mark 1

mark. A mark is an item that you can insert into a horizontal, vertical, or math list and later recover from within your output routine. Marks are useful for purposes such as keeping track of topics to appear in page headers. Each mark has a list of tokens—the "mark text"—associated with it. The \mark command (p. '\mark') expects such a token list as its argument, and appends an item containing that token list (after expansion) to whatever list TEX is currently building. The \topmark, \firstmark, and \botmark commands (p. '\topmark') can be used to retrieve various marks on a page. These commands are most often used in page headers and footers.

Here is a simplified example. Suppose you define a section heading macro as follows:

```
\def\section#1{\medskip{\bf#1}\smallskip\mark{#1}}
% #1 is the name of the section
```

This macro, when called, will produce a section heading in boldface and will also record the name of the section as a mark. You can now define the header for each printed page as follows:

```
\headline = {\ifodd\pageno \hfil\botmark\quad\folio
\else \folio\quad\firstmark\hfil \fi}
```

Each even (left-hand) page will now have the page number followed by the name of the first section on that page, while each odd (right-hand) page will have the page number followed by the name of the last section on that page. Special cases, e.g., no sections starting on a page, will generally come out correctly because of how \firstmark and \botmark work.

When you split a page using the \vsplit command (p.'\vsplit') you can retrieve the mark texts of the first and last marks of the split-off portion with the \splitfirstmark and \splitbotmark commands (p.'\splitfirstmark').

See pages 258–260 of *The TeXbook* for a more precise explanation of how to create and retrieve marks.