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\begingroup \endgroup

These two commands begin and end a group. A \begingroup does not match up with a right brace, nor an \endgroup with a left brace.

TEX treats begingroup and bendgroup like any other control sequence when it's scanning its input. In particular, you can define a macro that contains a begingroup but not an bendgroup, and conversely. This technique is often useful when you're defining paired macros, one of which establishes an environment and the other of which terminates that environment. You can't, however, use begingroup and endgroup as substitutes for braces other than the ones that surround a group.

Example:

\def\a{One \begingroup \it two }
\def\enda{\endgroup four}
\a three \enda
produces:
One two three four