List of Regular Expressions

Operator Description

^	The circumflex symbol marks the beginning of a pattern, although in some cases it can be omitted
$	Same as with the circumflex symbol, the dollar sign marks the end of a search pattern
.	The period matches any single character
?	It will match the preceding pattern zero or one times
+	It will match the preceding pattern one or more times
*	It will match the preceding pattern zero or more times
|	Boolean OR
-	Matches a range of elements
()	Groups a different pattern elements together
[]	Matches any single character between the square brackets
{min, max}	It is used to match exact character counts
\d	Matches any single digit
\D	Matches any single non digit caharcter
\w	Matches any alpha numeric character including underscore (_)
\W	Matches any non alpha numeric character excluding the underscore character
\s	Matches whitespace character

As an addition in PHP the forward slash character is escaped using the simple slash \. Example:

'/he\/llo/'

To have a brief understanding how these operators are used, let's have a look at a few examples:

Example Description

'/hello/'	It will match the word hello
'/^hello/'	It will match hello at the start of a string. Possible matches are hello or helloworld, but not worldhello
'/hello$/'	It will match hello at the end of a string.
'/he.o/'	It will match any character between he and o. Possible matches are helo or heyo, but not hello
'/he?llo/'	It will match either llo or hello
'/hello+/'	It will match hello on or more time. E.g. hello or hellohello
'/he*llo/'	Matches llo, hello or hehello, but not hellooo
'/hello|world/'	It will either match the word hello or world
'/(A-Z)/'	Using it with the hyphen character, this pattern will match every uppercase character from A to Z. E.g. A, B, C…
'/[abc]/'	It will match any single character a, b or c
'/abc{1}/'	Matches precisely one c character after the characters ab. E.g. matches abc, but not abcc
'/abc{1,}/'	Matches one or more c character after the characters ab. E.g. matches abc or abcc
'/abc{2,4}/'	Matches between two and four c character after the characters ab. E.g. matches abcc, abccc or abcccc, but not abc