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Subject: newbie? audiophile definitions

Posted by [IAIN](#) on Thu, 29 Apr 2004 13:20:29 GMT

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Just a newbie question. Is there a difference between what is called a "line stage" and a "preamp"? I have been reading reviews of many products and a site I was looking at had one product which they called a line stage and another product they called a preamp yet other sites seem to use these terms interchangeably.

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Subject: Re: newbie? audiophile definitions

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 29 Apr 2004 23:03:05 GMT

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I suppose "line stage" and "preamp" aren't rigidly defined terms so you really need to check for specific details. Look for clarification and more description to know what is being described as a "line stage" or a "preamp." I'd define a preamp as anything that had active components and that operated at a level of millivolts to a volt or two, designed to present its output to a power amplifier. I'd define a "line stage" as a device that acted on signals at the millivolt level and had no user controls, such that it performed a specific task and that's it. Like a phono preamp with RIAA equalization and no user controls. But others might define these things differently. I've seen some define "line stage" as being passive. I've seen some use the phrase "passive preamp," which generally meant a few switches and potentiometers or stepped resistor attenuators used in line where a preamp might be. Lots of different ways people use the same labels, so you mustn't assume that you are sure about a person's meaning unless it's clarified with further description or something.