

constexpr Variables

Chapter 2 Conditionally Safe Features

For a variable of other than **const** integral type to be usable in a **constant expression**, certain criteria must hold:

1. The variable must be annotated with **constexpr**, which implicitly also declares the variable to be **const**¹:

```

struct S // simple (aggregate) literal type
{
    int i; // built-in integer data member
};

void test1()
{
    constexpr S s{1}; // OK, literal type constant expression initialized
    s = S(); // Error, constexpr implies const.
    static_assert(s.i == 1, ""); // OK, subobjects of constexpr objects are
    constexpr int j = s.i; // usable in constant expressions.
    constexpr const int k = 1; // OK, redundant keyword const
    const constexpr int l = 2; // OK, keywords in either order
}

```

In the example above, we have, for expedience of exposition, used braced initialization to initialize the aggregate; see Section 2.1.“Braced Init” on page 215. Note that non**mutable** subobjects of **constexpr** objects are also effectively **constexpr** and can be used freely in **constant expressions** even though they themselves are not explicitly declared **constexpr**.

2. All **constexpr** variables must be initialized with a **constant expression** when they are defined. Hence, every **constexpr** variable must have an initializer, and that initializer must be a valid **constant expression**; see Section 2.1.“constexpr Functions” on page 257:

```

    int g() { return 17; } // a nonconstexpr function
    constexpr int h() { return 34; } // a constexpr function

    constexpr int v1; // Error, v1 is not initialized.
    constexpr int v2 = 17; // OK
    constexpr int v3 = g(); // Error, g() is not constexpr.
    constexpr int v4 = h(); // OK

    void test2(int c)
    {
        constexpr int v5 = c; // Error, c is not a compile-time constant.
        constexpr int v6 = sizeof(c); // OK, c is not evaluated.
    }

```

¹C++20 added the **constexprinit** keyword to identify a variable that is initialized at compile time (with a constant expression) but may subsequently be modified at run time.