

**namelists** — Specifying matrix and function names
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## Description

*Namelists* appear in syntax diagrams.

## Syntax

Many mata commands allow or require a *namelist*, such as

```
: mata describe [ namelist ] [ , all ]
```

A *namelist* is defined as a list of matrix and/or function names, such as

```
alpha beta foo()
```

The above *namelist* refers to the matrices `alpha` and `beta` along with the function named `foo()`.

Function names always end in `()`, hence

<code>alpha</code>	refers to the matrix named <code>alpha</code>
<code>alpha()</code>	refers to the function of the same name

Names may also be specified using the `*` and `?` wildcard characters:

<code>*</code>	means zero or more characters go here
<code>?</code>	means exactly one character goes here

hence,

<code>*</code>	means all matrices
<code>*()</code>	means all functions
<code>* *()</code>	means all matrices and all functions
<code>s*</code>	means all matrices that start with <i>s</i>
<code>s*()</code>	means all functions that start with <i>s</i>
<code>*e</code>	means all matrices that end with <i>e</i>
<code>*e()</code>	means all functions that end with <i>e</i>
<code>s*e</code>	means all matrices that start with <i>s</i> and end with <i>e</i>
<code>s*e()</code>	means all functions that start with <i>s</i> and end with <i>e</i>
<code>s?e</code>	means all matrices that start with <i>s</i> and end with <i>e</i> and have one character in between
<code>s?e()</code>	means all functions that start with <i>s</i> and end with <i>e</i> and have one character in between

## Remarks and examples

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Some *namelists* allow only matrices, and some allow only functions. Even when only functions are allowed, you must include the `()` suffix.

## Also see

[M-3] [intro](#) — Commands for controlling Mata