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regex for matching something if it is not preceded by something else

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So with regex in java, I want to write a regex that will match if and only if the pattern is not preceded by certain characters. For example:

```
String s = "foobar barbar beachbar crowbar bar ";
```

I want to match if bar is not preceded by foo. So output would be:

```
barbar  
beachbar  
crowbar  
bar
```

I know this is probably a very simple question. I am trying to learn regex, but in the meantime I need something to work now.

[java](#) [regex](#)

edited Mar 7 '17 at 22:08



[ebruchez](#)

6,406 4 24 38

asked Feb 16 '12 at 5:50



[b3bop](#)

845 2 7 15

- 2 Your question is not quite clear. want to match iff your your whole string or each word(separated by space) is not preceded by certain charachters? – [Kuldeep Jain](#) Feb 16 '12 at 5:55

1 Answer

▲ You want to use negative
lookbehind like this:

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Where `(?!x)` means "only if it doesn't have 'x' before this point".

See [Regular Expressions - Lookaround](#) for more information.

Edit: added the `\w*` to capture the characters before (e.g. "beach").

edited Jun 15 '17 at 4:15



[Sebastian Palma](#)

16.3k 4 21 35

answered Feb 16 '12 at 5:52



[Adam Rofer](#)

3,081 1 10 11

2 what modifications need to be made to not match `foo_arbitrary_bar`? ie foo not immediately preceding bar – [Brad Kent](#) Jun 28 '18 at 1:43

1 [@BradKent](#) `(?!foo).*bar` would match something like that, I believe. – [emyller](#) Jul 17 '18 at 21:20

[@emyller](#) nope. that will match `foobazbar` (foo doesn't come before `foobazbar`, so it matches) – [Brad Kent](#) Jul 18 '18 at 21:53

2 [@BradKent](#) I didn't read your "not" in "not match", that why I said it would match. Your case looks like a `\b(?:foo)\w*bar\b` to me then. – [emyller](#) Jul 19 '18 at 16:08

2 [@BradKent](#) Then you can either ask a new question, elaborating what you're trying to achieve in detail, or continue playing with regular

expressions until you find it yourself. :) – [emyller](#) Jul 19 '18 at 18:30
