

A Macro to View and Insert Variables 0-9
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WordPerfect has the ability to memorize the words and phrases you need. You can then put that text in your document on demand, with a single keystroke combination. This ability comes from the macro feature called variables.

What Is a Variable Anyway?

There are hundreds of lengthy, technical treatises that explain computer variables. I'm not going to bore you with any of them. Think of a variable as a manila folder. Just like you can write something on paper and put that paper in a folder, you can put words or numbers in a variable.

Just like you put labels on your folders so you can tell them apart, you give each variable a name.

Finally, any time you want to see what's in a particular folder, you just look for the label and open it up. Similarly, any time you want to see what's in a computer variable, you just use its name.

The concept of variables may still be a little hazy, so maybe some hands-on experience will clear things up. Here's how you can use variables to get around the tedium of having to type and retype words you use frequently.

1. In a document screen with text in it, move your cursor to the beginning of a word or phrase you use frequently, such as "inter-deity intrigue." By the way, variables can't use attributes like bold and italics, so your word or phrase must be plain text.
2. Press Block (Alt-F4), then use the arrow keys to highlight the word or phrase. This is the text that will be put in (or "assigned to," as computer nerds like to say) the variable. Variables can only hold 128 characters, though, so don't highlight an entire page of text. Highlighting the text is comparable to writing something on paper that you plan to put in the folder.
3. Press Macro Commands (Ctrl-Page Up). At the bottom of the screen, the prompt Variable: appears. Here's where you give the variable a name, like you'd put a label on a folder.
4. Press 1 for the variable name, then press (Enter). You can actually use either numbers or words for variable names, but it's easier to get at variables that are named with the numbers 0-9.

There. You've done it. You've created a variable named 1, and it contains text you've specified. So, how do you use the variable? Well, simply move your cursor to where you want that text to go. (Just in case, you may want to be at a blank document screen.) Now, hold down the (Alt) key and press the number that goes with the variable name. Since you named this variable "1," you press (Alt-1). Your word or phrase zips onto the screen in nothing flat. Note: The number you press while holding down the (Alt) key must be a number from the top of the keyboard, *not* the numeric keypad.

You can use steps 1-4 to assign different text to other variables, 0-9. You can then put the text in those variables on-screen by pressing the (Alt) key and that number. You should keep a few things in mind about variables:

- Variables only last until you exit WP. All variables are erased when you exit WordPerfect.
- A variable can hold only one item at a time. If you assign variable 6 the word "Apollo," you cannot also assign it the phrase "Jupiter is a wimp." If you do, "Jupiter is a wimp" will replace "Apollo," and not be added to it.

The great thing about variables is they're reusable. Just because you used the variable to put the text on the screen once doesn't mean you can't do it again. As many times as you press (Alt-1), that text will be inserted.

Variables are also recyclable. If you decide that you want variable 1 to contain different text, just follow steps 1-4 again, highlighting something different.

Using Variables In Macros

So far, you've been using variables outside of the Macro feature. This is fine for doing things like avoiding extra typing. The real power of variables, however, is when you use them inside macros. For example, you can create a macro that shows a menu of the text you've assigned to variables 0-9. The macro is included here as VARMENU.WPM. This menu is helpful to remind you which variables hold what. You can then press the number of the variable you want, and it's inserted into the document at your cursor.

Begin the process by pressing (Home), Macro Define (Ctrl-F10). At the Define macro: prompt, type varmenu, then press (Enter). At the Description: prompt, type Menu of variables 0-9. Press (Enter).

Using the Macro

Use this macro as a way to remind yourself which of the variables 0-9 have values, and what these values are. From a document screen, press Macro (Alt-F10), type "varmenu" and press (Enter). A menu appears that lists all your variables 0-9.

If you just needed a reminder, you can then press Cancel (F1) to make the menu disappear. If, however, you want to insert one of the words or phrases, press the number corresponding to the variable. That's all there is to this macro. Continue to assign values to these variables in the way described earlier in this article.

If there aren't any variables assigned, nothing will appear next to the variable on the menu.

Understanding the Macro

This macro was converted from WP 5.1, so the old step-by-step explanations do not apply.