Is YAML the answer?

...and if so, what has ever been the question?

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‘Nobody can become a master of YAML as it is so simple.’

— Former Coworker
‘YAML is easy to implement and use.’

— YAML 1.0 Specification, Sec. 1.1: Goals
Orientation

- YAML is a human- and machine-readable serialisation format
- First formalised in 2004
- Current spec: v1.2.2 (Oct 2021)
- Strong ties to JSON
Basics

- YAML is **typed**
- Scalar types:
  - bool
  - int
  - float
- Complex types:
  - seq
  - map
  - str
  - null
Not-So-Basics

- omap
- set
- yaml
- binary
- Custom data types
Example №2

variables:

    APP_VERSION: 3
Example №2

variables:

   APP_VERSION: 3.1
Example №2

variables:

APP_VERSION: 3.1.
Example №2

variables:

APP_VERSION: 3.1.4
Example №2

variables:
    APP_VERSION: "3.1.4"
Example №2

variables:
    APP_VERSION: !!str 3.1.4
variables:
  APP_VERSION: !<!tag:yaml.org,2002:str> 3.1.4
‘Advanced’ YAML

- **Anchors** (&) can be used to reference nodes
- **Aliases** (*) reference anchors
- Merge-Key Operator "<<:1

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1cf https://yaml.org/type/merge.html
Problem:

script:
  - echo "foo: bar"
Case №1

Solutions:

- `echo "foo: bar"`
- "echo \"foo: bar\"
- `echo "foo: bar"
- `!binary | ZWNobyAiZm9vOiBiYXJiCg==`
Case №2

Problem:

variables:
  FOO: baz
  BAR: ${FOO}
Case №2

Solution:

variables:
  FOO: &foo baz
  BAR: *foo
Case №3

languages:
- EN
- NO
Observations

- More advanced features of YAML are commonly not known/used
- Tools diverge in terms of capabilities
- Complexity is lurking at the most unexpected places
Solutions

- Start specifying versions in YAML streams
- See to sane configuration of tools when consuming YAML
- Give StrictYAML a try?
About that question, then . . .

With the help of YAML, JSON with comments is now a possibility.
Thank you for your attention!
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