

11.5: ESCAPE CHARACTER



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Since we use special characters in regular expressions to match the beginning or end of a line or specify wild cards, we need a way to indicate that these characters are "normal" and we want to match the actual character such as a dollar sign or caret.

We can indicate that we want to simply match a character by prefixing that character with a backslash. For example, we can find money amounts with the following regular expression.

```
import re
x = 'We just received $10.00 for cookies.'
y = re.findall('\$[0-9.]+',x)
```

Since we prefix the dollar sign with a backslash, it actually matches the dollar sign in the input string instead of matching the "end of line", and the rest of the regular expression matches one or more digits or the period character. *Note:* Inside square brackets, characters are not "special". So when we say "[0-9.]", it really means digits or a period. Outside of square brackets, a period is the "wild-card" character and matches any character. Inside square brackets, the period is a period.