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`\*`

The `\*` command indicates a discretionary multiplication symbol ($\times$), which is a binary operation. This multiplication symbol behaves like a discretionary hyphen when it appears in a formula within text. That is, TEX will typeset the `\times` symbol *only* if the formula needs to be broken at that point. There's no point in using `\*` in a displayed formula since TEX never breaks displayed formulas on its own.

Example:

```
Let $c = a\*b$. In the case that $c=0$ or $c=1$, let
$\Delta$ be $(\hbox{the smallest $q$})\*(\hbox{the
largest $q$})$ in the set of approximate $\tau$-values.
```

produces:

Let $c = ab$. In the case that $c = 0$ or $c = 1$, let Δ be (the smallest q) $\times$ (the largest q) in the set of approximate τ-values.