

FINDING SYMBOLS



Symbols and characters not on the keyboard can be accessed either by learning the keyboard strokes for the hidden characters that come with many fonts or utilizing pre-defined palettes of symbols. Below are instructions for several tools to find and use these symbols:

- Keyboard Viewer & its earlier iteration, Key Caps are used to find the hidden symbols and characters that come with many fonts, and to see the keyboard strokes for their utilization. Keyboard Viewer is loaded with OSX.3 and later systems; Key Caps came with OSX.2 and earlier (pre-OSX) systems. The hidden symbols vary by font and are generally more functional than decorative or pictorial (currency & math symbols, various foreign alphabets, language accents & symbols, editing marks, etc).
- Character Palette (OSX.2 and later) and the Symbol function (Microsoft Office) can be used to view pre-defined palettes of symbols. The symbols are arrayed together in one window. In addition to functional symbols (copyright, math & currency symbols, etc), the palettes contain decorative elements & objects (no smoking symbol, cars, tools, hands, human figures, etc). Microsoft's Symbol palettes also vary by font.

Additional symbols are available in symbolic fonts (Hoefler Text Ornaments, Zapf Dingbats, Webdings, Wingdings, etc). But, to see what symbol is assigned to each key, one must manually type each key (including the capitalized versions) onto a blank document (e.g, on the Zapf Dingbats keyboard, keys "asdfg" become "♣▲*❄*❄" in lower case and "☆*♣♦◇" in upper case. In Wingdings, they're "☺•☹↗↘" and "✌☝☞☜☛", respectively).

To start:

1. Have open on your desktop the document into which you intend to use the symbol/character you seek.

Note: Apple's Keyboard Viewer, Key Caps and Character Palette will work with most text programs which come loaded with the Apple computer (Mail, Text Edit, etc) or which are Apple software products (iWorks). The Symbol palettes are loaded in Microsoft Office. Most symbols can be cut and pasted across the environments.
2. Move the cursor to the location in the open document where the symbol or character is to appear; click the cursor in the desired spot so that the cursor is blinking there.
3. To use Keyboard Viewer and Character Palette, first make them visible on the computer monitor, if you have not already done so: [\(pete's instructions\)](#)

KEYBOARD VIEWER (OSX.3 & later)

- If you have previously enabled Keyboard Viewer, select the American Flag (upper right corner of monitor) → Show Keyboard Viewer.
- Format → Font → Show Font
- Select a font (middle column)

- Try each of the following key or key combinations to search for the desired symbol or character; each alternative will display differing symbols on the keyboard in the Keyboard Viewer:
 - a. Option key
 - b. Option/Shift keys simultaneously
 - c. Option/Caps Lock keys simultaneously (**be sure** to **re**-press the caps lock key to undo the capitalization function of the key)
 - d. Option/Control may illuminate other symbols in some fonts.
- Once found, to insert the symbol/character into the document,
 - > hold down the key/key combo that illuminated the symbol
 - > on the keyboard in the Keyboard Viewer window, click on the appropriate key for the desired symbol/character
- To adjust the size,
 - > select the symbol once it is in the document
 - > click the arrow on the font-size window of the formatting toolbar and select a larger or smaller number for a larger or small font size

OR

 - > select the symbol in the document
 - > Format → Font → Smaller (or Bigger); repeat multiple times if necessary
- To close the Keyboard Viewer, when finished,
 - American Flag (upper right corner of monitor) → Hide Keyboard Viewer

CHARACTER PALETTE

- {• Edit → Special Characters
- {OR
- {• If the Fonts window is open (per above),
 - { > select Characters icon (*, 3rd symbol, bottom left corner, Fonts window) → Characters...
- Select a category of symbols in the left column of the Characters window; those symbols will appear to the right.
- Change categories, left column, to see more symbols.
 - NOTE: changing fonts does not seem to alter the available symbols
- Select the appropriate symbol by clicking on it
- Click the Insert button, in the lower right corner of the Characters window to drop it into the document
- To change the size,
 - > in the document, select the symbol in the open document

- > click the arrow on the font-size window of the toolbar at the top of the document and select a larger or smaller number for a larger or small font size

OR

- > select the symbol in the open document
- > Format → Font → Smaller (or Bigger); repeat multiple times if necessary

- To close the Character Palette when finished,
American Flag (upper right corner of monitor) → Hide Character Palette

MICROSOFT OFFICE

- Insert → Symbol
- Look for the desired symbol; clicking on a symbol will magnify it in Office'04; dragging the cursor over the symbols will magnify them in Office '08.
- Change fonts, if the desired symbol is not available in a selected font.
- Once found, to drop it into the document
 - > click on the desired symbol to select it
 - > click Insert (lower right corner of the Symbol window)
- To change the size
 - > in the document, select the symbol
 - > click the arrow on the font-size window of the formatting palette or toolbar and select a larger or smaller number for a larger or small font size
- NOTE:
 - > click the Special Characters tab in this window to find the keystroke shortcuts for some frequently-used symbols (i.e., copyright, trademark).
 - > define personalized shortcut keystrokes for favorite symbols by selecting it in the Symbols tab window, clicking the Shortcut Key... button in the lower left corner of that window, and following the instructions that appear.

KEY CAPS (OSX.2 & earlier)

- Open the Key Caps application
If it's not in the Applications folder, try:
 - (a) System Folder → Apple Menu Items Folder or
 - (b) Utilities folder
- Select Font→ (any desired font); change fonts if the symbol isn't found in the selected font style
- Look for the symbol by pressing the following key or key combinations (all keys are located in the lower left corner of the keyboard):
 - a) Option key

- b) Option/Apple keys simultaneously
- c) Option/Control keys simultaneously
- d) Option/Shift keys simultaneously
- e) Option/Caps Lock keys simultaneously (**be sure** to **re**-press the caps lock key to undo the capitalization function of this key)

- When the symbol/character is found, note which key or key combo illuminated it AND, in the Key Caps keyboard, which key location on the keyboard your symbol occupies
- Press the key/key combo simultaneously with the appropriate key on the keyboard; the character will appear in the banner above the keyboard in the Key Caps window.
- Copy it from the banner and paste it into the document.

OR

- { • Work in the document:
 - { > in the document, select the same font used in Key Caps to find the symbol
 - > place the blinking cursor in the location where the symbol is to appear
 - { > simultaneously press the key/key combo that illuminated the desired symbol together with the appropriate keyboard key
- To close Key Caps when finished,
 - > Key Caps →Quit Key Caps

Prepared by Ellen Williams