

(MENA Version)

MAXIM ROMANOV

To start: Regular Expressions Practicum File on *GitHub*: https://github.com/
maximromanov/re_tutorial

On Windows or Mac

- Install Sublime Text
- Open the practicum file in the editor



What are Regular Expressions?

- very small language for describing textual patterns
- not a programming language, yet a part of each one
- incredibly powerful tool for find/replace operations
- old (1950s-60s)
- arcane art
- ubiquitous





Why Use Regular Expressions?

To search:

- all spelling variations of the same word:
 - Col. Qadhdhafi or Kaddafi? Isfahan or Isbahān?
- words of specific morphological patterns:
 - [root]er, [root]ed, [root]ing [root]s: all derivatives from the same root
- entities that may be referred to differently:
 - references to Austria?
 - references to education in biographies

To search and replace:

reformat "dirty"/inconsistent data

To tag:

- make texts navigable and more readable
- tag information relevant to your research

and many other uses...



The Basics

- a regular expression is a pattern enclosed within delimiters
 - delimiters will differ depending on a programming language or software that you use; you may also not see them at all
 - most text editors that support RE do not display delimiters (EditPad Pro, Sublime Text, TextMate)
- most characters match themselves
- there are also special characters

Example:

- /Hamburg/ is a regular expression that matches "Hamburg"
 - slash is the delimiter enclosing the expression
 - "Hamburg" is the pattern



/at/

 Matches strings with "a" followed by "t".

at

hat

that

atlas

aft

Athens



/at/

• Matches strings with "a" followed by "t".

at hat

th*at* atlas

aft Athens



Characters & Special Characters

- most characters match themselves
- matching is case sensitive
- special characters: () ^\${}[]\|.+?*
- to match a special character in your text, you need to "escape it",
 i.e. precede it with "\" in your pattern:
 - /Baġdād [sic]/ does not match "Baġdād [sic]"
 - /Baġdād \[sic\]/ matches "Baġdād [sic]"



Character Classes: []

- Characters within [] are choices for a single-character match.
- Think of a type of or.
- Order within [] is unimportant.
- /x[01]/ matches >>> "x0" and "x1".
- Initial ^ negates the class:
 - /[^45]/ matches any character except 4 or 5.



/[ch]at/

 Matches strings with "c" or that "h", followed by "a", followed by "t".

at

chat

cat

fat

phat



/[ch]at/

 Matches strings with "c" or "h", followed by "a", followed by "t". t*hat* at chat cat fat phat



Ranges (within classes)

Ranges define sets of characters within a class.

- -/[1-9]/ matches any non-zero
 digit
- -/[a-zA-Z]/ matches any letter
 of the English alphabet
- -/[12][0-9]/ matches numbers between 10 and 29



Ranges shortcuts

Shortcut	Name	Equivalent Class		
\d	digit	[0-9]		
\D	not digit	[^0-9]		
\w	word	[a-zA-Z0-9_] (actually more!)		
\ W	not word	[^a-zA-Z0-9_]		
\s	space	[\t\n\r\f\v]		
\s	not space	[^\t\n\r\f\v]		
•	everything	[^\n] (depends on mode)		



$/\d\d\d\-\]\d\d\d\d$

Matches strings with: 501–1234 234 1252

- Three digits
- Space or dash
- Four digits

652.2648

713-342-7452

PE6-5000

653-6464x256



/\d\d\d[-]\d\d\d\d/

- Matches strings with:
 - Three digits
 - Space or dash
 - Four digits

501-1234 234 1252

652.2648

713-342-7452

PE6-5000

653-6464x256



Repeaters

- Symbols indicating that the preceding element of the pattern can repeat.
- /runs?/ matches runs or run
- /1\d*/ matches any number beginning with "1".

Repeater	Count		
?	zero or one		
+	one or more		
*	zero or more		
{n}	exactly n		
$\{n,m\}$	between n and m times		
{ , m}	no more than <i>m</i> times		
{n,}	at least n times		

Repeaters

```
Strings:
                                Repeater
                                            Count
1: "at" 2: "art"
                                            zero or one
3: "arrrrt" 4: "aft"
                                     +
                                            one or more
Patterns:
                                            zero or more
A: /ar?t/ B: /a[fr]?t/
                                            exactly n
                                    {n}
C: /ar*t/ D: /ar+t/
                                            between n and m
                                  \{n,m\}
E: /a.*t/ F: /a.+t/
                                            times
                                            no more than m
                                   \{, m\}
                                            times
                                            at least n times
                                   {n,}
```

Repeaters

```
1: "at" 2: "art" 3: "arrrt" 4: "aft"
```

- /ar?t/ matches "at" and "art" but not "arrrt".
- /a[fr]?t/ matches "at", "art", and "aft".
- /ar*t/ matches "at", "art", and "arrrrt"
- /ar+t/ matches "art" and "arrrt" but not "at".
- /a.*t/ matches anything with an 'a' eventually followed by a 't'.



Lab: Intro (in the practicum file)

Repeater	Count	Shortcut	Name
?	zero or one	\d	digit
+	one or more	\D	not digit
*	zero or more	\w	word
{n}	exactly <i>n</i> times	\W	not word
$\{n,m\}$	between n and m times	\s	
		15	space
$\{ , m \}$	no more than <i>m</i> times	\ S	not space
{n,}	at least <i>n</i> times	•	any symbol



Anchors

- Anchors match between characters.
- Used to assert that the characters you are matching must appear in a certain place.
- /\bat\b/ matches "at work" but not "batch".

Anchor	Matches
^	start of line
\$	end of line
\ b	word boundary
\ B	not boundary
\ A	start of string (rare)
\Z	end of string (rare)
\z	raw end of string (rare)



ALTERNATION - "|" (pipe)

- In **RE**, "|" means "or".
- You can put a full expression on the left and another full expression on the right.
- Either can match.
- /seek|seeks|sought/
 - matches "seek", "seeks", or "sought".
- /seeks?|sought/
 - matches "seek", "seeks", or "sought".



Grouping

- Everything within (...) is grouped into a single element for the purposes of *repetition* and *alternation*.
- The expression / (la) +/ matches "la", "lala", "lalala" but not "all".
- /schema(ta)?/ matches "schema" and "schemata" but not "schematic".



Grouping Example

 What regular expression matches "eat", "eats", "ate" and "eaten"?



Grouping Example

- What regular expression matches "eat", "eats", "ate" and "eaten"?
- /eat(s|en)?|ate/

- Add word boundary anchors to exclude "sate" and "eating":
- /\b(eat(s|en)?|ate)\b/



Lab: Part I (in the practicum file)

Repeater	Count	Shrtct	Name	Anchor	Matches
?	zero or one	\d	digit	^	start of line
+	one or more	\ D	not digit	\$	end of line
*	zero or more	\w	word	\b	word boundary
{n}	exactly n times	\W	not word	\t	TAB symbol
$\{n,m\}$	between n and m times	\s	space	\n	new line
{ , m}	no more than <i>m</i> times	\s	not space	1	"or" alternation
		•	any symbol	()	capture group
{n,}	at least n times			[]	class



Replacement

- Regex most often used for search/replace
- Text editors:
 - Search Window: pattern
 - Replace Window: replacement



Capture

- During searches, (...) groups capture patterns for use in replacement.
- Special variables \1, \2, \3 etc. contain the capture
 - in *Sublime Text*: \$1, \$2, \$3
- /(\d\d\d) (\d\d\d\d) / "123-4567"
 - \1 (\$1) contains "123"
 - **− \2** (\$2) contains "**4567**"



CAPTURE & REFORMAT

 How to convert "Schwarzenegger, Arnold" to "Arnold Schwarzenegger"?

•

•

•



CAPTURE & REFORMAT

 How to convert "Schwarzenegger, Arnold" to "Arnold Schwarzenegger"?

- Search: / (\w+) , (\w+) /
- Replace (a): /\2 \1/
- Replace (b): /\$2 \$1/

• (!) Before hitting "Replace", make sure that your match does not catch what you do NOT want to change



Lab: Part II (in the practicum file)

Repeater	Count	Shrtct	Name	Anchor	Matches
?	zero or one	\d	digit	^	start of line
+	one or more	\ D	not digit	\$	end of line
*	zero or more	\w	word	\b	word boundary
{n}	exactly n times	\W	not word	\t	TAB symbol
$\{n,m\}$	between n and m times	\s	space	\n	new line
{ , m}	no more than <i>m</i> times	\s	not space	1	"or" alternation
		•	any symbol	()	capture group
{n,}	at least n times			[]	class



• *Very Simple*: Construct regular expressions that finds references all Austrian cities.



 Very Simple: Construct regular expressions that finds references all Austrian cities.

Simply connect all toponyms from the list with a pipe symbol "|"



• A Bit Tricky: Construct regular expression that finds only cities from 1) Lower Austria; 2) Salzburg.



• A Bit Tricky: Construct regular expression that finds only cities from 1) Lower Austria; 2) Salzburg.

```
Option I:
```

```
\b([\w ]+) \(Lower Austria\)
\b([\w ]+) \(Salzburg\)
```

Option II (cooler):

```
\b([\w ]+)(?=( \(Lower Austria\)))
\b([\w ]+)(?=( \(Salzburg\)))
```



RE for Highlighting Toponyms

```
~~حسب وتجرى في هذه الشعب الفراتية السفن اليُّ
                                                                                       157
                  <mark>~~ الكوفة وفي دجلة الى الموصل ، وذكر الشمشاطي PageV01P120 إ</mark>
                                                                                       158
                     في تاريخه ان المنصور لما أراد بناء <mark>مدينة السلام</mark> احضريا
                                                                                       159
                       ~أكبر · من · عرف · من · أهل · الفقه · و العدالة · و الأمانة · و المعرفة يا
                                                                                       160
  بالهندسة وكان فنهم ابو حنيفة النعمان ابن ثابت والحجاج بن أرطاة وحشرا
                                                                                       161
 الصناع والفعلة من <mark>الشام والموصل والحيل</mark> وسائر اعماله وامر بخطها وحفريا
                                                                                       162
                     الأساسات في سنة 145 وتمت في سنة 49 وجعل عرض السور منيا
                                                                                       163
                  أسفل خمسين ذراعا وجعلها بثمانية أبواب اربعة داخلة صغارا
                                                                                       164
                                   واربعة خارجة كبار <mark>باد البصرة وباد الشام</mark>يّ
                                                                                       165
                 <mark>~~وباد خراسان وباد الكوفة</mark> وجعل الحامع والقصر وسطها وقبلة ∵
                                                                                       166
                                                                                       167
                                       <mark>جامع الرصافة</mark> اصح. منه ، ووجدت في بعض <sub>-</sub>
خزائن الخلفاء ان المنصور أنفق على مدينة السلام اربعة آلاف ألف وثمانمائة ا
                                                                                       168
               وثلاثة وثلاثين درهما لان اجرة الأستاذ كانت قيراطا والروزكاري
                                                                                       169
                                    حبتين النهروان مدينة ذات جانبين الشرقي ا
                                                                                       170
                    اعمر رحبة عامرة بينهما الجسر الجامع في الحانب الشرقي"
                                                                                       171
                                  والحاج ينزلون على هذا الشط الدسكرة مدينة ا
                                                                                       172
                                         صغيرة سوقها واحد طويل الجامع أسفله
                                                                                       173
                                      غام بآزاج جلولا حولها أشجار غير حصينة ا
                                                                                       174
                   وهذه المدن <mark>وخانقين</mark> على جادة <mark>حلوان</mark> ليس لهن بهاء ولا هن ا
                                                                                       175
                                                                                       176
   لائقات <mark>ببغداد وصرصر</mark> أيضا كبعض قرى فلسطين النهر الى جانبها وكذلك نهري<sup>ا</sup>
                       الملك <mark>والصراة قري واما قصر هبيرة</mark> فمدينة كبيرة جيدة ا
                                                                                       177
  الأسواق بحبئهم الماء من الفرات كثيرة الحاكة والبهود والحامع في السوق ال
                                                                                       178
                    <mark>وبابل</mark> صغيرة نائية عن الطريق والجادة على جسرها ، وسائر
                                                                                       179
      <mark>~~</mark>مدن· هذا· الوجه· على ما وصفنا مثل· <mark>النيل</mark>· وعبدس وكوثا ، ومدينة إبراهيم ا
                                                                                       180
```



RE for Finding Date Statements

- Download settings and examples for EditPad Pro: https://tinyurl.com/tutorial-re
- In EditPad Pro:
 - Open: "0748Dhahabi.TarikhIslam.Shamela0035100ara1.sample"
 - Open: "year_Statement_re.txt"
 - Copy/paste the regular expression into the search window
 - Switch back to "0748Dhahabi.TarikhIslam.Shamela0035100ara1.sample"
- The date statements in the excerpt from al-Dahabī's *Ta'rīḥ al-islām* should appear highlighted with a different color



RE for Finding Date Statements

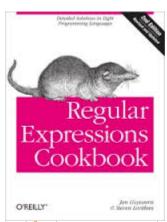
```
BIO MAN$ -- 153$ +##□265- الفضل بن أحمد بن محمد بن متوبه، ي
                               ~~أبو عمرو الكاكويي، [الوفاة: ∙506 ه] ي
                                                                        266
                                               🐈 كان يقال لأبيه كاكو. 📲
                                                                        267
                                                                        268
                                                                        269
    ~~سمع من: عبد الغافر الفارسي، وأبي عثمان الصابوني، وابن مسرور ∵
                                                                        270
                                                        ~~بافادة والده ـ
    قال أبو سعد السمعاني: أجاز لي، وحدثني عنه جماعة، وتوفي ليلة 🚽
                                                                        271
                          --- عيد · الفطر ، · وكان · مولده · في · سنة تسع وثلاثين . ·
                                                                        272
  ومن الرواة عنه ولده ، وبقي إلى <mark>سنة أربع وخمسين</mark>، وروى أبوه أحمد الم
                                                                        273
                          كاكو·عن: أبي·عبد·الله·بن·نظيف. • PageV11P080 - يا
                                                                        274
               BIO MAN$ - 154$ ###⊟275 - الفضل بن محمد بن عبيد بن محمد 🚼
 ~~بن محمد بن مهدى، أبو محمد القشيري، النيسابوري. [الوفاة: ∙506 ه] ي
                                                                        276
                                                                        277
           · شيخ، ثقة، مشهور، من بيت العدالة والصلاح، كان مبالغا في ﴿
     ~~الاحتياط وس: ﴿ 81 ﴿ فَي الشَّهاداتُ، ومن أعيان العدول، وكان صوفيا، ﴿
                                                                        278
                                                                        279
                                                                        280
                                                                        281
                  ~سمع: عبد الرحمن بن حمدان النصروبي، وعبد القاهر 🚽
أبا منصور البغدادي، وأبا حسان المزكي، وأبا الحسين الفارسي، وحدث إ
                                                                        282
    ببغداد لما حج، روى عنه: أبو الفتح محمد بن عبد السلام الكاتب، ي
                                                                        283
                                                                        284
 عشرين وأربعمائة، وتوفي في رمضان، وهو أخو عبيد القشيري، يا
                                                                        285
                                                                        √286
                                                 PageV11P080
```

To keep in mind

- RE are "greedy," i.e. they tend to catch more than you may need. Always test!
- Test before applying! (In text editors Ctrl+Z (Win), Cmd+Z (Mac) can help to revert changes)
- Check the language/application-specific documentation: some common shortcuts are not universal (\1 vs \$1, for example)



SOME READINGS



- Amazon.com
 - http://www.amazon.com/Regular-Expressions-Cookbook-Jan-Goyvaerts/dp/1449319432/
 - http://www.amazon.com/Mastering-Regular-Expressions-Jeffrey-Friedl/dp/0596528124/
- Free Online Readings
 - http://www.regular-expressions.info/
 - http://ruby.bastardsbook.com/chapters/regexes/
- Cheat Sheets
 - http://krijnhoetmer.nl/stuff/regex/cheat-sheet/
 - http://www.rexegg.com/regex-quickstart.html
- Interactive tutorial
 - http://regexone.com/

