Learn PHP - Getting dynamic

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The whole point of coding in PHP instead of just using HTML files is to make everything dynamic. You want the pages to make themselves, so you can spend more time counting your loot. The ideal way to get content onto your pages is from a database. First of all, databases are, as the name suggests, great places to store data. Secondly, clients pay more if you use the words "database" and "dynamic" in the quote and invoice.

First off, we need to get our PHP program talking to the database. The primary time-waster when querying databases is waiting for the darn thing to establish a connection, so we'll do that right at the start and get it over with. We'll do this in a function so that you can type all this out once and just use it over and over, thus saving more time for sending out bills for your web development work:

```
function dbconnect($dbserver,$dbusername,$dbpassword,$dbname) {
$connection=mysql_connect($dbserver,$dbusername,$dbpassword) or
die(mysql_error);
$db=mysql_select_db($dbname,$connection) or die(mysql_error());
}
```

The first line establishes the connection, and the second line selects the tectonic database. The die(mysql_error()) will display any errors and stop the program from executing further if something goes terribly, terribly wrong.
When you want to call this function, you'd use something like this:

```
dbconnect('localhost','tectonicdbuser','topsecret','tectonic');
```

Every time you call this function you will be instantly and magically connected to your database until you either explicitly disconnect or the page finishes processing. I don't bother to disconnect because, well, I'm lazy.

Right, now we want to get some info out of the database. We'll use the unique id number to identify which story we want, and go grab it before anyone notices.

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