

An Easy Way to Insert Common Fractions
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Whether you type recipes or mathematical manuscripts, you may need to insert fractions into your documents. For example, if you're typing a recipe, you might have to type "2 1/2 C. flour." You could, of course, just type "2 1/2"; however, that isn't as attractive or as readable as "2½," which includes the true typographic fraction "½."

Fortunately, WordPerfect's Compose feature provides typographic symbols of the most common fractions. Unfortunately, it's virtually impossible to remember the character set and character number for these fractions. The obvious solution to the problem is a macro.

Creating and using the macro

The macro is included as ALTF.WPM.

To use the macro, place your cursor in the location that you want the fraction and press (Alt-F). At the prompt "Fraction (e.g., 1/2):" type "1/2" and press (Enter) to insert ½, or type "1/4" to insert ¼, and so forth. The macro allows you to type these fractions: 1/2; 1/4; 3/4; 1/3; 2/3; 1/8; 3/8; 5/8; and 7/8.

Understanding the macro

The key to understanding the macro is the macro command {CALL}. This advanced macro command allows you to call a subroutine within a macro. A subroutine is a portion of a macro that executes a specified set of commands and then returns to the macro command immediately after the {CALL} command.

The {CALL} command requires the following syntax: {CALL}label~ where label is the label name that begins a subroutine. The called subroutine must begin with the {LABEL} command and end with the {RETURN} command, which tells the macro to return control to the command after the {CALL} command.

In the second line in Figure 2, the {CALL} command uses a variable as the label, which means that the label may be different each time you run the macro. When you execute the macro and type a fraction such as "1/2," the {TEXT} command assigns the string "1/2" to the variable Frac.

The {CALL} command then uses the value of the variable, in this case "1/2," as the label for calling a subroutine. Since one of the subroutines – shown in lines 4 to the end of the macro – begins with {LABEL}1/2~, the {CALL} command will call that subroutine when Frac equals "1/2."

The {RETURN} command at the end of that subroutine will then cause macro control to return to the command after the {CALL} command, namely, the {QUIT} command on the third line of the macro listing in Figure 2.

Note that if you enter a fraction that doesn't have a corresponding {LABEL} command, the macro quits since the label does not exist.

Each of the subroutines in the ALTF macro uses {^V} (Ctrl-V) to execute a Compose command. Each Compose command specifies the character set, which in this macro is always 4, and the character number corresponding to a fraction character in the character set. Thus, each subroutine inserts a fraction character into the document.