

# Hash Function

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A **Hash Function**, also known as a **Hashing Algorithm** or **Message Digest Function**, takes a group of characters (called a key) and maps it to a value of a certain length (called a hash value or hash). The hash value is representative of the original string of characters, but is normally smaller than the original.

Hashing is done for indexing and locating items in databases because it is easier to find the shorter hash value than the longer string. Hashing is also used in encryption.

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