

ASCII

ASCII is an acronym for the American Standard Code for Information Interchange. Pronounced ask-ee, ASCII is a code for representing English characters as numbers, with each letter assigned a number from 0 to 127. For example, the ASCII code for uppercase **M** is 77. Most computers use ASCII codes to represent text, which makes it possible to transfer data from one computer to another.

Text files stored in ASCII format are sometimes called ASCII files. Text editors and word processors are usually capable of storing data in ASCII format, although ASCII format is not always the **default** storage format. Most data files, particularly if they contain **numeric** data, are not stored in ASCII format. Executable programs are never stored in ASCII format.

The standard ASCII **character set** uses just 7 bits for each character. There are several larger character sets that use 8 bits, which gives them 128 additional characters. The extra characters are used to represent non-English characters, graphics symbols, and mathematical symbols. Several companies and organizations have proposed extensions for these 128 characters. The DOS operating system uses a superset of ASCII called extended ASCII or high ASCII. A more universal standard is the **ISO Latin 1** set of characters, which is used by many operating systems, as well as web browsers.

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Last update: **2023/08/13 19:31**

