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Filtering Input, **Regular Expressions** And Basic Patterns

Regular Expressions

Regular expressions have two common forms: basic and extended. Most commands that use regular expressions can interpret basic regular expressions. However, extended regular expressions are not available for all commands and a command option is typically required for them to work correctly.

The following table summarizes basic regular expression characters:

Basic Regex Character(s)	Meaning
.	Any one single character
[ ]	Any one specified character
[^]	Not the one specified character
*	Zero or more of the previous character
^	If first character in the pattern, then pattern must be at beginning of the line to match, otherwise just a literal ^
$	If last character in the pattern, then pattern must be at the end of the line to match, otherwise just a literal $

The following table summarizes the extended regular expressions, which must be used with either the `egrep` command or the `-E` option with the `grep` command:

Extended Regex Character(s)	Meaning
+	One or more of the previous pattern

Extended Regex Character(s)	Meaning
?	The preceding pattern is optional
{ }	Specify minimum, maximum or exact matches of the previous pattern
|	Alternation - a logical "or"
( )	Used to create groups

Only basic regular expressions have been covered here. For more information concerning extended regular expressions, check out the NDG Linux Essentials and NDG Introduction to Linux courses.