

Variables and their Standard Uses

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1 General Mathematics

Mathematics has many conventions; below is general subset of the more common variables. Many of the symbols also have other conventional uses, for which they might stand for a constant or a specific function rather than a variable. I am not too rigorous in applying a strict ontology or classification here.

Mathematical Conventions

- (1) a_i is often used to denote a term of a sequence.
- (2) a, b, c, d (sometimes extended to e and f) usually play similar roles or are made to represent parallel notions in a mathematical context. They often represent constants. The coefficients in an equation, for example the general expression of a polynomial or a Diophantine equation are often a, b, c, d, e, f .
- (3) e also stands for Euler's number: the base of an exponential function $= 2.7182818\dots$
- (4) f, g (sometimes h) commonly denote functions.
- (5) i, j, k are often used as subscripts or index variables; this is also true in syntax and formal semantics. (i can also stand for the imaginary number $i = \sqrt{-1}$; conversely $i^2 = -1$).
- (6) l, w are often used to represent the length and width of a figure.
- (7) m, n usually denote integers and usually play similar roles or are made to represent parallel notions in a mathematical context.
- (8) n typically denotes a count of objects, or, in statistics, the number of individuals.
- (9) p, q often represent prime numbers, or relatively prime numbers; in logic they typically represent propositional variables.
- (10) p, q, r usually play similar roles or are made to represent parallel notions in a mathematical context.

- (11) r often denotes a remainder or modulus.
- (12) r, s, t usually play similar roles or are made to represent parallel notions in a mathematical context.
- (13) u, v usually play similar roles or are made to represent parallel notions in a mathematical context, such as denoting a vertex (graph theory).
- (14) w, x, y, z usually play similar roles or are made to represent parallel notions in a mathematical context, such as representing unknowns in an equation.
- (15) x, y, z correspond to the three Cartesian axes. In many two-dimensional cases, y will be expressed in terms of x ; if a third dimension is added, z is expressed in terms of x and y .
- (16) z is a common variable for a complex number.
- (17) $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \theta, \varphi$ commonly denote angle measures.
- (18) ϵ usually represents an arbitrarily small positive number.
- (19) λ is used for eigenvalues.
- (20) δ often denotes a sum, or the standard deviation in a statistical context.

2 Linguistics: Syntax and Formal Semantics

Many of the variables and their standard conventional uses in linguistics come from mathematics and/or mathematical logic. This is largely because they were simply adopted wholesale in the early days and perhaps only later acquired more specific and linguistically relevant meanings.

Linguistics Conventions

- (21) A and A -bar (variants for latter include \bar{A} , A') denote a specific syntactic tree position correlated with an argument, subject, or agent.
- (22) e stands for an empty category.
- (23) i is often used as a subscript to track coreference between two constituents.
- (24) wh and Wh are used for a specific subclass of interrogatives; originally adopted as shorthand for English words (for example, but not necessarily limited to *what*, *where*, *who*, *when*, *how*). These variables presently refer to this special subclass of interrogatives in all languages, despite orthography .

3 L^AT_EX Symbols and their commands

α	<code>\alpha</code>	θ	<code>\theta</code>	o	<code>o</code>	τ	<code>\tau</code>
β	<code>\beta</code>	ϑ	<code>\vartheta</code>	π	<code>\pi</code>	υ	<code>\upsilon</code>
γ	<code>\gamma</code>	γ	<code>\gamma</code>	ϖ	<code>\varpi</code>	ϕ	<code>\phi</code>
δ	<code>\delta</code>	κ	<code>\kappa</code>	ρ	<code>\rho</code>	φ	<code>\varphi</code>
ϵ	<code>\epsilon</code>	λ	<code>\lambda</code>	ϱ	<code>\varrho</code>	χ	<code>\chi</code>
ε	<code>\varepsilon</code>	μ	<code>\mu</code>	σ	<code>\sigma</code>	ψ	<code>\psi</code>
ζ	<code>\zeta</code>	ν	<code>\nu</code>	ς	<code>\varsigma</code>	ω	<code>\omega</code>
η	<code>\eta</code>	ξ	<code>\xi</code>				
Γ	<code>\Gamma</code>	Λ	<code>\Lambda</code>	Σ	<code>\Sigma</code>	Ψ	<code>\Psi</code>
Δ	<code>\Delta</code>	Ξ	<code>\Xi</code>	Υ	<code>\Upsilon</code>	Ω	<code>\Omega</code>
Θ	<code>\Theta</code>	Π	<code>\Pi</code>	Φ	<code>\Phi</code>		

Table 1: Greek Letters

\pm	<code>\pm</code>	\cap	<code>\cap</code>	\diamond	<code>\diamond</code>	\oplus	<code>\oplus</code>
\mp	<code>\mp</code>	\cup	<code>\cup</code>	\triangleup	<code>\triangleup</code>	\ominus	<code>\ominus</code>
\times	<code>\times</code>	\uplus	<code>\uplus</code>	\triangledown	<code>\triangledown</code>	\otimes	<code>\otimes</code>
\div	<code>\div</code>	\sqcap	<code>\sqcap</code>	\triangleleft	<code>\triangleleft</code>	\oslash	<code>\oslash</code>
$*$	<code>\ast</code>	\sqcup	<code>\sqcup</code>	\triangleright	<code>\triangleright</code>	\odot	<code>\odot</code>
\star	<code>\star</code>	\vee	<code>\vee</code>	\triangleleft^b	<code>\triangleleft^b</code>	\bigcirc	<code>\bigcirc</code>
\circ	<code>\circ</code>	\wedge	<code>\wedge</code>	\rhd^b	<code>\rhd^b</code>	\dagger	<code>\dagger</code>
\bullet	<code>\bullet</code>	\setminus	<code>\setminus</code>	\unlhd^b	<code>\unlhd^b</code>	\ddagger	<code>\ddagger</code>
\cdot	<code>\cdot</code>	\wr	<code>\wr</code>	\unrhd^b	<code>\unrhd^b</code>	\amalg	<code>\amalg</code>
$+$	<code>+</code>	$-$	<code>-</code>				

^b Not predefined in a format based on `basefont.tex`. Use one of the style options `oldfont`, `newfont`, `amssymb` or `amssymb`.

Table 2: Binary Operation Symbols

\leq	<code>\leq</code>	\geq	<code>\geq</code>	\equiv	<code>\equiv</code>	\models	<code>\models</code>
\prec	<code>\prec</code>	\succ	<code>\succ</code>	\sim	<code>\sim</code>	\perp	<code>\perp</code>
\preceq	<code>\preceq</code>	\succeq	<code>\succeq</code>	\simeq	<code>\simeq</code>	$ $	<code>\mid</code>
\ll	<code>\ll</code>	\gg	<code>\gg</code>	\asymp	<code>\asymp</code>	\parallel	<code>\parallel</code>
\subset	<code>\subset</code>	\supset	<code>\supset</code>	\approx	<code>\approx</code>	\bowtie	<code>\bowtie</code>
\subseteq	<code>\subseteq</code>	\supseteq	<code>\supseteq</code>	\cong	<code>\cong</code>	\Join	<code>\Join^b</code>
\sqsubset	<code>\sqsubset^b</code>	\sqsupset	<code>\sqsupset^b</code>	\neq	<code>\neq</code>	\smile	<code>\smile</code>
\sqsubseteq	<code>\sqsubseteq</code>	\sqsupseteq	<code>\sqsupseteq</code>	\doteq	<code>\doteq</code>	\frown	<code>\frown</code>
\in	<code>\in</code>	\ni	<code>\ni</code>	\propto	<code>\propto</code>	$=$	<code>=</code>
\vdash	<code>\vdash</code>	\dashv	<code>\dashv</code>	$<$	<code><</code>	$>$	<code>></code>
$:$	<code>:</code>						

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Table 3: Relation Symbols

$,$	<code>,</code>	$;$	<code>;</code>	$:$	<code>\colon</code>	\ldotp	<code>\ldotp</code>	\cdot	<code>\cdot</code>	\cdot	<code>\cdot</code>
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Table 4: Punctuation Symbols

\leftarrow	<code>\leftarrow</code>	\longleftarrow	<code>\longleftarrow</code>	\uparrow	<code>\uparrow</code>
\Leftarrow	<code>\Leftarrow</code>	\Longleftarrow	<code>\Longleftarrow</code>	\Uparrow	<code>\Uparrow</code>
\rightarrow	<code>\rightarrow</code>	\longrightarrow	<code>\longrightarrow</code>	\downarrow	<code>\downarrow</code>
\Rightarrow	<code>\Rightarrow</code>	\Longrightarrow	<code>\Longrightarrow</code>	\Downarrow	<code>\Downarrow</code>
\leftrightarrow	<code>\leftrightarrow</code>	\longleftrightarrow	<code>\longleftrightarrow</code>	\updownarrow	<code>\updownarrow</code>
\Leftrightarrow	<code>\Leftrightarrow</code>	\Longleftrightarrow	<code>\Longleftrightarrow</code>	\Updownarrow	<code>\Updownarrow</code>
\mapsto	<code>\mapsto</code>	\longmapsto	<code>\longmapsto</code>	\nearrow	<code>\nearrow</code>
\hookrightarrow	<code>\hookrightarrow</code>	\hookleftarrow	<code>\hookleftarrow</code>	\searrow	<code>\searrow</code>
\leftharpoonup	<code>\leftharpoonup</code>	\rightharpoonup	<code>\rightharpoonup</code>	\swarrow	<code>\swarrow</code>
\leftharpoondown	<code>\leftharpoondown</code>	\rightharpoondown	<code>\rightharpoondown</code>	\nwarrow	<code>\nwarrow</code>
\rightleftharpoons	<code>\rightleftharpoons</code>	\leadsto	<code>\leadsto^b</code>		

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Table 5: Arrow Symbols

\dots	<code>\ldots</code>	\cdots	<code>\cdots</code>	\vdots	<code>\vdots</code>	\ddots	<code>\ddots</code>
\aleph	<code>\aleph</code>	\prime	<code>\prime</code>	\forall	<code>\forall</code>	∞	<code>\infty</code>
\hbar	<code>\hbar</code>	\emptyset	<code>\emptyset</code>	\exists	<code>\exists</code>	\Box	<code>\Box^b</code>
\imath	<code>\imath</code>	∇	<code>\nabla</code>	\neg	<code>\neg</code>	\Diamond	<code>\Diamond^b</code>
\jmath	<code>\jmath</code>	\surd	<code>\surd</code>	\flat	<code>\flat</code>	\triangle	<code>\triangle</code>
ℓ	<code>\ell</code>	\top	<code>\top</code>	\natural	<code>\natural</code>	\clubsuit	<code>\clubsuit</code>
\wp	<code>\wp</code>	\bot	<code>\bot</code>	\sharp	<code>\sharp</code>	\diamondsuit	<code>\diamondsuit</code>
\Re	<code>\Re</code>	$\ $	<code>\ </code>	\backslash	<code>\backslash</code>	\heartsuit	<code>\heartsuit</code>
\Im	<code>\Im</code>	\angle	<code>\angle</code>	∂	<code>\partial</code>	\spadesuit	<code>\spadesuit</code>
\mhob	<code>\mho^b</code>	\cdot	<code>\cdot</code>	$ $	<code> </code>		

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Table 6: Miscellaneous Symbols

\sum	<code>\sum</code>	\bigcap	<code>\bigcap</code>	\bigodot	<code>\bigodot</code>
\prod	<code>\prod</code>	\bigcup	<code>\bigcup</code>	\bigotimes	<code>\bigotimes</code>
\coprod	<code>\coprod</code>	\bigsqcup	<code>\bigsqcup</code>	\bigoplus	<code>\bigoplus</code>
\int	<code>\int</code>	\bigvee	<code>\bigvee</code>	\biguplus	<code>\biguplus</code>
\oint	<code>\oint</code>	\bigwedge	<code>\bigwedge</code>		

Table 7: Variable-sized Symbols

<code>\arccos</code>	<code>\cos</code>	<code>\csc</code>	<code>\exp</code>	<code>\ker</code>	<code>\limsup</code>	<code>\min</code>	<code>\sinh</code>
<code>\arcsin</code>	<code>\cosh</code>	<code>\deg</code>	<code>\gcd</code>	<code>\lg</code>	<code>\ln</code>	<code>\Pr</code>	<code>\sup</code>
<code>\arctan</code>	<code>\cot</code>	<code>\det</code>	<code>\hom</code>	<code>\lim</code>	<code>\log</code>	<code>\sec</code>	<code>\tan</code>
<code>\arg</code>	<code>\coth</code>	<code>\dim</code>	<code>\inf</code>	<code>\liminf</code>	<code>\max</code>	<code>\sin</code>	<code>\tanh</code>

Table 8: Log-like Symbols

$($	$($	$)$	$)$	\uparrow	<code>\uparrow</code>	\Uparrow	<code>\Uparrow</code>
$[$	$[$	$]$	$]$	\downarrow	<code>\downarrow</code>	\Downarrow	<code>\Downarrow</code>
$\{$	<code>\{</code>	$\}$	<code>\}</code>	\updownarrow	<code>\updownarrow</code>	\Updownarrow	<code>\Updownarrow</code>
\lfloor	<code>\lfloor</code>	\rfloor	<code>\rfloor</code>	\lceil	<code>\lceil</code>	\rceil	<code>\rceil</code>
\langle	<code>\langle</code>	\rangle	<code>\rangle</code>	$/$	<code>/</code>	\backslash	<code>\backslash</code>
$ $	<code> </code>	$\ $	<code>\ </code>				

Table 9: Delimiters

$\}$	<code>\rmoustache</code>	$\}$	<code>\lmoustache</code>	$\}$	<code>\rgroup</code>	$\{$	<code>\lgroup</code>
\uparrow	<code>\arrowvert</code>	\uparrow	<code>\Arrowvert</code>	\uparrow	<code>\bracevert</code>		

Table 10: Large Delimiters

\hat{a}	<code>\hat{a}</code>	\acute{a}	<code>\acute{a}</code>	\bar{a}	<code>\bar{a}</code>	\dot{a}	<code>\dot{a}</code>	\breve{a}	<code>\breve{a}</code>
\check{a}	<code>\check{a}</code>	\grave{a}	<code>\grave{a}</code>	\vec{a}	<code>\vec{a}</code>	\ddot{a}	<code>\ddot{a}</code>	\tilde{a}	<code>\tilde{a}</code>

Table 11: Math mode accents

\widetilde{abc}	<code>\widetilde{abc}</code>	\widehat{abc}	<code>\widehat{abc}</code>
\overleftarrow{abc}	<code>\overleftarrow{abc}</code>	\overrightarrow{abc}	<code>\overrightarrow{abc}</code>
\overline{abc}	<code>\overline{abc}</code>	\underline{abc}	<code>\underline{abc}</code>
\overbrace{abc}	<code>\overbrace{abc}</code>	\underbrace{abc}	<code>\underbrace{abc}</code>
\sqrt{abc}	<code>\sqrt{abc}</code>	$\sqrt[n]{abc}$	<code>\sqrt[n]{abc}</code>
f'	<code>f'</code>	$\frac{abc}{xyz}$	<code>\frac{abc}{xyz}</code>

Table 12: Some other constructions