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`\span`

The meaning of this command depends on whether it appears in a preamble or in an alignment entry.

- Normally, TEX does not expand tokens in the preamble when it reads them. Putting `\span` in front of a token in the preamble causes that token to be expanded immediately according to TEX's usual rules of macro expansion.
- Putting `\span` instead of '`&`' between two column or row entries causes those columns or rows to be combined. For a horizontal alignment, the width of the combined column is the sum of the widths of the component columns. For a vertical alignment, the height of the combined row is the sum of the heights of the component rows. The template of the combined column or combined row forms a single group, so font-setting commands preceding a `\span` affect everything up to the next '`&`'.

`\span` is rarely useful by itself outside of a template, but it provides the basic mechanism for defining `\multispan`.