

# Babel

User guide

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Localization and  
internationalization

Unicode

T<sub>E</sub>X

pdfT<sub>E</sub>X

LuaT<sub>E</sub>X

XeT<sub>E</sub>X

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**What is this document about?** This user guide focuses on internationalization and localization with  $\LaTeX$  and pdf $\TeX$ , xetex and luatex with the babel package. There are also some notes on its use with e-Plain and pdf-Plain  $\TeX$ .

**What if I'm interested only in the latest changes?** Changes and new features with relation to version 3.8 are highlighted with **New X.XX**, and there are some notes for the latest versions in [the babel site](#). The most recent features can be still unstable.

**Can I help?** Sure! If you are interested in the  $\TeX$  multilingual support, please join the [kadingira mail list](#). You can follow the development of babel in [GitHub](#) and make suggestions; feel free to fork it and make pull requests. If you are the author of a package, send to me a few test files which I'll add to mine, so that possible issues can be caught in the development phase.

**It doesn't work for me!** You can ask for help in some forums like tex.stackexchange, but if you have found a bug, I strongly beg you to report it in [GitHub](#), which is much better than just complaining on an e-mail list or a web forum. Remember *warnings are not errors* by themselves, they just warn about possible problems or incompatibilities.

**How can I contribute a new language?** See section 3.1 for contributing a language.

**I only need learn the most basic features.** The first subsections (1.1-1.3) describe the traditional way of loading a language (with ldf files), which is usually all you need. The alternative way based on ini files, which complements the previous one (it does *not* replace it, although it is still necessary in some languages), is described below; go to 1.13.

**I don't like manuals. I prefer sample files.** This manual contains lots of examples and tips, but in GitHub there are many [sample files](#).

**Where is the code?** Run  
`lua $\LaTeX$  --jobname=babel-code \let\babelcode\relax\input{babel.dtx}.`

## 1 The user interface

### 1.1 Monolingual documents

In most cases, a single language is required, and then all you need in  $\LaTeX$  is to load the package using its standard mechanism for this purpose, namely, passing that language as an optional argument. In addition, you may want to set the font and input encodings. Another approach is making the language a global option in order to let other packages detect and use it. This is the standard way in  $\LaTeX$  for an option – in this case a language – to be recognized by several packages.

Many languages are compatible with xetex and luatex. With them you can use babel to localize the documents. When these engines are used, the Latin script is covered by default in current  $\LaTeX$  (provided the document encoding is UTF-8), because the font loader is preloaded and the font is switched to `lmroman`. Other scripts require loading fontspec. You may want to set the font attributes with fontspec, too.

**EXAMPLE** Here is a simple full example for “traditional”  $\TeX$  engines (see below for xetex and luatex). The packages fontenc and inputenc do not belong to babel, but they are included in the example because typically you will need them. It assumes UTF-8, the default encoding:

PDF $\TeX$

```
\documentclass{article}

\usepackage[T1]{fontenc}

\usepackage[french]{babel}
```

```
\begin{document}

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!

\end{document}
```

Now consider something like:

```
\documentclass[french]{article}
\usepackage{babel}
\usepackage{varioref}
```

With this setting, the package `varioref` will also see the option `french` and will be able to use it.

**EXAMPLE** And now a simple monolingual document in Russian (text from the Wikipedia) with `xetex` or `luatex`. Note neither `fontenc` nor `inputenc` are necessary, but the document should be encoded in UTF-8 and a so-called Unicode font must be loaded (in this example `\babel` font is used, described below).

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\documentclass[russian]{article}

\usepackage{babel}

\babelfont{rm}{DejaVu Serif}

\begin{document}

Россия, находящаяся на пересечении множества культур, а также
с учётом многонационального характера её населения, — отличается
высокой степенью этнокультурного многообразия и способностью к
межкультурному диалогу.

\end{document}
```

**TROUBLESHOOTING** A common source of trouble is a wrong setting of the input encoding. Depending on the  $\text{\LaTeX}$  version you can get the following somewhat cryptic error:

```
! Paragraph ended before \UTFviii@three@octets was complete.
```

Or the more explanatory:

```
! Package inputenc Error: Invalid UTF-8 byte ...
```

Make sure you set the encoding actually used by your editor.

**NOTE** Because of the way `babel` has evolved, “language” can refer to (1) a set of hyphenation patterns as preloaded into the format, (2) a package option, (3) an `\ldf` file, and (4) a name used in the document to select a language or dialect. So, a package option refers to a language in a generic way – sometimes it is the actual language name used to select it, sometimes it is a file name loading a language with a different name, sometimes it is a file name loading several languages. Please, read the documentation for specific languages for further info.

**TROUBLESHOOTING** The following warning is about hyphenation patterns, which are not under the direct control of `babel`:

```
Package babel Warning: No hyphenation patterns were preloaded for
(babel)                the language `LANG' into the format.
(babel)                Please, configure your TeX system to add them and
(babel)                rebuild the format. Now I will use the patterns
(babel)                preloaded for \language=0 instead on input line 57.
```

The document will be typeset, but very likely the text will not be correctly hyphenated. Some languages in some system may be raising this warning wrongly (because they are not hyphenated) – just ignore it. See the manual of your distribution (MacTeX, MikTeX, TeXLive, etc.) for further info about how to configure it.

**NOTE** With hyperref you may want to set the document language with something like:

```
\usepackage[pdflang=es-MX]{hyperref}
```

This is not currently done by babel and you must set it by hand. The document language can be also set with \DocumentMetadata, before \documentclass; for example:

```
\DocumentMetadata{lang=es-MX}
```

**NOTE** Although it has been customary to recommend placing \title, \author and other elements printed by \maketitle after \begin{document}, mainly because of shorthands, it is advisable to keep them in the preamble. Currently there is no real need to use shorthands in those macros.

**NOTE** Babel does not make any readjustments by default in font size, vertical positioning or line height by default. This is on purpose because the optimal solution depends on the document layout and the font, and very likely the most appropriate one is a combination of these settings.

## 1.2 Multilingual documents

In multilingual documents, just use a list of the required languages as package or class options. The last language is considered the main one, activated by default. Sometimes, the main language changes the document layout (eg, spanish and french).

**EXAMPLE** In L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, the preamble of the document:

```
\documentclass{article}
\usepackage[dutch,english]{babel}
```

would tell L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X that the document would be written in two languages, Dutch and English, and that English would be the first language in use, and the main one.

You can also set the main language explicitly, but it is discouraged except if there is a real reason to do so:

```
\documentclass{article}
\usepackage[main=english,dutch]{babel}
```

Examples of cases where main is useful are the following.

**EXAMPLE** Some classes load babel with a hardcoded language option. Sometimes, the main language can be overridden with something like that before \documentclass:

```
\PassOptionsToPackage{main=english}{babel}
```

**NOTE** Languages may be set as global and as package option at the same time, but in such a case you should set explicitly the main language with the package option `main`:

```
\documentclass[italian]{book}  
\usepackage[ngerman,main=italian]{babel}
```

**WARNING** In the preamble the main language has *not* been selected, except hyphenation patterns and the name assigned to `\language` (in particular, shorthands, captions and date are not activated). If you need to define boxes and the like in the preamble, you might want to use some of the language selectors described below.

To switch the language there are two basic macros, described below in detail:  
`\selectlanguage` is used for blocks of text, while `\foreignlanguage` is for chunks of text inside paragraphs.

**EXAMPLE** A full bilingual document with pdfTeX follows. The main language is french, which is activated when the document begins. It assumes UTF-8:

PDFTEX

```
\documentclass{article}  
  
\usepackage[T1]{fontenc}  
  
\usepackage[english,french]{babel}  
  
\begin{document}  
  
Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!  
  
\selectlanguage{english}  
  
And an English paragraph, with a short text in  
\foreignlanguage{french}{français}.  
  
\end{document}
```

**EXAMPLE** With xetex and luatex, the following bilingual, single script document in UTF-8 encoding just prints a couple of ‘captions’ and `\today` in Danish and Vietnamese. No additional packages are required, because the default font supports both languages.

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\documentclass{article}  
  
\usepackage[vietnamese,danish]{babel}  
  
\begin{document}  
  
\prefacename, \alsoname, \today.  
  
\selectlanguage{vietnamese}  
  
\prefacename, \alsoname, \today.  
  
\end{document}
```

**NOTE** Once loaded a language, you can select it with the corresponding BCP47 tag. See section 1.22 for further details.

### 1.3 Mostly monolingual documents

**New 3.39** Very often, multilingual documents consist of a main language with small pieces of text in another languages (words, idioms, short sentences). Typically, all you need is to set the line breaking rules and, perhaps, the font. In such a case, babel now does not require declaring these secondary languages explicitly, because the basic settings are loaded on the fly when the language is selected (and also when provided in the optional argument of `\babel font`, if used).

This is particularly useful, too, when there are short texts of this kind coming from an external source whose contents are not known on beforehand (for example, titles in a bibliography). At this regard, it is worth remembering that `\babel font` does *not* load any font until required, so that it can be used just in case.

**New 3.84** With `pdftex`, when a language is loaded on the fly (actually, with `\babel provide`, because this is the macro used internally to load it) selectors now set the font encoding based on the list provided when loading `fontenc`. Not all scripts have an associated encoding, so this feature works only with Latin, Cyrillic, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Cherokee, Armenian, and Georgian, provided a suitable font is found.

**EXAMPLE** A trivial document with the default font in English and Spanish, and FreeSerif in Russian is:

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\documentclass[english]{article}
\usepackage{babel}

\babelfont[russian]{rm}{FreeSerif}

\begin{document}

English. \foreignlanguage{russian}{Русский}.
\foreignlanguage{spanish}{Español}.

\end{document}
```

**NOTE** Instead of its name, you may prefer to select the language with the corresponding BCP47 tag. This alternative, however, must be activated explicitly, because a two- or tree-letter word is a valid name for a language (eg, `lu` can be the locale name with tag `khb` or the tag for `lubakatanga`). See section 1.22 for further details.

### 1.4 Modifiers

**New 3.9c** The basic behavior of some languages can be modified when loading babel by means of *modifiers*. They are set after the language name, and are prefixed with a dot (only when the language is set as package option – neither global options nor the main key accepts them). An example is (spaces are not significant and they can be added or removed):<sup>1</sup>

```
\usepackage[latin.medieval, spanish.notilde.lcroman, danish]{babel}
```

Attributes (described below) are considered modifiers, ie, you can set an attribute by including it in the list of modifiers.

**New 3.89** Alternatively, modifiers can be set with a separate option, with the keyword `modifiers` followed by a dot and the language name (note the language is not selected or loaded with this option). It is useful to activate some feature when the language is declared as a class option:

---

<sup>1</sup>No predefined “axis” for modifiers are provided because languages and their scripts have quite different needs.



```
\documentclass[spanish]{report}
\usepackage[modifiers.spanish = notilde.lcroman]{babel}
```

## 1.5 Troubleshooting

- Loading directly sty files in L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X (ie, `\usepackage{<language>}`) is deprecated and you will get the error:<sup>2</sup>

```
! Package babel Error: You are loading directly a language style.
(babel)                This syntax is deprecated and you must use
(babel)                \usepackage[language]{babel}.
```

- Another typical error when using babel is the following:<sup>3</sup>

```
! Package babel Error: Unknown language `#1'. Either you have
(babel)                misspelled its name, it has not been installed,
(babel)                or you requested it in a previous run. Fix its name,
(babel)                install it or just rerun the file, respectively. In
(babel)                some cases, you may need to remove the aux file
```

The most frequent reason is, by far, the latest (for example, you included spanish, but you realized this language is not used after all, and therefore you removed it from the option list). In most cases, the error vanishes when the document is typeset again, but in more severe ones you will need to remove the aux file.

## 1.6 Plain

In e-Plain and pdf-Plain, load languages styles with `\input` and then use `\begindocument` (the latter is defined by babel):

```
\input estonian.sty
\begindocument
```

**WARNING** Not all languages provide a sty file and some of them are not compatible with those formats. Please, refer to [Using babel with Plain](#) for further details.

## 1.7 Basic language selectors

This section describes the commands to be used in the document to switch the language in multilingual documents. In most cases, only the two basic macros `\selectlanguage` and `\foreignlanguage` are necessary. The environments `otherlanguage`, `otherlanguage*` and `hyphenrules` are auxiliary, and described in the next section.

The main language is selected automatically when the document environment begins.

`\selectlanguage {<language>}`

When a user wants to switch from one language to another he can do so using the macro `\selectlanguage`. This macro takes the language, defined previously by a language definition file, as its argument. It calls several macros that should be defined in the language definition files to activate the special definitions for the language chosen:

<sup>2</sup>In old versions the error read “You have used an old interface to call babel”, not very helpful.

<sup>3</sup>In old versions the error read “You haven’t loaded the language LANG yet”.

```
\selectlanguage{german}
```

This command can be used as environment, too.

**NOTE** For “historical reasons”, a macro name is converted to a language name without the leading \; in other words, `\selectlanguage{\german}` is equivalent to `\selectlanguage{german}`. Using a macro instead of a “real” name is deprecated.

**New 3.43** However, if the macro name does not match any language, it will get expanded as expected.

**NOTE** Bear in mind `\selectlanguage` can be automatically executed, in some cases, in the auxiliary files, at heads and foots, and after the environment `otherlanguage*`.

**WARNING** If used inside braces there might be some non-local changes, as this would be roughly equivalent to:

```
{\selectlanguage{<inner-language>} ...}\selectlanguage{<outer-language>}
```

If you want a change which is really local, you must enclose this code with an additional grouping level.

**WARNING** There are a couple of issues related to the way the language information is written to the auxiliary files:

- `\selectlanguage` should not be used inside some boxed environments (like floats or minipage) to switch the language if you need the information written to the aux be correctly synchronized. This rarely happens, but if it were the case, you must use `otherlanguage` instead.
- In addition, this macro inserts a `\write` in vertical mode, which may break the vertical spacing in some cases (for example, between lists). **New 3.64** The behavior can be adjusted with `\babeladjust{select.write=<mode>}`, where `<mode>` is `shift` (which shifts the skips down and adds a `\penalty`); `keep` (the default – with it the `\write` and the skips are kept in the order they are written), and `omit` (which may seem a too drastic solution, because nothing is written, but more often than not this command is applied to more or less short texts with no sectioning or similar commands and therefore no language synchronization is necessary).

**\foreignlanguage** [`<option-list>`] {`<language>`} {`<text>`}

The command `\foreignlanguage` takes two arguments; the second argument is a phrase to be typeset according to the rules of the language named in its first one.

This command (1) only switches the extra definitions and the hyphenation rules for the language, *not* the names and dates, (2) does not send information about the language to auxiliary files (i.e., the surrounding language is still in force), and (3) it works even if the language has not been set as package option (but in such a case it only sets the hyphenation patterns and a warning is shown). With the `bidi` option, it also enters in horizontal mode (this is not done always for backwards compatibility), and since it is meant for phrases only the text direction (and not the paragraph one) is set.

**New 3.44** As already said, captions and dates are not switched. However, with the optional argument you can switch them, too. So, you can write:

```
\foreignlanguage[date]{polish}{\today}
```

In addition, captions can be switched with `captions` (or both, of course, with `date`, `captions`). Until 3.43 you had to write something like `{\selectlanguage{..} ..}`, which was not always the most convenient way.

## 1.8 Auxiliary language selectors

`\begin{otherlanguage} {<language>} ... \end{otherlanguage}`

The environment `otherlanguage` does basically the same as `\selectlanguage`, except that language change is (mostly) local to the environment. Actually, there might be some non-local changes, as this environment is roughly equivalent to:

```
\begingroup
\selectlanguage{<inner-language>}
...
\endgroup
\selectlanguage{<outer-language>}
```

If you want a change which is really local, you must enclose this environment with an additional grouping, like braces `{}`. Spaces after the environment are ignored.

`\begin{otherlanguage*} [<option-list>]{<language>} ... \end{otherlanguage*}`

Same as `\foreignlanguage` but as environment. Spaces after the environment are *not* ignored.

This environment was originally intended for intermixing left-to-right typesetting with right-to-left typesetting in engines not supporting a change in the writing direction inside a line. However, by default it never complied with the documented behavior and it is just a version as environment of `\foreignlanguage`, except when the option `bidi` is set – in this case, `\foreignlanguage` emits a `\leavevmode`, while `otherlanguage*` does not.

## 1.9 More on selection

`\babeltags {<tag1> = <language1>, <tag2> = <language2>, ...}`

**New 3.9i** In multilingual documents with many language-switches the commands above can be cumbersome. With this tool shorter names can be defined. It adds nothing really new – it is just syntactical sugar.

It defines `\text{<tag1>}{<text>}` to be `\foreignlanguage{<language1>}{<text>}`, and `\begin{<tag1>}` to be `\begin{otherlanguage*}{<language1>}`, and so on. Note `\{<tag1>` is also allowed, but remember to set it locally inside a group.

**WARNING** There is a clear drawback to this feature, namely, the ‘prefix’ `\text...` is heavily overloaded in  $\TeX$  and conflicts with existing macros may arise (`\textlatin`, `\textbar`, `\textit`, `\textcolor` and many others). The same applies to environments, because `arabic` conflicts with `\arabic`. Furthermore, and because of this overloading, detecting the language of a chunk of text by external tools can become unfeasible. Except if there is a reason for this ‘syntactical sugar’, the best option is to stick to the default selectors or to define your own alternatives.

**EXAMPLE** With

```
\babeltags{de = german}
```

you can write

```
text \textde{German text} text
```

and

```
text
\begin{de}
  German text
\end{de}
text
```

**NOTE** Something like `\babeltags{finnish = finnish}` is legitimate – it defines `\textfinnish` and `\finnish` (and, of course, `\begin{finnish}`).

**\babelensure** [`include=<commands>`], [`exclude=<commands>`], [`fontenc=<encoding>`]{<language>}

**New 3.9i** Except in a few languages, like russian, captions and dates are just strings, and do not switch the language. That means you should set it explicitly if you want to use them, or hyphenation (and in some cases the text itself) will be wrong. For example:

```
\foreignlanguage{russian}{text \foreignlanguage{polish}{\seename} text}
```

Of course,  $\TeX$  can do it for you. To avoid switching the language all the while, `\babelensure` redefines the captions for a given language to wrap them with a selector:

```
\babelensure{polish}
```

By default only the basic captions and `\today` are redefined, but you can add further macros with the key `include` in the optional argument (without commas). Macros not to be modified are listed in `exclude`. You can also enforce a font encoding with the option `fontenc`.<sup>4</sup> A couple of examples:

```
\babelensure[include=\Today]{spanish}
\babelensure[fontenc=T5]{vietnamese}
```

They are activated when the language is selected (at the `afterextras` event), and it makes some assumptions which could not be fulfilled in some languages. Note also you should include only macros defined by the language, not global macros (eg,  $\TeX$  of `\dag`). With `ini` files (see below), captions are ensured by default.

## 1.10 Shorthands

A *shorthand* is a sequence of one or two characters that expands to arbitrary  $\TeX$  code. Shorthands can be used for different kinds of things; for example: (1) in some languages shorthands such as "a are defined to be able to hyphenate the word if the encoding is OT1; (2) in some languages shorthands such as ! are used to insert the right amount of white space; (3) several kinds of discretionaries and breaks can be inserted easily with " -, "=", etc. The package `inputenc` as well as `xetex` and `luatex` have alleviated entering non-ASCII characters, but minority languages and some kinds of text can still require characters not directly available on the keyboards (and sometimes not even as separated or precomposed Unicode characters). As to the point 2, now `pdfTeX` provides `\knbcode`, and `luatex` can manipulate the glyph list. Tools for point 3 can be still very useful in general. There are four levels of shorthands: *user*, *language*, *system*, and *language user* (by order of precedence). In most cases, you will use only shorthands provided by languages.

**NOTE** Keep in mind the following:

1. Activated chars used for two-char shorthands cannot be followed by a closing brace } and the spaces following are gobbled. With one-char shorthands (eg, :), they are preserved.

<sup>4</sup>With it, encoded strings may not work as expected.

2. If on a certain level (system, language, user, language user) there is a one-char shorthand, two-char ones starting with that char and on the same level are ignored.
3. Since they are active, a shorthand cannot contain the same character in its definition (except if deactivated with, eg, `\string`).

**TROUBLESHOOTING** A typical error when using shorthands is the following:

```
! Argument of \language@active@arg" has an extra }.
```

It means there is a closing brace just after a shorthand, which is not allowed (eg, `"}`). Just add `{}` after (eg, `"{}}`).

`\shorthandon` `{\shorthands-list}`  
`\shorthandoff` `*{\shorthands-list}`

It is sometimes necessary to switch a shorthand character off temporarily, because it must be used in an entirely different way. For this purpose, the user commands `\shorthandoff` and `\shorthandon` are provided. They each take a list of characters as their arguments. The command `\shorthandoff` sets the `\catcode` for each of the characters in its argument to other (12); the command `\shorthandon` sets the `\catcode` to active (13). Both commands only work on ‘known’ shorthand characters, and an error will be raised otherwise. You can check if a character is a shorthand with `\ifbabelshorthand` (see below).

**New 3.9a** However, `\shorthandoff` does not behave as you would expect with characters like `~` or `^`, because they usually are not “other”. For them `\shorthandoff*` is provided, so that with

```
\shorthandoff*{~^}
```

`~` is still active, very likely with the meaning of a non-breaking space, and `^` is the superscript character. The catcodes used are those when the shorthands are defined, usually when language files are loaded.

If you do not need shorthands, or prefer an alternative approach of your own, you may want to switch them off with the package option `shorthands=off`, as described below.

**WARNING** It is worth emphasizing these macros are meant for temporary changes.

Whenever possible and if there are not conflicts with other packages, shorthands must be always enabled (or disabled).

`\usesshorthands` `*{\char}`

The command `\usesshorthands` initiates the definition of user-defined shorthand sequences. It has one argument, the character that starts these personal shorthands.

**New 3.9a** User shorthands are not always alive, as they may be deactivated by languages (for example, if you use `"` for your user shorthands and switch from german to french, they stop working). Therefore, a starred version `\usesshorthands*{\char}` is provided, which makes sure shorthands are always activated.

Currently, if the package option `shorthands` is used, you must include any character to be activated with `\usesshorthands`. This restriction will be lifted in a future release.

`\defineshorthand` `[\language], \language, ...]{\shorthand}{\code}`

The command `\defineshorthand` takes two arguments: the first is a one- or two-character shorthand sequence, and the second is the code the shorthand should expand to.

**New 3.9a** An optional argument allows to (re)define language and system shorthands (some languages do not activate shorthands, so you may want to add

`\languageshorthands{⟨lang⟩}` to the corresponding `\extras⟨lang⟩`, as explained below). By default, user shorthands are (re)defined. User shorthands override language ones, which in turn override system shorthands. Language-dependent user shorthands (new in 3.9) take precedence over “normal” user shorthands.

**EXAMPLE** Let’s assume you want a unified set of shorthand for discretionary (languages do not define shorthands consistently, and “-”, “\”, “=” have different meanings). You can start with, say:

```
\usesshorthands*{"}
\defineshorthand{"*"}{\babelhyphen{soft}}
\defineshorthand{"-"}{\babelhyphen{hard}}
```

However, the behavior of hyphens is language-dependent. For example, in languages like Polish and Portuguese, a hard hyphen inside compound words are repeated at the beginning of the next line. You can then set:

```
\defineshorthand[*polish,*portuguese]{"-"}{\babelhyphen{repeat}}
```

Here, options with `*` set a language-dependent user shorthand, which means the generic one above only applies for the rest of languages; without `*` they would (re)define the language shorthands instead, which are overridden by user ones.

Now, you have a single unified shorthand (“-”), with a content-based meaning (‘compound word hyphen’) whose visual behavior is that expected in each context.

## `\languageshorthands {⟨language⟩}`

The command `\languageshorthands` can be used to switch the shorthands on the language level. It takes one argument, the name of a language or none (the latter does what its name suggests).<sup>5</sup> Note that for this to work the language should have been specified as an option when loading the babel package. For example, you can use in english the shorthands defined by `ngerman` with

```
\addto\extrasenglish{\languageshorthands{ngerman}}
```

(You may also need to activate them as user shorthands in the preamble with, for example, `\usesshorthands` or `\usesshorthands*`.)

**EXAMPLE** Very often, this is a more convenient way to deactivate shorthands than `\shorthandoff`, for example if you want to define a macro to easy typing phonetic characters with `tipa`:

```
\newcommand{\myipa}[1]{\{\languageshorthands{none}\tipaencoding#1}}
```

## `\babelshorthand {⟨shorthand⟩}`

With this command you can use a shorthand even if (1) not activated in shorthands (in this case only shorthands for the current language are taken into account, ie, not user shorthands), (2) turned off with `\shorthandoff` or (3) deactivated with the internal `\bbl@deactivate`; for example, `\babelshorthand{"u}` or `\babelshorthand{:}`. (You can conveniently define your own macros, or even your own user shorthands provided they do not overlap.)

<sup>5</sup>Actually, any name not corresponding to a language group does the same as none. However, follow this convention because it might be enforced in future releases of babel to catch possible errors.

**EXAMPLE** Since by default shorthands are not activated until `\begin{document}`, you may use this macro when defining the `\title` in the preamble:

```
\title{Documento científico\babelshorthand{"-}técnico}
```

For your records, here is a list of shorthands, but you must double check them, as they may change:<sup>6</sup>

**Languages with no shorthands** Croatian, English (any variety), Indonesian, Hebrew, Interlingua, Irish, Lower Sorbian, Malaysian, North Sami, Romanian, Scottish, Welsh  
**Languages with only " as defined shorthand character** Albanian, Bulgarian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German (old and new orthography, also Austrian), Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese (also Brazilian), Russian, Serbian (with Latin script), Slovene, Swedish, Ukrainian, Upper Sorbian

**Basque** " ' ~  
**Breton** : ; ? !  
**Catalan** " ' `   
**Czech** " -  
**Esperanto** ^  
**Estonian** " ~  
**French** (all varieties) : ; ? !  
**Galician** " . ' ~ < >  
**Greek** ~  
**Hungarian** `  
**Kurmanji** ^  
**Latin** " ^ =  
**Slovak** " ^ ' -  
**Spanish** " . < > ' ~  
**Turkish** : ! =

In addition, the babel core declares ~ as a one-char shorthand which is let, like the standard ~, to a non breaking space.<sup>7</sup>

`\ifbabelshorthand`  $\langle character \rangle \{ \langle true \rangle \} \{ \langle false \rangle \}$

**New 3.23** Tests if a character has been made a shorthand.

## 1.11 Package options

**New 3.9a** These package options are processed before language options, so that they are taken into account irrespective of its order. The first three options have been available in previous versions.

**KeepShorthandsActive** Tells babel not to deactivate shorthands after loading a language file, so that they are also available in the preamble.

**activeacute** For some languages babel supports this options to set ' as a shorthand in case it is not done by default.

**activegrave** Same for `.

**shorthands=**  $\langle char \rangle \langle char \rangle \dots$  | off

The only language shorthands activated are those given, like, eg:

<sup>6</sup>Thanks to Enrico Gregorio

<sup>7</sup>This declaration serves to nothing, but it is preserved for backward compatibility.

```
\usepackage[esperanto,french,shorthands=:;!?]{babel}
```

If ' is included, activeacute is set; if ` is included, activegrave is set. Active characters (like ~) should be preceded by \string (otherwise they will be expanded by  $\TeX$  before they are passed to the package and therefore they will not be recognized); however, t is provided for the common case of ~ (as well as c for not so common case of the comma). With shorthands=off no language shorthands are defined, As some languages use this mechanism for tools not available otherwise, a macro \babelshorthand is defined, which allows using them; see above.

**safe=** none | ref | bib

Some  $\TeX$  macros are redefined so that using shorthands is safe. With safe=bib only \nocite, \bibcite and \bibitem are redefined. With safe=ref only \newlabel, \ref and \pageref are redefined (as well as a few macros from varioref and ifthen). With safe=none no macro is redefined. This option is strongly recommended, because a good deal of incompatibilities and errors are related to these redefinitions. As of **New 3.34**, in  $\epsilon\TeX$  based engines (ie, almost every engine except the oldest ones) shorthands can be used in these macros (formerly you could not).

**math=** active | normal

Shorthands are mainly intended for text, not for math. By setting this option with the value normal they are deactivated in math mode (default is active) and things like  $\{a'\}$  (a closing brace after a shorthand) are not a source of trouble anymore.

**config=** *<file>*

Load *<file>.cfg* instead of the default config file `bblopts.cfg` (the file is loaded even with `noconfigs`).

**main=** *<language>*

Sets the main language, as explained above, ie, this language is always loaded last. If it is not given as package or global option, it is added to the list of requested languages.

**headfoot=** *<language>*

By default, headlines and footlines are not touched (only marks), and if they contain language-dependent macros (which is not usual) there may be unexpected results. With this option you may set the language in heads and foots. An alternative is to set the language explicitly when heads and foots are redefined.

**noconfigs** Global and language default config files are not loaded, so you can make sure your document is not spoilt by an unexpected .cfg file. However, if the key config is set, this file is loaded.

**showlanguages** Prints to the log the list of languages loaded when the format was created: number (remember dialects can share it), name, hyphenation file and exceptions file.

**silent** **New 3.9l** No warnings and no *infos* are written to the log file.<sup>8</sup>

**hyphenmap=** off | first | select | other | other\*

**New 3.9g** Sets the behavior of case mapping for hyphenation, provided the language defines it.<sup>9</sup> It can take the following values:

<sup>8</sup>You can use alternatively the package silence.

<sup>9</sup>Turned off in plain.



**off** deactivates this feature and no case mapping is applied;  
**first** sets it at the first switching commands in the current or parent scope (typically, when the aux file is first read and at `\begin{document}`), but also the first `\selectlanguage` in the preamble), and it's the default if a single language option has been stated,<sup>10</sup>  
**select** sets it only at `\selectlanguage`;  
**other** also sets it at `otherlanguage`;  
**other\*** also sets it at `otherlanguage*` as well as in heads and foots (if the option `headfoot` is used) and in auxiliary files (ie, at `\select@language`), and it's the default if several language options have been stated. The option `first` can be regarded as an optimized version of `other*` for monolingual documents.<sup>11</sup>

**bidi=** default | basic | basic-r | bidi-l | bidi-r

**New 3.14** Selects the bidi algorithm to be used in luatex and xetex. See sec. 1.24.

**layout=**

**New 3.16** Selects which layout elements are adapted in bidi documents. See sec. 1.24.

**provide=** \*

**New 3.49** An alternative to `\babelprovide` for languages passed as options. See section 1.13, which describes also the variants `provide+=` and `provide*=`.

## 1.12 The base option

With this package option `babel` just loads some basic macros (those in `switch.def`), defines `\AfterBabelLanguage` and exits. It also selects the hyphenation patterns for the last language passed as option (by its name in `language.dat`). There are two main uses: classes and packages, and as a last resort in case there are, for some reason, incompatible languages. It can be used if you just want to select the hyphenation patterns of a single language, too.

**\AfterBabelLanguage** `{<option-name>}{<code>}`

This command is currently the only provided by `base`. Executes `<code>` when the file loaded by the corresponding package option is finished (at `\ldf@finish`). The setting is global. So

```
\AfterBabelLanguage{french}{...}
```

does ... at the end of `french.ldf`. It can be used in `ldf` files, too, but in such a case the code is executed only if `<option-name>` is the same as `\CurrentOption` (which could not be the same as the option name as set in `\usepackage!`).

**EXAMPLE** Consider two languages `foo` and `bar` defining the same `\macro` with `\newcommand`. An error is raised if you attempt to load both. Here is a way to overcome this problem:

```
\usepackage[base]{babel}
\AfterBabelLanguage{foo}{%
  \let\macroFoo\macro
  \let\macro\relax}
\usepackage[foo,bar]{babel}
```

<sup>10</sup>Duplicated options count as several ones.

<sup>11</sup>Providing foreign is pointless, because the case mapping applied is that at the end of the paragraph, but if either xetex or luatex change this behavior it might be added. On the other hand, `other` is provided even if I [JBL] think it isn't really useful, but who knows.

**NOTE** With a recent version of  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , an alternative method to execute some code just after an `ldf` file is loaded is with `\AddToHook` and the hook `file/<language>.ldf/after`. Babel does not predeclare it, and you have to do it yourself with `\ActivateGenericHook`.

**WARNING** Currently this option is not compatible with languages loaded on the fly.

### 1.13 ini files

An alternative approach to define a language (or, more precisely, a *locale*) is by means of an `ini` file. Currently babel provides about 250 of these files containing the basic data required for a locale, plus basic templates for 500 about locales.

`ini` files are not meant only for babel, and they have been devised as a resource for other packages. To easy interoperability between  $\text{\TeX}$  and other systems, they are identified with the BCP 47 codes as preferred by the Unicode Common Locale Data Repository, which was used as source for most of the data provided by these files, too (the main exception being the `\...name` strings).

Most of them set the date, and many also the captions (Unicode and LICR). They will be evolving with the time to add more features (something to keep in mind if backward compatibility is important). The following section shows how to make use of them by means of `\babelprovide`. In other words, `\babelprovide` is mainly meant for auxiliary tasks, and as alternative when the `ldf`, for some reason, does not work as expected.

**EXAMPLE** Although Georgian has its own `ldf` file, here is how to declare this language with an `ini` file in Unicode engines.

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\documentclass{book}

\usepackage{babel}
\babelprovide[import, main]{georgian}

\babelfont{rm}[Renderer=Harfbuzz]{DejaVu Sans}

\begin{document}

\tableofcontents

\chapter{სამშარეულო და სუფრის ტრადიციები}

ქართული ტრადიციული სამშარეულო ერთ-ერთი უმდიდრესია მთელ მსოფლიოში.

\end{document}
```

**MORE** There is an example of how to use a template `ini` file [here](#), for Phoenician.

**New 3.49** Alternatively, you can tell babel to load all or some languages passed as options with `\babelprovide` and not from the `ldf` file in a few typical cases. Thus, `provide=*` means ‘load the main language with the `\babelprovide` mechanism instead of the `ldf` file’ applying the basic features, which in this case means `import`, `main`. There are (currently) three options:

- `provide=*` is the option just explained, for the main language;
- `provide+=*` is the same for additional languages (the main language is still the `ldf` file);
- `provide*=*` is the same for all languages, ie, main and additional.

**EXAMPLE** The preamble in the previous example can be more compactly written as:

```
\documentclass{book}
\usepackage[georgian, provide=*]{babel}
\babelfont{rm}[Renderer=Harfbuzz]{DejaVu Sans}
```

Or also:

```
\documentclass[georgian]{book}
\usepackage[provide=*]{babel}
\babelfont{rm}[Renderer=Harfbuzz]{DejaVu Sans}
```

**NOTE** The ini files just define and set some parameters, but the corresponding behavior is not always implemented. Also, there are some limitations in the engines. A few remarks follow (which could no longer be valid when you read this manual, if the packages involved have been updated). The Harfbuzz renderer has still some issues, so as a rule of thumb prefer the default renderer, and resort to Harfbuzz only if the former does not work for you. Fortunately, fonts can be loaded twice with different renderers; for example:

```
\babelfont[spanish]{rm}{FreeSerif}
\babelfont[hindi]{rm}[Renderer=Harfbuzz]{FreeSerif}
```

**Arabic** Monolingual documents mostly work in luatex, but it must be fine tuned, particularly math and graphical elements like picture. In xetex babel resorts to the bidi package, which seems to work.

**Hebrew** Niqqud marks seem to work in both engines, but depending on the font cantillation marks might be misplaced (xetex or luatex with Harfbuzz seems better).

**Devanagari** In luatex and the the default renderer many fonts work, but some others do not, the main issue being the ‘ra’. You may need to set explicitly the script to either deva or dev2, eg:

```
\newfontscript{Devanagari}{deva}
```

Other Indic scripts are still under development in the default luatex renderer, but should work with `Renderer=Harfbuzz`. They also work with xetex, although unlike with luatex fine tuning the font behavior is not always possible.

**Southeast scripts** Thai works in both luatex and xetex, but line breaking differs (rules are hard-coded in xetex, but they can be modified in luatex). Lao seems to work, too, but there are no patterns for the latter in luatex. Khemer clusters are rendered wrongly with the default renderer. The comment about Indic scripts and luatex also applies here. Some quick patterns can help, with something similar to:

```
\babelprovide[import, hyphenrules=+]{lao}
\babelpatterns[lao]{1໐ 1໑ 1໒ 1໓ 1໔ 1໕} % Random
```

**East Asia scripts** Settings for either Simplified or Traditional should work out of the box, with basic line breaking with any renderer. Although for a few words and short texts the ini files should be fine, CJK texts are best set with a dedicated framework (CJK, luatexja, kotex, CTeX, etc.). This is what the class `ltjbook` does with luatex, which can be used in conjunction with the `ldf` for japanese, because the following piece of code loads luatexja:

```
\documentclass[japanese]{ltjbook}
\usepackage{babel}
```

**Latin, Greek, Cyrillic** Combining chars with the default luatex font renderer might be wrong; on the other hand, with the Harfbuzz renderer diacritics are stacked correctly, but many hyphenation points are discarded (this bug is related to kerning, so it depends on the font). With xetex both combining characters and hyphenation work as expected (not quite, but in most cases it works; the problem here are font clusters).

**NOTE** Wikipedia defines a *locale* as follows: “In computing, a locale is a set of parameters that defines the user’s language, region and any special variant preferences that the user wants to see in their user interface. Usually a locale identifier consists of at least a language code and a country/region code.” Babel is moving gradually from the old and fuzzy concept of *language* to the more modern of *locale*. Note each locale is by itself a separate “language”, which explains why there are so many files. This is on purpose, so that possible variants can be created and/or redefined easily.

Here is the list (u means Unicode captions, and l means LICR captions):

---

aa	Afar	ca	Catalan <sup>ul</sup>
ab	Abkhazian	cch	Atsam
af	Afrikaans <sup>ul</sup>	ce	Chechen
agq	Aghem	cgg	Chiga
ak	Akan	chr	Cherokee
am	Amharic <sup>ul</sup>	ckb-Arab	Central Kurdish <sup>u</sup>
ar-DZ	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	ckb-Latn	Central Kurdish <sup>u</sup>
ar-EG	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	ckb	Central Kurdish <sup>u</sup>
ar-IQ	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	co	Corsican
ar-JO	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	cop	Coptic
ar-LB	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	cs	Czech <sup>ul</sup>
ar-MA	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	cu-Cyrs	Church Slavic <sup>u</sup>
ar-PS	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	cu-Glag	Church Slavic
ar-SA	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	cu	Church Slavic <sup>u</sup>
ar-SY	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	cy	Welsh <sup>ul</sup>
ar-TN	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	da	Danish <sup>ul</sup>
ar	Arabic <sup>u</sup>	dav	Taita
as	Assamese <sup>u</sup>	de-1901	German <sup>ul</sup>
asa	Asu	de-1996	German <sup>ul</sup>
ast	Asturian <sup>ul</sup>	de-AT-1901	Austrian German <sup>ul</sup>
az-Cyrl	Azerbaijani	de-AT-1996	Austrian German <sup>ul</sup>
az-Latn	Azerbaijani	de-AT	Austrian German <sup>ul</sup>
az	Azerbaijani <sup>ul</sup>	de-CH-1901	Swiss High German <sup>ul</sup>
bal	Baluchi	de-CH-1996	Swiss High German <sup>ul</sup>
bas	Basaa	de-CH	Swiss High German <sup>ul</sup>
be	Belarusian <sup>ul</sup>	de	German <sup>ul</sup>
bem	Bemba	dje	Zarma
bez	Bena	dsb	Lower Sorbian <sup>ul</sup>
bg	Bulgarian <sup>ul</sup>	dua	Duala
bgc	Haryanvi	dyo	Jola-Fonyi
bho	Bhojpuri	dz	Dzongkha
bm	Bambara	ebu	Embu
bn	Bangla <sup>u</sup>	ee	Ewe
bo	Tibetan <sup>u</sup>	el-polyton	Polytonic Greek <sup>ul</sup>
br	Breton <sup>ul</sup>	el	Greek <sup>ul</sup>
brx	Bodo	en-AU	Australian English <sup>ul</sup>
bs-Cyrl	Bosnian	en-CA	Canadian English <sup>ul</sup>
bs-Latn	Bosnian <sup>ul</sup>	en-GB	British English <sup>ul</sup>
bs	Bosnian <sup>ul</sup>	en-NZ	English <sup>ul</sup>
byn	Blin	en-US	American English <sup>ul</sup>

en	English <sup>ul</sup>	kgp	Kaingang
eo	Esperanto <sup>ul</sup>	khq	Koyra Chiini
es-MX	Mexican Spanish <sup>ul</sup>	ki	Kikuyu
es	Spanish <sup>ul</sup>	kk	Kazakh
et	Estonian <sup>ul</sup>	kkj	Kako
eu	Basque <sup>ull</sup>	kl	Kalaallisut
ewo	Ewondo	kln	Kalenjin
fa	Persian <sup>u</sup>	km	Khmer <sup>u</sup>
ff	Fulah	kmr-Arab	Northern Kurdish <sup>u</sup>
fi	Finnish <sup>ul</sup>	kmr-Latn	Northern Kurdish <sup>ul</sup>
fil	Filipino	kmr	Northern Kurdish <sup>ul</sup>
fo	Faroese	kn	Kannada <sup>u</sup>
fr-BE	French <sup>ul</sup>	ko-Hani	Korean <sup>u</sup>
fr-CA	Canadian French <sup>ul</sup>	ko	Korean <sup>u</sup>
fr-CH	Swiss French <sup>ul</sup>	kok	Konkani
fr-LU	French <sup>ul</sup>	ks	Kashmiri
fr-x-acadian	Acadian <sup>ul</sup>	ksb	Shambala
fr	French <sup>ul</sup>	ksf	Bafia
fur	Friulian <sup>ul</sup>	ksh	Colognian
fy	Western Frisian	kw	Cornish
ga	Irish <sup>ul</sup>	ky	Kyrgyz
gaa	Ga	la-x-classic	Classical Latin <sup>ul</sup>
gd	Scottish Gaelic <sup>ul</sup>	la-x-ecclesia	Ecclesiastical Latin <sup>ul</sup>
gez	Geez	la-x-medieval	Medieval Latin <sup>ul</sup>
gl	Galician <sup>ul</sup>	la	Latin <sup>ul</sup>
gn	Guarani	lag	Langi
grc	Ancient Greek <sup>ul</sup>	lb	Luxembourgish <sup>ul</sup>
gsw	Swiss German	lg	Ganda
gu	Gujarati	lij	Ligurian
guz	Gusii	lkt	Lakota
gv	Manx	ln	Lingala
ha-GH	Hausa	lo	Lao <sup>u</sup>
ha-NE	Hausa	lrc	Northern Luri
ha	Hausa <sup>ul</sup>	lt	Lithuanian <sup>ulll</sup>
haw	Hawaiian	lu	Luba-Katanga
he	Hebrew <sup>ul</sup>	luo	Luo
hi	Hindi <sup>u</sup>	luy	Luyia
hr	Croatian <sup>ul</sup>	lv	Latvian <sup>ul</sup>
hsb	Upper Sorbian <sup>ul</sup>	mas	Masai
hu	Hungarian <sup>ulll</sup>	mer	Meru
hy	Armenian <sup>ul</sup>	mfe	Morisyen
ia	Interlingua <sup>ul</sup>	mg	Malagasy
id	Indonesian <sup>ul</sup>	mgh	Makhuwa-Meetto
ig	Igbo	mgo	Meta'
ii	Sichuan Yi	mk	Macedonian <sup>ul</sup>
is	Icelandic <sup>ul</sup>	ml	Malayalam <sup>u</sup>
it	Italian <sup>ul</sup>	mn	Mongolian
iu	Inuktitut	mr	Marathi <sup>u</sup>
ja	Japanese <sup>u</sup>	ms-BN	Malay
jgo	Ngomba	ms-SG	Malay
jmc	Machame	ms	Malay <sup>ul</sup>
ka	Georgian <sup>u</sup>	mt	Maltese
kab	Kabyle	mua	Mundang
kaj	Jju	mus	Muscogee
kam	Kamba	my	Burmese
kcg	Tyap	myv	Erzya
kde	Makonde	mzn	Mazanderani
kea	Kabuverdianu	naq	Nama

nb	Norwegian Bokmål <sup>ul</sup>	si	Sinhala <sup>u</sup>
nd	North Ndebele	sk	Slovak <sup>ul</sup>
ne	Nepali	sl	Slovenian <sup>ul</sup>
nl	Dutch <sup>ul</sup>	smn	Inari Sami
nmg	Kwasio	sn	Shona
nn	Norwegian Nynorsk <sup>ul</sup>	so	Somali
nnh	Ngiemboon	sq	Albanian <sup>ul</sup>
no	Norwegian <sup>ul</sup>	sr-Cyrl-BA	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
nqo	N'Ko	sr-Cyrl-ME	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
nr	South Ndebele	sr-Cyrl-XK	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
nso	Northern Sotho	sr-Cyrl	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
nus	Nuer	sr-ijekavsk	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
ny	Nyanja	sr-Latn-BA	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
nyn	Nyankole	sr-Latn-ijekavsk	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
oc	Occitan <sup>ul</sup>	sr-Latn-ME	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
om	Oromo	sr-Latn-XK	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
or	Odia	sr-Latn	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
os	Ossetic	sr	Serbian <sup>ul</sup>
pa-Arab	Punjabi	ss	Swati
pa-Guru	Punjabi <sup>u</sup>	ssy	Saho
pa	Punjabi <sup>u</sup>	st	Southern Sotho
pap	Papiamentu	sv	Swedish <sup>ul</sup>
pl	Polish <sup>ul</sup>	sw	Swahili
pms	Piedmontese <sup>ul</sup>	syr	Syriac
prg	Prussian	szl	Silesian
ps	Pashto	ta	Tamil <sup>u</sup>
pt-BR	Brazilian Portuguese <sup>ul</sup>	te	Telugu <sup>u</sup>
pt-PT	European Portuguese <sup>ul</sup>	teo	Teso
pt	Portuguese <sup>ul</sup>	th	Thai <sup>ul</sup>
qu	Quechua	ti	Tigrinya
raj	Rajasthani	tig	Tigre
rm	Romansh <sup>ul</sup>	tk	Turkmen <sup>ul</sup>
rn	Rundi	tn	Tswana
ro-MD	Moldavian <sup>ul</sup>	to	Tongan
ro	Romanian <sup>ul</sup>	tpi	Tok Pisin
rof	Rombo	tr	Turkish <sup>ul</sup>
ru	Russian <sup>ul</sup>	trv	Taroko
rw	Kinyarwanda	ts	Tsonga
rwk	Rwa	twq	Tasawaq
sa-Beng	Sanskrit	tzm	Central Atlas Tamazight
sa-Deva	Sanskrit	ug	Uyghur <sup>u</sup>
sa-Gujr	Sanskrit	uk	Ukrainian <sup>ul</sup>
sa-Knda	Sanskrit	ur	Urdu <sup>u</sup>
sa-Mlym	Sanskrit	uz-Arab	Uzbek
sa-Telu	Sanskrit	uz-Cyrl	Uzbek
sa	Sanskrit	uz-Latn	Uzbek
sah	Sakha	uz	Uzbek
saq	Samburu	vai-Latn	Vai
sbp	Sangu	vai-Vaii	Vai
sc	Sardinian	vai	Vai
scn	Sicilian	ve	Venda
se	Northern Sami <sup>ul</sup>	vi	Vietnamese <sup>ul</sup>
seh	Sena	vo	Volapük
ses	Koyraboro Senni	vun	Vunjo
sg	Sango	wae	Walser
shi-Latn	Tachelhit	wal	Wolaytta
shi-Tfng	Tachelhit	xog	Soga
shi	Tachelhit	yav	Yangben

yi	Yiddish	zh-Hans-SG	Chinese
yo	Yoruba	zh-Hans	Chinese <sup>u</sup>
yrl	Nheengatu	zh-Hant-HK	Chinese
yue	Cantonese	zh-Hant-MO	Chinese
zgh	Standard Moroccan Tamazight	zh-Hant	Chinese <sup>u</sup>
zh-Hans-HK	Chinese	zh	Chinese <sup>u</sup>
zh-Hans-MO	Chinese	zu	Zulu

In some contexts (currently `\babel font`) an ini file may be loaded by its name. Here is the list of the names currently supported. With these languages, `\babel font` loads (if not done before) the language and script names (even if the language is defined as a package option with an ldf file). These are also the names recognized by `\babel provide` with a valueless `import`.

abkhazian	azerbaijani-latin	chinese-hant
acadian	azerbaijani-latn	chinese-hant-hk
afar	bafia	chinese-hant-mo
afrikaans	baluchi	chinese-simplified
aghem	bambara	chinese-simplified-
akan	bangla	hongkongsarchina
albanian	basaa	chinese-simplified-
american	basque	macausarchina
americanenglish	belarusian	chinese-simplified-singapore
amharic	bemba	chinese-traditional
ancientgreek	bena	chinese-traditional-
arabic	bengali	hongkongsarchina
arabic-algeria	bhojpuri	chinese-traditional-
arabic-dz	blin	macausarchina
arabic-eg	bodo	churchslavic
arabic-egypt	bosnian	churchslavic-cyrs
arabic-iq	bosnian-cyrillic	churchslavic-glag
arabic-iraq	bosnian-cyrl	churchslavic-glagolitic
arabic-jo	bosnian-latin	churchslavic-oldcyrillic <sup>12</sup>
arabic-jordan	bosnian-latn	churchsslavic-glag
arabic-lb	brazilian	churchslavonic
arabic-lebanon	brazilianportuguese	classicallatin
arabic-ma	breton	cognian
arabic-morocco	british	coptic
arabic-palestinianterritories	britishenglish	cornish
arabic-ps	bulgarian	corsican
arabic-sa	burmese	croatian
arabic-saudiarabia	canadian	czech
arabic-sy	canadianenglish	danish
arabic-syria	cantonese	duala
arabic-tn	catalan	dutch
arabic-tunisia	centralatlastamazight	dzongkha
armenian	centralkurdish	ecclesiasticallatin
assamese	centralkurdish-latin	embu
asturian	centralkurdish-latn	english
asu	chechen	english-au
atsam	cherokee	english-australia
australian	chiga	english-ca
australianenglish	chinese	english-canada
austrian	chinese-hans	english-gb
azerbaijani	chinese-hans-hk	english-newzealand
azerbaijani-cyrillic	chinese-hans-mo	english-nz
azerbaijani-cyrl	chinese-hans-sg	english-unitedkingdom

<sup>12</sup>The name in the CLDR is Old Church Slavonic Cyrillic, but it has been shortened for practical reasons.

english-unitedstates	kabuverdianu	naustrian
english-us	kabyle	nepali
erzya	kaingang	newzealand
esperanto	kako	ngerman
estonian	kalaallisut	ngiemboon
europeanportuguese	kalenjin	ngomba
ewe	kamba	nheengatu
ewondo	kannada	nko
faroesee	kashmiri	norsk
farsi	kazakh	northernkurdish
filipino	khmer	northernkurdish-arab
finnish	kikuyu	northernkurdish-arabic
french	kinyarwanda	northernluri
french-be	konkani	northernsami
french-belgium	korean	northernsotho
french-ca	korean-han	northndebele
french-canada	korean-hani	norwegian
french-canadianfrench	koyraborosenni	norwegianbokmal
french-ch	koyrachiini	norwegiannynorsk
french-lu	kurmanji	nswissgerman
french-luxembourg	kwasio	nuer
french-swissfrench	kyrgyz	nyanja
french-switzerland	lakota	nyankole
friulian	langi	nynorsk
fulah	lao	occitan
ga	latin	odia
galician	latvian	oriya
ganda	ligurian	oromo
geez	lingala	ossetic
georgian	lithuanian	papiamento
german	lowersorbian	pashto
german-at	lubakatanga	persian
german-austria	luo	piedmontese
german-austria-traditional	luxembourgish	polish
german-ch	luyia	polytonicgreek
german-switzerland	macedonian	portuguese
german-switzerland-traditional	machame	portuguese-br
german-traditional	makhuwameetto	portuguese-brazil
greek	makonde	portuguese-portugal
guarani	malagasy	portuguese-pt
gujarati	malay	prussian
gusii	malay-bn	punjabi
haryanvi	malay-brunei	punjabi-arab
hausa	malay-sg	punjabi-arabic
hausa-gh	malay-singapore	punjabi-gurmukhi
hausa-ghana	malayalam	punjabi-guru
hausa-ne	maltese	quechua
hausa-niger	manx	rajasthani
hawaiian	marathi	romanian
hebrew	masai	romanian-md
hindi	mazanderani	romanian-moldova
hungarian	medievallatin	romansh
icelandic	meru	rombo
igbo	meta	rundi
inarisami	mexican	russian
indonesian	mexicanspanish	rwa
interlingua	moldavian	saho
inuktitut	mongolian	sakha
irish	monotonicgreek	samburu
italian	morisyen	sango
japanese	mundang	sangu
jju	muscogee	sanskrit
jolafonyi	nama	sanskrit-bangla



sanskrit-beng	shona	tokpisin
sanskrit-bengali	sichuanyi	tongan
sanskrit-deva	sicilian	tsonga
sanskrit-devanagari	silesian	tswana
sanskrit-gujarati	sinhala	turkish
sanskrit-gujr	slovak	turkmen
sanskrit-kannada	slovene	tyap
sanskrit-knda	slovenian	ukenglish
sanskrit-malayalam	soga	ukrainian
sanskrit-mlym	somali	uppertsorbian
sanskrit-telu	sorani	urdu
sanskrit-telugu	southernsotho	usenglish
sardinian	southndebele	uyghur
scottishgaelic	spanish	uzbek
sen	spanish-mexico	uzbek-arab
serbian	spanish-mx	uzbek-arabic
serbian-cyrillic	standardmoroccantamazight	uzbek-cyrillic
serbian-cyrillic-	swahili	uzbek-cyrl
bosniaherzegovina	swati	uzbek-latin
serbian-cyrillic-kosovo	swedish	uzbek-latn
serbian-cyrillic-montenegro	swissgerman	vai
serbian-cyrl	swisshighgerman	vai-latin
serbian-cyrl-ba	syriac	vai-latn
serbian-cyrl-me	tachelhit	vai-vai
serbian-cyrl-xk	tachelhit-latin	vai-vaii
serbian-ijekavsk	tachelhit-latn	venda
serbian-latin	tachelhit-tfng	vietnamese
serbian-latin-	tachelhit-tifinagh	volapuk
bosniaherzegovina	taita	vunjo
serbian-latin-kosovo	tamil	walser
serbian-latin-montenegro	taroko	welsh
serbian-latn	tasawaq	westernfrisian
serbian-latn-ba	telugu	wolaytta
serbian-latn-ijekavsk	teso	yangben
serbian-latn-me	thai	yiddish
serbian-latn-xk	tibetan	yoruba
serbianc	tigre	zarma
shambala	tigrinya	zulu

## Modifying and adding values to ini files

**New 3.39** There is a way to modify the values of ini files when they get loaded with `\babelprovide` and `import`. To set, say, `digits.native` in the numbers section, use something like `numbers/digits.native=abcdefghijkl`. Keys may be added, too. Without `import` you may modify the identification keys.

This can be used to create private variants easily. All you need is to import the same ini file with a different locale name and different parameters.

## 1.14 Selecting fonts

**New 3.15** Babel provides a high level interface on top of `fontspec` to select fonts. There is no need to load `fontspec` explicitly – babel does it for you with the first `\babel font`.<sup>13</sup>

`\babel font` [*<language-list>*] [*<font-family>*] [*<font-options>*] [*<font-name>*]

**NOTE** See the note in the previous section about some issues in specific languages.

The main purpose of `\babel font` is to define at once in a multilingual document the fonts required by the different languages, with their corresponding language systems (script and language). So, if you load, say, 4 languages, `\babel font{rm}{FreeSerif}` defines 4 fonts

<sup>13</sup>See also the package `combofont` for a complementary approach.

(with their variants, of course), which are switched with the language by babel. It is a tool to make things easier and transparent to the user.

Here *font-family* is *rm*, *sf* or *tt* (or newly defined ones, as explained below), and *font-name* is the same as in fontspec and the like.

If no language is given, then it is considered the default font for the family, activated when a language is selected.

On the other hand, if there is one or more languages in the optional argument, the font will be assigned to them, overriding the default one. Alternatively, you may set a font for a script – just precede its name (lowercase) with a star (eg, *\*devanagari*). With this optional argument, the font is *not* yet defined, but just predeclared. This means you may define as many fonts as you want ‘just in case’, because if the language is never selected, the corresponding `\babel font` declaration is just ignored.

Babel takes care of the font language and the font script when languages are selected (as well as the writing direction); see the recognized languages above. In most cases, you will not need *font-options*, which is the same as in fontspec, but you may add further key/value pairs if necessary.

**EXAMPLE** Usage in most cases is very simple. Let us assume you are setting up a document in Swedish, with some words in Hebrew, with a font suited for both languages.

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\documentclass{article}

\usepackage[swedish, bidi=default]{babel}

\babelprovide[import]{hebrew}

\babelfont{rm}{FreeSerif}

\begin{document}

Svenska \foreignlanguage{hebrew}{עברית} svenska.

\end{document}
```

If on the other hand you have to resort to different fonts, you can replace the red line above with, say:

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\babelfont{rm}{Iwona}
\babelfont[hebrew]{rm}{FreeSerif}
```

`\babel font` can be used to implicitly define a new font family. Just write its name instead of *rm*, *sf* or *tt*. This is the preferred way to select fonts in addition to the three basic families.

**EXAMPLE** Here is how to do it:

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\babelfont{kai}{FandolKai}
```

Now, `\kaifamily` and `\kaidefault`, as well as `\textkai` are at your disposal.

**NOTE** You may load fontspec explicitly. For example:

LUATEX/XETEX

```
\usepackage{fontspec}
\newfontscript{Devanagari}{deva}
\babelfont[hindi]{rm}{Shobhika}
```

This makes sure the OpenType script for Devanagari is `deva` and not `dev2`, in case it is not detected correctly. You may also pass some options to `fontspec`: with `silent`, the warnings about unavailable scripts or languages are not shown (they are only really useful when the document format is being set up).

**NOTE** Directionality is a property affecting margins, indentation, column order, etc., not just text. Therefore, it is under the direct control of the language, which applies both the script and the direction to the text. As a consequence, there is no need to set `Script` when declaring a font with `\babel font` (nor `Language`). In fact, it is even discouraged.

**NOTE** `\fontspec` is not touched at all, only the preset font families (`rm`, `sf`, `tt`, and the like). If a language is switched when an *ad hoc* font is active, or you select the font with this command, neither the script nor the language is passed. You must add them by hand. This is by design, for several reasons—for example, each font has its own set of features and a generic setting for several of them can be problematic, and also preserving a “lower-level” font selection is useful.

**NOTE** The keys `Language` and `Script` just pass these values to the *font*, and do *not* set the script for the *language* (and therefore the writing direction). In other words, the `ini` file or `\babel provide` provides default values for `\babel font` if omitted, but the opposite is not true. See the note above for the reasons of this behavior.

**WARNING** Using `\setxxxxfont` and `\babel font` at the same time is discouraged, but very often works as expected. However, be aware with `\setxxxxfont` the language system will not be set by `babel` and should be set with `fontspec` if necessary.

**TROUBLESHOOTING** *Package babel Info: The following fonts are not babel standard families.*

**This is *not* an error.** `babel` assumes that if you are using `\babel font` for a family, very likely you want to define the rest of them. If you don’t, you can find some inconsistencies between families. This checking is done at the beginning of the document, at a point where we cannot know which families will be used.

Actually, there is no real need to use `\babel font` in a monolingual document, if you set the language system in `\setmainfont` (or not, depending on what you want).

As the message explains, *there is nothing intrinsically wrong* with not defining all the families. In fact, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with not using `\babel font` at all. But you must be aware that this may lead to some problems.

**NOTE** `\babel font` is a high level interface to `fontspec`, and therefore in `xetex` you can apply Mappings. For example, there is a set of [transliterations for Brahmic scripts](#) by Davis M. Jones. After installing them in your distribution, just set the map as you would do with `fontspec`.

## 1.15 Modifying a language

Modifying the behavior of a language (say, the chapter “caption”), is sometimes necessary, but not always trivial. In the case of caption names a specific macro is provided, because this is perhaps the most frequent change:

`\setlocalecaption`  $\{\langle\text{language-name}\rangle\}\{\langle\text{caption-name}\rangle\}\{\langle\text{string}\rangle\}$

**New 3.51** Here *caption-name* is the name as string without the trailing name. An example, which also shows caption names are often a stylistic choice, is:

```
\setlocalecaption{english}{contents}{Table of Contents}
```

This works not only with existing caption names, because it also serves to define new ones by setting the *caption-name* to the name of your choice (name will be postpended). Captions so defined or redefined behave with the ‘new way’ described in the following note.

**NOTE** There are a few alternative methods:

- With data import'ed from ini files, you can modify the values of specific keys, like:

```
\babelprovide[import, captions/listtable = Lista de tablas]{spanish}
```

(In this particular case, instead of the captions group you may need to modify the captions.licr one.)

- The 'old way', still valid for many languages, to redefine a caption is the following:

```
\addto\captionenglish{%  
  \renewcommand\contentsname{Foo}%  
}
```

As of 3.15, there is no need to hide spaces with % (babel removes them), but it is advisable to do so. This redefinition is not activated until the language is selected.

- The 'new way', which is found in bulgarian, azerbaijani, spanish, french, turkish, icelandic, vietnamese and a few more, as well as in languages created with \babelprovide and its key import, is:

```
\renewcommand\spanishchaptername{Foo}
```

This redefinition is immediate.

**NOTE** Do *not* redefine a caption in the following way:

```
\AtBeginDocument{\renewcommand\contentsname{Foo}}
```

The changes may be discarded with a language selector, and the original value restored.

Macros to be run when a language is selected can be add to \extras⟨lang⟩:

```
\addto\extrasrussian{\mymacro}
```

There is a counterpart for code to be run when a language is unselected: \noextras⟨lang⟩.

**NOTE** These macros (\captions⟨lang⟩, \extras⟨lang⟩) may be redefined, but *must not* be used as such – they just pass information to babel, which executes them in the proper context.

Another way to modify a language loaded as a package or class option is by means of \babelprovide, described below in depth. So, something like:

```
\usepackage[danish]{babel}  
\babelprovide[captions=da, hyphenrules=nohyphenation]{danish}
```

first loads danish.ldf, and then redefines the captions for danish (as provided by the ini file) and prevents hyphenation. The rest of the language definitions are not touched. Without the optional argument it just loads some additional tools if provided by the ini file, like extra counters.

## 1.16 Creating a language

**New 3.10** And what if there is no style for your language or none fits your needs? You may then define quickly a language with the help of the following macro in the preamble (which may be used to modify an existing language, too, as explained in the previous subsection).

`\babelprovide` [*options*]{*language-name*}

If the language *language-name* has not been loaded as class or package option and there are no *options*, it creates an “empty” one with some defaults in its internal structure: the hyphen rules, if not available, are set to the current ones, left and right hyphen mins are set to 2 and 3. In either case, caption, date and language system are not defined.

If no ini file is imported with `import`, *language-name* is still relevant because in such a case the hyphenation and like breaking rules (including those for South East Asian and CJK) are based on it as provided in the ini file corresponding to that name; the same applies to OpenType language and script.

Conveniently, some options allow to fill the language, and babel warns you about what to do if there is a missing string. Very likely you will find alerts like that in the log file:

```
Package babel Warning: \chaptername not set for 'mylang'. Please,
(babel)                define it after the language has been loaded
(babel)                (typically in the preamble) with:
(babel)                \setlocalecaption{mylang}{chapter}{..}
(babel)                Reported on input line 26.
```

In most cases, you will only need to define a few macros. Note languages loaded on the fly are not yet available in the preamble.

**EXAMPLE** If you need a language named arhinish:

```
\usepackage[danish]{babel}
\babelprovide{arhinish}
\setlocalecaption{arhinish}{chapter}{Chapitula}
\setlocalecaption{arhinish}{refname}{Refirenke}
\renewcommand\arhinishhyphenmins{22}
```

**EXAMPLE** Sometimes treating the IPA as a language makes sense:

```
\documentclass{article}
\usepackage[english]{babel}
\babelprovide{ipa}
\babelfont[ipa]{rm}{DejaVu Sans}
\begin{document}
Blah \foreignlanguage{ipa}{ɔ:l'ðəʊ} Blah.
\end{document}
```

Then you can define shorthands, transforms (if luatex), and so on.

**EXAMPLE** Locales with names based on BCP 47 codes can be created with something like:

```
\babelprovide[import=en-US]{enUS}
```

Note, however, mixing ways to identify locales can lead to problems. For example, is yi the name of the language spoken by the Yi people or is it the code for Yiddish?

The main language is not changed (danish in this example). So, you must add `\selectlanguage{arhinish}` or other selectors where necessary.

If the language has been loaded as an argument in `\documentclass` or `\usepackage`, then `\babelprovide` redefines the requested data.

**import=** *<language-tag>*

**New 3.13** Imports data from an ini file, including captions and date (also line breaking rules in newly defined languages). For example:

```
\babelprovide[import=hu]{hungarian}
```

Unicode engines load the UTF-8 variants, while 8-bit engines load the LICR (ie, with macros like `\'` or `\ss`) ones.

**New 3.23** It may be used without a value, and that is often the recommended option. In such a case, the ini file set in the corresponding `babel-<language>.tex` (where `<language>` is the last argument in `\babelprovide`) is imported. See the list of recognized languages above. So, the previous example is best written as:

```
\babelprovide[import]{hungarian}
```

There are about 250 ini files, with data taken from the ldf files and the CLDR provided by Unicode. Not all languages in the latter are complete, and therefore neither are the ini files. A few languages may show a warning about the current lack of suitability of some features.

Besides `\today`, this option defines an additional command for dates: `\<language>date`, which takes three arguments, namely, year, month and day numbers. In fact, `\today` calls `\<language>today`, which in turn calls

`\<language>date{\the\year}{\the\month}{\the\day}`. **New 3.44** More convenient is usually `\localdate`, which prints the date for the current locale.

**captions=** *<language-tag>*

Loads only the strings. For example:

```
\babelprovide[captions=hu]{hungarian}
```

**hyphenrules=** *<language-list>*

With this option, with a space-separated list of hyphenation rules, babel assigns to the language the first valid hyphenation rules in the list. For example:

```
\babelprovide[hyphenrules=chavacano spanish italian]{chavacano}
```

If none of the listed hyphenrules exist, the default behavior applies. Note in this example we set `chavacano` as first option, which can seem redundant, but without it, it would select `spanish` even if `chavacano` exists.

A special value is `+`, which allocates a new language (in the  $\TeX$  sense). It only makes sense as the last value (or the only one; the subsequent ones are silently ignored). It is mostly useful with `luatex`, because you can add some patterns with `\babelpatterns`, as for example:

```
\babelprovide[hyphenrules=+]{neo}  
\babelpatterns[neo]{a1 e1 i1 o1 u1}
```

In other engines it just suppresses hyphenation (because the pattern list is empty).

**New 3.58** Another special value is `unhyphenated`, which is an alternative to `justification=unhyphenated`.

**main** This valueless option makes the language the main one (thus overriding that set when babel is loaded). Only in newly defined languages.

**EXAMPLE** Let's assume your document (xetex or luatex) is mainly in Polytonic Greek with but with some sections in Italian. Then, the first attempt should be:

```
\usepackage[italian, greek.polutoniko]{babel}
```

But if, say, accents in Greek are not shown correctly, you can try

```
\usepackage[italian, polytonicgreek, provide=*]{babel}
```

Remember there is an alternative syntax for the latter:

```
\usepackage[italian]{babel}  
\babelprovide[import, main]{polytonicgreek}
```

Finally, also remember you might not need to load `italian` at all if there are only a few word in this language (see 1.3).

**script=** *<script-name>*

**New 3.15** Sets the script name to be used by fontspec (eg, Devanagari). Overrides the value in the ini file. If fontspec does not define it, then babel sets its tag to that provided by the ini file. This value is particularly important because it sets the writing direction, so you must use it if for some reason the default value is wrong.

**language=** *<language-name>*

**New 3.15** Sets the language name to be used by fontspec (eg, Hindi). Overrides the value in the ini file. If fontspec does not define it, then babel sets its tag to that provided by the ini file. Not so important, but sometimes still relevant.

**alph=** *<counter-name>*

Assigns to `\alph` that counter. See the next section.

**Alph=** *<counter-name>*

Same for `\Alph`.

A few options (only luatex) set some properties of the writing system used by the language. These properties are *always* applied to the script, no matter which language is active. Although somewhat inconsistent, this makes setting a language up easier in most typical cases.

**onchar=** `ids` | `fonts` | `letters`

**New 3.38** This option is much like an ‘event’ called when a character belonging to the script of this locale is found (as its name implies, it acts on characters, not on spaces). There are currently two ‘actions’, which can be used at the same time (separated by a space): with `ids` the `\language` and the `\localeid` are set to the values of this locale; with `fonts`, the fonts are changed to those of this locale (as set with `\babelfont`). Characters can be added or modified with `\babelcharproperty`.

**New 3.81** Option `letters` restricts the ‘actions’ to letters, in the  $\mathrm{T}_{\mathrm{E}}\mathrm{X}$  sense (i. e., with catcode 11). Digits and punctuation are then considered part of current locale (as set by a selector). This option is useful when the main script is non-Latin and there is a secondary one whose script is Latin.

**NOTE** An alternative approach with `luatex` and `Harfbuzz` is the font option `RawFeature={multiscript=auto}`. It does not switch the `babel` language and therefore the line breaking rules, but in many cases it can be enough.

**NOTE** There is no general rule to set the font for a punctuation mark, because it is a semantic decision and not a typographical one. Consider the following sentence: “یک, دو, and سه are Persian numbers”. In this case the punctuation font must be the English one, even if the commas are surrounded by non-Latin letters. Quotation marks, parenthesis, etc., are even more complex. Several criteria are possible, like the main language (the default in `babel`), the first letter in the paragraph, or the surrounding letters, among others, but even so manual switching can be still necessary.

**intraspace=** `<base> <shrink> <stretch>`

Sets the interword space for the writing system of the language, in em units (so, `0.1 0` is `0em` plus `.1em`). Like `\spaceskip`, the em unit applied is that of the current text (more precisely, the previous glyph). Currently used only in Southeast Asian scripts, like Thai, and CJK.

**intrapenalty=** `<penalty>`

Sets the interword penalty for the writing system of this language. Currently used only in Southeast Asian scripts, like Thai. Ignored if 0 (which is the default value).

**transforms=** `<transform-list>`

See section 1.21.

**justification=** `unhyphenated | kashida | elongated | padding`

**New 3.59** There are currently 4 options. Note they are language dependent, so that they will not be applied to other languages.

The first one (`unhyphenated`) activates a line breaking mode that allows spaces to be stretched to arbitrary amounts. Although for European standards the result may look odd, in some writing systems, like Malayalam and other Indic scripts, this has been the customary (although not always the desired) practice. Because of that, no locale sets currently this mode by default (Amharic is an exception). Unlike `\sloppy`, the `\hfuzz` and the `\vfuzz` are not changed, because this line breaking mode is not really ‘sloppy’ (in other words, overfull boxes are reported as usual).

The second and the third are for the Arabic script. It sets the linebreaking and justification method, which can be based on the the ARABIC TATWEEL character or in the ‘justification alternatives’ OpenType table (`jalt`). For an explanation see the [babel site](#).

**New 3.81** The option `padding` has been devised primarily for Tibetan. It’s still somewhat experimental. Again, there is an explanation in the [babel site](#).

**linebreaking=** **New 3.59** Just a synonymous for `justification`.

**NOTE** (1) If you need shorthands, you can define them with `\usesshorthands` and `\defineshorthand` as described above. (2) Captions and `\today` are “ensured” with `\babelensure` (this is the default in ini-based languages).

## 1.17 Digits and counters

**New 3.20** About thirty ini files define a field named `digits.native`. When it is present, two macros are created: `\<language>digits` and `\<language>counter` (only `xetex` and `luatex`). With the first, a string of ‘Latin’ digits are converted to the native digits of that language; the second takes a counter name as argument. With the option `maparabic` in `\babelprovide`, `\arabic` is redefined to produce the native digits (this is done *globally*, to



avoid inconsistencies in, for example, page numbering, and note as well dates do not rely on `\arabic`.)  
For example:

```
\babelprovide[import]{telugu}
% Or also, if you want:
% \babelprovide[import, maparabic]{telugu}
\babelfont{rm}{Gautami} % With luatex, better with Harfbuzz
\begin{document}
\telugudigits{1234}
\telugucounter{section}
\end{document}
```

Languages providing native digits in all or some variants are:

Arabic	Persian	Lao	Odia	Urdu
Assamese	Gujarati	Northern Luri	Punjabi	Uzbek
Bangla	Hindi	Malayalam	Pashto	Vai
Tibetar	Khmer	Marathi	Tamil	Cantonese
Bodo	Kannada	Burmese	Telugu	Chinese
Central Kurdish	Konkani	Mazanderani	Thai	
Dzongkha	Kashmiri	Nepali	Uyghur	

**New 3.30** With luatex there is an alternative approach for mapping digits, namely, `mapdigits`. Conversion is based on the language and it is applied to the typeset text (not math, PDF bookmarks, etc.) before bidi and fonts are processed (ie, to the node list as generated by the T<sub>E</sub>X code). This means the local digits have the correct bidirectional behavior (unlike `Numbers=Arabic` in fontspec, which is not recommended).

**NOTE** With xetex you can use the option `Mapping` when defining a font.

```
\localnumeral {\style}{\number}
\localecounter {\style}{\counter}
```

**New 3.41** Many ‘ini’ locale files has been extended with information about non-positional numerical systems, based on those predefined in CSS. They only work with xetex and luatex and are fully expendable (even inside an unprotected `\edef`). Currently, they are limited to numbers below 10000.  
There are several ways to use them (for the available styles in each language, see the list below):

- `\localnumeral{\style}{\number}`, like `\localnumeral{abjad}{15}`
- `\localecounter{\style}{\counter}`, like `\localecounter{lower}{section}`
- In `\babelprovide`, as an argument to the keys `alph` and `Alph`, which redefine what `\alph` and `\Alph` print. For example:

```
\babelprovide[alph=alphabetic]{thai}
```

The styles are:

**Ancient Greek** `lower.ancient`, `upper.ancient`  
**Amharic** `afar`, `agaw`, `ari`, `blin`, `dizi`, `gedeo`, `gumuz`, `hadiyya`, `harari`, `kaffa`, `kebena`, `kembata`, `konso`, `kunama`, `meen`, `oromo`, `saho`, `sidama`, `silti`, `tigre`, `wolaita`, `yemsa`  
**Arabic** `abjad`, `maghrebi.abjad`  
**Armenian** `lower.letter`, `upper.letter`  
**Belarusan, Bulgarian, Church Slavic, Macedonian, Serbian** `lower`, `upper`

**Bangla** alphabetic  
**Central Kurdish** alphabetic  
**Chinese** cjk-earthly-branch, cjk-heavenly-stem, circled.ideograph, parenthesized.ideograph, fullwidth.lower.alpha, fullwidth.upper.alpha  
**Church Slavic (Glagolitic)** letters  
**Coptic** epact, lower.letters  
**French** date.day (mainly for internal use).  
**Georgian** letters  
**Greek** lower.modern, upper.modern, lower.ancient, upper.ancient (all with keraia)  
**Hebrew** letters (neither geresh nor gershayim yet)  
**Hindi** alphabetic  
**Italian** lower.legal, upper.legal  
**Japanese** hiragana, hiragana.iroha, katakana, katakana.iroha, circled.katakana, informal, formal, cjk-earthly-branch, cjk-heavenly-stem, circled.ideograph, parenthesized.ideograph, fullwidth.lower.alpha, fullwidth.upper.alpha  
**Khmer** consonant  
**Korean** consonant, syllable, hanja.informal, hanja.formal, hangul.formal, cjk-earthly-branch, cjk-heavenly-stem, circled.ideograph, parenthesized.ideograph, fullwidth.lower.alpha, fullwidth.upper.alpha  
**Marathi** alphabetic  
**Persian** abjad, alphabetic  
**Russian** lower, lower.full, upper, upper.full  
**Syriac** letters  
**Tamil** ancient  
**Thai** alphabetic  
**Ukrainian** lower, lower.full, upper, upper.full

**New 3.45** In addition, native digits (in languages defining them) may be printed with the numeral style digits.

## 1.18 Dates

**New 3.45** When the data is taken from an ini file, you may print the date corresponding to the Gregorian calendar and other lunisolar systems with the following command.

**\localedate** [*<calendar=.., variant=.., convert>*]{*<year>*}{*<month>*}{*<day>*}

By default the calendar is the Gregorian, but an ini file may define strings for other calendars (currently ar, ar-\*, he, fa, hi). In the latter case, the three arguments are the year, the month, and the day in those in the corresponding calendar. They are *not* the Gregorian data to be converted (which means, say, 13 is a valid month number with calendar=hebrew and calendar=coptic). However, with the option convert it's converted (using internally the following command).

Even with a certain calendar there may be variants. In Kurmanji the default variant prints something like *30. Çileyä Pêşîn 2019*, but with variant=iza fa it prints *31'ê Çileyä Pêşînê 2019*.

**\babelcalendar** [*<date>*]{*<calendar>*}{*<year-macro>*}{*<month-macro>*}{*<day-macro>*}

**New 3.76** Although calendars aren't the primary concern of babel, the package should be able to, at least, generate correctly the current date in the way users would expect in their own culture. Currently, \localedate can print dates in a few calendars (provided the ini locale file has been imported), but year, month and day had to be entered by hand, which is very inconvenient. With this macro, the current date is converted and stored in the three last arguments, which must be macros. Allowed calendars are

buddhist	ethiopic	islamic-civil	persian
coptic	hebrew	islamic-umalqura	

The optional argument converts the given date, in the form ‘*year*’-*month*’-*day*’. Please, refer to the page on the news for 3.76 in the babel site for further details.

## 1.19 Accessing language info

**\language** The control sequence `\language` contains the name of the current language.

**WARNING** Due to some internal inconsistencies in catcodes, it should *not* be used to test its value. Use `iflang`, by Heiko Oberdiek.

**\iflanguage** `{\language}{\true}{\false}`

If more than one language is used, it might be necessary to know which language is active at a specific time. This can be checked by a call to `\iflanguage`, but note here “language” is used in the T<sub>E</sub>X sense, as a set of hyphenation patterns, and *not* as its babel name. This macro takes three arguments. The first argument is the name of a language; the second and third arguments are the actions to take if the result of the test is true or false respectively.

**\localeinfo** `*{\field}`

**New 3.38** If an ini file has been loaded for the current language, you may access the information stored in it. This macro is fully expandable, and the available fields are:

**name.english** as provided by the Unicode CLDR.

**tag.ini** is the tag of the ini file (the way this file is identified in its name).

**tag.bcp47** is the full BCP 47 tag (see the warning below). This is the value to be used for the ‘real’ provided tag (babel may fill other fields if they are considered necessary).

**language.tag.bcp47** is the BCP 47 language tag.

**tag.opentype** is the tag used by OpenType (usually, but not always, the same as BCP 47).

**script.name**, as provided by the Unicode CLDR.

**script.tag.bcp47** is the BCP 47 tag of the script used by this locale. This is a required field for the fonts to be correctly set up, and therefore it should be always defined.

**script.tag.opentype** is the tag used by OpenType (usually, but not always, the same as BCP 47).

**region.tag.bcp47** is the BCP 47 tag of the region or territory. Defined only if the locale loaded actually contains it (eg, es-MX does, but es doesn’t), which is how locales behave in the CLDR. **New 3.75**

**variant.tag.bcp47** is the BCP 47 tag of the variant (in the BCP 47 sense, like 1901 for German). **New 3.75**

**extension.⟨s⟩.tag.bcp47** is the BCP 47 value of the extension whose singleton is ⟨s⟩ (currently the recognized singletons are x, t and u). The internal syntax can be somewhat complex, and this feature is still somewhat tentative. An example is `classicallatin` which sets `extension.x.tag.bcp47` to `classic`. **New 3.75**

**WARNING** **New 3.46** As of version 3.46 `tag.bcp47` returns the full BCP 47 tag. Formerly it returned just the language subtag, which was clearly counterintuitive.

**New 3.75** Sometimes, it comes in handy to be able to use `\localeinfo` in an expandable way even if something went wrong (for example, the locale currently active is undefined). For these cases, `localeinfo*` just returns an empty string instead of raising an error. Bear in mind that babel, following the CLDR, may leave the region unset, which means `\getlocaleproperty*`, described below, is the preferred command, so that the existence of a field can be checked before. This also means building a string with the language and the region with `\localeinfo*{language.tab.bcp47}` - `\localeinfo*{region.tab.bcp47}` is not usually a good idea (because of the hyphen).

`\getlocaleproperty`  $\ast\{\langle macro\rangle\}\{\langle locale\rangle\}\{\langle property\rangle\}$

**New 3.42** The value of any locale property as set by the ini files (or added/modified with `\babelprovide`) can be retrieved and stored in a macro with this command. For example, after:

```
\getlocaleproperty\hechap{hebrew}{captions/chapter}
```

the macro `\hechap` will contain the string פרק.

If the key does not exist, the macro is set to `\relax` and an error is raised. **New 3.47** With the starred version no error is raised, so that you can take your own actions with undefined properties.

`\localeid` Each language in the babel sense has its own unique numeric identifier, which can be retrieved with `\localeid`.

The `\localeid` is not the same as the `\language` identifier, which refers to a set of hyphenation patterns (which, in turn, is just a component of the line breaking algorithm described in the next section). The data about preloaded patterns are stored in an internal macro named `\bbl@languages` (see the code for further details), but note several locales may share a single `\language`, so they are separated concepts. In `luatex`, the `\localeid` is saved in each node (when it makes sense) as an attribute, too.

`\LocaleForEach`  $\{\langle code\rangle\}$

Babel remembers which ini files have been loaded. There is a loop named `\LocaleForEach` to traverse the list, where `#1` is the name of the current item, so that `\LocaleForEach{\message{ **#1** }}` just shows the loaded ini's.

`ensureinfo=off` **New 3.75** Previously, ini files were loaded only with `\babelprovide` and also when languages are selected if there is a `\babelfont` or they have not been explicitly declared. Now the ini files are loaded (and therefore the corresponding data) even if these two conditions are not met (in previous versions you had to enable it with `\BabelEnsureInfo` in the preamble). Because of the way this feature works, problems are very unlikely, but there is a switch as a package option to turn the new behavior off (`ensureinfo=off`).

## 1.20 Hyphenation and line breaking

Babel deals with three kinds of line breaking rules: Western, typically the LGC group, South East Asian, like Thai, and CJK, but support depends on the engine: `pdftex` only deals with the former, `xetex` also with the second one (although in a limited way), while `luatex` provides basic rules for the latter, too. With `luatex` there are also tools for non-standard hyphenation rules, explained in the next section.

`\babelhyphen`  $\ast\{\langle type\rangle\}$

`\babelhyphen`  $\ast\{\langle text\rangle\}$

**New 3.9a** It is customary to classify hyphens in two types: (1) *explicit* or *hard hyphens*, which in  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  are entered as `-`, and (2) *optional* or *soft hyphens*, which are entered as `\-`. Strictly, a *soft hyphen* is not a hyphen, but just a breaking opportunity or, in  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  terms, a “discretionary”; a *hard hyphen* is a hyphen with a breaking opportunity after it. A further type is a *non-breaking hyphen*, a hyphen without a breaking opportunity. In  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$ , `-` and `\-` forbid further breaking opportunities in the word. This is the desired behavior very often, but not always, and therefore many languages provide shorthands for these cases. Unfortunately, this has not been done consistently: for example, `-` in Dutch, Portuguese, Catalan or Danish is a hard hyphen, while in German, Spanish, Norwegian, Slovak or Russian is a soft hyphen. Furthermore, some of them even redefine `\-`, so that you cannot insert a soft hyphen without breaking opportunities in the rest of the word. Therefore, some macros are provided with a set of basic “hyphens” which can be used by themselves, to define a user shorthand, or even in language files.

- `\babelhyphen{soft}` and `\babelhyphen{hard}` are self explanatory.
- `\babelhyphen{repeat}` inserts a hard hyphen which is repeated at the beginning of the next line, as done in languages like Polish, Portuguese and Spanish.
- `\babelhyphen{nobreak}` inserts a hard hyphen without a break after it (even if a space follows).
- `\babelhyphen{empty}` inserts a break opportunity without a hyphen at all.
- `\babelhyphen{<text>}` is a hard “hyphen” using `<text>` instead. A typical case is `\babelhyphen{/}`.

With all of them, hyphenation in the rest of the word is enabled. If you don’t want to enable it, there is a starred counterpart: `\babelhyphen*{soft}` (which in most cases is equivalent to the original `\-`), `\babelhyphen*{hard}`, etc.

Note `hard` is also good for isolated prefixes (eg, *anti-*) and `nobreak` for isolated suffixes (eg, *-ism*), but in both cases `\babelhyphen*{nobreak}` is usually better.

There are also some differences with  $\TeX$ : (1) the character used is that set for the current font, while in  $\TeX$  it is hardwired to `-` (a typical value); (2) the hyphen to be used in fonts with a negative `\hyphenchar` is `-`, like in  $\TeX$ , but it can be changed to another value by redefining `\babelnullhyphen`; (3) a break after the hyphen is forbidden if preceded by a glue  $>0$  pt (at the beginning of a word, provided it is not immediately preceded by, say, a parenthesis).

**`\babelhyphenation`** [`<language>`], [`<language>`], ... [`<exceptions>`]

**New 3.9a** Sets hyphenation exceptions for the languages given or, without the optional argument, for *all* languages (eg, proper nouns or common loan words, and of course monolingual documents). Multiple declarations work much like `\hyphenation` (last wins), but language exceptions take precedence over global ones.

It can be used only in the preamble, and exceptions are set when the language is first selected, thus taking into account changes of `\lccodes`’s done in `\extras<lang>` as well as the language-specific encoding (not set in the preamble by default). Multiple `\babelhyphenation`’s are allowed. For example:

```
\babelhyphenation{Wal-hal-la Dar-bhan-ga}
```

Listed words are saved expanded and therefore it relies on the LICR. Of course, it also works without the LICR if the input and the font encodings are the same, like in Unicode based engines.

**NOTE** Using `\babelhyphenation` with Southeast Asian scripts is mostly pointless. But with `\babelpatterns` (below) you may fine-tune line breaking (only `luatex`). Even if there are no patterns for the language, you can add at least some typical cases.

**NOTE** Use `\babelhyphenation` instead of `\hyphenation` to set hyphenation exceptions in the preamble before any language is explicitly set with a selector. In the preamble the hyphenation rules are not always fully set up and an error can be raised.

**`\begin{hyphenrules}`** [`<language>`] ... **`\end{hyphenrules}`**

The environment `hyphenrules` can be used to select *only* the hyphenation rules to be used (it can be used as command, too). This can for instance be used to select ‘nohyphenation’, provided that in `language.dat` the ‘language’ `nohyphenation` is defined by loading `zerohyph.tex`. It deactivates language shorthands, too (but not user shorthands).

Except for these simple uses, `hyphenrules` is deprecated and `otherlanguage*` (the starred version) is preferred, because the former does not take into account possible changes in encodings of characters like, say, ‘`’`’ done by some languages (eg, *italian*, *french*, *ukrainian*).

`\babelpatterns` [*<language>* , *<language>* , ... ] { *<patterns>* }

**New 3.9m** *In luatex only*,<sup>14</sup> adds or replaces patterns for the languages given or, without the optional argument, for *all* languages. If a pattern for a certain combination already exists, it gets replaced by the new one.

It can be used only in the preamble, and patterns are added when the language is first selected, thus taking into account changes of `\lccodes`’s done in `\extras<lang>` as well as the language-specific encoding (not set in the preamble by default). Multiple `\babelpatterns`’s are allowed.

Listed patterns are saved expanded and therefore it relies on the LICR. Of course, it also works without the LICR if the input and the font encodings are the same, like in Unicode based engines.

**New 3.31** (Only luatex.) With `\babelprovide` and imported CJK languages, a simple generic line breaking algorithm (push-out-first) is applied, based on a selection of the Unicode rules (**New 3.32** it is disabled in verbatim mode, or more precisely when the `hyphenrules` are set to `nohyphenation`). It can be activated alternatively by setting explicitly the `intraspace`.

**New 3.27** Interword spacing for Thai, Lao and Khemer is activated automatically if a language with one of those scripts are loaded with `\babelprovide`. See the sample on the babel repository. With both Unicode engines, spacing is based on the “current” em unit (the size of the previous char in luatex, and the font size set by the last `\selectfont` in xetex).

## 1.21 Transforms

Transforms (only luatex) provide a way to process the text on the typesetting level in several language-dependent ways, like non-standard hyphenation, special line breaking rules, script to script conversion, spacing conventions and so on.<sup>15</sup>

It currently embraces `\babelprehyphenation` and `\babelposthyphenation`.

**New 3.57** Several ini files predefine some transforms. They are activated with the key `transforms` in `\babelprovide`, either if the locale is being defined with this macro or the languages has been previously loaded as a class or package option, as the following example illustrates:

```
\usepackage[hungarian]{babel}
\babelprovide[transforms = digraphs.hyphen]{hungarian}
```

**New 3.67** Transforms predefined in the ini locale files can be made attribute-dependent, too. When an attribute between parenthesis is inserted subsequent transforms will be assigned to it (up to the list end or another attribute). For example, and provided an attribute called `\withsigmafinal` has been declared:

```
transforms = transliteration.omega (\withsigmafinal) sigma.final
```

This applies `transliteration.omega` always, but `sigma.final` only when `\withsigmafinal` is set.

Here are the transforms currently predefined. (A few may still require some fine-tuning. More to follow in future releases.)

---

Arabic	<code>transliteration.dad</code>	Applies the transliteration system devised by Yannis Haralambous for dad (simple and T <sub>E</sub> X-friendly). Not yet complete, but sufficient for most texts.
--------	----------------------------------	---

---

<sup>14</sup>With luatex exceptions and patterns can be modified almost freely. However, this is very likely a task for a separate package and babel only provides the most basic tools.

<sup>15</sup>They are similar in concept, but not the same, as those in Unicode. The main inspiration for this feature is the Omega transformation processes.

Croatian	<code>digraphs.ligatures</code>	Ligatures <i>DŽ, Dž, dž, LJ, Lj, lj, NJ, Nj, nj</i> . It assumes they exist. This is not the recommended way to make these transformations (the best way is with OTF features), but it can get you out of a hurry.
Czech, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish	<code>hyphen.repeat</code>	Explicit hyphens behave like <code>\babelhyphen{repeat}</code> .
Czech, Polish, Slovak	<code>oneletter.nobreak</code>	Converts a space after a non-syllabic preposition or conjunction into a non-breaking space.
Finnish	<code>prehyphen.nobreak</code>	Line breaks just after hyphens prepended to words are prevented, like in “pakastekaapit ja -arkut”.
Greek	<code>diaeresis.hyphen</code>	Removes the diaeresis above iota and upsilon if hyphenated just before. It works with the three variants.
Greek	<code>transliteration.omega</code>	Although the provided combinations are not the full set, this transform follows the syntax of Omega: = for the circumflex, v for digamma, and so on. For better compatibility with Levy’s system, ~ (as ‘string’) is an alternative to =. ' is tonos in Monotonic Greek, but oxia in Polytonic and Ancient Greek.
Greek	<code>sigma.final</code>	The transliteration system above does not convert the sigma at the end of a word (on purpose). This transform does it. To prevent the conversion (an abbreviation, for example), write "s.
Hindi, Sanskrit	<code>transliteration.hk</code>	The Harvard-Kyoto system to romanize Devanagari.
Hindi, Sanskrit	<code>punctuation.space</code>	Inserts a space before the following four characters: !?;:.
Hungarian	<code>digraphs.hyphen</code>	Hyphenates the long digraphs <i>ccs, ddz, ggy, lly, nny, ssz, tty</i> and <i>zzs</i> as <i>cs-cs, dz-dz</i> , etc.
Indic scripts	<code>danda.nobreak</code>	Prevents a line break before a danda or double danda if there is a space. For Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, Telugu.
Latin	<code>digraphs.ligatures</code>	Replaces the groups <i>ae, AE, oe, OE</i> with <i>æ, Æ, œ, Œ</i> .
Latin	<code>letters.noj</code>	Replaces <i>j, J</i> with <i>i, I</i> .
Latin	<code>letters.uv</code>	Replaces <i>v, U</i> with <i>u, V</i> .
Sanskrit	<code>transliteration.iast</code>	The IAST system to romanize Devanagari. <sup>16</sup>
Serbian	<code>transliteration.gajica</code>	(Note serbian with ini files refers to the Cyrillic script, which is here the target.) The standard system devised by Ljudevit Gaj.
Arabic, Persian	<code>kashida.plain</code>	Experimental. A very simple and basic transform for ‘plain’ Arabic fonts, which attempts to distribute the tatwil as evenly as possible (starting at the end of the line). See the news for version 3.59.



`\babelposthyphenation` [*options*]{*hyphenrules-name*}{*lua-pattern*}{*replacement*}

**New 3.37-3.39** With *luatex* it is possible to define non-standard hyphenation rules, like  $f-f \rightarrow ff-f$ , repeated hyphens, ranked ruled (or more precisely, ‘penalized’ hyphenation points), and so on. A few rules are currently provided (see above), but they can be defined as shown in the following example, where {1} is the first captured char (between ( ) in the pattern):

```
\babelposthyphenation{german}{([fmtrp]) | {1}}
{
  { no = {1}, pre = {1}{1}- }, % Replace first char with disc
  remove,                    % Remove automatic disc (2nd node)
  {}                          % Keep last char, untouched
}
```

In the replacements, a captured char may be mapped to another, too. For example, if the first capture reads ( [ íú ] ), the replacement could be {1|íú|íú}, which maps *í* to *í*, and *ú* to *ú*, so that the diaeresis is removed.

This feature is activated with the first `\babelposthyphenation` or `\babelprehyphenation`.

**New 3.85** Another option is `label`, which takes a value similar to those in `\babelprovide` key transforms (in fact, the latter just applies this option). This label can be used to turn on and off transforms with a higher level interface, by means of `\enablelocaletransform` and `\disablelocaletransform` (see below).

**New 3.85** When used in conjunction with `label`, this key makes a transform font dependent. As an example, the rules for Arabic kashida can differ depending on the font design. The value consists in a list of space-separated font tags:

```
\babelprehyphenation[label=transform.name, fonts=rm sf]{..}{..}
```

Tags can adopt two forms: a family, such as `rm` or `tt`, or the set family/series/shape. If a font matches one of these conditions, the transform is enabled. The second tag in `rm rm/n/it` is redundant. There are no wildcards; so, for italics you may want to write something like `sf/m/it sf/b/it`.

Transforms set for specific fonts (at least once in any language) are always reset with a font selector.

In `\babelprovide`, transform labels can be tagged before its name, with a list separated with colons, like:

```
transforms = rm:sf:transform.name
```

**New 3.67** With the optional argument you can associate a user defined transform to an attribute, so that it's active only when it's set (currently its attribute value is ignored). With this mechanism transforms can be set or unset even in the middle of paragraphs, and applied to single words. To define, set and unset the attribute, the LaTeX kernel provides the macros `\newattribute`, `\setattribute` and `\unsetattribute`. The following example shows how to use it, provided an attribute named `\latinnoj` has been declared:

```
\babelprehyphenation[attribute=\latinnoj]{latin}{ J }{ string = I }
```

See the [babel site](#) for a more detailed description and some examples. It also describes a few additional replacement types (`string`, `penalty`).

Although the main purpose of this command is non-standard hyphenation, it may actually be used for other transformations (after hyphenation is applied, so you must take discretionaries into account).

You are limited to substitutions as done by lua, although a future implementation may alternatively accept lpeg.



`\babelprehyphenation` [*<options>*]{*<locale-name>*}{*<lua-pattern>*}{*<replacement>*}

**New 3.44-3-52** It is similar to the latter, but (as its name implies) applied before hyphenation, which is particularly useful in transliterations. There are other differences: (1) the first argument is the locale instead of the name of the hyphenation patterns; (2) in the search patterns = has no special meaning, while | stands for an ordinary space; (3) in the replacement, discretionaries are not accepted.

See the description above for the optional argument.

This feature is activated with the first `\babelposthyphenation` or `\babelprehyphenation`.

**EXAMPLE** You can replace a character (or series of them) by another character (or series of them). Thus, to enter ž as zh and š as sh in a newly created locale for transliterated Russian:

```
\babelprovide[hyphenrules=+]{russian-latin} % Create locale
\babelprehyphenation{russian-latin}{([sz])h} % Create rule
{
  string = {1|sz|šž},
  remove
}
```

**EXAMPLE** The following rule prevent the word “a” from being at the end of a line:

```
\babelprehyphenation{english}{|a|}
{ }, { }, % Keep first space and a
{ insert, penalty = 10000 }, % Insert penalty
{ } % Keep last space
}
```

**NOTE** With luatex there is another approach to make text transformations, with the function `fonts.handlers.otf.addfeature`, which adds new features to an OTF font (substitution and positioning). These features can be made language-dependent, and babel by default recognizes this setting if the font has been declared with `\babel font`. The *transforms* mechanism supplements rather than replaces OTF features.

With xetex, where *transforms* are not available, there is still another approach, with font mappings, mainly meant to perform encoding conversions and transliterations. Mappings, however, are linked to fonts, not to languages.

`\enablelocaletransform` {*<label>*}

`\disablelocaletransform` {*<label>*}

**New 3.85** Enables and disables the transform with the given label in the current language.

## 1.22 Selection based on BCP 47 tags

**New 3.43** The recommended way to select languages is that described at the beginning of this document. However, BCP 47 tags are becoming customary, particularly in documents (or parts of documents) generated by external sources, and therefore babel will provide a set of tools to select the locales in different situations, adapted to the particular needs of each case. Currently, babel provides autoloading of locales as described in this section. In these contexts autoloading is particularly important because we may not know on beforehand which languages will be requested.

It must be activated explicitly, because it is primarily meant for special tasks. Mapping from BCP 47 codes to locale names are not hardcoded in babel. Instead the data is taken from the ini files, which means currently about 250 tags are already recognized. Babel performs a simple lookup in the following way: `fr-Latn-FR` → `fr-Latn` → `fr-FR` → `fr`.

Languages with the same resolved name are considered the same. Case is normalized before, so that `fr-latn-fr`  $\rightarrow$  `fr-Latn-FR`. If a tag and a name overlap, the tag takes precedence.

Here is a minimal example:

```
\documentclass{article}

\usepackage[danish]{babel}

\babeladjust{
  autoload.bcp47 = on,
  autoload.bcp47.options = import
}

\begin{document}

Chapter in Danish: \chaptername.

\selectlanguage{de-AT}

\localedate{2020}{1}{30}

\end{document}
```

Currently the locales loaded are based on the `ini` files and decoupled from the main `ldf` files. This is by design, to ensure code generated externally produces the same result regardless of the languages requested in the document, but an option to use the `ldf` instead will be added in a future release, because both options make sense depending on the particular needs of each document (there will be some restrictions, however). The behaviour is adjusted with `\babeladjust` with the following parameters:

`autoload.bcp47` with values `on` and `off`.

`autoload.bcp47.options`, which are passed to `\babelprovide`; empty by default, but you may add `import` (features defined in the corresponding `babel-...tex` file might not be available).

`autoload.bcp47.prefix`. Although the public name used in selectors is the tag, the internal name will be different and generated by prepending a prefix, which by default is `bcp47-`. You may change it with this key.

**New 3.46** If an `ldf` file has been loaded, you can enable the corresponding language tags as selector names with:

```
\babeladjust{ bcp47.toname = on }
```

(You can deactivate it with `off`.) So, if `dutch` is one of the package (or class) options, you can write `\selectlanguage{nl}`. Note the language name does not change (in this example is still `dutch`), but you can get it with `\localeinfo` or `\getlocaleproperty`. It must be turned on explicitly for similar reasons to those explained above.

## 1.23 Selecting scripts

Currently `babel` provides no standard interface to select scripts, because they are best selected with either `\fontencoding` (low-level) or a language name (high-level). Even the Latin script may require different encodings (ie, sets of glyphs) depending on the language, and therefore such a switch would be in a sense incomplete.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>The so-called Unicode fonts do not improve the situation either. So, a font suited for Vietnamese is not necessarily suited for, say, the romanization of Indic languages, and the fact it contains glyphs for Modern Greek does not mean it includes them for Classic Greek.

Some languages sharing the same script define macros to switch it (eg, `\textcyrillic`), but be aware they may also set the language to a certain default. Even the babel core defined `\textlatin`, but it was somewhat buggy because in some cases it messed up encodings and fonts (for example, if the main Latin encoding was LY1), and therefore it has been deprecated.<sup>18</sup>

`\ensureascii`  $\langle text \rangle$

**New 3.9i** This macro makes sure  $\langle text \rangle$  is typeset with a LICR-savvy encoding in the ASCII range. It is used to redefine `\TeX` and `\LaTeX` so that they are correctly typeset even with LGR or X2 (the complete list is stored in `\BabelNonASCII`, which by default is LGR, X2, OT2, OT3, OT6, LHE, LWN, LMA, LMC, LMS, LMU, but you can modify it). So, in some sense it fixes the bug described in the previous paragraph.

If non-ASCII encodings are not loaded (or no encoding at all), it is no-op (also `\TeX` and `\LaTeX` are not redefined); otherwise, `\ensureascii` switches to the encoding at the beginning of the document if ASCII-savvy, or else the last ASCII-savvy encoding loaded. For example, if you load LY1, LGR, then it is set to LY1, but if you load LY1, T2A it is set to T2A. The symbol encodings TS1, T3, and TS3 are not taken into account, since they are not used for “ordinary” text (they are stored in `\BabelNonText`, used in some special cases when no Latin encoding is explicitly set).

The foregoing rules (which are applied “at begin document”) cover most of the cases. No assumption is made on characters above 127, which may not follow the LICR conventions – the goal is just to ensure most of the ASCII letters and symbols are the right ones.

## 1.24 Selecting directions

No macros to select the writing direction are provided, either – writing direction is intrinsic to each script and therefore it is best set by the language (which can be a dummy one). Furthermore, there are in fact two right-to-left modes, depending on the language, which differ in the way ‘weak’ numeric characters are ordered (eg, Arabic %123 vs Hebrew 123%).

**WARNING** The current code for `text` in luatex should be considered essentially stable, but, of course, it is not bug-free and there can be improvements in the future, because setting bidi text has many subtleties (see for example <https://www.w3.org/TR/html-bidi/>). A basic stable version for other engines must wait. This applies to text; there is a basic support for **graphical** elements, including the picture environment (with `pict2e`) and `pfg/tikz`. Also, indexes and the like are under study, as well as math (there are progresses in the latter, including `amsmath` and `mathtools` too, but for example gathered may fail).

An effort is being made to avoid incompatibilities in the future (this one of the reason currently bidi must be explicitly requested as a package option, with a certain bidi model, and also the layout options described below).

**WARNING** If characters to be mirrored are shown without changes with luatex, try with the following line:

```
\babeladjust{bidi.mirroring=off}
```

There are some package options controlling bidi writing.

`bidi=` default | basic | basic-r | bidi-l | bidi-r

**New 3.14** Selects the bidi algorithm to be used. With `default` the bidi mechanism is just activated (by default it is not), but every change must be marked up. In xetex and pdftex this is the only option.

<sup>18</sup>But still defined for backwards compatibility.

In `luatex`, `basic-r` provides a simple and fast method for R text, which handles numbers and unmarked L text within an R context many in typical cases. **New 3.19** Finally, `basic` supports both L and R text, and it is the preferred method (support for `basic-r` is currently limited). (They are named `basic` mainly because they only consider the intrinsic direction of scripts and weak directionality.)

**New 3.29** In `xetex`, `bidi-r` and `bidi-l` resort to the package `bidi` (by Vafa Khalighi). Integration is still somewhat tentative, but it mostly works. For RL documents use the former, and for LR ones use the latter. There are samples on GitHub, under `/required/babel/samples`. See particularly `lua-bidibasic.tex` and `lua-secenum.tex`.

**EXAMPLE** The following text comes from the Arabic Wikipedia (article about Arabia). Copy-pasting some text from the Wikipedia is a good way to test this feature. Remember `basic` is available in `luatex` only.

```
\documentclass{article}

\usepackage[bidi=basic]{babel}

\babelprovide[import, main]{arabic}

\babelfont{rm}{FreeSerif}

\begin{document}

    وقد عرفت شبه جزيرة العرب طيلة العصر الهليني (الآغريقي) بـ
    Arabia أو Aravia (بالآغريقية Ἀραβία)، استخدم الرومان ثلاث
    بادئات بـ"Arabia" على ثلاث مناطق من شبه الجزيرة العربية، إلا أنها
    حقيقةً كانت أكبر مما تعرف عليه اليوم.

\end{document}
```

**EXAMPLE** With `bidi=basic` both L and R text can be mixed without explicit markup (the latter will be only necessary in some special cases where the Unicode algorithm fails). It is used much like `bidi=basic-r`, but with R text inside L text you may want to map the font so that the correct features are in force. This is accomplished with an option in `\babelprovide`, as illustrated:

```
\documentclass{book}

\usepackage[english, bidi=basic]{babel}

\babelprovide[onchar=ids fonts]{arabic}

\babelfont{rm}{Crimson}
\babelfont[*arabic]{rm}{FreeSerif}

\begin{document}

    Most Arabic speakers consider the two varieties to be two registers
    of one language, although the two registers can be referred to in
    Arabic as \textit{fuṣḥā l-ʿaṣr} (MSA) and
    \textit{fuṣḥā t-turāth} (CA).

\end{document}
```

In this example, and thanks to `onchar=ids fonts`, any Arabic letter (because the language is `arabic`) changes its font to that set for this language (here defined via `*arabic`, because `Crimson` does not provide Arabic letters).

**NOTE** Boxes are “black boxes”. Numbers inside an `\hbox` (for example in a `\ref`) do not know anything about the surrounding chars. So, `\ref{A}-\ref{B}` are not rendered in the visual order A-B, but in the wrong one B-A (because the hyphen does not “see” the digits inside the `\hbox`’es). If you need `\ref` ranges, the best option is to define a dedicated macro like this (to avoid explicit direction changes in the body; here `\textthe` must be defined to select the main language):

```
\newcommand\refrange[2]{\babelsublr{\textthe{\ref{#1}}-\textthe{\ref{#2}}}}
```

In the future a more complete method, reading recursively boxed text, may be added.

**layout=** sectioning | counters | lists | contents | footnotes | captions | columns | graphics | extras

**New 3.16** *To be expanded.* Selects which layout elements are adapted in bidi documents, including some text elements (except with options loading the bidi package, which provides its own mechanism to control these elements). You may use several options with a space-separated list, like `layout=counters contents sectioning` (in **New 3.85** spaces are to be preferred over dots, which was the former syntax). This list will be expanded in future releases. Note not all options are required by all engines.

**sectioning** makes sure the sectioning macros are typeset in the main language, but with the title text in the current language (see below `\BabelPatchSection` for further details).

**counters** required in all engines (except `luatex` with `bidi=basic`) to reorder section numbers and the like (eg, `\subsection`).`\section`); required in `xetex` and `pdftex` for counters in general, as well as in `luatex` with `bidi=default`; required in `luatex` for numeric footnote marks `>9` with `bidi=basic-r` (but *not* with `bidi=basic`); note, however, it can depend on the counter format.

With counters, `\arabic` is not only considered L text always (with `\babelsublr`, see below), but also an “isolated” block which does not interact with the surrounding chars. So, while `1.2` in R text is rendered in that order with `bidi=basic` (as a decimal number), in `\arabic{c1}.\arabic{c2}` the visual order is `c2.c1`. Of course, you may always adjust the order by changing the language, if necessary.

**New 3.84** Since `\thepage` is (indirectly) redefined, `makeindex` will reject many entries as invalid. With `counters* babel` attempts to remove the conflicting macros.

**lists** required in `xetex` and `pdftex`, but only in bidirectional (with both R and L paragraphs) documents in `luatex`.

**WARNING** As of April 2019 there is a bug with `\parshape` in `luatex` (a `TEX` primitive) which makes lists to be horizontally misplaced if they are inside a `\vbox` (like `minipage`) and the current direction is different from the main one. A workaround is to restore the main language before the box and then set the local one inside.

**contents** required in `xetex` and `pdftex`; in `luatex` toc entries are R by default if the main language is R.

**columns** required in `xetex` and `pdftex` to reverse the column order (currently only the standard two-column mode); in `luatex` they are R by default if the main language is R (including `multicol`).

**footnotes** not required in monolingual documents, but it may be useful in bidirectional documents (with both R and L paragraphs) in all engines; you may use alternatively `\BabelFootnote` described below (what this option does exactly is also explained there).

**captions** is similar to sectioning, but for `\caption`; not required in monolingual documents with `luatex`, but may be required in `xetex` and `pdftex` in some styles (support for the latter two engines is still experimental) **New 3.18** .

**tabular** required in luatex for R tabular, so that the first column is the right one (it has been tested only with simple tables, so expect some readjustments in the future); ignored in pdfTeX or xetex (which will not support a similar option in the short term). It patches an internal command, so it might be ignored by some packages and classes (or even raise an error). **New 3.18** .

**graphics** modifies the picture environment so that the whole figure is L but the text is R. It *does not* work with the standard picture, and *pict2e* is required. It attempts to do the same for pgf/tikz. Somewhat experimental. **New 3.32** .

**extras** is used for miscellaneous readjustments which do not fit into the previous groups. Currently redefines in luatex `\underline` and `\LaTeXe` **New 3.19** .

**EXAMPLE** Typically, in an Arabic document you would need:

```
\usepackage[bidi=basic,
             layout=counters tabular]{babel}
```

**\babelsublr** `{\lr-text}`

Digits in pdfTeX must be marked up explicitly (unlike luatex with `bidi=basic` or `bidi=basic-r` and, usually, xetex). This command is provided to set `{\lr-text}` in L mode if necessary. It's intended for what Unicode calls weak characters, because words are best set with the corresponding language. For this reason, there is no `rl` counterpart. Any `\babelsublr` in *explicit* L mode is ignored. However, with `bidi=basic` and *implicit* L, it first returns to R and then switches to explicit L. To clarify this point, consider, in an R context:

```
RTL A \ltr text \thechapter{} and still \tr RTL B
```

There are *three* R blocks and *two* L blocks, and the order is *RTL B and still \tr 1 \tr text RTL A*. This is by design to provide the proper behavior in the most usual cases — but if you need to use `\ref` in an L text inside R, the L text must be marked up explicitly; for example:

```
RTL A \foreignlanguage{english}{\ltr text \thechapter{} and still \tr} RTL B
```

**\localerestoredirs**

**New 3.86** *LuaTeX*. This command resets the internal text, paragraph and body directions to those of the current locale (if different). Sometimes changing directly these values can be useful for some hacks, and this command helps in restoring the directions to the correct ones. It can be used in `>` arguments of array, too.

**\BabelPatchSection** `{\section-name}`

Mainly for bidi text, but it can be useful in other cases. `\BabelPatchSection` and the corresponding option `layout=sectioning` takes a more logical approach (at least in many cases) because it applies the global language to the section format (including the `\chaptername` in `\chapter`), while the section text is still the current language. The latter is passed to tocs and marks, too, and with `sectioning` in `layout` they both reset the “global” language to the main one, while the text uses the “local” language. With `layout=sectioning` all the standard sectioning commands are redefined (it also “isolates” the page number in heads, for a proper bidi behavior), but with this command you can set them individually if necessary (but note then tocs and marks are not touched).

**\BabelFootnote** `{\cmd}{\local-language}{\before}{\after}`

**New 3.17** Something like:

```
\BabelFootnote{\parsfootnote}{\language}\{ }\{ }
```

defines `\parsfootnote` so that `\parsfootnote{note}` is equivalent to:

```
\footnote{(\foreignlanguage{\language}\note)}
```

but the footnote itself is typeset in the main language (to unify its direction). In addition, `\parsfootnotetext` is defined. The option `footnotes` just does the following:

```
\BabelFootnote{\footnote}{\language}\{ }\{ }%
\BabelFootnote{\localfootnote}{\language}\{ }\{ }%
\BabelFootnote{\mainfootnote}{\language}\{ }\{ }
```

(which also redefine `\footnotetext` and define `\localfootnotetext` and `\mainfootnotetext`). If the language argument is empty, then no language is selected inside the argument of the footnote. Note this command is available always in bidi documents, even without `layout=footnotes`.

**EXAMPLE** If you want to preserve directionality in footnotes and there are many footnotes entirely in English, you can define:

```
\BabelFootnote{\enfootnote}{english}\{ }\{ . }
```

It adds a period outside the English part, so that it is placed at the left in the last line. This means the dot the end of the footnote text should be omitted.

## 1.25 Language attributes

### `\languageattribute`

This is a user-level command, to be used in the preamble of a document (after `\usepackage[...]{babel}`), that declares which attributes are to be used for a given language. It takes two arguments: the first is the name of the language; the second, a (list of) attribute(s) to be used. Attributes must be set in the preamble and only once – they cannot be turned on and off. The command checks whether the language is known in this document and whether the attribute(s) are known for this language.

Very often, using a *modifier* in a package option is better.

Several language definition files use their own methods to set options. For example, `french` uses `\frenchsetup`, `magyar` (1.5) uses `\magyarOptions`; modifiers provided by `spanish` have no attribute counterparts. Macros setting options are also used (eg, `\ProsodicMarksOn` in `latin`).

## 1.26 Hooks

**New 3.9a** A hook is a piece of code to be executed at certain events. Some hooks are predefined when `luatex` and `xetex` are used.

**New 3.64** This is not the only way to inject code at those points. The events listed below can be used as a hook name in `\AddToHook` in the form `babel/<language-name>/<event-name>` (with `*` it's applied to all languages), but there is a limitation, because the parameters passed with the `babel` mechanism are not allowed. The `\AddToHook` mechanism does *not* replace the current one in `'babel'`. Its main advantage is you can reconfigure `'babel'` even before loading it. See the example below.



**\AddBabelHook** [*<lang>*]{*<name>*}{*<event>*}{*<code>*}

The same name can be applied to several events. Hooks with a certain *<name>* may be enabled and disabled for all defined events with `\EnableBabelHook{<name>}`, `\DisableBabelHook{<name>}`. Names containing the string `babel` are reserved (they are used, for example, by `\usesshortands*` to add a hook for the event `afterextras`).

**New 3.33** They may be also applied to a specific language with the optional argument; language-specific settings are executed after global ones.

Current events are the following; in some of them you can use one to three  $\TeX$  parameters (`#1`, `#2`, `#3`), with the meaning given:

**addialect** (language name, dialect name) Used by `luababel.def` to load the patterns if not preloaded.

**patterns** (language name, language with encoding) Executed just after the `\language` has been set. The second argument has the patterns name actually selected (in the form of either `lang:ENC` or `lang`).

**hyphenation** (language name, language with encoding) Executed locally just before exceptions given in `\babelhyphenation` are actually set.

**defaultcommands** Used (locally) in `\StartBabelCommands`.

**encodedcommands** (input, font encodings) Used (locally) in `\StartBabelCommands`. Both `xetex` and `luatex` make sure the encoded text is read correctly.

**stopcommands** Used to reset the above, if necessary.

**write** This event comes just after the switching commands are written to the aux file.

**beforeextras** Just before executing `\extras{<language>}`. This event and the next one should not contain language-dependent code (for that, add it to `\extras{<language>}`).

**afterextras** Just after executing `\extras{<language>}`. For example, the following deactivates shorthands in all languages:

```
\AddBabelHook{noshort}{afterextras}{\languageshorthands{none}}
```

**stringprocess** Instead of a parameter, you can manipulate the macro `\BabelString` containing the string to be defined with `\SetString`. For example, to use an expanded version of the string in the definition, write:

```
\AddBabelHook{myhook}{stringprocess}{%  
  \protected@edef\BabelString{\BabelString}}
```

**initiateactive** (char as active, char as other, original char) **New 3.9i** Executed just after a shorthand has been ‘initiated’. The three parameters are the same character with different catcodes: active, other (`\string’ed`) and the original one.

**afterreset** **New 3.9i** Executed when selecting a language just after `\originalTeX` is run and reset to its base value, before executing `\captions{<language>}` and `\date{<language>}`.

**begindocument** **New 3.88** Executed before the code written by `ldf` files with `\AtBeginDocument`. The optional argument with the language in this particular case is the language that wrote the code. The special value `/` means ‘return to the core babel definitions’ (in other words, what follows hasn’t been written by any language).

Four events are used in `hyphen.cfg`, which are handled in a quite different way for efficiency reasons – unlike the precedent ones, they only have a single hook and replace a default definition.

**everylanguage** (language) Executed before every language patterns are loaded.

**loadkernel** (file) By default just defines a few basic commands. It can be used to define different versions of them or to load a file.

**loadpatterns** (patterns file) Loads the patterns file. Used by `luababel.def`.

**loadexceptions** (exceptions file) Loads the exceptions file. Used by `luababel.def`.

**EXAMPLE** The generic unlocalized  $\LaTeX$  hooks are predefined, so that you can write:



```
\AddToHook{babel/*/afterextras}{\frenchspacing}
```

which is executed always after the extras for the language being selected (and just before the non-localized hooks defined with `\AddBabelHook`).

In addition, locale-specific hooks in the form `babel/⟨language-name⟩/⟨event-name⟩` are *recognized* (executed just before the localized babel hooks), but they are *not predefined*. You have to do it yourself. For example, to set `\frenchspacing` only in bengali:

```
\ActivateGenericHook{babel/bengali/afterextras}  
\AddToHook{babel/bengali/afterextras}{\frenchspacing}
```

**\BabelContentsFiles** New 3.9a This macro contains a list of “toc” types requiring a command to switch the language. Its default value is `toc, lof, lot`, but you may redefine it with `\renewcommand` (it’s up to you to make sure no toc type is duplicated).

## 1.27 Languages supported by babel with ldf files

In the following table most of the languages supported by babel with and `.ldf` file are listed, together with the names of the option which you can load babel with for each language. Note this list is open and the current options may be different. It does not include `ini` files (see below). Except in a few cases (eg, `ngerman`, `serbianc`, `acadian`) names are those of the Unicode CLDR (or based on them).

**Afrikaans** afrikaans  
**Azerbaijani** azerbaijani  
**Basque** basque  
**Breton** breton  
**Bulgarian** bulgarian  
**Catalan** catalan  
**Croatian** croatian  
**Czech** czech  
**Danish** danish  
**Dutch** dutch  
**English** english, american (*preferred to USenglish*), british (*preferred to UKenglish*), canadian, australian, newzealand  
**Esperanto** esperanto  
**Estonian** estonian  
**Finnish** finnish  
**French** french, acadian  
**Galician** galician  
**German** ngerman, naustrian, german, austrian  
**Greek** greek, polutonikogreek  
**Hebrew** hebrew  
**Icelandic** icelandic  
**Indonesian** indonesian  
**Interlingua** interlingua  
**Irish Gaelic** irish  
**Italian** italian  
**Latin** latin  
**Lower Sorbian** lowersorbian  
**Malay** malay (*preferred to melayu*)  
**Northern Sami** northern sami  
**Norwegian** norsk, nynorsk  
**Polish** polish  
**Portuguese** portuguese, brazilian

**Romanian** romanian  
**Russian** russian  
**Scottish Gaelic** scottishgaelic (*preferred to scottish*)  
**Spanish** spanish  
**Slovakian** slovak  
**Slovenian** slovene  
**Swedish** swedish  
**Serbian** serbian  
**Turkish** turkish  
**Ukrainian** ukrainian  
**Upper Sorbian** uppersorbian  
**Welsh** welsh

There are more languages not listed above, including hindi, thai, thaicjk, latvian, turkmen, magyar, mongolian, romansh, lithuanian, spanglish, vietnamese, japanese, pinyin, arabic, farsi, ibygreek, bgreek, serbianc, frenchle, ethiop and friulan.

**NOTE** There are also some deprecated names (a few has been even removed): frenchb or francais, as well as canadien (french), germanb (german), bahasa, indon or bahasai (indonesian), lsorbian (lowersorbian), bahasam (malay), portuges (portuguese), brazil (brazilian), russianb (russian), usorbian (uppersorbian), vietnam (vietnamese), northern sami (samin), ukraineb (ukrainian). Deprecated names come in many cases from the times when they had to be shortened to 8 characters.

Most of them work out of the box, but some may require extra fonts, encoding files, a preprocessor or even a complete framework (like CJK or luatexja). For example, if you have got the velthuis/devnag package, you can create a file with extension .dn:

```

\documentclass{article}
\usepackage[hindi]{babel}
\begin{document}
{\dn devaanaa.m priya.h}
\end{document}

```

Then you preprocess it with devnag  $\langle file \rangle$ , which creates  $\langle file \rangle$ .tex; you can then typeset the latter with  $\LaTeX$ .

## 1.28 Unicode character properties in luatex

**New 3.32** Part of the babel job is to apply Unicode rules to some script-specific features based on some properties. Currently, they are 3, namely, direction (ie, bidi class), mirroring glyphs, and line breaking for CJK scripts. These properties are stored in lua tables, which you can modify with the following macro (for example, to set them for glyphs in the PUA).

**\babelcharproperty**  $\{\langle char-code \rangle\}[\langle to-char-code \rangle]\{\langle property \rangle\}\{\langle value \rangle\}$

**New 3.32** Here,  $\{\langle char-code \rangle\}$  is a number (with  $\TeX$  syntax). With the optional argument, you can set a range of values. There are three properties (with a short name, taken from Unicode): direction (bc), mirror (bmg), linebreak (lb). The settings are global, and this command is allowed only in vertical mode (the preamble or between paragraphs). For example:

```

\babelcharproperty{`i}{mirror}{`?}
\babelcharproperty{-}{direction}{l} % or al, r, en, an, on, et, cs
\babelcharproperty{`)}{linebreak}{cl} % or id, op, cl, ns, ex, in, hy

```

Please, refer to the Unicode standard (Annex #9 and Annex #14) for the meaning of the available codes. For example, en is ‘European number’ and id is ‘ideographic’.

**New 3.39** Another property is `locale`, which adds characters to the list used by `onchar` in `\babelprovide`, or, if the last argument is empty, removes them. The last argument is the locale name:

```
\babelcharproperty{`}{locale}{english}
```

## 1.29 Tweaking some features

`\babeladjust`  $\{(key-value-list)\}$

**New 3.36** Sometimes you might need to disable some babel features. Currently this macro understands the following keys, with values on or off:

<code>autoload.bcp47</code>	<code>bidirectional.math</code>	<code>layout.tabular</code>
<code>bcp47.toname</code>	<code>linebreak.sea</code>	<code>layout.lists</code>
<code>bidirectional.mirroring</code>	<code>linebreak.cjk</code>	
<code>bidirectional.text</code>	<code>justify.arabic</code>	

The first four are documented elsewhere. The following are by default on, but with off can disable some features: `bidirectional.math` (only preamble) changes for math or amsmath, `linebreak.sea`, `linebreak.cjk` and `justify.arabic` the corresponding algorithms, `layout.tabular` and `layout.lists` changes for tabular and lists. Some of the are reverted only to some extent.

Other keys are:

<code>autoload.options</code>	<code>autoload.bcp47.options</code>	<code>select.write</code>
<code>autoload.bcp47.prefix</code>	<code>prehyphenation.disable</code>	<code>select.encoding</code>

Most of them are documented elsewhere. With `select.encoding=off`, the encoding is not set when loading a language on the fly with `pdftex` (only off). `prehyphenation.disable` is by default `nohyphenation`, which means prehyphenation transforms are not applied if the current hyphenation rules are `nohyphenation`; with off they are never disabled. For example, you can set `\babeladjust{bidirectional.text=off}` if you are using an alternative algorithm or with large sections not requiring it. Use with care, because these options do not deactivate other related options (like paragraph direction with `bidirectional.text`).

## 1.30 Tips, workarounds, known issues and notes

- If you use the document class `book` and you use `\ref` inside the argument of `\chapter` (or just use `\ref` inside `\MakeUppercase`),  $\TeX$  will keep complaining about an undefined label. To prevent such problems, you can revert to using uppercase labels, you can use `\lowercase{\ref{foo}}` inside the argument of `\chapter`, or, if you will not use shorthands in labels, set the `safe` option to `none` or `bib`.
- Both `ltxdoc` and `babel` use `\AtBeginDocument` to change some catcodes, and `babel` reloads `hline` to make sure `:` has the right one, so if you want to change the catcode of `|` it has to be done using the same method at the proper place, with

```
\AtBeginDocument{\DeleteShortVerb{\|}}
```

*before* loading `babel`. This way, when the document begins the sequence is (1) make `|` active (`ltxdoc`); (2) make it unactive (your settings); (3) make `babel` shorthands active (`babel`); (4) reload `hline` (`babel`, now with the correct catcodes for `|` and `:`).

- Documents with several input encodings are not frequent, but sometimes are useful. You can set different encodings for different languages as the following example shows:

```
\addto\extrasfrench{\inputencoding{latin1}}
\addto\extrasrussian{\inputencoding{koi8-r}}
```

- For the hyphenation to work correctly, lccodes cannot change, because T<sub>E</sub>X only takes into account the values when the paragraph is hyphenated, i.e., when it has been finished.<sup>19</sup> So, if you write a chunk of French text with `\foreignlanguage`, the apostrophes might not be taken into account. This is a limitation of T<sub>E</sub>X, not of babel. Alternatively, you may use `\useshorthands` to activate ' and `\defineshorthand`, or redefine `\textquoteright` (the latter is called by the non-ASCII right quote).
- `\bibitem` is out of sync with `\selectlanguage` in the .aux file. The reason is `\bibitem` uses `\immediate` (and others, in fact), while `\selectlanguage` doesn't. There is a similar issue with floats, too. There is no known workaround.
- Babel does not take into account `\normalsfcodes` and (non-)French spacing is not always properly (un)set by languages. However, problems are unlikely to happen and therefore this part remains untouched in version 3.9 (but it is in the 'to do' list).
- Using a character mathematically active (ie, with math code "8000) as a shorthand can make T<sub>E</sub>X enter in an infinite loop in some rare cases. (Another issue in the 'to do' list, although there is a partial solution.)

The following packages can be useful, too (the list is still far from complete):

**csquotes** Logical markup for quotes.

**iflang** Tests correctly the current language.

**hyphsubst** Selects a different set of patterns for a language.

**translator** An open platform for packages that need to be localized.

**siunitx** Typesetting of numbers and physical quantities.

**biblatex** Programmable bibliographies and citations.

**bicaption** Bilingual captions.

**babelbib** Multilingual bibliographies.

**microtype** Adjusts the typesetting according to some languages (kerning and spacing).  
Ligatures can be disabled.

**substitutefont** Combines fonts in several encodings.

**mkpattern** Generates hyphenation patterns.

**tracklang** Tracks which languages have been requested.

**ucharclasses** (xetex) Switches fonts when you switch from one Unicode block to another.

**zhspacing** Spacing for CJK documents in xetex.

### 1.31 Current and future work

The current work is focused on the so-called complex scripts in luatex. In 8-bit engines, babel provided a basic support for bidi text as part of the style for Hebrew, but it is somewhat unsatisfactory and internally replaces some hardwired commands by other hardwired commands (generic changes would be much better).

Useful additions would be, for example, time, currency, addresses and personal names.<sup>20</sup> But that is the easy part, because they don't require modifying the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X internals.

Calendars (Arabic, Persian, Indic, etc.) are under study.

Also interesting are differences in the sentence structure or related to it. For example, in Basque the number precedes the name (including chapters), in Hungarian "from (1)" is "(1)-ből", but "from (3)" is "(3)-ből", in Spanish an item labelled "3.<sup>o</sup>" may be referred to as either "ítem 3.<sup>o</sup>" or "3.<sup>er</sup> ítem", and so on.

<sup>19</sup>This explains why L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X assumes the lowercase mapping of T1 and does not provide a tool for multiple mappings. Unfortunately, `\savingsphcodes` is not a solution either, because lccodes for hyphenation are frozen in the format and cannot be changed.

<sup>20</sup>See for example POSIX, ISO 14652 and the Unicode Common Locale Data Repository (CLDR). Those systems, however, have limited application to T<sub>E</sub>X because their aim is just to display information and not fine typesetting.

An option to manage bidirectional document layout in luatex (lists, footnotes, etc.) is almost finished, but xetex required more work. Unfortunately, proper support for xetex requires patching somehow lots of macros and packages (and some issues related to `\specials` remain, like color and hyperlinks), so babel resorts to the bidi package (by Vafa Khalighi). See the babel repository for a small example (xe-bidi).

### 1.32 Tentative and experimental code

See the code section for `\foreignlanguage*` (a new starred version of `\foreignlanguage`). For old an deprecated functions, see the babel site.

#### Options for locales loaded on the fly

**New 3.51** `\babeladjust{ autoload.options = ... }` sets the options when a language is loaded on the fly (by default, no options). A typical value would be `import`, which defines captions, date, numerals, etc., but ignores the code in the tex file (for example, extended numerals in Greek).

#### Labels

**New 3.48** There is some work in progress for babel to deal with labels, both with the relation to captions (chapters, part), and how counters are used to define them. It is still somewhat tentative because it is far from trivial – see the babel site for further details.

## 2 Loading languages with `language.dat`

T<sub>E</sub>X and most engines based on it (pdfT<sub>E</sub>X, xetex,  $\epsilon$ -T<sub>E</sub>X, the main exception being luatex) require hyphenation patterns to be preloaded when a format is created (eg, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, XeL<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, pdfL<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X). babel provides a tool which has become standard in many distributions and based on a “configuration file” named `language.dat`. The exact way this file is used depends on the distribution, so please, read the documentation for the latter (note also some distributions generate the file with some tool).

**New 3.9q** With luatex, however, patterns are loaded on the fly when requested by the language (except the “0th” language, typically english, which is preloaded always).<sup>21</sup> Until 3.9n, this task was delegated to the package `luatex-hyphen`, by Khaled Hosny, Élie Roux, and Manuel Pégourié-Gonnard, and required an extra file named `language.dat.lua`, but now a new mechanism has been devised based solely on `language.dat`. **You must rebuild the formats** if upgrading from a previous version. You may want to have a local `language.dat` for a particular project (for example, a book on Chemistry).<sup>22</sup>

### 2.1 Format

In that file the person who maintains a T<sub>E</sub>X environment has to record for which languages he has hyphenation patterns *and* in which files these are stored<sup>23</sup>. When hyphenation exceptions are stored in a separate file this can be indicated by naming that file *after* the file with the hyphenation patterns.

The file can contain empty lines and comments, as well as lines which start with an equals (=) sign. Such a line will instruct L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X that the hyphenation patterns just processed have to be known under an alternative name. Here is an example:

```
% File      : language.dat
% Purpose   : tell iniTeX what files with patterns to load.
english     english.hyphenations
=british

dutch       hyphen.dutch exceptions.dutch % Nederlands
german      hyphen.ger
```

<sup>21</sup>This feature was added to 3.9o, but it was buggy. Both 3.9o and 3.9p are deprecated.

<sup>22</sup>The loader for lua(e)tex is slightly different as it's not based on babel but on `etex.src`. Until 3.9p it just didn't work, but thanks to the new code it works by reloading the data in the babel way, i.e., with `language.dat`.

<sup>23</sup>This is because different operating systems sometimes use very different file-naming conventions.

You may also set the font encoding the patterns are intended for by following the language name by a colon and the encoding code.<sup>24</sup> For example:

```
german:T1 hyphenT1.ger
german hyphen.ger
```

With the previous settings, if the encoding when the language is selected is T1 then the patterns in hyphenT1.ger are used, but otherwise use those in hyphen.ger (note the encoding can be set in `\extras<lang>`).

A typical error when using babel is the following:

```
No hyphenation patterns were preloaded for
the language '<lang>' into the format.
Please, configure your TeX system to add them and
rebuild the format. Now I will use the patterns
preloaded for english instead}}
```

It simply means you must reconfigure language.dat, either by hand or with the tools provided by your distribution.

### 3 The interface between the core of babel and the language definition files

The *language definition files* (ldf) must conform to a number of conventions, because these files have to fill in the gaps left by the common code in babel.def, i. e., the definitions of the macros that produce texts. Also the language-switching possibility which has been built into the babel system has its implications.

The following assumptions are made:

- Some of the language-specific definitions might be used by plain TeX users, so the files have to be coded so that they can be read by both L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X and plain TeX. The current format can be checked by looking at the value of the macro `\fmtname`.
- The common part of the babel system redefines a number of macros and environments (defined previously in the document style) to put in the names of macros that replace the previously hard-wired texts. These macros have to be defined in the language definition files.
- The language definition files must define five macros, used to activate and deactivate the language-specific definitions. These macros are `\<lang>hyphenmins`, `\<lang>captions`, `\<lang>date`, `\<lang>extras` and `\<lang>noextras` (the last two may be left empty); where `<lang>` is either the name of the language definition file or the name of the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X option that is to be used. These macros and their functions are discussed below. You must define all or none for a language (or a dialect); defining, say, `\<lang>date` but not `\<lang>captions` does not raise an error but can lead to unexpected results.
- When a language definition file is loaded, it can define `\l@<lang>` to be a dialect of `\language0` when `\l@<lang>` is undefined.
- Language names must be all lowercase. If an unknown language is selected, babel will attempt setting it after lowercasing its name.
- The semantics of modifiers is not defined (on purpose). In most cases, they will just be simple separated options (eg, spanish), but a language might require, say, a set of options organized as a tree with suboptions (in such a case, the recommended separator is /).

---

<sup>24</sup>This is not a new feature, but in former versions it didn't work correctly.

Some recommendations:

- The preferred shorthand is `"`, which is not used in  $\TeX$  (quotes are entered as `` `` and `' '`). Other good choices are characters which are not used in a certain context (eg, `=` in an ancient language). Note however `=`, `<`, `>`, `:` and the like can be dangerous, because they may be used as part of the syntax of some elements (numeric expressions, key/value pairs, etc.).
- Captions should not contain shorthands or encoding-dependent commands (the latter is not always possible, but should be clearly documented). They should be defined using the LICR. You may also use the new tools for encoded strings, described below.
- Avoid adding things to `\noextras<lang>` except for `umlauthigh` and friends, `\bbl@deactivate`, `\bbl@(non)frenchspacing`, and language-specific macros. Use always, if possible, `\babel@save` and `\babel@savevariable` (except if you still want to have access to the previous value). Do not reset a macro or a setting to a hardcoded value. Never. Instead save its value in `\extras<lang>`.
- Do not switch scripts. If you want to make sure a set of glyphs is used, switch either the font encoding (low-level) or the language (high-level, which in turn may switch the font encoding). Usage of things like `\latintext` is deprecated.<sup>25</sup>
- Please, for “private” internal macros do not use the `\bbl@` prefix. It is used by `babel` and it can lead to incompatibilities.

There are no special requirements for documenting your language files. Now they are not included in the base `babel` manual, so provide a standalone document suited for your needs, as well as other files you think can be useful. A PDF and a “readme” are strongly recommended.

### 3.1 Guidelines for contributed languages

Currently, the easiest way to contribute a new language is by taking one of the 500 or so `ini` templates available on GitHub as a basis. Just make a pull request or download it and then, after filling the fields, send it to me. Feel free to ask for help or to make feature requests.

As to `ldf` files, now language files are “outsourced” and are located in a separate directory (`/macros/latex/contrib/babel-contrib`), so that they are contributed directly to CTAN (please, do not send to me language styles just to upload them to CTAN).

Of course, placing your style files in this directory is not mandatory, but if you want to do it, here are a few guidelines.

- Do not hesitate stating on the file heads you are the author and the maintainer, if you actually are. There is no need to state the `babel` maintainer(s) as authors if they have not contributed significantly to your language files.
- Fonts are not strictly part of a language, so they are best placed in the corresponding TeX tree. This includes not only `tfm`, `vf`, `psl`, `otf`, `mf` files and the like, but also `fd` ones.
- Font and input encodings are usually best placed in the corresponding tree, too, but sometimes they belong more naturally to the `babel` style. Note you may also need to define a LICR.
- `Babel ldf` files may just interface a framework, as it happens often with Oriental languages/scripts. This framework is best placed in its own directory.

The following page provides a starting point for `ldf` files:

<http://www.texnia.com/incubator.html>. See also

<https://latex3.github.io/babel/guides/list-of-locale-templates.html>.

If you need further assistance and technical advice in the development of language styles, I am willing to help you. And of course, you can make any suggestion you like.

<sup>25</sup>But not removed, for backward compatibility.



## 3.2 Basic macros

In the core of the babel system, several macros are defined for use in language definition files. Their purpose is to make a new language known. The first two are related to hyphenation patterns.

- \addlanguage** The macro `\addlanguage` is a non-outer version of the macro `\newlanguage`, defined in `plain.tex` version 3.x. Here “language” is used in the  $\TeX$  sense of set of hyphenation patterns.
- \adddialect** The macro `\adddialect` can be used when two languages can (or must) use the same hyphenation patterns. This can also be useful for languages for which no patterns are preloaded in the format. In such cases the default behavior of the babel system is to define this language as a ‘dialect’ of the language for which the patterns were loaded as `\language0`. Here “language” is used in the  $\TeX$  sense of set of hyphenation patterns.
- \<lang>hyphenmins** The macro `\<lang>hyphenmins` is used to store the values of the `\lefthyphenmin` and `\righthyphenmin`. Redefine this macro to set your own values, with two numbers corresponding to these two parameters. For example:

```
\renewcommand\spanishhyphenmins{34}
```

(Assigning `\lefthyphenmin` and `\righthyphenmin` directly in `\extras<lang>` has no effect.)

- \providehyphenmins** The macro `\providehyphenmins` should be used in the language definition files to set `\lefthyphenmin` and `\righthyphenmin`. This macro will check whether these parameters were provided by the hyphenation file before it takes any action. If these values have been already set, this command is ignored (currently, default pattern files do *not* set them).
- \captions<lang>** The macro `\captions<lang>` defines the macros that hold the texts to replace the original hard-wired texts.
- \date<lang>** The macro `\date<lang>` defines `\today`.
- \extras<lang>** The macro `\extras<lang>` contains all the extra definitions needed for a specific language. This macro, like the following, is a hook – you can add things to it, but it must not be used directly.
- \noextras<lang>** Because we want to let the user switch between languages, but we do not know what state  $\TeX$  might be in after the execution of `\extras<lang>`, a macro that brings  $\TeX$  into a predefined state is needed. It will be no surprise that the name of this macro is `\noextras<lang>`.
- \bbl@declare@attribute** This is a command to be used in the language definition files for declaring a language attribute. It takes three arguments: the name of the language, the attribute to be defined, and the code to be executed when the attribute is to be used.
- \main@language** To postpone the activation of the definitions needed for a language until the beginning of a document, all language definition files should use `\main@language` instead of `\selectlanguage`. This will just store the name of the language, and the proper language will be activated at the start of the document.
- \ProvidesLanguage** The macro `\ProvidesLanguage` should be used to identify the language definition files. Its syntax is similar to the syntax of the  $\LaTeX$  command `\ProvidesPackage`.
- \LdfInit** The macro `\LdfInit` performs a couple of standard checks that must be made at the beginning of a language definition file, such as checking the category code of the `@`-sign, preventing the `.ldf` file from being processed twice, etc.
- \ldf@quit** The macro `\ldf@quit` does work needed if a `.ldf` file was processed earlier. This includes resetting the category code of the `@`-sign, preparing the language to be activated at `\begin{document}` time, and ending the input stream.
- \ldf@finish** The macro `\ldf@finish` does work needed at the end of each `.ldf` file. This includes resetting the category code of the `@`-sign, loading a local configuration file, and preparing the language to be activated at `\begin{document}` time.
- \loadlocalcfg** After processing a language definition file,  $\LaTeX$  can be instructed to load a local configuration file. This file can, for instance, be used to add strings to `\captions<lang>` to support local document classes. The user will be informed that this configuration file has been loaded. This macro is called by `\ldf@finish`.



### 3.3 Skeleton

Here is the basic structure of an ldf file, with a language, a dialect and an attribute. Strings are best defined using the method explained in sec. 3.8 (babel 3.9 and later).

```
\ProvidesLanguage{<language>}
    [2016/04/23 v0.0 <Language> support from the babel system]
\LfInit{<language>}{captions<language>}

\ifx\undefined\l@<language>
  \nopatterns{<Language>}
  \adddialect\l@<language>0
\fi

\adddialect\l@<dialect>\l@<language>

\bbld@declare@ttribute{<language>}{<attrib>}{%
  \expandafter\addto\expandafter\extras<language>
  \expandafter{\extras<attrib><language>}%
  \let\captions<language>\captions<attrib><language>}

\providehyphenmins{<language>}{\tw@\thr@@}

\StartBabelCommands*{<language>}{captions}
\SetString\chaptername{<chapter name>}
% More strings

\StartBabelCommands*{<language>}{date}
\SetString\monthiname{<name of first month>}
% More strings

\StartBabelCommands*{<dialect>}{captions}
\SetString\chaptername{<chapter name>}
% More strings

\StartBabelCommands*{<dialect>}{date}
\SetString\monthiname{<name of first month>}
% More strings

\EndBabelCommands

\addto\extras<language>{}
\addto\noextras<language>{}
\let\extras<dialect>\extras<language>
\let\noextras<dialect>\noextras<language>

\ldf@finish{<language>}
```

**NOTE** If for some reason you want to load a package in your style, you should be aware it cannot be done directly in the ldf file, but it can be delayed with `\AtEndOfPackage`. Macros from external packages can be used *inside* definitions in the ldf itself (for example, `\extras<language>`), but if executed directly, the code must be placed inside `\AtEndOfPackage`. A trivial example illustrating these points is:

```
\AtEndOfPackage{%
  \RequirePackage{dingbat}%      Delay package
  \savebox{\myeye}{\eye}%       And direct usage
  \newsavebox{\myeye}
  \newcommand\myanchor{\anchor}% But OK inside command
```

### 3.4 Support for active characters

In quite a number of language definition files, active characters are introduced. To facilitate this, some support macros are provided.

<code>\initiate@active@char</code>	The internal macro <code>\initiate@active@char</code> is used in language definition files to instruct $\TeX$ to give a character the category code ‘active’. When a character has been made active it will remain that way until the end of the document. Its definition may vary.
<code>\bbl@activate</code> <code>\bbl@deactivate</code>	The command <code>\bbl@activate</code> is used to change the way an active character expands. <code>\bbl@activate</code> ‘switches on’ the active behavior of the character. <code>\bbl@deactivate</code> lets the active character expand to its former (mostly) non-active self.
<code>\declare@shorthand</code>	The macro <code>\declare@shorthand</code> is used to define the various shorthands. It takes three arguments: the name for the collection of shorthands this definition belongs to; the character (sequence) that makes up the shorthand, i.e. <code>~</code> or <code>"a</code> ; and the code to be executed when the shorthand is encountered. (It does <i>not</i> raise an error if the shorthand character has not been “initiated”.)
<code>\bbl@add@special</code> <code>\bbl@remove@special</code>	The $\TeX$ book states: “Plain $\TeX$ includes a macro called <code>\dospecials</code> that is essentially a set macro, representing the set of all characters that have a special category code.” [4, p. 380] It is used to set text ‘verbatim’. To make this work if more characters get a special category code, you have to add this character to the macro <code>\dospecials</code> . $\mathbb{X}\TeX$ adds another macro called <code>\@sanitize</code> representing the same character set, but without the curly braces. The macros <code>\bbl@add@special⟨char⟩</code> and <code>\bbl@remove@special⟨char⟩</code> add and remove the character <code>⟨char⟩</code> to these two sets.
<code>\@safe@activetrue</code> <code>\@safe@activesfalse</code>	Enables and disables the “safe” mode. It is a tool for package and class authors. See the description below.

### 3.5 Support for saving macro definitions

Language definition files may want to *redefine* macros that already exist. Therefore a mechanism for saving (and restoring) the original definition of those macros is provided. We provide two macros for this<sup>26</sup>.

<code>\babel@save</code>	To save the current meaning of any control sequence, the macro <code>\babel@save</code> is provided. It takes one argument, <code>⟨csname⟩</code> , the control sequence for which the meaning has to be saved.
<code>\babel@savevariable</code>	A second macro is provided to save the current value of a variable. In this context, anything that is allowed after the <code>\the</code> primitive is considered to be a variable. The macro takes one argument, the <code>⟨variable⟩</code> . The effect of the preceding macros is to append a piece of code to the current definition of <code>\originalTeX</code> . When <code>\originalTeX</code> is expanded, this code restores the previous definition of the control sequence or the previous value of the variable.

### 3.6 Support for extending macros

<code>\addto</code>	The macro <code>\addto{⟨control sequence⟩}{⟨<math>\TeX</math> code⟩}</code> can be used to extend the definition of a macro. The macro need not be defined (ie, it can be undefined or <code>\relax</code> ). This macro can, for instance, be used in adding instructions to a macro like <code>\extrasinglish</code> . Be careful when using this macro, because depending on the case the assignment can be either global (usually) or local (sometimes). That does not seem very consistent, but this behavior is preserved for backward compatibility. If you are using <code>etoolbox</code> , by Philipp Lehman, consider using the tools provided by this package instead of <code>\addto</code> .
---------------------	--

### 3.7 Macros common to a number of languages

<code>\bbl@allowhyphens</code>	In several languages compound words are used. This means that when $\TeX$ has to hyphenate such a compound word, it only does so at the ‘-’ that is used in such words. To allow hyphenation in the rest of such a compound word, the macro <code>\bbl@allowhyphens</code> can be used.
<code>\allowhyphens</code>	Same as <code>\bbl@allowhyphens</code> , but does nothing if the encoding is T1. It is intended mainly

---

<sup>26</sup>This mechanism was introduced by Bernd Raichle.

for characters provided as real glyphs by this encoding but constructed with `\accent` in OT1.

Note the previous command (`\bbl@allowhyphens`) has different applications (hyphens and discretionaries) than this one (composite chars). Note also prior to version 3.7, `\allowhyphens` had the behavior of `\bbl@allowhyphens`.

`\set@low@box` For some languages, quotes need to be lowered to the baseline. For this purpose the macro `\set@low@box` is available. It takes one argument and puts that argument in an `\hbox`, at the baseline. The result is available in `\box0` for further processing.

`\save@sf@q` Sometimes it is necessary to preserve the `\spacefactor`. For this purpose the macro `\save@sf@q` is available. It takes one argument, saves the current `spacefactor`, executes the argument, and restores the `spacefactor`.

`\bbl@frenchspacing` The commands `\bbl@frenchspacing` and `\bbl@nonfrenchspacing` can be used to properly switch French spacing on and off.

### 3.8 Encoding-dependent strings

**New 3.9a** Babel 3.9 provides a way of defining strings in several encodings, intended mainly for `luatex` and `xetex`, although the old way of defining/switching strings still works and it's used by default.

It consists of a series of blocks started with `\StartBabelCommands`. The last block is closed with `\EndBabelCommands`. Each block is a single group (ie, local declarations apply until the next `\StartBabelCommands` or `\EndBabelCommands`). An `ldf` may contain several series of this kind.

Thanks to this new feature, string values and string language switching are not mixed any more. Furthermore, strings do not need to be wrapped with formatting commands (eg, to select the writing direction) because babel takes care of it automatically. (See also `\setlocalecaption`.)

`\StartBabelCommands`  $\langle\langle\textit{language-list}\rangle\rangle\langle\langle\textit{category}\rangle\rangle[\langle\langle\textit{selector}\rangle\rangle]$

The  $\langle\langle\textit{language-list}\rangle\rangle$  specifies which languages the block is intended for. A block is taken into account only if the `\CurrentOption` is listed here. Alternatively, you can define `\BabelLanguages` to a comma-separated list of languages to be defined (if undefined, `\StartBabelCommands` sets it to `\CurrentOption`). You may write `\CurrentOption` as the language, but this is discouraged – an explicit name (or names) is much better and clearer. A “selector” selects a group of definitions to be used, optionally followed by extra info about the encodings to be used. The name `unicode` must be used for `xetex` and `luatex`. Without a selector, the LICR representation (ie, with macros like `\~{n}` instead of `ñ`) is assumed.

If a string is set several times (because several blocks are read), the first one takes precedence (ie, it works much like `\providecommand`).

Encoding info is `charset=` followed by a `charset`, which if given sets how the strings should be translated to the internal representation used by the engine, typically `utf8`, which is the only value supported currently (default is no translations). Note `charset` is applied by `luatex` and `xetex` when reading the file, not when the macro or string is used in the document.

A list of font encodings which the strings are expected to work with can be given after `fontenc=` (separated with spaces, if two or more) – recommended, but not mandatory, although blocks without this key are not taken into account if you have requested `strings=encoded`.

Blocks without a selector are read always. They provide fallback values, and therefore they must be the last ones; they should be provided always if possible and all strings should be defined somehow inside it; they can be the only blocks (mainly LGC scripts using the LICR). The  $\langle\langle\textit{category}\rangle\rangle$  is either `captions`, `date` or `extras`. You must stick to these three categories, even if no error is raised when using other names.<sup>27</sup> It may be empty, too, but in such a case using `\SetString` is an error.

<sup>27</sup>In future releases further categories may be added.

```

\StartBabelCommands{language}{captions}
  [unicode, fontenc=TU EU1 EU2, charset=utf8]
\SetString{chaptername}{utf8-string}

\StartBabelCommands{language}{captions}
\SetString{chaptername}{ascii-maybe-LICR-string}

\EndBabelCommands

```

A real example can be:

```

\StartBabelCommands{austrian}{date}
  [unicode, fontenc=TU, charset=utf8]
\SetString\monthiname{Jänner}

\StartBabelCommands{german,austrian}{date}
  [unicode, fontenc=TU, charset=utf8]
\SetString\monthiiname{März}

\StartBabelCommands{austrian}{date}
\SetString\monthiname{J\"{a}nner}

\StartBabelCommands{german}{date}
\SetString\monthiname{Januar}

\StartBabelCommands{german,austrian}{date}
\SetString\monthiiname{Februar}
\SetString\monthiiname{M\"{a}rz}
\SetString\monthivname{April}
\SetString\monthvname{Mai}
\SetString\monthviname{Juni}
\SetString\monthviiname{Juli}
\SetString\monthviiname{August}
\SetString\monthixname{September}
\SetString\monthxname{Oktober}
\SetString\monthxiiname{November}
\SetString\monthxiiname{Dezenber}
\SetString\today{\number\day.\~%
  \csname month\romannumeral\month name\endcsname\space
  \number\year}

\StartBabelCommands{german,austrian}{captions}
\SetString\prefacename{Vorwort}
[etc.]

\EndBabelCommands

```

When used in ldf files, previous values of  $\langle category \rangle \langle language \rangle$  are overridden, which means the old way to define strings still works and used by default (to be precise, is first set to undefined and then strings are added). However, when used in the preamble or in a package, new settings are added to the previous ones, if the language exists (in the babel sense, ie, if  $\backslash date \langle language \rangle$  exists).

**NOTE** The package option strings introduced in version 3.9 (around 2013) when Unicode engines were still of marginal use, is now deprecated.

**NOTE** Captions and other strings defined in ini files (in other words, when a locale is loaded with  $\backslash babelprovide$ ) are internally set with the help of these macros.

**\StartBabelCommands** \*{\language-list}{\category}{[selector]}

The starred version just forces strings to take a value – if not set as package option (which is now deprecated), then the default for the engine is used. This is not done by default to prevent backward incompatibilities, but if you are creating a new language this version is better. It's up to the maintainers of the current languages to decide if using it is appropriate.<sup>28</sup>

**\EndBabelCommands** Marks the end of the series of blocks.

**\AfterBabelCommands** {\code}

The code is delayed and executed at the global scope just after \EndBabelCommands.

**\SetString** {\macro-name}{\string}

Adds \macro-name to the current category, and defines globally \lang-macro-name to \code (after applying the transformation corresponding to the current charset or defined with the hook stringprocess).

Use this command to define strings, without including any “logic” if possible, which should be a separated macro. See the example above for the date.

**\SetStringLoop** {\macro-name}{\string-list}

A convenient way to define several ordered names at once. For example, to define \abmoniname, \abmoniiname, etc. (and similarly with abday):

```
\SetStringLoop{abmon#lname}{en,fb,mr,ab,my,jn,jl,ag,sp,oc,nv,dc}
\SetStringLoop{abday#lname}{lu,ma,mi,ju,vi,sa,do}
```

#1 is replaced by the roman numeral.

**\SetCase** [\map-list]{\toupper-code}{\tolower-code} *Deprecated*

**WARNING** This feature doesn't work any longer after some changes in the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X kernel. It's now deprecated and an alternative is on the way.

**\SetHyphenMap** {\to-lower-macros}

**New 3.9g** Case mapping for hyphenation is handled with \SetHyphenMap and controlled with the package option hyphenmap.

There are three helper macros to be used inside \SetHyphenMap:

- \BabelLower{\uccode}{\lccode} is similar to \lccode but it's ignored if the char has been set and saves the original lccode to restore it when switching the language (except with hyphenmap=first).
- \BabelLowerMM{\uccode-from}{\uccode-to}{\step}{\lccode-from} loops though the given uppercase codes, using the step, and assigns them the lccode, which is also increased (MM stands for *many-to-many*).
- \BabelLowerMO{\uccode-from}{\uccode-to}{\step}{\lccode} loops though the given uppercase codes, using the step, and assigns them the lccode, which is fixed (MO stands for *many-to-one*).

An example is (which is redundant, because these assignments are done by both luatex and xetex):

<sup>28</sup>This replaces in 3.9g a short-lived \UseStrings which has been removed because it did not work.

```
\SetHyphenMap{\BabelLowerMM{"100}{ "11F}{2}{ "101}}
```

**NOTE** This macro is not intended to fix wrong mappings done by Unicode (which are the default in both xetex and luatex) – if an assignment is wrong, fix it directly.

### 3.9 Executing code based on the selector

```
\IfBabelSelectorTF {<selectors>}{<true>}{<false>}
```

**New 3.67** Sometimes a different setup is desired depending on the selector used. Values allowed in *<selectors>* are *select*, *other*, *foreign*, *other\** (and also *foreign\** for the tentative starred version), and it can consist of a comma-separated list. For example:

```
\IfBabelSelectorTF{other, other*}{A}{B}
```

is true with any of these two environment selectors.  
Its natural place of use is in hooks or in `\extras<language>`.

## 4 Acknowledgements

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