

# Can someone explain the dollar sign in Javascript?

Asked 10 years, 2 months ago   Active 5 months ago   Viewed 332k times



The code in question is here:

346

```
var $item = $(this).parent().parent().find('input');
```



What is the purpose of the dollar sign in the variable name, why not just exclude it?



73

javascript

naming-conventions

edited Nov 18 '17 at 19:56



Donald Duck

4,223 13 42 65

asked May 11 '09 at 3:00



Keith Donegan

11.8k 29 84 123

3 possible duplicate of [stackoverflow.com/questions/205853/...](https://stackoverflow.com/questions/205853/...) – DisgruntledGoat Apr 15 '10 at 15:11

[ttony21's answer][1] is wrong stating that there are no types in Javascript, cf. [official documentation][2] [1]: [stackoverflow.com/questions/846585/...](https://stackoverflow.com/questions/846585/...) [2]: [ecma-international.org/publications/files/ECMA-ST/ECMA-262.pdf](http://ecma-international.org/publications/files/ECMA-ST/ECMA-262.pdf) – anddam Mar 11 '11 at 8:49

This thread is quite old but it seems that the mainstream browsers have standardized the \$, \$\$ global vairables. What is \$ vs \$\$ supposed to do? – Nick Sotiros May 1 '14 at 8:28

Nothing, unless you're in said browser's console. Chrome for example defines \$ and \$\$ as shortcuts to `document.querySelector` and `document.querySelectorAll` – Kevin B May 8 '14 at 18:18

Possible duplicate of [Why would a JavaScript variable start with a dollar sign?](https://stackoverflow.com/questions/846585/can-someone-explain-the-dollar-sign-in-javascript) – Ken Nov 19 '17 at 11:17

## 8 Answers



A '\$' in a variable means nothing special to the interpreter, much like an underscore.

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The dollar sign function `$()` in jQuery is a library function that is frequently used, so a short name is desirable.

edited Nov 14 '15 at 20:49



Emery Lapinski

972 11 20

answered May 11 '09 at 3:13



cobbal

60.8k 14 130 150

74 Note: By default, jQuery uses "\$" as a shortcut for "jQuery". This has some effects on the use of other Javascript libraries. See [docs.jquery.com/Using\\_jQuery\\_with\\_Other\\_Libraries](https://docs.jquery.com/Using_jQuery_with_Other_Libraries) – Thimmayya Nov 7 '09 at 1:27

15 In other words, \$ is comparable to any acceptable symbol in variable/function names. Doing `var $=function(){} is very same as doing var a=function(){} .` – F-3000 Dec 7 '13 at 12:32

19 Thimmayya your comment "By default, jQuery uses "\$" as a shortcut for "jQuery"" should be in bold letters at the top of every page on JQuery's website, Their examples are horribly documented. – RustyH Jun 25 '14 at 21:59

What about when \$ is specified as a function parameter? I am looking at some code like `jQuery(document).ready(function($){ ...` Then the \$ is used inside the function implementation. – still\_dreaming\_1 Sep 16 '16 at 16:32

4 @ThrowawayAccount3Million It's just part of the name. In the case of `$scope` the \$ is one of the characters in that name. Just as if you take off the e at the end of `$scope` , it won't work, so taking of the \$ will also not work. In the case that you see something like `$( "a" ).addClass( "test" )` , the dollar sign is the entire name of whatever that is. – still\_dreaming\_1 Feb 20 '17 at 14:48

The \$ sign is an identifier for variables and functions.

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[https://web.archive.org/web/20160529121559/http://www.authenticociety.com/blog/javascript\\_dollarsign](https://web.archive.org/web/20160529121559/http://www.authenticociety.com/blog/javascript_dollarsign)

That has a clear explanation of what the dollar sign is for.

Here's an alternative explanation: <http://www.vcarrer.com/2010/10/about-dollar-sign-in-javascript.html>

edited Jul 19 '16 at 11:14



andrewsi

10.8k 11 30 47

answered May 11 '09 at 3:04



AlbertoPL

10.4k 4 39 69

1 Javascript does have types; and in any case, how is the dollar sign even related to that? It's just a character that happens to be a legal identifier in Javascript. – Erik Allik Nov 10 '11 at 22:02

7 I'm not sure I would call that link a "clear" explanation. Does it really take 6+ paragraphs to explain that \$ is simply a valid character when defining

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The sample code in the link is quite easy to understand. Awesome! – 蔡宗容 Mar 5 at 7:19



In your example the \$ has no special significance other than being a character of the name.

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However, in ECMAScript 6 (ES6) the \$ may represent a [Template Literal](#)



```
var user = 'Bob'  
console.log(`We love ${user}.`); //Note backticks  
// We Love Bob.
```

answered Dec 15 '16 at 15:30



UpTheCreek

16.3k 31 135 207



The dollar sign is treated just like a normal letter or underscore ( \_ ). It has no special significance to the interpreter.

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Unlike many similar languages, **identifiers** (such as functional and variable names) in Javascript can contain not only letters, numbers and underscores, but **can also contain dollar signs**. They are even allowed to start with a dollar sign, or consist *only* of a dollar sign and nothing else.



Thus, \$ is a valid function or variable name in Javascript.

### Why would you want a dollar sign in an identifier?

The syntax doesn't really enforce any particular usage of the dollar sign in an identifier, so it's up to you how you wish to use it. In the past, it has often been recommended to start an identifier with a dollar sign only in *generated code* - that is, code created not by hand but by a code generator.

In your example, however, this doesn't appear to be the case. It looks like someone just put a dollar sign at the start for fun - perhaps they were a PHP programmer who did it out of habit, or something. In PHP, all variable names must have a dollar sign in front of them.

There is another common meaning for a dollar sign in an interpreter nowadays: the jQuery object, whose name *only* consists of a single dollar sign ( \$ ). This is a convention borrowed from earlier Javascript frameworks like Prototype, and if jQuery is used with other such

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edited Jan 15 at 22:08

answered May 11 '09 at 3:23



thomasrutter

92.6k 21 129 151

Dollar sign is used in **ecmascript** 2015-2016 as 'template literals'. Example:

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```
var a = 5;
var b = 10;
console.log(`Sum is equal: ${a + b}`); // 'Sum is equal: 15'
```

Here working example: <https://es6console.com/j3lg8xeo/> Notice this sign "`", its not normal quotes.

U can also meet \$ while working with library **jQuery**.

\$ sign in **Regular Expressions** means end of line.

edited Dec 13 '17 at 12:15

answered Jun 6 '17 at 11:04



Vasyl Gutnyk

2,990 2 20 26

No reason. Maybe the person who coded it came from PHP. It has the same effect as if you had named it "\_item" or "item" or "item\$".

Maybe it's some kind of Hungarian notation for the coder to note that the variable is a DOM element or something.

3

answered May 11 '09 at 3:04



Claudiu

132k 129 405 600

Here is a good short video explanation: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acm-MD\\_6934](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acm-MD_6934)

1

According to Ecma International Identifier Names are tokens that are interpreted according to the grammar given in the "Identifiers" section of [chapter 5](#) of the Unicode standard, with some small modifications. An Identifier is an IdentifierName that is not a

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by the Unicode Standard. The characters in the specified categories in version 3.0 of the Unicode standard must be treated as in those categories by all conforming ECMAScript implementations. This standard specifies specific character additions:

**The dollar sign (\$) and the underscore (\_) are permitted anywhere in an IdentifierName.**

Further reading can be found on: <http://www.ecma-international.org/ecma-262/5.1/#sec-7.6>

**Ecma International** is an industry association founded in 1961 and dedicated to the standardization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Consumer Electronics (CE).

edited Feb 10 '15 at 10:25

answered Feb 10 '15 at 9:41



Nomis

322 1 3 11

While this link may answer the question, it is better to include the essential parts of the answer here and provide the link for reference. Link-only answers can become invalid if the linked page changes. – TartanLlama Feb 10 '15 at 10:13

... @TartanLlama If you downgraded my answer please read my updated answer. Thank you. – Nomis Feb 10 '15 at 10:27

Wasn't me! I just flagged it. – TartanLlama Feb 10 '15 at 10:32

... ok to the person who down-voted this, please explain why and read my edited answer. Thank you. – Nomis Feb 10 '15 at 10:36

4 ... @TartanLlama this just proves (again) that Stackoverflows anonymous downgrade feature is broken. Answering old questions with accepted answers is ok for me since I myself find it useful to see other answers when I browse around for answers. – Nomis Feb 10 '15 at 10:50

When using jQuery, the usage of \$ symbol as a prefix in the variable name is merely by convention; it is completely optional and serves only to indicate that the variable holds a jQuery object, as in your example.

1 This means that when another jQuery function needs to be called on the object, you wouldn't need to wrap it in \$() again. For instance, compare these:

```
// the usual way
var item = $(this).parent().parent().find('input');
$(item).hide(); // this is a double wrap, but required for code readability
item.hide(); // this works but is very unclear how a jQuery function is getting called on this
```

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```
$item.hide(); // direct call is clear  
$($item).hide(); // this works too, but isn't necessary
```

With the `$` prefix the variables already holding jQuery objects are instantly recognizable and the code more readable, and eliminates double/multiple wrapping with `$(())`.

answered Feb 5 at 9:39



SNag

11.6k

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