### Reference guide

A user guide with technical facts or specifications about a software element in your app.

#### Structure
- **Title** is the element; answers the statement: *As a user, I want specific information on...*
- Headings capture different aspects of the element
- Presents examples first

#### Content
- Be showy; use examples and use cases to show how the element works
- Be accurate; only detail current props, methods, etc. - no future features
- Be direct; the content should be informative but brief

#### Test: as an app user
- Is the content accurate?
- Is the content complete? Is anything missing?
- Is the content specific to the element? Move any instructions to a how-to guide; move any concepts to an explanation guide.

#### Reader’s goal
“I found the information I needed quickly; I’m back to working with the app.”

### General structure and headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>h1 &lt;element&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- h2 Examples</td>
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<td>- h2 Purpose</td>
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<td>- h2 Interactions</td>
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<td>- h2 Exceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- h2 Props*</td>
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<tr>
<td>- h2 See also</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Alternatives: Parameters, Fields, Arguments

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**Header**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(title) &lt;element&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After the title, include the syntax for the element in code font. For example, the endpoint URL, import statement, command.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```plaintext
h1 Get cat facts by category

https://api.catfactzpartners.com/facts
```

**Examples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide examples that demo the usage of the software element; also include the expected output.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Use case: Get funny cat facts

**Request**

```
curl -X GET
"https://api.catfactzpartners.com/facts?category=funny"
```

**Response**

```json
{  "facts": [    "Here’s a funny cat fact: Cats can make over 100 different sounds!",    "Cat fact: A cat’s nose print is unique, just like a human’s fingerprint."
  ]}
```

**Purpose**

Clearly state the purpose of the software element. Also describe what it’s designed to accomplish or the problem it aims to solve with the app.
The Get cat facts endpoint retrieves cat facts given specific criteria such as "funny" cat facts or cat facts from "eastern" states. The facts come from trusted partners who collaborate with CatFactz on the Partners API.

Use the returned facts to expand the CatFactz data source so users remain engaged and entertained.

Max 5 sentences or items in a bullet list

Interactions

Explain how the reader should interact with the software element, or provide guidance on how to use it. Include any actions, methods, or functions the element provides.

**h3 Request**

```bash
curl -X GET "https://api.catfactzpartners.com/facts?
PARAM=VALUE"
```

**h3 Response**

The endpoint returns a JSON Fact object with an array of cat facts in the specified category.

Max 5 sentences or items in a bullet list; if helpful, use subheadings that are specific to the element (e.g., Request, Response, Methods, Functions)

Accessibility

Address any accessibility considerations specific to the software element. For example, is the element accessible or does the reader need to include a certain prop?

The CatFactz Partners API strives to provide an inclusive experience for all users.

However, it's important to ensure that the implementation of the returned cat facts are still accessible. Consider providing alternative text or descriptions for any images or multimedia associated with the cat facts.

Max 5 sentences or items in a bullet list; include an image or code example if helpful

Internationalization

Address any internationalization or localization considerations specific to the software element. For example, does the reader need to import another package to localize the element?

Although the Partners API returns data in English, CatFactz can generate cat facts in a preferred language. See How to customize CatFactz guide for details.

Max 5 sentences or items in a bullet list; include an image or code example if helpful

Exceptions

Discuss exceptions, error handling, or unexpected scenarios that a reader may encounter. Include information on status codes, error messages, or troubleshooting steps for resolving issues.

- **200 OK** The request was successful, and the cat fact was retrieved.
- **400 Not Found** The requested category does not exist.
- **500 Internal Server Error** An unexpected error occurred on the server while processing the request.

Max 5 sentences, include an image or code example if helpful; use a bullet list for status codes and descriptions

Props (or Parameters, Fields, Arguments)

List the props associated with the software element. For each prop, explain the purpose, data type, and any default or optional values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>category</td>
<td>Specifies the category of cat facts to retrieve.</td>
<td>funny, cute, interesting, random (default)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>region</td>
<td>Specifies a region in the United States where cat facts should be retrieved from.</td>
<td>eastern, mid-atlantic, rockies, western, pacific, random (default)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use a table to list props and related data

Learn more

Provide links to other guides, also link to external sources if relevant. Each linked guide should:

- Feel like a natural progression
- Help the reader gain more confidence
Provide a brief sentence for context
If you're not familiar, learn how CatFactz users:
- Generate a cat fact in CatFactz
- Integrate CatFactz in other apps

max 1 sentence, followed by a bullet list of items (no more than 3)

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1 Including soon-to-be implemented props in reference guides is tempting, but it is **not** recommended. Mainly because development can change at the last minute. It also adds to documentation maintenance, and prevents *timeless documentation*.