Reference Parameter Encyclopedia Article

Reference Parameter

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Reference Parameter

A reference **parameter** is a parameter, also called an **argument**, which defines the characteristics of a **function**. It is used when the function conveys a **value** to, or changes the value of, a **variable** from the calling block, without an **assignment statement** (such as D = A + B+ C, where D is the variable and the equation is the **expression**) in the calling block. In other words, a reference parameter specifies the location of the particular parameter, rather than containing the actual parameter information that defines the function.

When a function is called for, the reference parameter passes the **memory** address of the function parameter to a routine. The routine, in turn, executes the function.

A reference parameter is usually not information that is widely disseminated, since its use can alter functions that the user has installed.