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```
add_post_meta( int $post_id, string $meta_key, mixed $meta_value,  
bool $unique = false ): int|false
```

Adds a meta field to the given post.

## Description

Post meta data is called "Custom Fields" on the Administration Screen.

## Parameters

`$post_id`intrequired

Post ID.

`$meta_key`stringrequired

Metadata name.

`$meta_value`mixedrequired

Metadata value. Must be serializable if non-scalar.

`$unique`booloptional

Whether the same key should not be added.

Default: `false`

## Return

int|false Meta ID on success, false on failure.

## More Information

Note that if the given key already exists among custom fields of the specified post, another custom field with the same key is added unless the `$unique` argument is set to `true`, in which case, no changes are made. If you want to update the value of an existing key, use the [update\\_post\\_meta\(\)](#) function instead

## Character Escaping

Because meta values are passed through the [stripslashes\(\)](#) function, you need to be careful about content escaped with `\` characters. You can read more about the behavior, and a workaround example, in the [update\\_post\\_meta\(\)](#) documentation.

## Source

wp-includes/post.php

Copy

```
function add_post_meta( $post_id, $meta_key, $meta_value, $unique = false ) {
    // Make sure meta is added to the post, not a revision.
    $the_post = wp_is_post_revision( $post_id );
    if ( $the_post ) {
        $post_id = $the_post;
    }

    return add_metadata( 'post', $post_id, $meta_key, $meta_value, $unique );
}
```

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Related

Uses

[wp\\_is\\_post\\_revision\(\)](#)  
wp-includes/revision.php

[add\\_metadata\(\)](#)  
wp-includes/meta.php

Used by

[WP\\_REST\\_Font\\_Faces\\_Controller::create\\_item\(\)](#)  
wp-includes/rest-api/endpoints/class-wp-rest-font-faces-controller.php

[wp\\_check\\_for\\_changed\\_dates\(\)](#)  
wp-includes/post.php

[WP\\_Privacy\\_Policy\\_Content::get\\_suggested\\_policy\\_text\(\)](#)  
wp-admin/includes/class-wp-privacy-policy-content.php

[WP\\_Privacy\\_Policy\\_Content:: policy\\_page\\_updated\(\)](#)  
wp-admin/includes/class-wp-privacy-policy-content.php

[WP\\_Customize\\_Manager::trash\\_changeset\\_post\(\)](#)  
wp-includes/class-wp-customize-manager.php

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Changelog

Version	Description
<a href="#">1.5.0</a>	Introduced.

User Contributed Notes

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Hidden Custom Fields

If you are a plugin or theme developer and you are planning to use custom fields to store parameters related to your plugin or template, it is interesting to note that WordPress will not show custom fields which have keys starting with an “\_” (underscore) in the custom fields list on the post edit screen or when using the `the_meta()` template function. This can be for example used to show these custom fields in an unusual way by using the `add_meta_box()` function.

The following example:

Copy

```
<?php add_post_meta( 68, '_color', 'red', true ); ?>
```

will add a unique custom field with the key name `_color` and the value ‘red’ but this custom field will not display in the post edit screen.

In addition, if the `$meta_value` argument is an array, it will not be displayed on the page edit screen, even if you don’t prefix the key name with an underscore.

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### Adding or Updating a Unique Custom Field

Adds a new custom field if the key does not already exist, or updates the value of the custom field with that key otherwise.

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```
<?php
if ( ! add_post_meta( 7, 'fruit', 'banana', true ) ) {
    update_post_meta ( 7, 'fruit', 'banana' );
}
```

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### Other Examples

Adds a new custom field only if a custom field with the given key does not already exists:

Copy

```
<?php add_post_meta( 68, 'my_key', '47', true ); ?>
```

Adds several custom fields with different values but with the same key ‘my\_key’:

Copy

```
<?php add_post_meta( 68, 'my_key', '47' ); ?>
<?php add_post_meta( 68, 'my_key', '682' ); ?>
<?php add_post_meta( 68, 'my_key', 'The quick, brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.' ); ?>
```

For a more detailed example, see the [post\\_meta Functions Examples](#) page.

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Default Usage

Copy

```
<?php add_post_meta( 68, 'my_key', 47 ); ?>
```

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capbussat2 years ago

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I prefer a more complete solution which checks if is empty and deletes it:

```
function my_update_post_meta($post_id, $meta_key, $new_meta_value)
{
    $meta_value = get_post_meta($post_id, $meta_key, true);
    if ($new_meta_value && " " === $meta_value)
        add_post_meta($post_id, $meta_key, $new_meta_value, true); // unique
    else if ($new_meta_value && $new_meta_value !== $meta_value)
        update_post_meta($post_id, $meta_key, $new_meta_value, $meta_value);
    // same prev_value
    else if (" " === $new_meta_value && $meta_value)
        delete_post_meta($post_id, $meta_key, $meta_value); }
```

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