

11.3.2 Parameters by value and by reference, and variable scope

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 32 marks

KEY WORDS return value • pass by reference • pass by value
• pseudocode • procedure

Objective

Learn how a value gets **into** and **out of** a subroutine: **pass by value** against **pass by reference**, and the **scope** and lifetime of a variable. Sheets 11.3 and 11.3.1 wrote procedures and functions whose parameters only bring values in. This sheet traces what a call changes in the caller, chooses the right mode for each parameter, and explains why a **local variable** loses its value between calls. Sheet 11.3.3 then puts whole programs together from modules.

You must be able to:

- use parameters, understanding that a parameter may be passed by reference or by value
- trace what a subroutine changes in the caller, and what it does not
- choose the right passing mode for each parameter of a procedure
- use the terminology of procedures and functions when explaining your choice
- explain the difference between a local variable and a **global variable**, and write efficient pseudocode that prefers locals and parameters

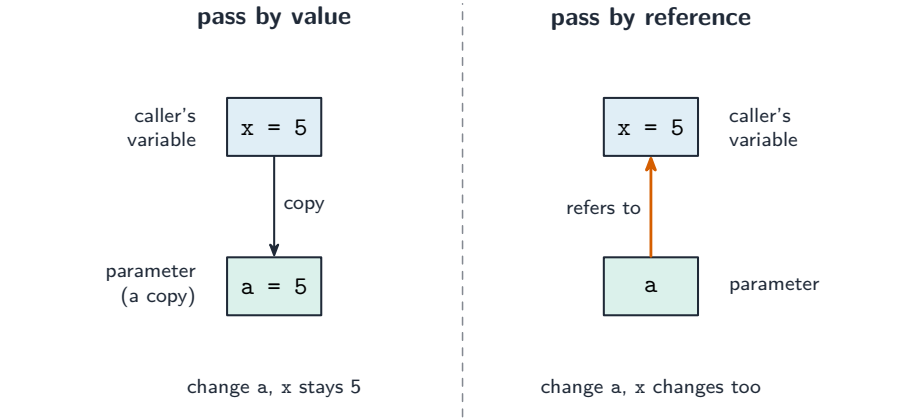
1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows a **method** that a question later on this sheet needs.

■ By value or by reference?

- A parameter is passed in one of two **modes**, written in the header.
- If no mode is written, BYVAL is assumed.

	BYVAL (by value)	BYREF (by reference)
the parameter is	a copy of the variable	the caller's own variable
a change inside	is lost when the call ends	stays in the caller's variable
use it when	the value is only read	the caller must see the change



■ Tracing a call

```
PROCEDURE Update(BYREF Count : INTEGER, BYVAL Increment : INTEGER)
    Count ← Count + Increment
    Increment ← 0
ENDPROCEDURE

Total ← 12
Amount ← 4
CALL Update(Total, Amount)
OUTPUT Total, Amount
```

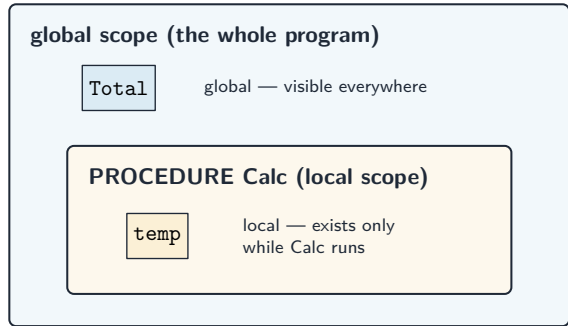
1. Count is BYREF, so Count is Total: the addition writes 16 into Total.
2. Increment is BYVAL, so it is a copy of Amount: Increment ← 0 changes the copy only, and Amount stays 4.
3. The output is 16, 4. (With BYVAL Count the output would be 12, 4.)

A trace question is marked on the **reason**: write "Count is BYREF, so it is Total itself", not only the number.

■ Choosing the mode

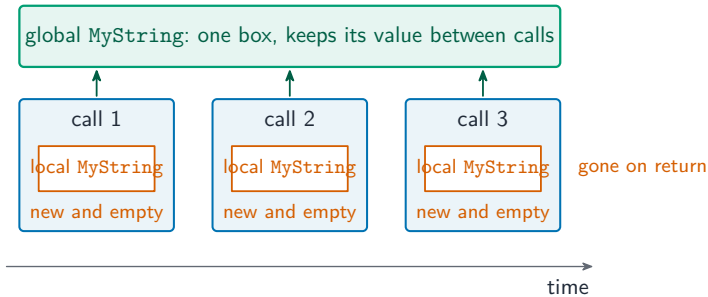
- The subroutine only **reads** the value → BYVAL (a copy protects the caller).
- It must **update** the caller's variable → BYREF. Swap needs **both** parameters BYREF.
- It produces **exactly one value** → use a **function** instead.
- The mode is part of the **interface**: changing BYVAL to BYREF changes the interface, even though the call looks the same.

■ Scope and lifetime



Scope is where a variable can be used. **Lifetime** is how long it exists.

	global variable	local variable
declared	outside every subroutine	inside one subroutine
scope	anywhere in the program	only inside that subroutine
lifetime	the whole run of the program	from the call to the return



A procedure adds 1 to a counter, outputs it, and is called three times. **Global** counter: 1, 2, 3. **Local** counter: 1, 1, 1, because a new, empty variable is made at each call. To keep a value between calls, make it global or pass it BYREF.

Why local variables are still preferred:

- the same name can be reused in another subroutine
- the value cannot be changed by mistake elsewhere
- the memory is released at the return
- the subroutine is self-contained, so it can be tested alone and reused

2 Practice

Now use the methods above. The first questions need one idea each.

2.1 State what is meant by passing a parameter **by value**, and what is meant by passing it **by reference**. [2]



2.2 For the **Update** procedure in the worked example, **Total** is 12 and **Amount** is 4 before the call. State the two values output, and give the reason for each. [2]



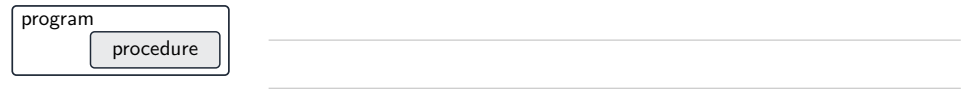
2.3 The header is changed so that **both** parameters are BYVAL. State the two values now output, and explain the change. [2]



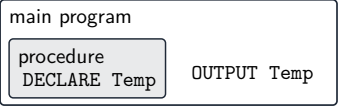
2.4 A procedure's header is changed from BYVAL to BYREF for one parameter. State whether the **interface** of the procedure has changed, and state whether the **argument** written at the call site has to change. [2]



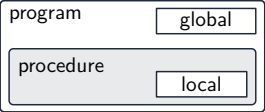
2.5 State what is meant by the **scope** of a variable. [1]



2.6 A programmer declares a variable inside a procedure and then tries to use it in the main program. State what happens, and why. [2]



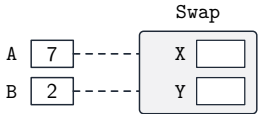
2.7 State two advantages of using a local variable rather than a global variable. [2]



3 Exam-style questions

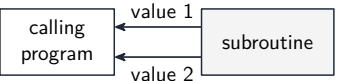
3.1 A procedure Swap() is intended to exchange the values of two integer variables. Before the call, A is 7 and B is 2.

(a) The header is PROCEDURE Swap(BYVAL X : INTEGER, BYVAL Y : INTEGER). State the values of A and B after the call, and explain your answer. [2]



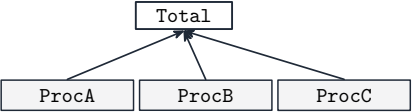
(b) Write a header that makes the procedure work as intended. [2]

3.2 A subroutine must give the calling program two values. Describe two different ways of doing this, and state one reason to prefer each. [4]



3.3 A program stores a running total in a global variable that three different procedures update.

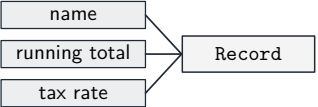
(a) State two problems this can cause. [2]



(b) Describe one change that removes those problems. [2]

3.4 A procedure Record() takes three parameters: a customer's name, which it only reads; a running total, which it must increase; and a tax rate, which it only reads.

State, with a reason, whether each parameter should be passed BYVAL or BYREF. [4]



3.5 A procedure declares a counter as a local variable, adds 1 to it and outputs it. The procedure is called three times.

State the three values output, explain why, and name two ways to make the counter keep its value between calls. [3]

