

# Sentinel Loop Patterns

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How do you handle problems where the loop **reads data from the user** until some special value, or **sentinel**, is found to signal the end of the input? This is called a **sentinel loop** and its logical structure is:

```
Read a value
If the value is equal to the sentinel then
    Exit the loop
Process the value
```

There is no easy test at the beginning of the loop; you don't know when the sentinel is encountered **until you've read a value**. There are three ways to **rearrange** the statements to handle this situation.



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