

# Regular expression to match first and last character

Asked 10 years, 8 months ago Modified 2 years, 5 months ago Viewed 160k times



I'm trying to use regex to check that the first and last characters in a string are alpha characters between a-z.

31

I know this matches the first character:



```
 /^[a-z]/i
```



But how do I then check for the last character as well?



This:

```
 /^[a-z][a-z]$/i
```

does not work. And I suspect there should be something in between the two clauses, but I don't know what!

javascript

regex

expression

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edited Jan 2, 2019 at 17:02



Peter Mortensen

31.6k

22

110

133

asked Jun 21, 2014 at 11:05



Jason

Jason 335

1

3

6

## 5 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default)



The below regex will match the strings that start and end with an alpha character.

62

```
 /^[a-z].*[a-z]$/igm
```



The `a` string also starts and ends with an alpha character, right? Then you have to use the below regex.



```
 /^[a-z](.*[a-z])?$/igm
```


[DEMO](#)

### Explanation:

```
 ^          # Represents beginning of a line
[a-z]       # Alphabetic character
.*         # Any character 0 or more times
[a-z]       # Alphabetic character
$          # End of a line
i          # Case-insensitive match
g          # Global
m          # Multiline
```

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edited Oct 7, 2022 at 20:57



[DanielAttard](#)

3,615 9 58 107

answered Jun 21, 2014 at 11:08



[Avinash Raj](#)

175k 32 246 287

2 Lookahead is completely unnecessary here. – [JJJ](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:13

3 This is completely identical to the other answer. – [Unihedron](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:14

he misses the `g` modifier. – [Avinash Raj](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:15

Why do you need `g` modifier? – [Toto](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:31

@M42 `g` modifier: global. All matches (don't return on first match) – [Avinash Raj](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:32

Sure, but it has nothing to do here because we match the whole string. – [Toto](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:33

1 without `g` modifier, it fails to match the string in the second line. [regex101.com/r/jO2pl2](http://regex101.com/r/jO2pl2) – [Avinash Raj](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:35

Kudos to you for explaining that sh\*\*! :) – [gsamaras](#) Dec 12, 2015 at 0:29

@AvinashRaj, what should I do to make the first character== last character in your regex. – [Ala Eddine Menai](#) May 23, 2020 at 23:26



You can do it as follows to check for the first and last characters and then anything in between:

11

```
/^[a-z].*[a-z]$/im
```



[DEMO](#)



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edited Jun 21, 2014 at 11:14

answered Jun 21, 2014 at 11:06



[sshashank124](#)

32.2k 10 72 76

The flag `m` would help as well. – [hjpotter92](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:07

@hjpotter92, Thank you. I have included it in my answer – [sshashank124](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:07

2 @sshashank124 `.*` would have done instead of `.*?`. Backtracking will be better because of anchor. – [Unihedron](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:12

@Unihedron, Thank you. I have changed my answer. I guess I just feel safer with `.*?` – [sshashank124](#) Jun 21, 2014 at 11:15



You can use this:

2

```
/^.|.$/gim
```



it matches with first and last character



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edited Jul 19, 2022 at 12:05

answered Jul 14, 2022 at 14:45



[Lajos Arpad](#)

77.1k 40 117 222



[pazzazzo](#)

104 1 3



1



```
var str = "Regular";  
//following code should return true as first and last characters are same  
var re = /^(^([a-zA-Z])(.*)\1$/gi;  
  
console.log(re.test(str)); //true  
  
Match 1 : Regular  
Group 1 : (^([a-zA-Z]) = R  
Group 2 : (.*?) = egula  
\1$ : Match the same what is caught in group 1 at the end = r
```

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answered Dec 18, 2021 at 10:03



Naveesh Kumar V

81 2

1 That is not was asked. – Toto Dec 18, 2021 at 10:08



1



put characters in groups like ([group1])([group2])\1. The \1 says the last group matches group 1.

```
([a-z])([someRegex])\1
```

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answered Oct 4, 2022 at 16:45



Karim Tingdis

200 3 7

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