

Enumerated Input

Enumerated input is more difficult than output, because:

- You have to decide how you want to **encode** the external version.
- You cannot use the input operator (without overloading).
- Because the external representation is text, you can't use a **switch**, but have to use sequential **if..else if..else** statements instead.

```
Month m1;  
cin >> m1; // does not compile
```

Here's a version of a **read_month** function which reads from input, using the first three letters of the input to convert it to a **Month**:

```
istream& read_month(Month& m, istream& in = cin)  
{  
    string encoded;  
    in >> encoded;  
    string subs = encoded.substr(0, 3); // first three characters  
    for (char& c : subs) c = to_lower(c); // lowercase  
  
    if (subs == "jan")    m = Month::jan;  
    else if (subs == "feb") m = Month::feb;  
    else if (subs == "mar") m = Month::mar;  
    . . .  
    else in.setstate(ios::failbit); // set failbit  
    return in;  
}
```

You'd use the function like this:

```
cout << "Enter a month: ";  
Month m;  
if (read_month(m)) {  
    cout << "The month is " << to_string(m) << endl;  
}  
else {  
    cout << "You entered an invalid value." << endl;  
}
```



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