

4.1: Using Comments

Before discussing any of the more complicated stuff, I want to introduce the **comment** character, `#`. It has a simple meaning: it tells R to ignore everything else you've written on this line. You won't have much need of the `#` character immediately, but it's very useful later on when writing scripts (see Chapter 8). However, while you don't need to use it, I want to be able to include comments in my R extracts. For instance, if you read this:⁴¹

```
seeker <- 3.1415          # create the first variable
lover <- 2.7183           # create the second variable
keeper <- seeker * lover  # now multiply them to create a third one
print( keeper )          # print out the value of 'keeper'
```

```
## [1] 8.539539
```

it's a lot easier to understand what I'm doing than if I just write this:

```
seeker <- 3.1415
lover <- 2.7183
keeper <- seeker * lover
print( keeper )
```

```
## [1] 8.539539
```

You might have already noticed that the code extracts in Chapter 3 included the `#` character, but from now on, you'll start seeing `#` characters appearing in the extracts, with some human-readable explanatory remarks next to them. These are still perfectly legitimate commands, since R knows that it should ignore the `#` character and everything after it. But hopefully they'll help make things a little easier to understand.

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