

Different types of data require different amounts of memory to store them. For instance, a number may be stored as 1 byte and just store whole numbers. A single character will only require 1 byte, but a string of 5 characters will need 5 bytes. The different types of data that can be stored are known as **data types**.

When **variables** or **constants** are created the computer needs to know what data types each of them are. Programming languages like C/C++/Java/C# expect the programmer to state which data type each variable will hold. Other languages, like Python, will assume what data type they should be using by the first value which is assigned to a variable or constant.

The following are data types that you can use.

Data type	Explanation	Example values
<b>Integer</b>	An <b>integer</b> will store a <b>whole number</b> . Some languages let you even specify how many bytes will be taken up by the integer and therefore how big the numbers that it stores can be.	0 51 29385 -812
<b>Real / Floating point</b>	A <b>real</b> or <b>floating point number</b> is one that has a <b>fractional component</b> . It would be used to store the height of a student or the price of something in pounds and pence.	145.28 5.0 0.29300 -4.23
<b>Boolean</b>	A <b>Boolean</b> is a data type that stores two options that are either <b>True</b> or <b>False</b> , or in some languages 1 or 0.	True False
<b>Character</b>	A <b>character</b> is <b>one single letter</b> , number etc. It is important to remember that space is also a character. Single quotes normally tell a programming language that something is a character.	'b' 'A' '8' ' ' '£'
<b>String</b>	A <b>string</b> is a <b>sequence of characters</b> that are all stored together. It has a variable length and is used to store text. Languages will use double quotes or single quotes around strings.	'Hello world!' 'Sam' 'This is text. ' '4\$3£sdj'

Most modern languages won't allow you to store the wrong data type in a variable. For instance, if you create a variable to store a Boolean and then try to put an integer in it you will get a **type mismatch error**. For example:

```
playAgain ← True
playAgain ← 0
```

This line of code would cause an error as playAgain would have been created as a Boolean and you are now trying to store an integer in it.