

DISCORD TEXT FORMATTING GUIDE



From humble beginnings on Discord...

I was a complete newbie back then when I joined my first Discord channel.

People were typing in underlines, bolded letters, strikethrough text, italics, and even colors! “How in the world do people type in colors?!”, I thought.

I tried to type “/bold hello guys!”, but that obviously didn’t work. It just made it obvious I had no clue what I was doing.



DISCORD

You Can Learn Awesome Discord Formatting

If you’re reading this, you’ve probably been that guy or gal (or you’re trying to avoid all the disappointment and become a Discord formatting wiz!)

Either way, today I’m going to show you how to type out literally every single format Discord offers.

You’ll learn the basics behind Discord’s formatting engine (Markdown & Highlight.js), basic formatting commands (bolding, italicizing, underlining, etc.), and you’ll learn how to type out text in boxes and code blocks — in color!

Save This Guide as a Reference

Once you have the basics down Discord formatting isn’t too bad.

While you’re still learning the commands though, it may be a good idea to keep this page open for reference (or bookmarked).

Anyways, enough talk — let’s get formatting!



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Behind the Scenes

Discord's Text Formatting Engine

While we sit there chatting away on Discord day after day, there's a sleek, lightweight engine working in the background, formatting all of our text.

This "engine" is called **Markdown**.

Highlight.js Makes Color Possible

Before we dig into markdown I wanted to explain another neat feature the Discord developers added on. It's a library called Highlight.js.

Now, I want to make it clear that Discord doesn't have true full-text highlighting. You can't say, "I want this word to be in red, and this one to be in blue!". That kind of highlighting doesn't exist.

What does exist for our text-coloring purposes, though, is a "hacked" version of text highlighting using syntax coloring methods from highlight.js.

Even though we can't directly highlight text, we can create a code block in discord, point it towards a specific syntax highlighting profile included in highlight.js, and then use that to our advantage by wrapping our text in the appropriate symbols.

This will all make much more sense when we get to some juicy examples down below.

The Rundown on Markdown

Originally created in 2004 by John Gruber and Aaron Swartz, Markdown is a markup language designed to be lightweight and simple to read/write. It's completely text-based and uses cleverly placed symbols to format words in bold, italics, underlined, etc.

Although it's been most commonly used to format readme files, forum discussions, and to turn plain text into rich text in basic text editors, Discord's developers saw its potential and brought it into the core software.

We're going to dig into Discord Markdown in the next section so you can learn how to properly format all of your messages in any way you'd like.



How to Format Text in Discord

And now the fun begins. I'm going to show you how to bold, italicize, underline, and strikethrough text as a starting point.

We'll start with the basics, and then move on into creating code blocks for text coloring.

How to **Bold** Text in Discord

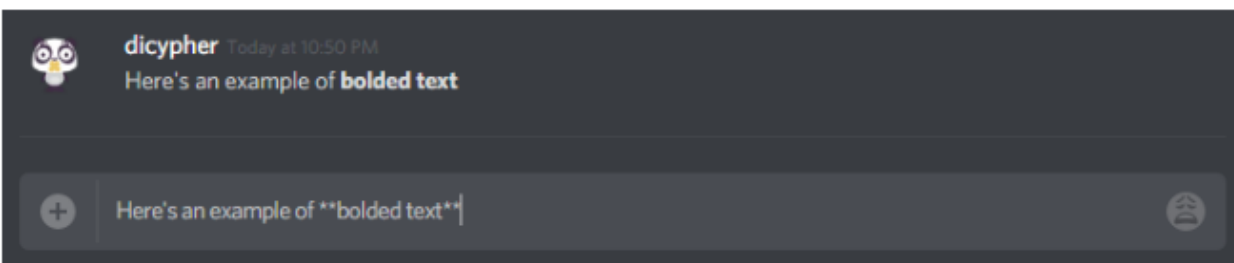
To create bolded text in discord, all you have to do is start and end the bolded text with two asterisks (*).

The asterisk is SHIFT+8 on your keyboard.

If you look at the image below, you'll notice that I put two asterisks, or stars, in front of and after the text I wanted to be in bold.

Here's what I typed and the result it produced:

Here's an example of ****bolded text****



How to *Italicize* Text in Discord

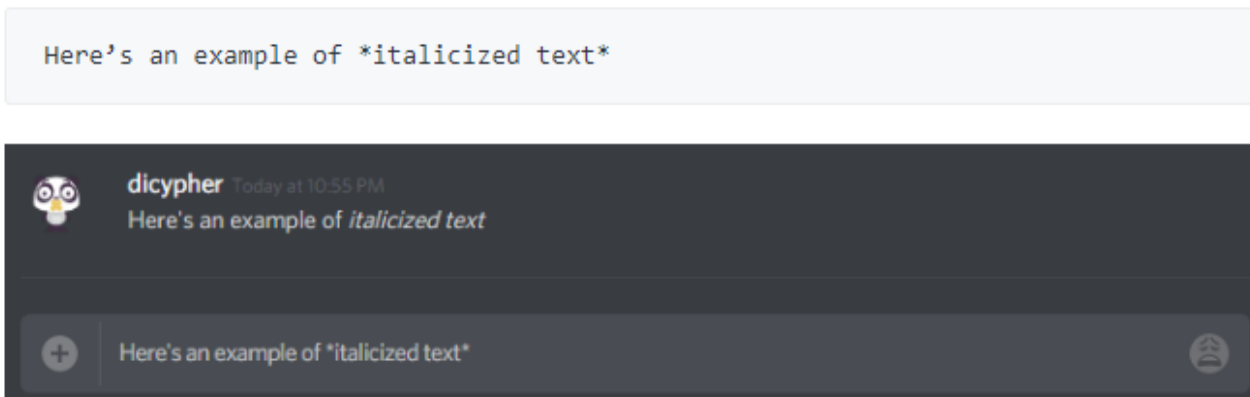
To create italics or italicized text in Discord, you have to type the asterisk once again, but this time use only one asterisk.

To bold text, we used two asterisks, like this: ****bold text****

For italics, we would do the same thing but with one single asterisk:
`*italicized text*`

Again, the asterisk (star) is SHIFT+8 on your keyboard.

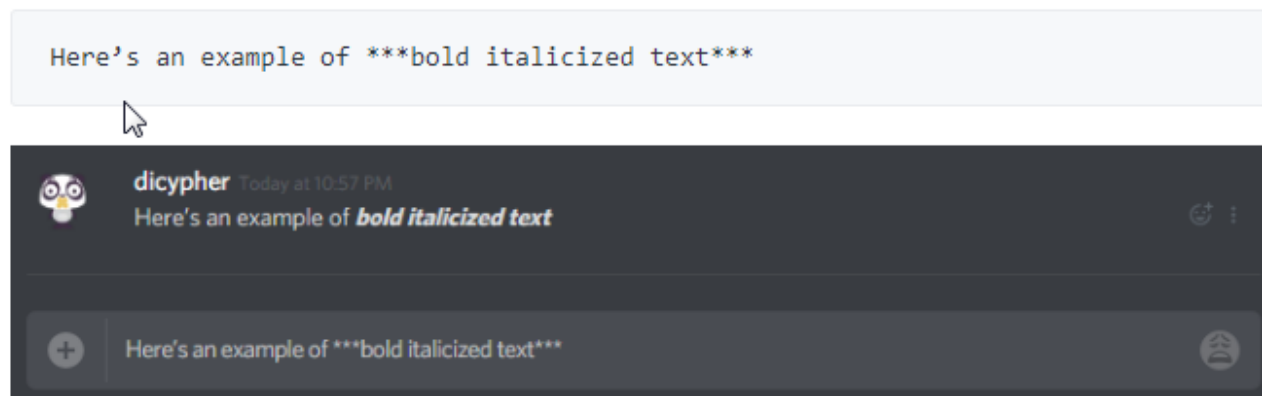
Here's what I typed to get the result shown in the image below:



How to Create ***Bold Italicized*** Text in Discord (Bold + Italics)

You might've been able to guess the markdown for Bold + Italics by now...

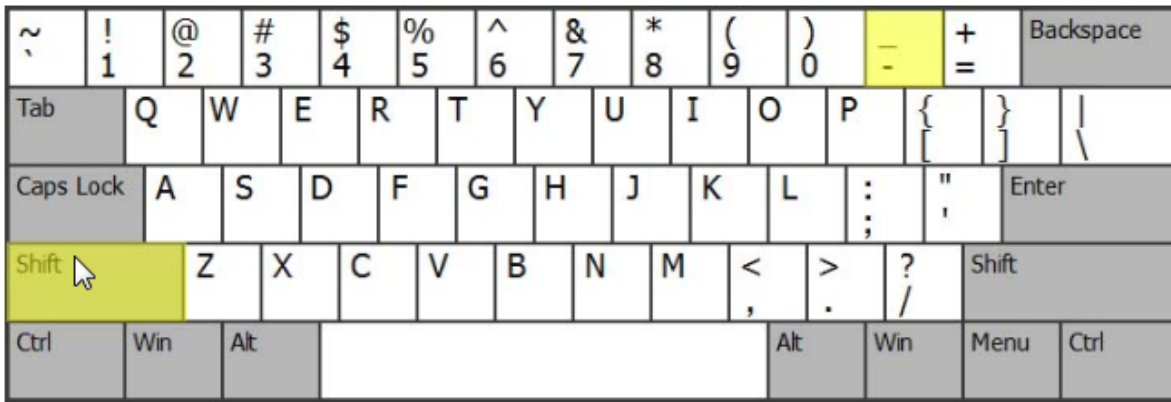
Instead of only one or two asterisks, it's three asterisks.



How to Underline Text in Discord

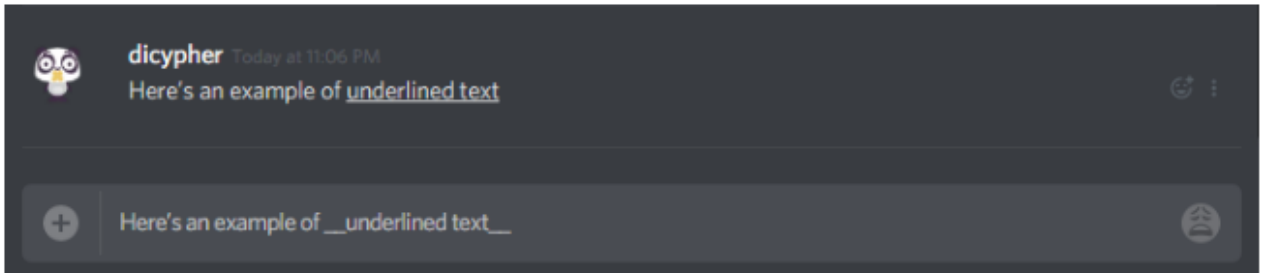
To format our text as underlined, we need to use two underscores (`__`)

This is meant to be a thorough guide, so I'm including the keyboard layout for an underscore below (in case you're reading this and have never yet had to type an underscore before!):



I typed this to get the result below:

Here's an example of underlined text

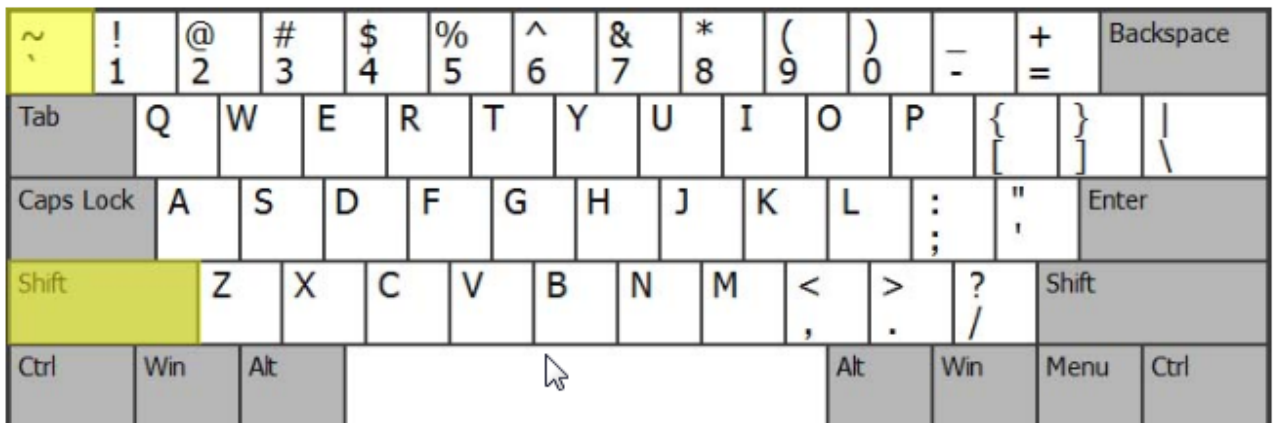


How to Create Strikethrough Text in Discord

For strikethrough text, we need to use the tilde (~) key.

Two tildes cross out, or 'strike through', the text you type.

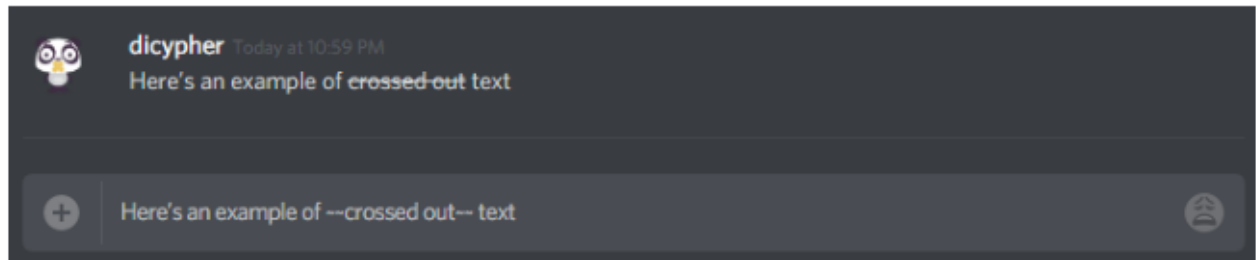
Here's the keyboard layout (yellow highlighted keys) for typing a tilde. You have to hit SHIFT + ~.



Here's what I typed below:

07

Here's an example of ~~crossed out~~ text



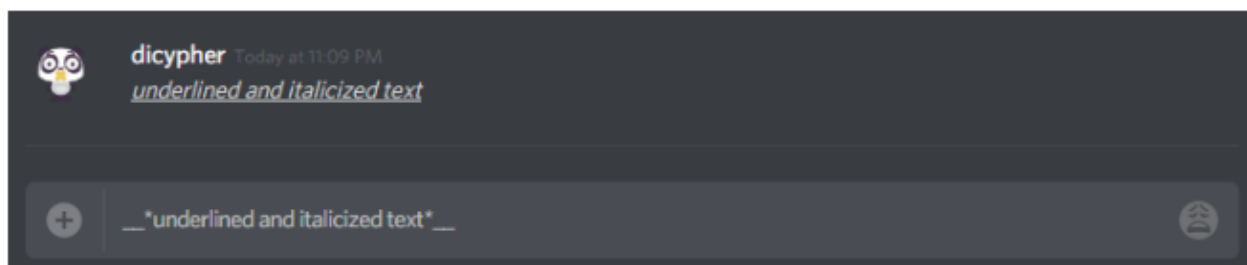
Combining Text Formatting Options Even Further

We can also combine the underline into bold, italics, and bold+italics.

Here's an example:

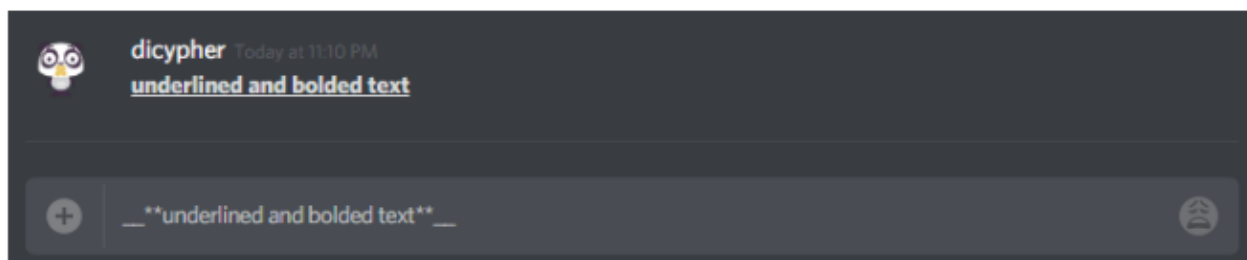
Underlined and Italicized Text

underlined and italicized text



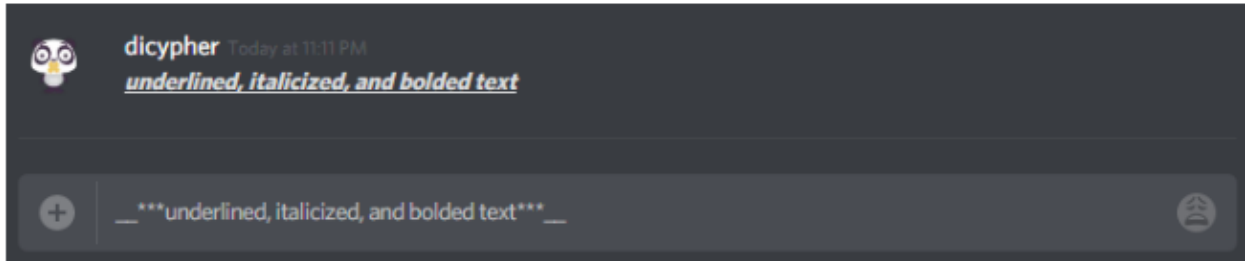
Underlined and Bolded Text

underlined and bolded text



Underlined, Italicized, and Bolded Text

__***underlined, italicized, and bolded text***__



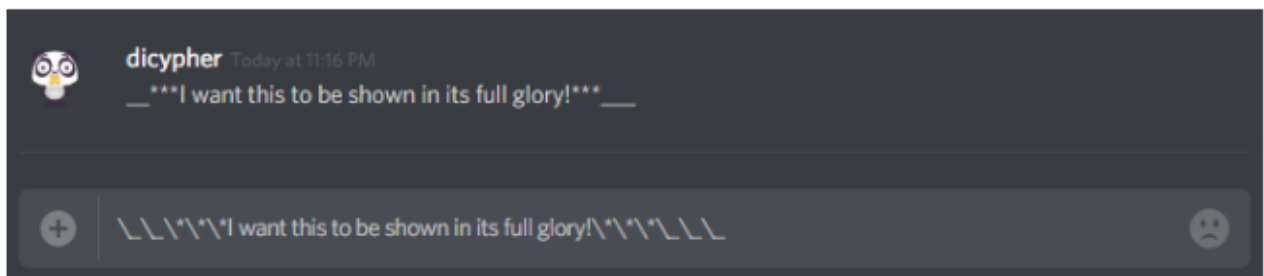
How to 'Escape' Text and See All Your Underscores and Asterisks

In case you actually want to see your underscores or asterisks in a message (like in an emoji, for example), you can use the backslash '\ ' key to skip markdown formatting and show the text just like it is.

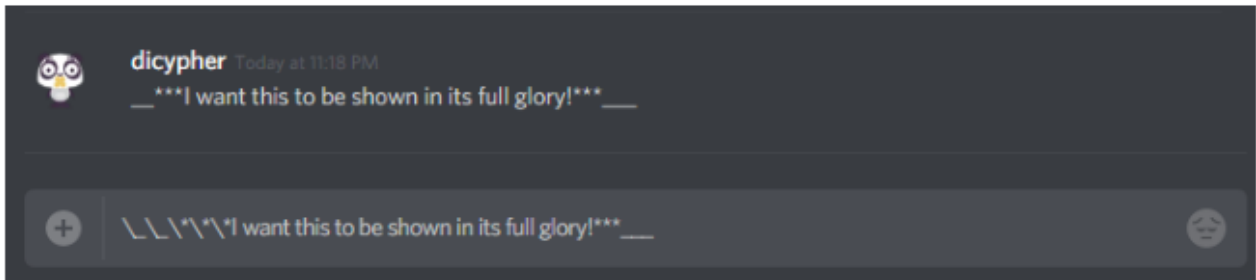
Take a peek at the example below (notice the backslashes '\ ' at the beginning of each character).

The excessive backslashes are needed here because I have underscores in my message.

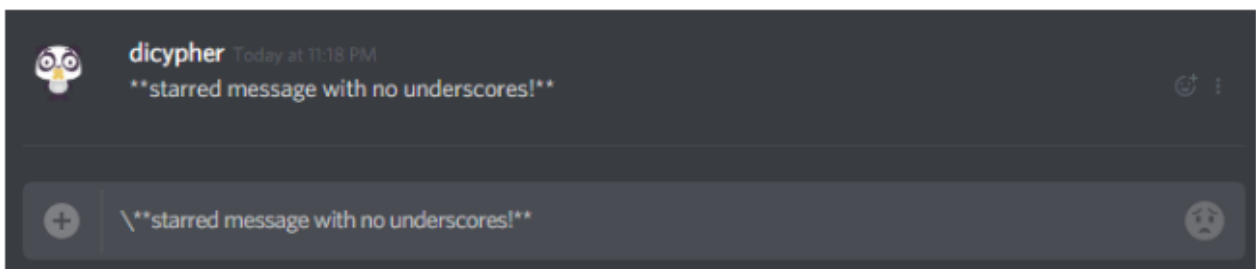
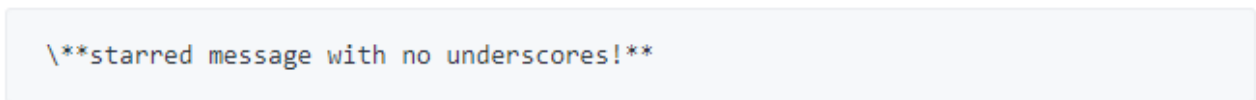
__***I want this to be shown in its full glory!***___



But notice that the backslashes at the end actually aren't required if you have them all in the beginning:



If I didn't have underscores, a single backslash `\` would do:



That Concludes Basic Formatting

And that's it for basic formatting. It's pretty simple stuff, and you should have it down after a few messages.

The only keys you have to remember are Underscores, Asterisks (Stars), and Backslashes.

Advanced Text Formatting in Discord: Writing in Color

And now we get to the fun part... formatting our discord messages in color!

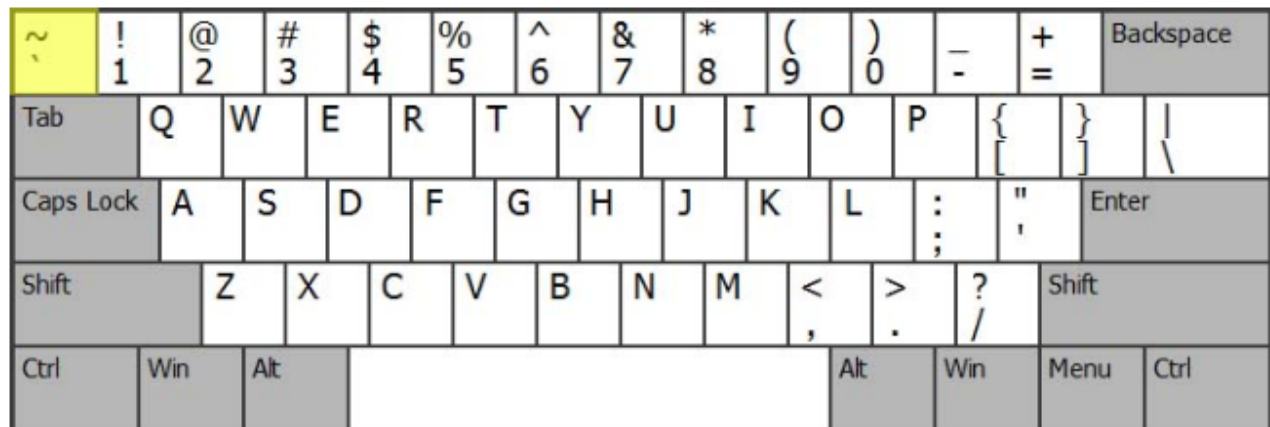
Once you start getting some colorful messages out there in the channels you frequently visit, you'll start getting asked how it's done.

We're going to cover some basics (code blocks), and then jump right into coloring your messages! Let's get to it!

Single Line Code Blocks in Discord

To create a single line code block in discord, you need to use the 'tick' or 'backtick' character: `.

Since this key can be a difficult key to find if you've never had to use it before (up until this point), I included a nice highlighted keyboard layout diagram below:

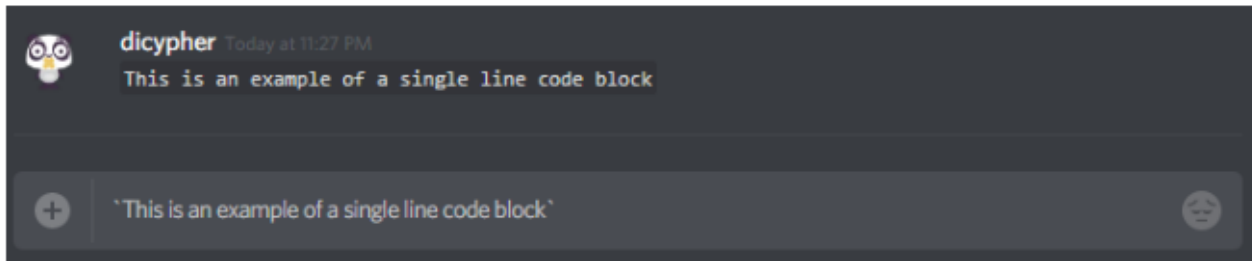


The 'tick' or 'backtick' character should be in the upper left corner of your keyboard right under the escape (ESC) key.

Once you're familiar with the 'backtick' key, let's create a single line code block. All you have to do is put a single backtick before and after your text.

Here's what I wrote for the example below:

```
`This is an example of a single line code block`
```



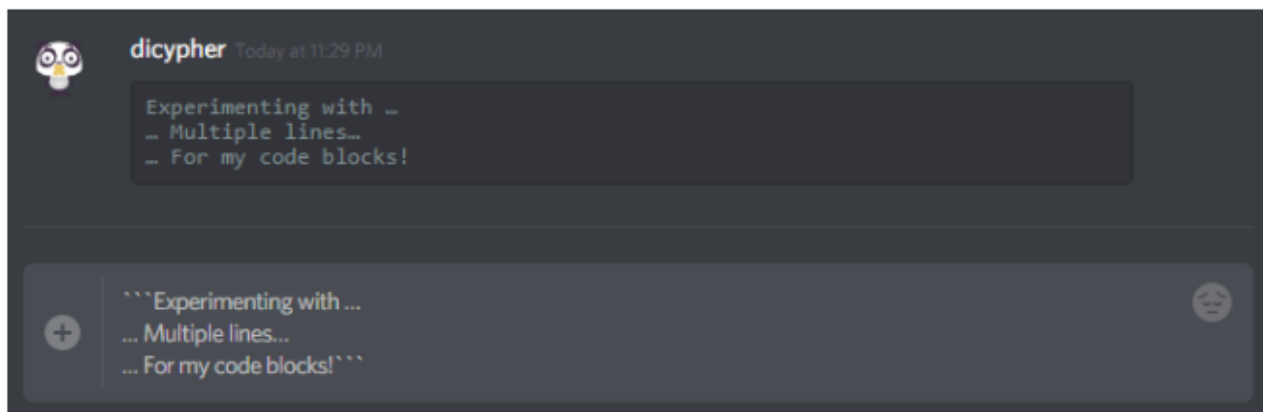
Multiple Line (Multiline) Code Blocks in Discord

Just like the single line code block, multi-line code blocks also use the backtick (``) character. The only difference is, instead of writing a single backtick (``) you have to write three (```) before and after your text.

The neat thing here is that you can press enter and space your text across multiple lines, all formatted in a single multi-line code block.

Here's the markdown for the example below:

```
```Experimenting with ...  
... Multiple lines...
... For my code blocks!```
```



You'll notice in the image above that we have all of our text in a code block, but this time it's in multiple lines just like we wanted.

# How to Format **Colored** Text in Discord

And now the moment we've all been waiting for... [drumroll] ... Colored Text!

I was searching around the web for a good example of some colored text formatting in Discord, but couldn't find anything clear.

There were some examples, but they were pretty hazy. I couldn't find a single guide that clearly showed you how to format your text if you wanted it to be in a certain color.

## We're Essentially "Hacking" Syntax Highlighting

As I mentioned in the intro, what we're going to be doing here is 'hacking' or 'hijacking' syntax highlighting from Highlight.js running in the background in Discord.

We have to do this because, as of writing this, Discord doesn't have built-in text highlighting functions.

As a result, we'll have to do a little bit of a workaround — but as long as it works, it works!

## Here's How Text Coloring in Discord Works

Since we'll be using a workaround based on Highlight.js, here's how it's going to work.

We will be creating multiline code blocks using three backticks and specifying the syntax highlighting language.

We can do this by including the highlighting programming language reference right at the beginning of the multiline code block.

Just like this, for example. Here we are specifying 'Apache' as the syntax highlighting language:

```
```apache
Some text goes here...
```
```

We'll be "exploiting" some syntax highlighting and using it to our advantage for coloring some text.

I included most of the colors you'd expect to use below, and tried to show the differences between various language references.

## Limitations to this Text Coloring Method

There are (unfortunately) limitations to this method. The most common limitation being, your text has to be connected in one word in some referenced syntax highlighting languages (not all!).

This means you can't type: This is a sentence.

You'll have to type: This\_is\_a\_sentence OR Thisisasentence.

Why is this? Well, since we're exploiting syntax highlighting to highlight our Discord messages, we're basically trying to make the multiline code block think that our message is literal programming code.

Most of the time the colors we want are contained in variables, which by definition, can't contain any spaces.

One place this does work well is in code comments and strings. I tried to include code comments and strings in each of the colors below as frequently as possible (to make it easy to type out).

If you look closely, you'll notice I did include some variables and mentioned that you can't have spaces if you choose to use those formatting methods. Even then, this may still be a perfectly viable method for single words.

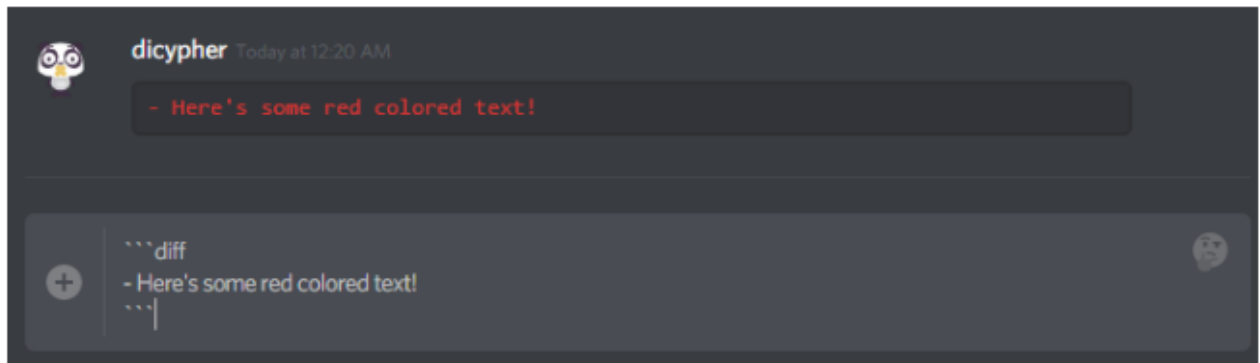
Anyways, that's enough yapping from me — [let's get coloring!](#)

# How to Color Text **RED** in Discord

## Diff Syntax Highlighting for Red (EASY)

Include dashes (-) before the line you want red colored text.

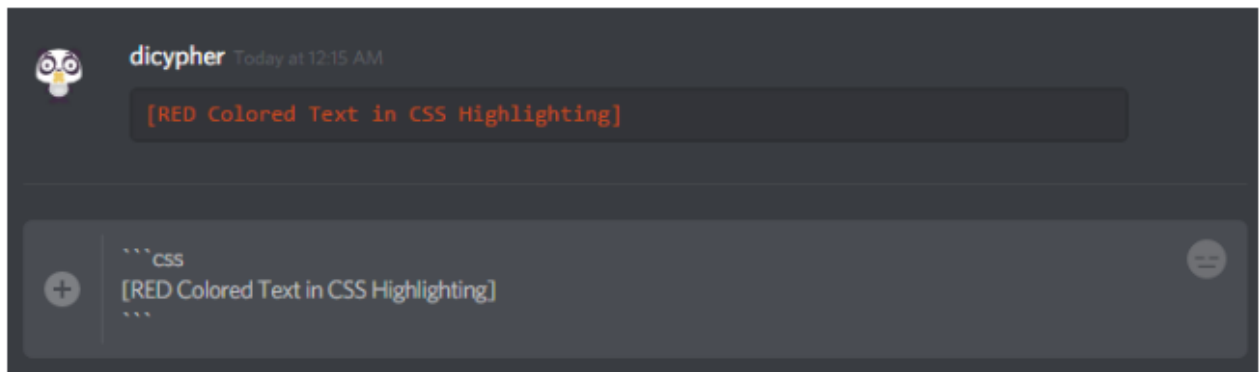
```
```diff
- Here's some red colored text!
```
```



## CSS Syntax Highlighting for Orange (Red-Orange)

Include brackets [ ] around the text you want highlighted.

```
```css
[RED Colored Text in CSS Highlighting]
```
```



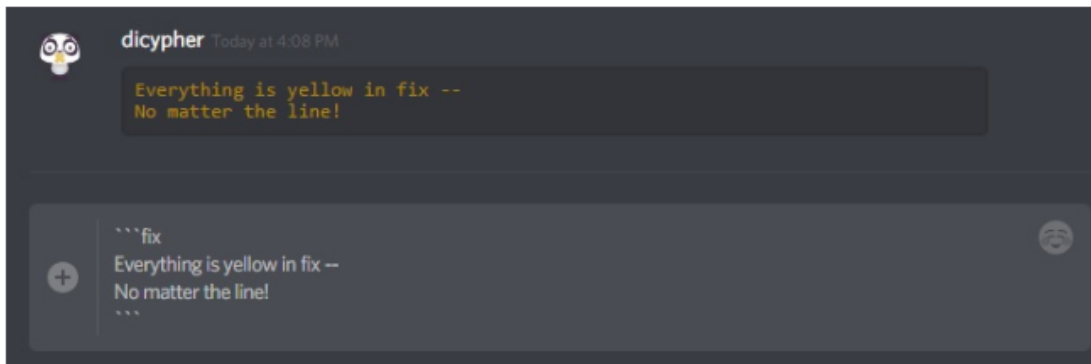
# How to Color Text **YELLOW** in Discord

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## Fix Syntax Highlighting for Yellow (EASY)

In Fix, everything you type is yellow by default! This is a great, easy way to have yellow text.

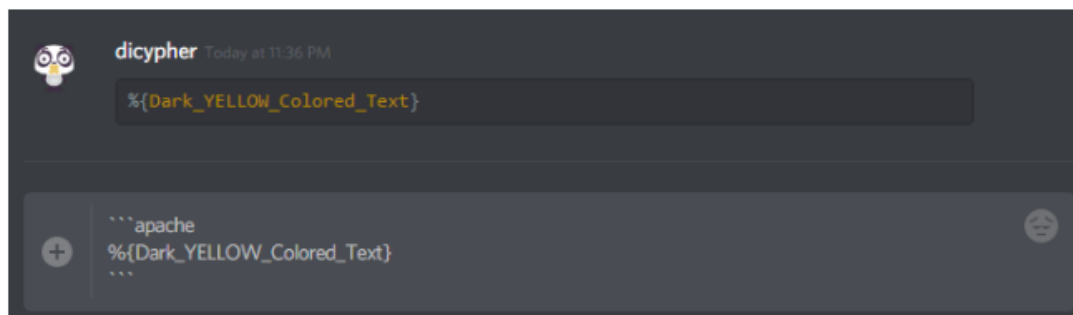
```
```fix
Everything is yellow in fix --
No matter the line!
```
```



## Apache Syntax Highlighting for Yellow (Limitation: NO SPACES)

Include a percent sign and right curly brace, `%{`, at the beginning of your text, and a left curly brace, `}`, at the end to highlight your text yellow in Apache syntax.

```
```apache
%{Dark_YELLOW_Colored_Text}
```
```

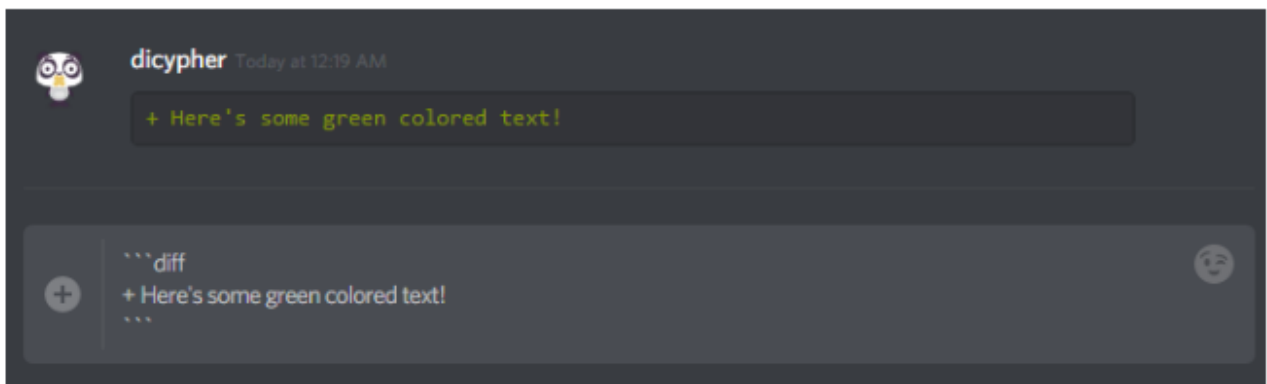


# How to Color Text **GREEN** in Discord

## Diff Syntax Highlighting for Light Green (EASY)

Include a plus sign (+) before the line that you want turned green.

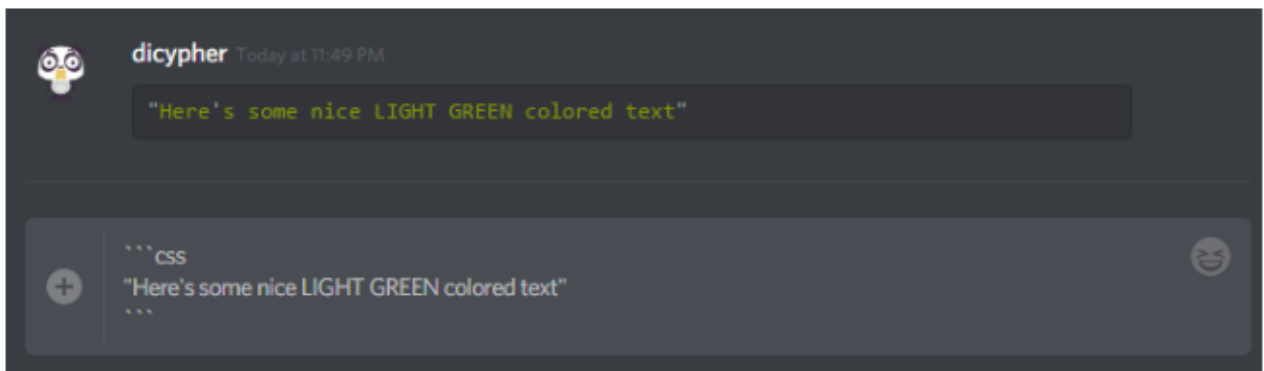
```
```diff
+ Here's some green colored text!
```
```



## CSS Syntax Highlighting for Light Green

Include quotation marks " " around the text you want colored Light Green.

```
```css
"Here's some nice LIGHT GREEN colored text"
```
```





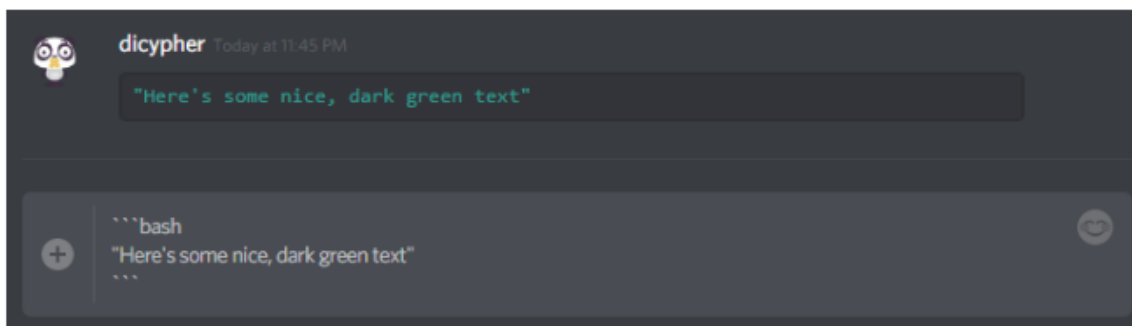
# How to Color Text **BLUE-GREEN** in Discord

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Quotation marks around your text " "

```
```bash
"Here's some nice, dark green text"
```
```

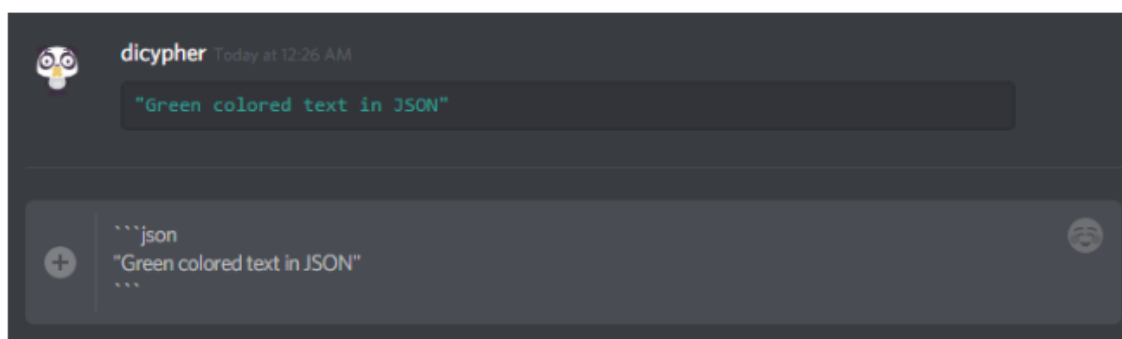
**Note:** This dark green color and quotation marks around your text also works in a bunch of other reference languages, not only "bash". It works with "coffeescript", "cpp", and many more.



## JSON Syntax Highlighting for Dark Green (EASY)

Just like in Bash, quotation marks around the text you want to color dark green.

```
```json
"Green colored text in JSON"
```
```

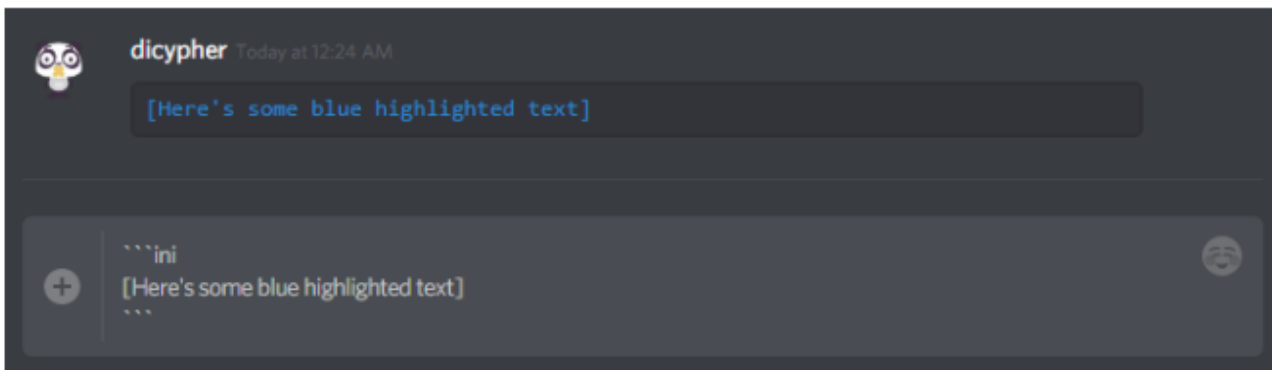


# How to Color Text **BLUE** in Discord

## INI Syntax Highlighting for Blue

Place brackets [ ] around the text you want highlighted blue.

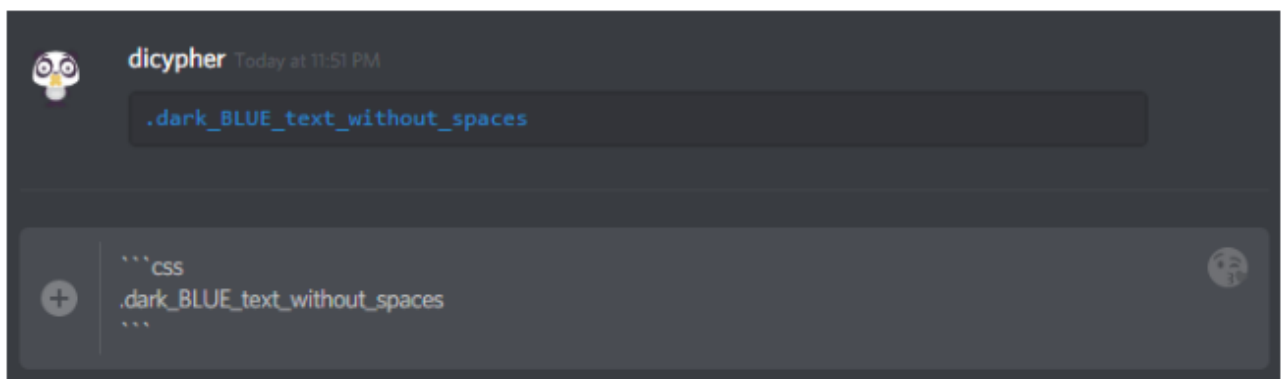
```
```ini
[Here's some blue highlighted text]
```
```



## CSS Syntax Highlighting (Limitation: NO SPACES)

Put a single dot (.) in front of the text you want colored blue, and make sure you don't have any spaces in the line.

```
```css
.dark_BLUE_text_without_spaces
```
```



# Color Formatting Takeaways

Lessons learned and colors mastered.

As you've probably noticed, there are limitations to using this method (such as having to type no spaces for certain colors). But the most important thing is, we can still color our text relatively easily!

I'd recommend using the DIFF, BASH, FIX, and CSS highlighting above (for red, green, yellow, and blue respectively). Either way, the examples above include several shades of the primary syntax highlighting colors, and let you experiment with them in your messages.

## Now It's Your Turn

And now the ball is in your court — get out there and format/color some text!

Don't forget to bookmark this page as a resource for future use. Good luck, and have fun!

