



Chapter Six: Getting User Input

This chapter will explain how to ask for, receive, and validate user input in your program.

Lesson One: InputBoxes

So far we have used the Visual Basic **MsgBox()** pop-up window to display output to the user. In this lesson, we will learn how to use the **InputBox()** pop-up window to receive input.

The **InputBox()** in Visual Basic is a special function which can be used to get a single line of input text from a user. For example, if you needed to know a user's age, or you needed to know their home state, you could use an **InputBox()**.

When you use the **InputBox()** function, the program will show a simple window with a question for the user, which you provide. The window will also have a place for the user to type in their answer, an OK button and a Cancel button. If the user clicks the OK button, any information typed into the text box will be sent back to your program. If the user clicks the Cancel button, they will return to your program without sending any information.

Here is what the **InputBox()** syntax looks like:

```
stringVariable = InputBox(questionForUser, titleForWindow)
```

Let's look at this statement one part at a time:

The first `stringVariable` is the name of some **String** variable that you must have already declared. When the user clicks the OK button, Visual Basic will put their answer into this variable. If the user clicks the Cancel button, this variable will contain an empty string.

The next part is the **InputBox()** keyword. This just tells Visual Basic that we will be showing an input box pop-up window.

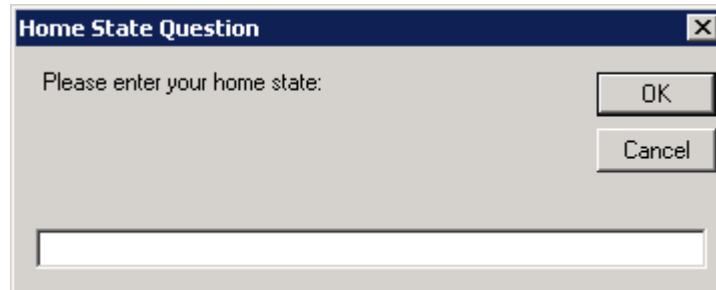
The items within the parentheses are the parameters for our **InputBox()**. These parameters help us to customize the **InputBox()** so that it looks just like we want it to. The first parameter, `questionForUser`, is just a string that tells the user what information we will need. For example, if we need to ask the user what their home state is, we could use the string: "Please enter your home state:"

The second parameter, `titleForWindow`, allows us to give our `InputBox()` a useful caption. Continuing the example above, we might use “Home State Question” as our title.

Now let’s look at a complete example to ask a question about the user’s home state:

```
homeState = InputBox("Please enter your home State: ", _
                    "Home State Question")
```

When run, the `InputBox()` pop-up window would look like this:



Simple, yet powerful!



There are many more parameters available for the `InputBox()` function. For this course, we will only be using the two parameters mentioned above. If you are interested in learning about the other parameters, just look up the `InputBox()` function in your MSDN help library.

Lesson Two: Getting User Input from Forms

The `InputBox()` function is a quick and simple way to get a single piece of information from a user. But what if you need more than one piece of information? What if you need to get a person’s whole address and not just their home state? For this, you would want to create a custom form that has several textboxes for users to enter information. In addition, your form would need to have an OK button to indicate when the user is finished.

Let’s walk through the creation and use of a custom form together. Open up the Microsoft Visual Basic IDE and create a new project called “User Input”.