

4.4.2.4. Commentary keywords

These keywords provide commentary information about the contents or history of the *FITS* file and *may* occur any number of times in a header. These keywords *shall* have no associated value even if the value indicator characters '=' appear in bytes 9 and 10 (hence it is *recommended* that these keywords not contain the value indicator). Bytes 9 through 80 *may* contain any of the restricted set of ASCII text characters, decimal 32 through 126 (hexadecimal 20 through 7E).

In earlier versions of this standard continued string keywords (see 4.2.1.2) could be handled as commentary keywords if the relevant convention was not supported. Now CONTINUE keywords *shall* be honoured as specified in Section 4.2.1.2.

COMMENT keyword. This keyword *may* be used to supply any comments regarding the *FITS* file.

HISTORY keyword. This keyword *should* be used to describe the history of steps and procedures associated with the processing of the associated data.

Keyword field is blank. This keyword *may* be used to supply any comments regarding the *FITS* file. It is frequently used for aesthetic purposes to provide a break between groups of related keywords in the header.

A sequence of one or more entirely blank keyword records (consisting of 80 ASCII space characters) that immediately precede the END keyword may be interpreted as non-significant fill space that may be overwritten when new keywords are appended to the header. This usage convention enables an arbitrarily large amount of header space to be preallocated when the *FITS* HDU is first created which can help mitigate the potentially time-consuming alternative of having to shift all the following data in the file by 2880 bytes to make room for a new *FITS* header block each time space is needed for a new keyword.