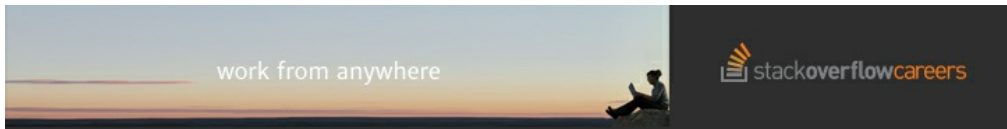


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## Constructing a map doesn't permit indexed collection as map key?



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So I'm trying to actually write an answer to [this question](#) which seemed like an interesting one to me. What the hell, I'll give it a shot.

Here's the solution I came up with. It seems correct to me, and should yield the right result, but instead yields a cypher parse error.

So the game here is to take two collections (letters and numbers) and to construct a map out of them which maps the right letter to the right number, sequentially from the two collections.

My solution:

```
with [1,2,3] as nums, ['a', 'b', 'c'] as letters
with nums, letters, range(0, length(nums)-1) as idxs
return extract(idx in idxs | { letters[idx] : nums[idx] });
```

My reasoning is that I need to iterate over collection indexes so that I can use the same index to "advance both collections" at the same time. I'm using `extract` to get each index, then constructing the nested map, which pairs the appropriate items.

Except that it fails because cypher says:

```
Invalid input '[: expected an identifier character, whitespace, '}' or ':' (line 3,
"return extract(idx in idxs | { letters[idx] : nums[idx] });"
                        ^
```

**UPDATE:** cybersam answered the original question [here](#) and indicated that "it may not be possible to dynamically create map keys". So my real question is -- is that accurate (maps cannot have dynamic keys) and if so, why?

neo4j cypher

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asked Mar 25 at 20:16



FrobberOfBits  
8,397 ● 7 ● 29

1 Answer

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This is just the "limitation" of cypher. You can try this:

```
WITH 'a' as key, 'test' as value
RETURN {key: value}
```

but the result is this:

```
{"key":"test"}
```

The correct approach is shown in the answer of Cybersam. Something like this:

```
WITH 'a' as key, 'test' as value, 'b' as key2, 'test2' as value2
RETURN [{key: key, value: value}, {key: key2, value: value2}]
```

will results:

```
[{"key":"a","value":"test"}, {"key":"b","value":"test2"}]
```

asked 4 months ago

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For creating dynamic map keys you have to use java or other programming languages.

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answered Mar 25 at 20:47

 **Richard Günzl**  
104 ● 5

Why would this be? Was this design "feature" where dynamic keys are prohibited made to prevent some worse problem that would occur if dynamic keys were permitted? Or was it oversight? Or is there some entirely different consideration I'm missing? – [FrobberOfBits](#) Mar 25 at 20:49

I'm guessing/hoping there's some interesting or deep reason why the obvious functionality isn't a good idea here. I accept that the workaround is workable, but it's really kludgy. (A map that stores keys and values both as values! That's gotta be in the programming dictionary right next to the term kludge) – [FrobberOfBits](#) Mar 25 at 20:50

- 1
- I agree with your comments. I think this problem has had low priority because there are workarounds: 1) programing languages 2) the kludgy one; and the implementation of the functionality can be complicated. I think a higher priority has improving performance, scalability, etc. ([neo4j.com/whats-new-in-neo4j-2-2](#)) I like to wait for next answers and comments. – [Richard Günzl](#) Mar 25 at 21:40

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