

Chapter 12

C the Mighty `if` Command

In This Chapter

- ▶ Using the `if` statement
 - ▶ Comparing values with `if`
 - ▶ Formatting the `if` statements
 - ▶ Handling exceptions with `else`
 - ▶ Making multiple decisions
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Okay, `if` isn't a command. It's *another* keyword in the C programming language, one that you can use in your program to make decisions — although it really makes comparisons, not decisions. It's the program that decides what to do based on the results of the comparison.

This chapter is about adding decision-making power to your programs by using the `if` command.



Keep in mind that the computer doesn't decide what to do. Instead, it follows a careful path that you set down for it. It's kind of like instructing small children to do something, though with the computer, it always does exactly what you tell it to and never pauses eternally in front of the TV set or wedges a Big Hunk into the sofa.

If Only. . . .

The idea behind the `if` command is to have the computer handle some predictable yet unknown event: A choice is made from a menu; the little man in some game opens the door with the hydra behind it; or the user types something goofy. These are all events that happen, which the computer must deal with.