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mode. When T_EX is processing your input in its stomach (see “anatomy of T_EX”, p. ‘\anatomy’), it is in one of six *modes*:

- ordinary horizontal mode (assembling a paragraph)
- restricted horizontal mode (assembling an hbox)
- ordinary vertical mode (assembling a page)
- internal vertical mode (assembling a vbox)
- text math mode (assembling a formula that appears in text)
- display math mode (assembling a formula that appears on a line by itself)

The mode describes the kind of entity that T_EX is putting together.

Because you can embed one kind of entity within another, e.g., a vbox within a math formula, T_EX keeps track not just of one mode but of a whole list of modes (what computer scientists call a “stack”). Suppose that T_EX is in mode M and encounters something that puts it into a new mode M' . When it finishes its work in mode M' , it resumes what it was doing in mode M .