Replace text using wildcards

Sometimes, you need something a bit more powerful than basic [Find and Replace](http://office.microsoft.com/client/15/help/preview?AssetId=HA104022568&lcid=1033&NS=WINWORD&Version=15&tl=2&CTT=5&origin=HA104053436). Wildcards help you search for variations of words, multiple words at once, or similar groups of words.

# Search by using wildcards to find specific letters

Use wildcards to search for text. For example, you can use the asterisk (\*) wildcard to search for a string of characters (for example, "s\*d" finds "sad" and "started").

**Use wildcards to find and replace text**

1. On the **Home** tab, in the **Editing** group, click the arrow next to **Find**, and then click **Advanced Find**.



1. Select the **Use wildcards** check box



If you don't see the **Use wildcards** check box, click **More**.



1. Do one of the following:
	* To choose a wildcard character from a list, click **Special**, click a wildcard character, and then type any additional text in the **Find what** box. For more information, see the table [Wildcards for items you want to find and replace](http://office.microsoft.com/client/15/help/preview?AssetId=HA104053436&lcid=1033&NS=WINWORD&Version=15&tl=2&respos=0&CTT=1&queryid=27ad71f2%2D59e7%2D43d3%2Db49e%2Da44cffc081a1#BM8).
	* Type a wildcard character directly in the **Find what** box. For more information, see the table [Wildcards for items you want to find and replace](http://office.microsoft.com/client/15/help/preview?AssetId=HA104053436&lcid=1033&NS=WINWORD&Version=15&tl=2&respos=0&CTT=1&queryid=27ad71f2%2D59e7%2D43d3%2Db49e%2Da44cffc081a1#BM8).
2. If you want to replace the item, click the **Replace** tab, and then type what you want to use as a replacement in the **Replace with** box.
3. Click **Find Next**, **Find All**, **Replace**, or **Replace All**.

 Note    To cancel a search in progress, press ESC.

**Expressions in wildcard searches**

Use parentheses ( ) to create groups of wildcard characters and text in the **Find What** box, then use \*n* in the **Replace With** box to use the results of each expression.

You can use the \n wildcard to search for an expression and then replace it with the rearranged expression. For example, type **(Ashton) (Chris)** in the **Find what** box and **\2 \1** in the **Replace with** box. Word will find **Ashton Chris** and replace it with **Chris Ashton**.

**Wildcards for items you want to find and replace**

 Notes

* When the **Use wildcards** check box is selected, Word finds only the exact text that you specify. Notice that the **Match case** and **Find whole words only** check boxes are unavailable (dimmed) to indicate that these options are automatically turned on. You can't turn off these options.
* To search for a character that's defined as a wildcard, type a backslash (**\**) before the character. For example, type **\?** to find a question mark or **\\** to find a backslash character (this is often called an “escape character”).
* You can use parentheses to group the wildcard characters and text and to indicate the order of evaluation. For example, type **<(pre)\*(ed)>** to find "presorted" and "prevented".

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| **To find** | **Type** | **Example** |
| Any single character, including space and punctuation characters | **?** | **s?t** finds **sat**, **set**, and **s t**.  |
| One of these characters | **[ ]** | **w[io]n** finds **win** and **won**. |
| Any single character in this range | **[-]** | **[r-t]ight** finds **right**, **sight**, and **tight**. Ranges must be in ascending order. |
| The beginning of a word | **<** | **<(inter)** finds **interesting** and **intercept**, but not splintered. |
| The end of a word | **>** | **(in)>** finds **in** and **within**, but not **interesting**. |
| Expression | **()** | Word remembers the results of a search combination to use in a replace operation. |
| Any single character except the characters in the range inside the brackets | **[!x-z]** | **t[!a-m]ck** finds **tock** and **tuck**, but not **tack** or **tick**. |
| Exactly *n* occurrences of the previous character or expression | **{n}** | **fe{2}d** finds **feed** but not **fed**. |
| At least *n* occurrences of the previous character or expression | **{n,}** | **fe{1,}d** finds **fed** and **feed**. |
| From *n* to *m* occurrences of the previous character or expression | **{n,m}** | **10{1,3}** finds **10**, **100**, and **1000**. |
| One or more occurrences of the previous character or expression | **@** | **lo@t** finds **lot** and **loot**. |
| Any string of characters, including space and punctuation characters | **\*** | **s\*d** finds **sad**, **started**, and **significantly altered**. |

Use codes to find letters, formatting, fields, or special characters

Use the following codes to find letters, formatting, fields, or special characters. Note that different codes are available when the **Use wildcards** option is turned on or off.

**Codes that work in the Find what box or Replace with box**

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| --- | --- |
| **To find** | **Type** |
| Paragraph mark (Paragraph mark )  | **^p** (doesn't work in the **Find what** box when the **Use wildcards** option is turned on), or **^13** |
| Tab character (Tab character ) | **^t** or **^9** |
| ASCII character | **^***nnn*, where *nnn* is the character code. |
| ANSI character | **^0***nnn*, where 0 is zero and *nnn* is the character code |
| Em dash ( — ) | **^+** |
| En dash ( – ) | **^=** |
| Caret character | **^^** |
| Manual line break (Manual line break ) | **^l** or **^11** |
| Column break | **^n** or **^14** |
| Page or section break | **^12** (when replacing, inserts a page break) |
| Manual page break  | **^m** (also finds or replaces section breaks when the **Use wildcards** option is turned on) |
| Nonbreaking space (Nonbreaking space ) | **^s** |
| Nonbreaking hyphen (Nonbreaking hyphen ) | **^~** |
| Optional hyphen (Optional hyphen ) | **^-** |