PHP Variables – Defining PHP Variables

The first thing to note about PHP variables is that they all start with a dollar sign before their actual name this is one way to identify them uniquely as variables in the processing.

A typical definition of a variable is as follows …

```
$x = 90;
```

Please note that although the above definition is legal and perfectly sound, it is more helpful if the variable name reflects the contents it contains …

```
$total_vat = 90;
```

PHP Variables – Naming PHP Variables

As well as giving the variable an understandable name there are certain rules the Developer must adher to …

The variable name must begin with either a letter or the underscore character.

A variable name can only contain alpha-numeric characters and underscores (A-z, 0-9, and _) and no spaces.

Variable names are case sensitive ($x and $X are two different variables)

PHP Variables – Naming PHP Variables

The following definitions of Variables are acceptable …

$x = 90;
$_theend = 90;
$the_end = 90;
$theend_ = 90;
$vat99 = 90;

The following will not work and their relevant error messages are given below the variable at fault …

$vat99% = 90;

Parse error**: syntax error, unexpected '=' in **C:\course\example.php** on line **10

PHP Variables – Naming PHP Variables

$vat@99% = 90;

Parse error**: syntax error, unexpected '@' in **C:\course\example.php** on line **10

$"999" = 90;

Parse error**: syntax error, unexpected T_CONSTANT_ENCAPSED_STRING, expecting T_VARIABLE or '$' in **C:\course\example.php** on line **11

$999 = 90;

Parse error**: syntax error, unexpected T_LNUMBER, expecting T_VARIABLE or '$' in **C:\course\example.php** on line **11

PHP Variables – Declaring PHP Variables

Generally, Variables in PHP are declared as and when they are needed with their initial value, if the Developer wishes to create one to reserve it for further use then it can be declared with a null value …

```
<?php

 $new_var = null;

 $another_var;  // This will compile but error if not populated before being used

?>
```

PHP Variables – Declaring PHP Variables

The Developer need not declare one variable at a time, in this example three variables are declared each with the value of 'A'

```
<?php

    $str1 = $str2 = $str3 = "A";

?>
```