

How to Type Symbols on Mac

Special characters on Mac are a boon for translators, mathematicians or people who are not comfortable using emojis. Shortcuts and Edit > Special Characters menu and you can find common characters. To get more unique symbols, you must reset the keyboard input menu.

Quick Shortcuts



Hold down any letter key to see related icons. In a document or online text field, holding down any key will open a list of equivalent characters in the alphabet. While holding down the key, click on the icon you want, or press the number key corresponding to the icon. Here are a few examples:

Hold down the key **a** to type à á â ã ä å æ ã å ?.

Hold down the key **c** to type ç ? ?.

Hold down the key **n** to type ñ ?.

Note that many letters do not have an open dialog box.

This dialog box will not appear if you turn off Key Repeat in System Preferences > Keyboard.



Hold down the key ? Option. While holding down a key ? Option(or Alton some keyboards), simultaneously pressing another key will write a special symbol, usually a mathematical or currency symbol. For example:

? Option+ p= ?

? Option+ 3= £

? Option+ g= ©

See the full list of keyboard shortcuts at the end of the article. Alternatively, you can follow the keyboard input instructions below to open a virtual keyboard that displays these symbols.

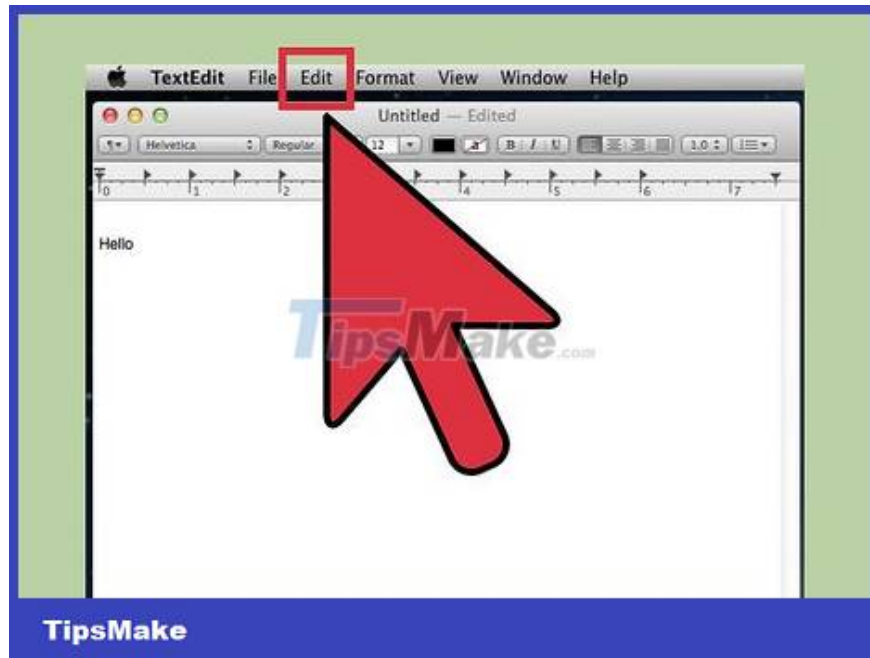


Hold down the ? Option and key ? Shift. To add more symbols, hold 2 keys at the same time and press another key. You can see the list of icons at the end of the article, or start with:

? Option+ ? Shift+ 2= €

? Option+ ? Shift+ /= ;

Emojis and Other Symbols



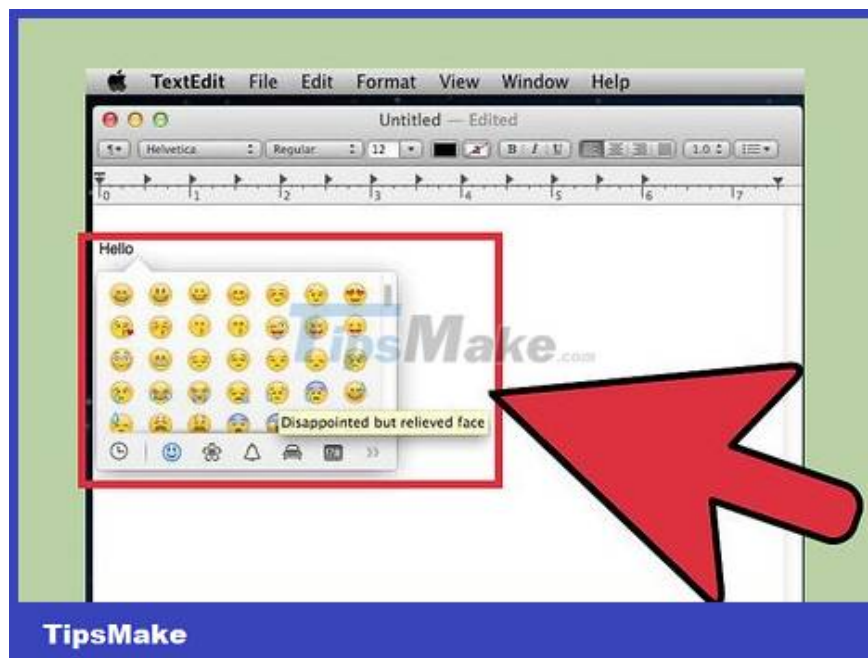
Click "Edit" on the toolbar. Click in the text field where you want to insert an emoji. This can be applied to most text fields, such as emails or text documents. If you want to be sure, you can use inTextEdit.

If you want to open a special character window when typing text, click anywhere on the desktop.



Opens the special characters menu. Look below the Edit menu to find this item. Depending on the version of OS X you're using, this section will be called Emoji & Symbols or Special Characters.

You can open the menu with the keyboard shortcut ? Command+ Control+ Space.



Access options. The special character window has a number of categories, click on the item below to switch. Click on the arrow to see more categories.

If you don't find the category you want, scroll to the top of the special character page to see the search bar.

You can switch the display method from small to large with the button in the upper right corner of the screen. You need to scroll up to see this button.

Open System Preferences. You can access this at the top of the menu with the Apple logo, or in the Applications folder. Or you can find it on the toolbar.

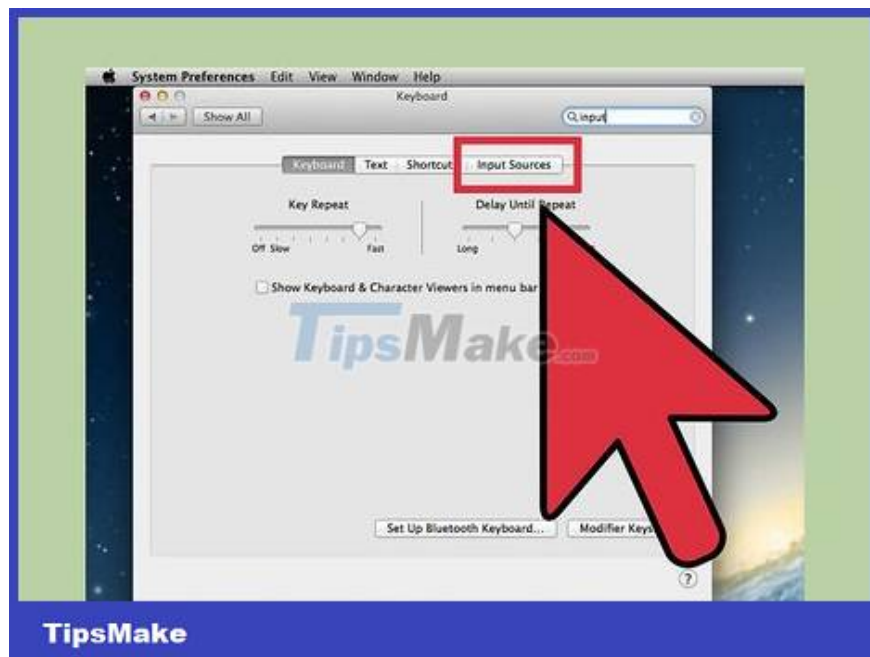


Find the Input section. Type "Input" in the search field in the top right corner of the System Preferences window. You will see one or more options highlighted. Please highlight the following items:

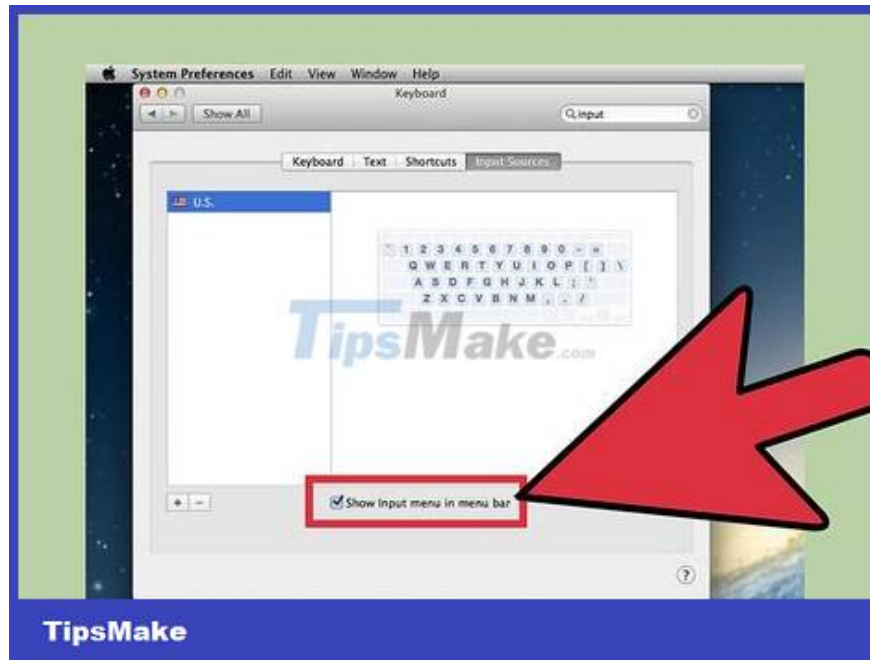
Keyboard (select if OS X is updated)

International (on some older versions of OS X)

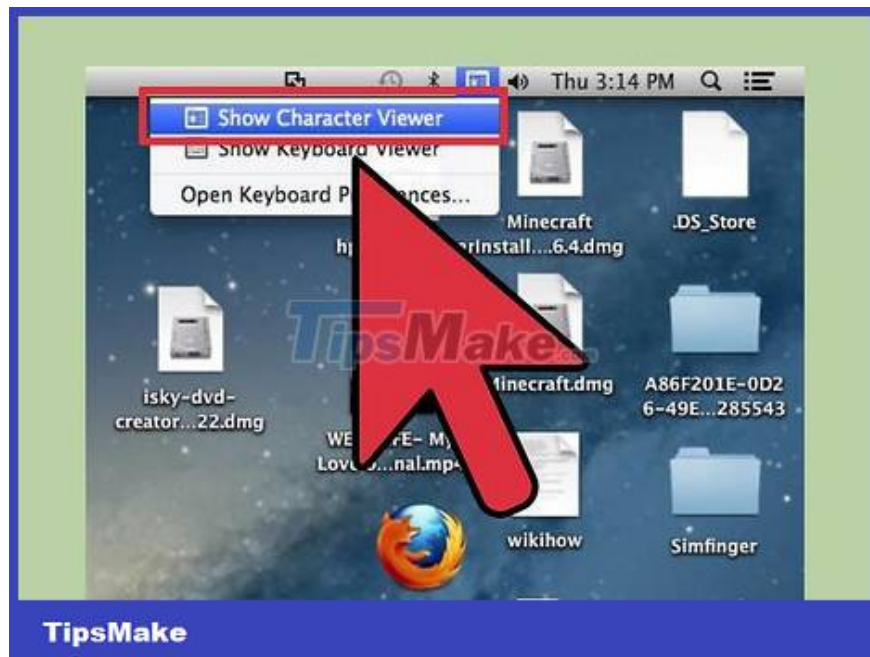
Language & Text (old OS X versions)



Click Input Sources. After opening the sub-menu, select Input Sources. Depending on the version of OS X you're using, you'll see a list of flags and country names, and/or a keyboard image.



Check the "Show Input menu in menu bar " dialog box (Show input menu in toolbar). This option is at the bottom of the window. After checking the dialog box, you will see a new icon appear on the right side of the toolbar, at the top of the screen, which can be a national flag icon or a black and white keyboard.

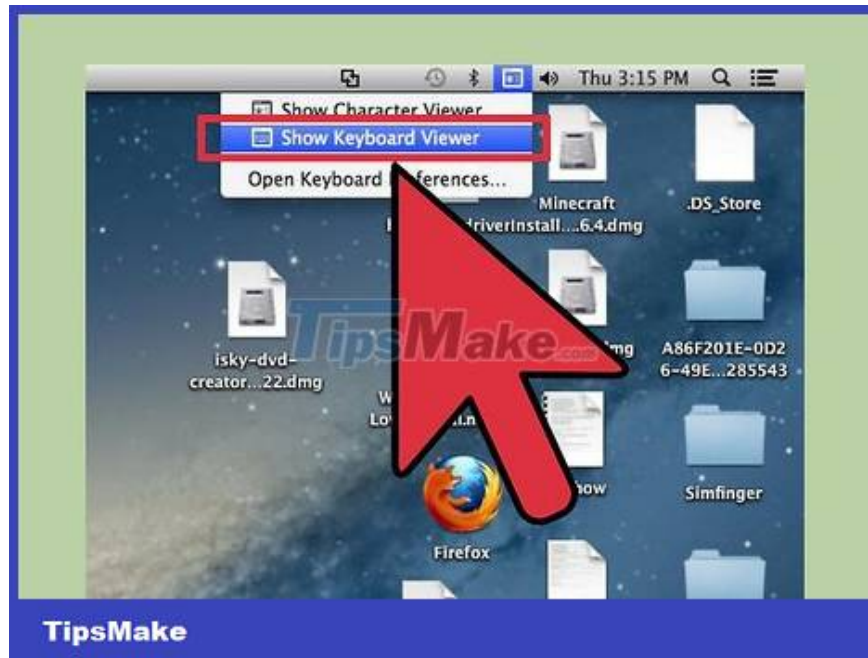


Show Character Viewer on the new menu. Click on the icon that appears on the toolbar, select Show Character Viewer. This opens a window containing many icons (similar to the emoticons in the method above). You can follow these steps:

Click on the category name in the left panel.

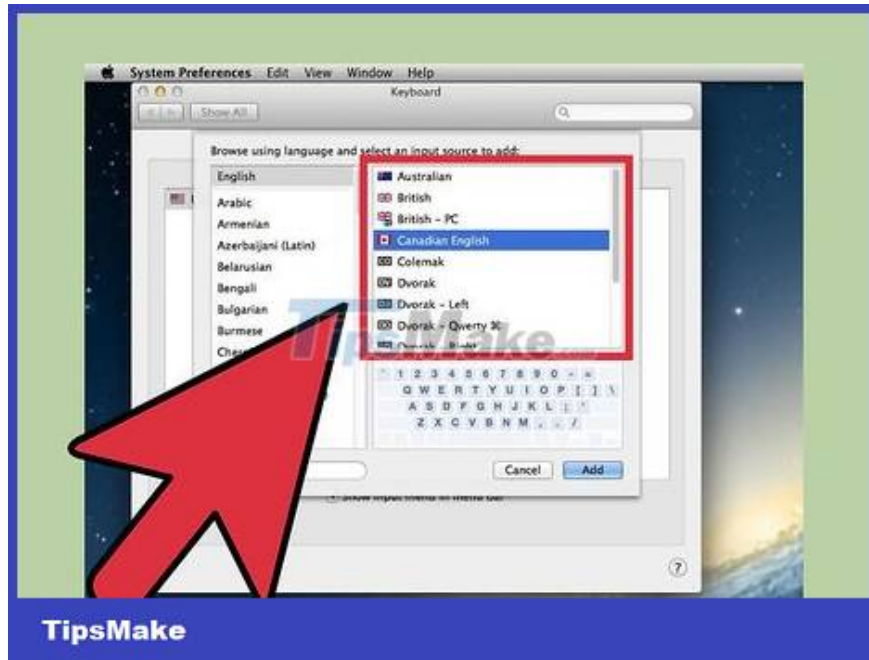
Scroll down to find the icon you want. To see variations of the icon, click and drag the icon over to the right panel.

Double click on the symbol to "type" it, drag and drop into the text field, or right click and select Copy Character Info. On older versions of OS X, just press the Insert button.



Show Keyboard Viewer. Another option in that menu is "Show Keyboard Viewer". If you select this item, you will see an image showing the keyboard on the computer screen. This is an effective way to search for symbols that are not printed on the physical keyboard. For example, hold down the ? Option and/or key ? Shift to see the virtual keyboard change.

You can move the position of the virtual keyboard on the screen. Resize by clicking and dragging at the corners.



Enable another keyboard (optional). If you type in multiple languages, return to the menu in System Preferences. Press the + key to access available languages, then click the Add button to select the language you want. Even without using another language, some of the following layouts will be helpful:

For example, the English section will have a "US Extended" keyboard. This keyboard can use more symbols than the trick of holding down the key ? Option above.

Some languages ??have the option to mimic the layout of a computer keyboard. It usually just changes the position of some icon keys.

If you don't use an English keyboard, you can temporarily switch to a standard US English keyboard to use the full list of keyboard shortcuts below.



Change keyboard. You can activate multiple keyboards at the same time. To change the keyboard, go to the previous keyboard and character viewer activation menu. Select the keyboard you want to use from the available list.

You can create hotkeys to move around on the keyboard. Find "Shortcuts" in the System Preferences search bar and click on the highlighted item. After accessing the Shortcuts menu, select Input Sources on the left and check the "Select the previous input source" dialog box.

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