Need to Know

Pattern arguments in stringr are interpreted as regular expressions *after any special characters have been parsed.*

In R, you write regular expressions as *strings*, sequences of characters surrounded by quotes (**""**) or single quotes(**''**).

Some characters cannot be represented directly in an R string . These must be represented as **special characters**, sequences of characters that have a specific meaning., e.g.

Special Character	Represents
\\	\
\"	"
\n	new line

Run **?"'"** to see a complete list

Because of this, whenever a \ appears in a regular expression, you must write it as \\ in the string that represents the regular expression.

Use **writeLines**() to see how R views your string after all special characters have been parsed.

writeLines("\\.")
# \.

writeLines("\\ is a backslash")
# \ is a backslash

INTERPRETATION

Patterns in stringr are interpreted as regexs To change this default, wrap the pattern in one of:

regex(pattern, ignore_case = FALSE, multiline = FALSE, comments = FALSE, dotall = FALSE, ...) Modifies a regex to ignore cases, match end of lines as well of end of strings, allow R comments within regex's , and/or to have . match everything including \n.
str_detect("I", regex("i", TRUE))

fixed() Matches raw bytes but will miss some characters that can be represented in multiple ways (fast). *str_detect("\u0130", fixed("i"))*

coll() Matches raw bytes and will use locale specific collation rules to recognize characters that can be represented in multiple ways (slow). *str_detect("\u0130", coll("i", TRUE, locale = "tr"))*

boundary() Matches boundaries between characters, line_breaks, sentences, or words. *str_split(sentences, boundary("word"))*

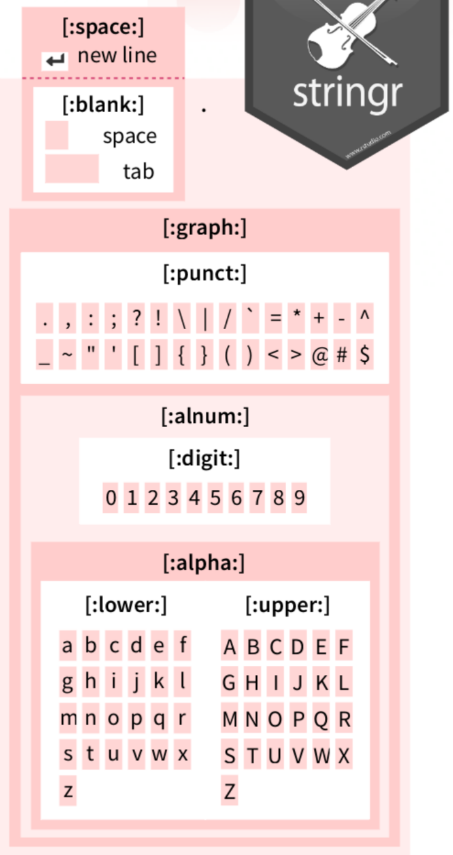
Regular Expressions - Regular expressions, or *regexps*, are a concise language for describing patterns in strings.

MATCH CHARACTERS

see <- function(rx) str_view_all("abc ABC 123\t.!?\\(){}\n", rx)

string (type this)	**regexp** (to mean this)	**matches** (which matches this)	**example**	
	a (etc.)	a (etc.)	see("a")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\.	\.	.	see("\\.")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\!	\!	!	see("\\!")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\?	\?	?	see("\\?")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\\\	\\	\	see("\\\\")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\(	\(	(	see("\\(")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\)	\)	)	see("\\)")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\{	\{	{	see("\\{")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\}	\}	}	see("\\}")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\n	\n	new line (return)	see("\\n")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\t	\t	tab	see("\\t")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\s	\s	any whitespace (**\S** *for non-whitespaces)*	see("\\s")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\d	\d	any digit (**\D** *for non-digits)*	see("\\d")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\w	\w	any word character (**\W** *for non-word chars)*	see("\\w")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
\\b	\b	word boundaries	see("\\b")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:digit:][1]	digits	see("[:digit:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:alpha:][1]	letters	see("[:alpha:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:lower:][1]	lowercase letters	see("[:lower:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:upper:][1]	uppercase letters	see("[:upper:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:alnum:][1]	letters and numbers	see("[:alnum:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:punct:][1]	punctuation	see("[:punct:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:graph:][1]	letters, numbers, and punctuation	see("[:graph:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:space:][1]	space characters (i.e. \s)	see("[:space:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	[:blank:][1]	space and tab (but not new line)	see("[:blank:]")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}
	.	every character except a new line	see(".")	abc ABC 123 .!?\(){}

[1] Many base R functions require classes to be wrapped in a second set of [ ], e.g. **[[:digit:]]**


[:space:]
↵ new line
[:blank:]
space
tab
.
[:graph:]
[:punct:]
. , : ; ? ! \ | / ` = * + - ^
_ ~ " ' [ ] { } ( ) < > @ # $
[:alnum:]
[:digit:]
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
[:alpha:]
[:lower:]
a b c d e f
g h i j k l
m n o p q r
s t u v w x
z
[:upper:]
A B C D E F
G H I J K L
M N O P Q R
S T U V W X
Z

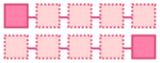
ALTERNATES

alt <- function(rx) str_view_all("abcde", rx)

regexp	matches	example	
ab|d	or	alt("ab|d")	abcde
[abe]	one of	alt("[abe]")	abcde
[^abe]	anything but	alt("[^abe]")	abcde
[a-c]	range	alt("[a-c]")	abcde

ANCHORS

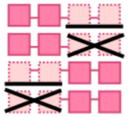
anchor <- function(rx) str_view_all("aaa", rx)



regexp	matches	example	
^a	start of string	anchor("^a")	aaa
a$	end of string	anchor("a$")	aaa

LOOK AROUNDS

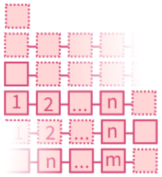
look <- function(rx) str_view_all("bacad", rx)



regexp	matches	example	
a(?=c)	followed by	look("a(?=c)")	bacad
a(?!c)	not followed by	look("a(?!c)")	bacad
(?<=b)a	preceded by	look("(?<=b)a")	bacad
(?<!b)a	not preceded by	look("(?<!b)a")	bacad

QUANTIFIERS

quant <- function(rx) str_view_all(".a.aa.aaa", rx)



regexp	matches	example	
a?	zero or one	quant("a?")	.a.aa.aaa
a*	zero or more	quant("a*")	.a.aa.aaa
a+	one or more	quant("a+")	.a.aa.aaa
a{n}	exactly **n**	quant("a{2}")	.a.aa.aaa
a{n, }	**n** or more	quant("a{2,}")	.a.aa.aaa
a{n, m}	between **n** and **m**	quant("a{2,4}")	.a.aa.aaa

GROUPS

ref <- function(rx) str_view_all("abbaab", rx)

Use parentheses to set precedent (order of evaluation) and create groups

regexp	matches	example	
(ab|d)e	sets precedence	alt("(ab|d)e")	abcde

Use an escaped number to refer to and duplicate parentheses groups that occur earlier in a pattern. Refer to each group by its order of appearance

string (type this)	**regexp** (to mean this)	**matches** (which matches this)	**example** (the result is the same as ref("abba"))	
\\1	\1 (etc.)	first () group, etc.	ref("(a)(b)\\2\\1")	abbaab