

`\topskip` [*⟨glue⟩* parameter]

T<sub>E</sub>X inserts glue at the top of each page in order to ensure that the baseline of the first box on the page always is the same distance  $d$  from the top of the page. `\topskip` determines the amount of that glue, called the “`\topskip` glue”, by specifying what  $d$  should be (provided that the first box on the page isn’t too tall).  $d$  is given by the natural size of the `\topskip` glue. If the height of the first box on the page exceeds  $d$ , so that the glue would be negative, T<sub>E</sub>X simply inserts no `\topskip` glue at all on that page.

To understand better the effect of these rules, assume that `\topskip` has no stretch or shrink and that the first item on the page is indeed a box. Then if the height of that box is no greater than `\topskip`, its baseline will be `\topskip` from the top of the page independently of its height. On the other hand, if the height of the box is  $e$  greater than `\topskip`, its baseline will be `\topskip` +  $e$  from the top of the page. See pages 113–114 of *The T<sub>E</sub>Xbook* for the remaining details of how `\topskip` works. Plain T<sub>E</sub>X sets `\topskip` to 10pt.