

FAQ 4.69 How can I use a reference as a hash key?

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- *From:* PerlFAQ Server <comdog@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 28 Dec 2005 05:03:01 +0000 (UTC)
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This message is one of several periodic postings to comp.lang.perl.misc intended to make it easier for perl programmers to find answers to common questions. The core of this message represents an excerpt from the documentation provided with Perl.

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(contributed by brian d foy)

Hash keys are strings, so you can't really use a reference as the key. When you try to do that, perl turns the reference into its stringified form (for instance, "HASH(0xDEADBEEF)"). From there you can't get back the reference from the stringified form, at least without doing some extra work on your own. Also remember that hash keys must be unique, but two different variables can store the same reference (and those variables can change later).

The Tie::RefHash module, which is distributed with perl, might be what you want. It handles that extra work.

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from that distributed in the stable Perl release. It may have been edited to reflect the additions, changes and corrections provided by respondents, reviewers, and critics to previous postings of these FAQ. Complete text of these FAQ are available on request.

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