

Windows – Entering Special Characters

By

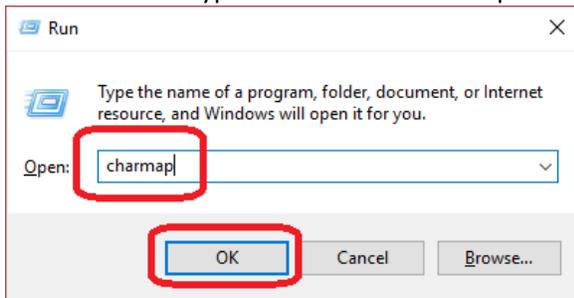
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Commonly we need to use non-standard characters in documents and emails. Characters such as ©, ®, ¶, ¼, ¥, ¢ and £ may be needed but are not always easily entered on a standard keyboard. Often workarounds are used, but it would be optimal to use the actual character. There are a number of ways to access special characters with one of the easiest being the Character Map tool. This tool has been a part of Windows for decades with a simple role: allow you to find special characters not on a standard keyboard, and enter them anywhere that accepts typed text.

There are a number of ways to open the Character Map tool. In many versions of Windows it can be found off the START menu in the *Accessories* or *Windows Accessories* group. If you do not find the program there try the following:

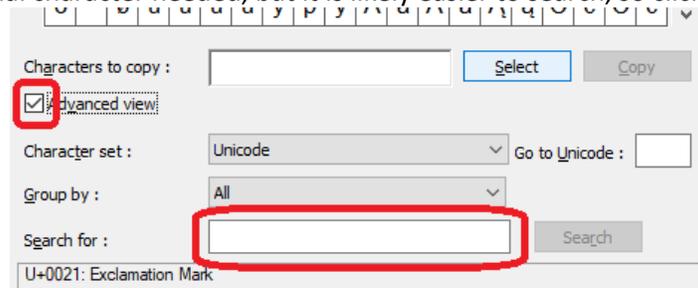
- Press the Windows Key and the R key on the keyboard at the same time, then let go of both keys.
- In the RUN box type **CHARMAP** and then press Enter or click the OK button:



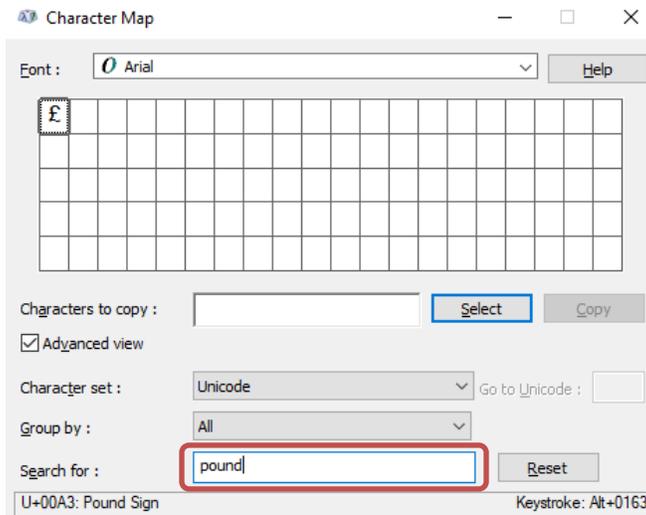
The Character Map application will open displaying 200 characters at a time - 10 rows of 20 characters each.



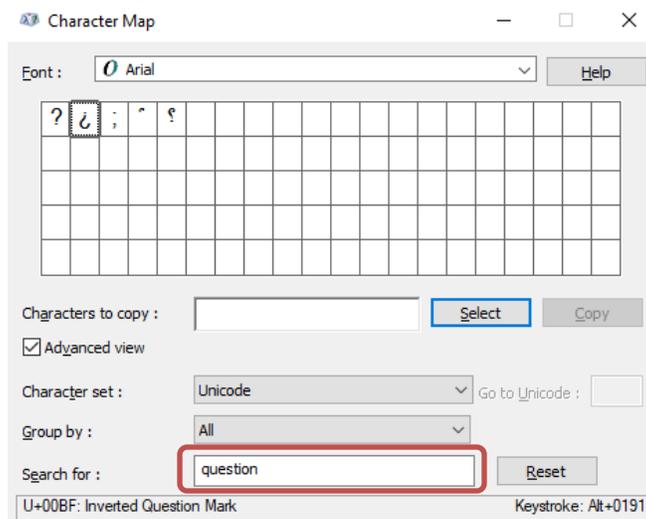
You can scroll to find the special character needed, but it is likely easier to search, so click the *Advanced View* checkbox.



You can now search by descriptive terms for the symbol you are looking for. For example, if you wanted the symbol for British Pound Sterling, type POUND in the *Search for* box and then click the SEARCH button.



Similarly, you could find the Spanish language inverted question mark by searching for QUESTION:

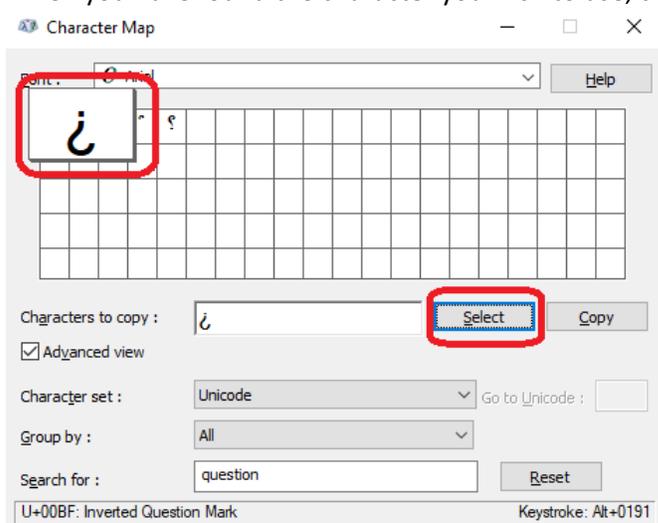


Now comes the fun part – using the special character anywhere you can enter text. There are a couple ways to do this:

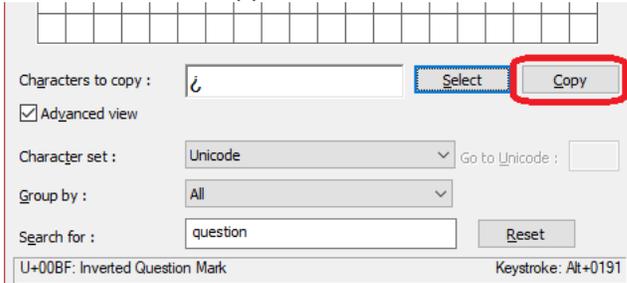
Copy/Paste

This method lets you copy the special character from the Character Map tool and paste it where you need it.

1. When you have found the character you wish to use, click it once and then click the SELECT button.



- The character will appear to the left of the SELECT button – now click the COPY button.

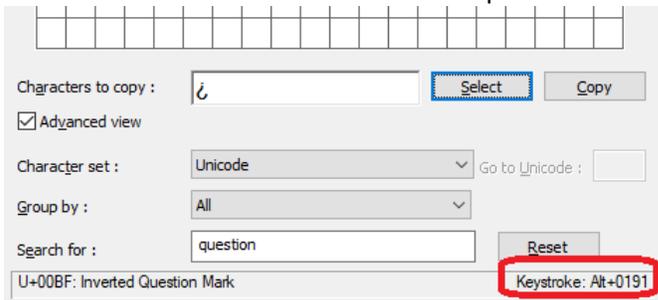


- Use any variation of the PASTE function (i.e., Paste icon, CTRL+V, SHIFT+INSERT, etc.) to *paste* this character wherever you can enter text such as Word or in an email.

ALT Key Combination

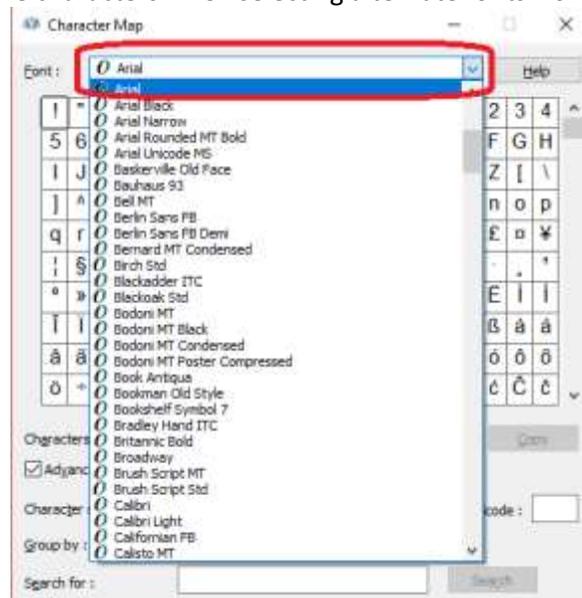
In the bottom right of the Character Map tool you will see a code prefaced by *Keystroke*. Using this code you can directly ‘type’ the character you have discovered via Character Map. For commonly used characters this works well as you don’t need to use the Character Map application once you know the keystroke. This is done as follows:

- Locate the ALT code in the Character Map tool – for example, the inverted question mark is **ALT+0191**.



- Place your cursor where you need the special character – for example in an email or Word document.
- Press and hold the ALT key on the keyboard.
- While continuing to hold the ALT key, type the numbers on the keyboard number pad (for the inverted question mark you would type **0191**). You cannot use the numbers above the alphabet keys.
- Release the ALT key and the special character will appear where you placed the cursor.

There may also be variations of some characters when selecting alternate fonts from the top of the Character Map tool:



This can lead to slightly different *looks* for the same special character. For example, the inverted question mark using the Arial font is ¿, with Calibri it is ¿ and Courier New is ¿. Using the Character Map tool you can find the special characters you need, integrate them in your work and format them to fit your needs.