



RegexOne
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Lesson 8: Characters optional




As you saw in the previous lesson, the Kleene star and plus allow us to match repeated characters in a line.

Another quantifier that is really common when matching and extracting text is the **?** (question mark) metacharacter which denotes **optionality**. This metacharacter allows you to match either zero or one of the preceding character or group. For example, the pattern **ab?c** will match either the strings "abc" or "ac" because the b is considered optional.

Similar to the dot metacharacter, the question mark is a special character and you will have to escape it using a slash **\?** to match a plain question mark character in a string.

In the strings below, notice how the the plurality of the word "file" depends on the number of files found. Try writing a pattern that uses the optionality metacharacter to match only the lines where one or more files were found.

Exercise 8: Matching Optional Characters

Task	Text	
Match	1 file found?	
Match	2 files found?	
Match	24 files found?	
Skip	No files found.	

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Solve the above task to continue on to the next problem, or read the Solution.

Next – Lesson 9: All this whitespace (/lesson/whitespaces)

Previous – Lesson 7: Mr. Kleene, Mr. Kleene (/lesson/kleene_operators)

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