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## Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange

iTeh STANDARD REVIEW  
Technologies de l'information — Jeu ISO de caractères codés à 7 éléments pour l'échange d'informations  
(standards.iteh.ai)

ISO/IEC 646:1991  
<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/1d19cd55-d4fd-43f6-b5c1-62f0a419e15c/iso-iec-646-1991>



Reference number  
ISO/IEC 646:1991(E)

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## **Foreword**

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1. Draft International Standards adopted by the joint technical committee are circulated to national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO/IEC 646 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*.  
<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/ist/1d19cd55-d4fd-43f6-b5c1-6210a419e15c/iso-iec-646-1991>

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 646 : 1983)  
which has been technically revised.

Annex A forms an integral part of this International Standard. Annexes B and C are for information only.

# Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange

## 1 Scope

This International Standard specifies a set of 128 characters, (control characters and graphic characters such as letters, digits and symbols) with their coded representation. Most of these characters are mandatory and unchangeable, but provision is made for some flexibility to accommodate national and other requirements.

This International Standard specifies a 7-bit coded character set with a number of options. It also provides guidance on how to exercise the options to define specific national versions and application-oriented versions. Furthermore it specifies the International Reference Version (IRV) in which such options have been exercised.

This character set is primarily intended for the interchange of information among data processing systems and associated equipment, and within data communication systems. The need for graphic characters and control functions in data processing has also been taken into account in determining this character set.

This character set is applicable to alphabets of the Latin script.

This character set allows the use of control characters for code extension where its character set is insufficient for particular applications. Procedures for the use of these control characters are specified in ISO/IEC 646:1991. ISO 2022. <https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/1d19cd55-d4fd-43fb-b5c1-62f0a419e15c/iso-iec-646-1991>

The definitions of the control characters mentioned in this International Standard are specified in ISO 6429. It is assumed that data associated with them are to be processed serially in a forward direction. When they are included in strings of data which are processed other than serially in a forward direction or when they are included in data formatted for fixed-record processing they may have undesirable effects or may require additional special treatment to ensure that they result in their desired function.

## 2 Conformance and implementation

### 2.1 Conformance

#### 2.1.1 Conformance of information interchange

A coded-character-data-element (CC-data-element) within coded information for interchange is in conformance with this International Standard if all the coded representations of characters within that CC-data-element conform to the requirements of 8.1 of this International Standard.

A claim of conformance shall identify the version adopted in accordance with 8.2 to 8.4.

#### 2.1.2 Conformance of devices

A device is in conformance with this International Standard if it conforms to the requirements of 2.1.2.1, and either or both of 2.1.2.2 and 2.1.2.3 below. A claim of conformance shall identify the version adopted.

### 2.1.2.1 Device description

A device that conforms to this International Standard shall be the subject of a description that identifies the means by which the user may supply characters to the device, or may recognize them when they are made available to him, as specified respectively in 2.1.2.2 and 2.1.2.3.

### 2.1.2.2 Originating devices

An originating device shall allow its user to supply any sequence of characters from the version adopted, and shall be capable of transmitting their coded representations within a CC-data-element.

### 2.1.2.3 Receiving devices

A receiving device shall be capable of receiving and interpreting any coded representations of characters that are within a CC-data-element, and that conform to 2.1.1, and shall make the corresponding characters available to its user in such a way that the user can identify them from among those of the version adopted, and can distinguish them from each other.

## 2.2 Implementation

The use of this character set requires definitions of its implementation in various media. For example, these could include punched tapes, punched cards, magnetic and optical interchangeable media and transmission channels, thus permitting interchange of data to take place either indirectly by means of an intermediate recording on a physical medium, or by local connection of various units (such as input and output devices and computers) or by means of data transmission equipment.

The implementation of this coded character set in physical media and for transmission, taking into account the need for error checking, is the subject of other International Standards.

## (standards.iteh.ai)

### 3 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards listed below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 2022 : 1986, *Information processing - ISO 7-bit and 8-bit coded character sets - Code extension techniques.*

ISO/IEC 6429 :<sup>1)</sup>, *Information processing - Control functions for 7-bit and 8-bit coded character sets.*

## 4 Definitions

For the purpose of this International Standard the following definitions apply.

**4.1 active position** : The character position which is to image the graphic symbol representing the next graphic character or relative to which the next control function is to be executed.

NOTE 1 - In general, the active position is indicated in a display by a cursor.

**4.2 bit combination** : An ordered set of bits used for the representation of characters.

**4.3 character** : A member of a set of elements used for the organization, control or representation of data.

**4.4 character position** : The portion of a display that is imaging or is capable of imaging a graphic symbol.

**4.5 coded character set; code** : A set of unambiguous rules that establishes a character set and the one-to-one relationship between the characters of the set and their bit combinations.

1) To be published.

**4.6 coded-character-data-element (CC-data-element) :** An element of interchanged information that is specified to consist of a sequence of coded representations of characters, in accordance with one or more identified standards for coded character sets.

NOTE 2 - In a communication environment according to the Reference Model for Open Systems Interconnection (ISO 7498), a CC-data-element will form all or part of the information that corresponds to the Presentation - Protocol -Data - Unit (PPDU) defined in that International Standard.

NOTE 3 - When information interchange is accomplished by means of interchangeable media, a CC-data-element will form all or part of the information that corresponds to the user data, and not that recorded during formatting and initialization.

**4.7 code extension :** The techniques for the encoding of characters that are not included in the character set of a given code.

**4.8 code table :** A table showing the character allocated to each bit combination in a code.

**4.9 control character :** A control function the coded representation of which consists of a single bit combination.

**4.10 control function :** An action that affects the recording, processing, transmission, or interpretation of data, and that has a coded representation consisting of one or more bit combinations.

**4.11 device :** A component of information processing equipment which can transmit, and/or receive, coded information within CC-data-elements.

NOTE 4 - It may be an input/output device in the conventional sense, or a process such as an application program or gateway function.

**4.12 escape sequence :** A string of bit combinations that is used for control purposes in code extension procedures. The first of these bit combinations represents the control function ESCAPE.

**4.13 Final Byte :** The bit combination that terminates an escape sequence or a control sequence.

**4.14 graphic character :** A character, other than a control function, that has a visual representation normally handwritten, printed or displayed, and that has a coded representation consisting of one or more bit combinations.

**4.15 graphic symbol :** A visual representation of a graphic character or of a control function.

**4.16 repertoire :** A specified set of characters that are represented by means of one or more bit combinations of a coded character set.

**4.17 user :** A person or other entity that invokes the services provided by a device.

NOTE 5 - This entity may be a process such as an application program if the "device" is a code convertor or a gateway function, for example.

NOTE 6 - The characters, as supplied by the user or made available to him, may be in the form of codes local to the device, or of non-conventional visible representations, provided that 2.1.2 above is satisfied.

## 5 Notation, code table and names

### 5.1 Notation

The bits of the bit combinations of the 7-bit code are identified by  $b_7$ ,  $b_6$ ,  $b_5$ ,  $b_4$ ,  $b_3$ ,  $b_2$  and  $b_1$ , where  $b_7$  is the highest-order, or most-significant, bit and  $b_1$  is the lowest-order, or least-significant, bit.

The bit combinations may be interpreted to represent integers in the range 0 to 127 in binary notation by attributing the following weights to the individual bits:

Bit :	b <sub>7</sub>	b <sub>6</sub>	b <sub>5</sub>	b <sub>4</sub>	b <sub>3</sub>	b <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>1</sub>
Weight :	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

In this International Standard, the bit combinations are identified by notations of the form x/y, where x is a number in the range 0 to 7 and y is a number in the range 0 to 15. The correspondence between the notations of the form x/y and the bit combinations consisting of the bits b<sub>7</sub> to b<sub>1</sub> is as follows:

- x is the number represented by b<sub>7</sub>, b<sub>6</sub> and b<sub>5</sub> where these bits are given the weights 4, 2 and 1 respectively;
- y is the number represented by b<sub>4</sub>, b<sub>3</sub>, b<sub>2</sub> and b<sub>1</sub> where these bits are given the weights 8, 4, 2 and 1 respectively.

The notations of the form x/y are the same as those used to identify code table positions, where x is the column number and y the row number (see 5.2).

## 5.2 Code table

A 7-bit code table consists of 128 positions arranged in 8 columns and 16 rows. The columns are numbered 0 to 7 and the rows 0 to 15.

The code table positions are identified by notations of the form x/y, where x is the column number and y is the row number.

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The positions of the code table are in one-to-one correspondence with the bit combinations of the code. The notation of a code table position, of the form x/y, is the same as that of the corresponding bit combination.

## 5.3 Names

[ISO/IEC 646:1991](#)

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/1d19cd55-d4fd-43f6-b5c1-041155e64616>

This International Standard assigns one name to each character. In addition, it specifies an acronym for each control character and for the characters SPACE and DELETE, and a graphic symbol for each graphic character. By convention, only capital letters, space and hyphen are used for writing the names of the characters. For acronyms only capital letters and digits are used. It is intended that the acronyms and this convention be retained in all translations of the text.

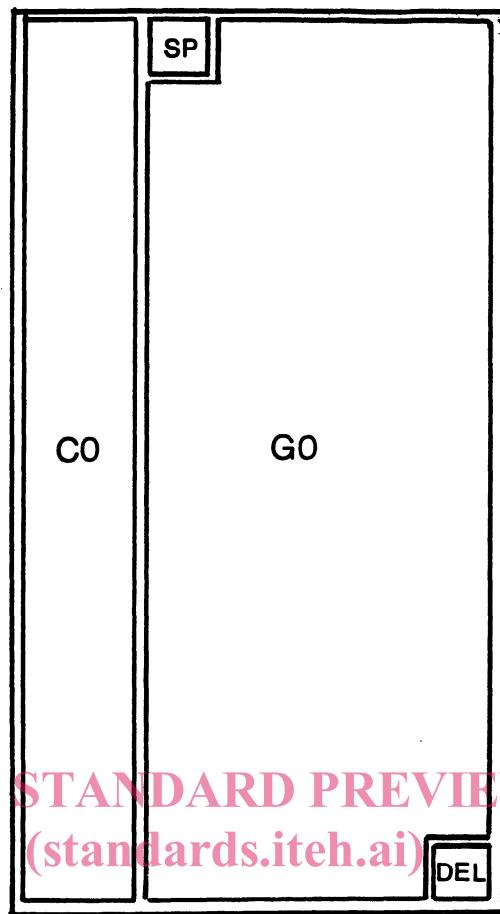
The names chosen to denote graphic characters are intended to reflect their customary meaning. However, this International Standard does not define and does not restrict the meanings of graphic characters. Neither does it specify a particular style or font design for the graphic characters when imaged.

## 6 Specification of the coded character set

### 6.1 Structure

The coded character set of this International Standard shall have the following structure.

- a C0 control character set of up to 32 control characters;
- the graphic character SPACE (SP);
- a G0 graphic character set of up to 94 graphic characters;
- the character DELETE (DEL).



[ISO/IEC 646:1991](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/1d19cd55-d4fd-43f6-b5c1-0f0a419e15c4/iso-646-1991)

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/1d19cd55-d4fd-43f6-b5c1-0f0a419e15c4/iso-646-1991>

**Figure 1 - Structure of the 7-bit coded character set**

## 6.2 Control characters

The control characters of the C0 set shall be represented by bit combinations as specified in annex A.

## 6.3 Character SPACE

The acronym of the character SPACE is SP and it is represented by bit combination 2/0.

This character is a graphic character, it has a visual representation consisting of the absence of a graphic symbol.

## 6.4 Graphic characters

The 94 bit combinations 2/1 to 7/14 are used for the representation of graphic characters as specified in 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

All graphic characters shall be spacing characters, that is, they cause the active position to advance by one character position.

### 6.4.1 Unique graphic character allocations

A unique graphic character is allocated to each of the 82 bit combinations 2/1, 2/2, 2/5 to 3/15, 4/1 to 5/10, 5/15 and 6/1 to 7/10. These graphic characters are specified in table 1.

Table 1 - Unique graphic character allocations

Graphic Symbol	Name	Coded representation
!	EXCLAMATION MARK	2/1
"	QUOTATION MARK	2/2
%	PERCENT SIGN	2/5
&	AMPERSAND	2/6
'	APOSTROPHE	2/7
(	LEFT PARENTHESIS	2/8
)	RIGHT PARENTHESIS	2/9
*	ASTERISK	2/10
+	PLUS SIGN	2/11
,	COMMA	2/12
-	HYPHEN-MINUS	2/13
.	FULL STOP	2/14
/	SOLIDUS	2/15
0	DIGIT ZERO	3/0
1	DIGIT ONE	3/1
2	DIGIT TWO	3/2
3	DIGIT THREE	3/3
4	DIGIT FOUR	3/4
5	DIGIT FIVE	3/5
6	DIGIT SIX	3/6
7	DIGIT SEVEN	3/7
8	DIGIT EIGHT	3/8
9	DIGIT NINE	3/9
:	COLON	3/10
;	ISO/IEC 646:1991	3/11
<	SEMICOLON	3/11
=	LESS-THAN SIGN	3/12
>	EQUALS SIGN	3/13
?	GREATER-THAN SIGN	3/14
A	QUESTION MARK	3/15
B	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER A	4/1
C	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER B	4/2
D	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER C	4/3
E	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER D	4/4
F	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER E	4/5
G	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER F	4/6
H	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER G	4/7
I	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER H	4/8
J	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER I	4/9
K	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER J	4/10
L	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER K	4/11
M	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER L	4/12
N	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER M	4/13
O	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER N	4/14
P	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER O	4/15
Q	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER P	5/0
R	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER Q	5/1
S	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER R	5/2
	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER S	5/3

(continued)

Table 1 - Unique graphic character allocations

Graphic Symbol	Name	Coded representation
T	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER T	5/4
U	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER U	5/5
V	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER V	5/6
W	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER W	5/7
X	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER X	5/8
Y	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER Y	5/9
Z	LATIN CAPITAL LETTER Z	5/10
-	LOW LINE	5/15
a	LATIN SMALL LETTER A	6/1
b	LATIN SMALL LETTER B	6/2
c	LATIN SMALL LETTER C	6/3
d	LATIN SMALL LETTER D	6/4
e	LATIN SMALL LETTER E	6/5
f	LATIN SMALL LETTER F	6/6
g	LATIN SMALL LETTER G	6/7
h	LATIN SMALL LETTER H	6/8
i	LATIN SMALL LETTER I	6/9
j	LATIN SMALL LETTER J	6/10
k	LATIN SMALL LETTER K	6/11
l	LATIN SMALL LETTER L	6/12
m	LATIN SMALL LETTER M	6/13
n	LATIN SMALL LETTER N	6/14
o	LATIN SMALL LETTER O	6/15
p	LATIN SMALL LETTER P	7/0
q	LATIN SMALL LETTER Q	7/1
r	LATIN SMALL LETTER R	7/2
s	LATIN SMALL LETTER S	7/3
t	LATIN SMALL LETTER T	7/4
u	LATIN SMALL LETTER U	7/5
v	LATIN SMALL LETTER V	7/6
w	LATIN SMALL LETTER W	7/7
x	LATIN SMALL LETTER X	7/8
y	LATIN SMALL LETTER Y	7/9
z	LATIN SMALL LETTER Z	7/10

#### 6.4.2 Alternative graphic character allocations

Two alternative graphic characters are allocated to each of the bit combinations 2/3 and 2/4. These characters are specified in table 2.

Table 2 - Alternative graphic character allocations

Graphic Symbol	Name	Coded representation
#	NUMBER SIGN	2/3
£	POUND SIGN	2/3
\$	DOLLAR SIGN	2/4
¤	CURRENCY SIGN	2/4