Declarations Encyclopedia Article

Declarations

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Declarations are used in computer **programming** to introduce a new **variable**, or other new information for use. A variable is a symbol or a name that denotes a numerical **value** or characters. Typically declaration can be achieved using a declarative statement. The structure of the declarative statement varies from program to program. The intent of the statement, however, is the same across the various programming languages.

Declaration serves to tell the computer's compiler—a program that translates the source **code** into a code that will be used for the execution of actions--generalized aspects of the piece of information, such as an identifying name, type, and the amount of **memory** that needs to be allocated. The **compiler** is thus able to allocate enough memory to hold a value of that particular **data** type and to associate an **identifier** with the location.

Data that is created must be declared before it can be used. Declaration can be made at the time the data is used. Thus, declarations are an essential part of programming languages. The language used to declare variables differs in different operating programs. For example, in the **C** programming language, the declaration "int" is used to express integers and the declaration "float" is used to express real numbers. In both **Java** and **Pascal**, each **variable declaration** is denoted by the code "var."