

Regular Expressions

[illegible]

What are they?

- They are pattern matchers
- *"A sequence of symbols and characters expressing a string or pattern to be searched for within a longer piece of text"*
- They aren't just for programmers
- Often considered a write-only language

Where did they come from?

- Began with [Ken Thompson](#) with [this article](#) published in 1968
 - For the IBM 7094
 - Then the QED editor
- Lots of languages added to it
 - [Perl](#) has a great implementation of it, as does Ruby and lots of other languages

Where are they used?

- Validations
- Checking for spam
- Approximate matching
- Extracting important information
- Finding and replacing
- Automation - lots of commands use this (e.g. grep)
- The meaning of life
 - `^(?=.*!(.)\1)([^\DO:105-93+30])(?-1)(?<!\d(?<=(![5-90-3])\d)).[^\WHY?]$`

Useful sites

- [Rubular](#)
- [Regexr](#)
- [Regexpr](#)
- [Ruby Docs](#)
- [MDN Regular Expressions](#)
- [Regexone](#)
- [Debuggex](#)
- [Regex101](#)
- [Regular Expression Crossword](#)
- [Regular Expression Golf](#)
- [RegexQuest](#)
- [TryRegex](#)
- [Akowalz](#)

Approximate equality

```
"bob" == "bob"  
# => true
```

```
"bob" =~ /bob/  
# => 0
```

```
"Hello, my name is bob" =~ /bob/  
# => 18
```

Ranges

```
"cat" =~ /[chs]at/
```

```
"bob" =~ /[Bb]ob/
```

```
"bob" =~ /[A-Z]ob/
```

```
"bob" =~ /[A-Za-z]ob/
```

```
"012345" =~ /[0-9]/
```

```
"012345" =~ /^[^A-Z]/ # Anything but A-Z
```


Character classes

- **\w** - any word character
- **\W** - any non-word character
- **\d** - anything that is a digit
- **\D** - anything that isn't a digit
- **\s** - any whitespace character
- **\S** - anything but a whitespace character
- **\b** - any word boundary
- **\B** - any non-word boundary
- **.** - any character except a new line

Character Classes

```
"this has word characters" =~ /\w/
```

```
"this has no numbers" =~ /\D/
```

```
"this has numbers 012" =~ /\d/
```

Quantifiers || Qualifiers

* - Zero or more times

+ - One or more times

? - Zero or one times (optional)

{**x**} - Exactly x times

{**x**,} - x or more times

{**,y**} - y or less times

{**x,y**} - At least x and at most y times

Repetition

```
"Arctic Arctic Arctic" =~ /(.* ) \1 \1/
```

```
"oo book cook" =~ /(.* ) b(\1)k c(\1)k/
```

```
"ababa" =~ /(.) (\1)\1/
```

Have a go at **these**
exercises

Regex methods - Match

```
"Some numbers: 42" =~ /\d+/
```

```
puts $1
```

RegEx methods - Match

```
matches = "Get the number: 42.".match( /(\d+)/ )
```

```
matches.pre_match
```

```
matches.string
```

```
matches[1]
```

```
matches.post_match
```

Captures

```
regex = /(\d{3}).*(\d{3}).*?(\d{4})/  
matches = "205-222-3219".match( regex )
```

```
matches[1]
```

```
matches[2]
```

```
matches[3]
```


Named Captures

```
matches = "Num: 42.".match( /(?<num>\d+)/ )
```

```
matches.pre_match
```

```
matches[:num]
```

```
matches.post_match
```

Scan, sub, gsub & split

```
"123 456 789".match( /\d+/ )
```

```
"123 456 789".scan( /\d+/ )
```

```
"205-222-3219".sub( /\D/, " " )
```

```
"205-222-3219".gsub( /\D/, " " )
```

```
"205-222-3219".split /-/
```

Anchors

```
"ruby".match( /^ruby/ )  
"    ruby".match( /ruby$/ )
```

Flags

```
"RUBY" =~ /ruby/i
```

```
"205-222-3219".match(/  
    (\d{3}).*    # First set of numbers: area code  
    (\d{3}).*    # Second set of numbers: exchange  
    (\d{4}).*    # Third set of numbers: suffix  
/x)
```

Greedy vs. Reluctant

```
"RUBY" =~ /ruby/i
```

```
"205-222-3219".match(/  
  (\d+).*  
  (\d+).*  
  (\d+).*  
/x) # GREEDY!
```

```
"205-222-3219".match(/  
  (\d+).*?  
  (\d+).*?  
  (\d+).*?  
/x) # RELUCTANT
```

Have a go at **these**
exercises