

Grave accent

The **grave accent** (̀) (/ɡreɪv/^[1][2] or /ɡraɪv/^[1][2]) is a diacritical mark used to varying degrees in English, French, Dutch, Italian, and many other western European languages. It is also used in other languages using the Latin alphabet, such as Mohawk and Yoruba, and with non-Latin writing systems such as the Greek and Cyrillic alphabets and the Bopomofo or Zhuyin Fuhao semi-syllabary. It has no single meaning, but can indicate pitch, stress, or other features.


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À	à
Ả	ả
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Ĥ	ĥ
Ì	ì
İ	ï
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acute
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Pitch

The grave accent first appeared in the polytonic orthography of Ancient Greek to mark a lower pitch than the high pitch of the acute accent. In modern practice, it replaces an acute accent in the last syllable of a word when that word is followed immediately by another word. The grave and circumflex have been replaced with an acute accent in the modern monotonic orthography.

The accent mark was called βαρεία, the feminine form of the adjective βαρύς (*barús*), meaning "heavy" or "low in pitch". This was calqued (loan-translated) into Latin as *gravis*, which then became the English word *grave*.

Stress

Ò	ò	Marks sometimes used as diacritics
	ó	apostrophe
Ṛ	ṛ	bar
Ṛ	ṛ	colon
Ṛ	ṛ	comma
Ṛ	ṛ	full stop/period
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ˆ	ô	
ˆ	ò	
ˆ	ù	
	Û	

The grave accent marks the stressed vowels of words in Maltese, Catalan, and Italian.

Ω	ώ
Cyrillic	
È	è
Ѐ	ѐ

A general rule in Italian is that words that end with stressed *-a*, *-i* or *-u* must

be marked with a grave accent. Words that end with stressed *-e* or *-o* may bear either an acute accent or a grave accent, depending on whether the final *e* or *o* sound is closed or open, respectively. Some examples of words with a final grave accent are *città* ("city"), *così* ("so/then/thus"), *più* ("more"/"plus"), *Mosè* ("Moses"), and *portò* ("[he/she/it] brought/carried"). Typists who use a keyboard without accented characters and are unfamiliar with input methods for typing accented letters sometimes use a separate grave accent or even an apostrophe instead of the proper accent character. This is nonstandard but is especially common when typing capital letters: **E`* or **E'* instead of *È* ("[he/she/it] is"). Other mistakes arise from the misunderstanding of truncated and elided words: the phrase *un po'* ("a little"), which is the truncated version of *un poco*, may be mistakenly spelled as **un pò*. Italian has word pairs where one has an accent marked and the other not, with different pronunciation and meaning—such as *pero* ("pear tree") and *però* ("but"), and *Papa* ("Pope") and *papà* ("dad"); the last example is also valid for Catalan.

In Bulgarian, the grave accent sometimes appears on the vowels a, o, y, e, и, and ъ to mark stress. It most commonly appears in books for children or foreigners, and dictionaries—or to distinguish between near-homophones: *пàра* (*pàra*, "steam/vapour") and *пapà* (*parà*, "cent/penny, money"), *вълна* (*bǎlna*, "wool") and *вълнà* (*bǎlnà*, "wave").

In Macedonian the stress mark is orthographically required to distinguish homographs (see Disambiguation) and is put mostly on the vowels e and и. Then, it forces the stress on the accented word-syllable instead of having a different syllable in the stress group getting accented. In turn, it changes the pronunciation and the whole meaning of the group.

Ukrainian, Rusyn, Belarusian, and Russian used a similar system until the first half of the 20th century. Now the main stress is preferably marked with an acute, and the role of the grave is limited to marking secondary stress in compound words (in dictionaries and linguistic literature).

In Serbo-Croatian and in Slovene, the stressed syllable can be short or long and have a rising or falling tone. They use (in dictionaries, orthography, and grammar books, for example) four different stress marks (grave, acute, double grave, and inverted breve). The system is identical both in Latin and Cyrillic scripts.

In modern Church Slavonic, there are three stress marks (acute, grave, and circumflex), which formerly represented different types of pitch accent. There is no longer any phonetic distinction between them, only an orthographical one. The grave is typically used when the stressed vowel is the last letter of a multiletter word.

In Ligurian, the grave accent marks the accented short vowel of a word in *à* (sound [a]), *è* (sound [ɛ]), *ì* (sound [i]) and *ù* (sound [y]). For *ò*, it indicates the short sound of [o], but may not be the stressed vowel of the word.

Height

The grave accent marks the height or openness of the vowels *e* and *o*, indicating that they are pronounced open: *è* [ɛ] (as opposed to *é* [e]); *ò* [ɔ] (as opposed to *ó* [o]), in several Romance languages:

- Catalan uses the accent on three letters (*a*, *e*, and *o*).
- French orthography uses the accent on three letters (*a*, *e*, and *u*).
 - The *ù* is used in only one word, *où*, to distinguish it from its homophone *ou*.
 - The *à* is used in only a small closed class of words, including *à*, *là*, and *çà* (homophones of *a*, *la*, and *ça* respectively), and *déjà*.
 - The *è* is used more broadly to represent the vowel /ɛ/, in positions where a plain *e* would be pronounced as /ə/ (schwa). Many verb conjugations contain regular alternations between *è* and *e*; for example, the accent mark in the present tense verb *lève* [lɛv] distinguishes the vowel's pronunciation from the schwa in the infinitive, *lever* [ləve].
- Italian
- Occitan
- Ligurian also uses the grave accent to distinguish the sound [o], written *ò*, from the sound [u], written *ó* or *o*.

Disambiguation

In several languages, the grave accent distinguishes both homophones and words that otherwise would be homographs:

- In Bulgarian and Macedonian, it distinguishes the conjunction *и* ("and") from the short-form feminine possessive pronoun *и*.
- In Catalan, it distinguishes homophone words such as *ma* ("my (f)") and *mà* ("hand").
- In French the grave accent on the letters *a* and *u* has no effect on pronunciation and just distinguishes homonyms otherwise spelled the same, for example the preposition *à* ("to/belonging to/towards") from the verb *a* ("[he/she/it] has") as well as the adverb *là* ("there") and the feminine definite article *la*; it is also used in the words *déjà* ("already"), *deçà* (preceded by *en* or *au*, and meaning "closer than" or "inferior to (a given value)"), the phrase *çà et là* ("hither and thither"; without the accents, it would literally mean "it and the") and its functional synonym *deçà, delà*. It is used on the letter *u* only to distinguish *où* ("where") and *ou* ("or"). *É* is rarely used to distinguish homonyms except in *dès/des* ("since/some"), *ès/es* ("in/(thou) art"), and *lès/les* ("near/the").
- In Italian, it distinguishes, for example, the feminine article *la* from the adverb *là* ("there").
- In Norwegian (both Bokmål and Nynorsk), the grave accent separates words that would otherwise be identical: *og* (and) and *øg* (too). Popular usage, possibly because Norwegian rarely uses diacritics, often leads to a grave accent in place of an acute accent.

- In Romansh, it distinguishes (in the *Rumantsch Grischun* standard) *e* ("and") from the verb form *è* ("he/she/it is") and *en* ("in") from *èn* ("they are"). It also marks distinctions of stress (*gia* "already" vs. *già* "violin") and of vowel quality (*letg* "bed" vs. *lètg* "marriage").

Length

In Welsh, the accent denotes a short vowel sound in a word that would otherwise be pronounced with a long vowel sound: *mùg* [mʊg] "mug" versus *mwg* [muːg] "smoke".

In Scottish Gaelic, it denotes a long vowel, such as *cùis* [kʰuːʃ] ("subject"), compared with *cuir* [kʰurʲ] ("put"). The use of acute accents to denote the rarer close long vowels, leaving the grave accents for the open long ones, is seen in older texts, but it is no longer allowed according to the new orthographical conventions.

Tone

In some tonal languages such as Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese (when it is written in Hanyu Pinyin or Zhuyin Fuhao), the grave accent indicates a falling tone. The alternative to the grave accent in Mandarin is the numeral 4 after the syllable: *pà* = pa4.

In African languages and in International Phonetic Alphabet, the grave accent often indicates a low tone: Nobiin *jàkkàr* ("fish-hook"), Yoruba *àgbòn* ("chin"), Hausa *màcè* ("woman").

The grave accent represents the low tone in Kanien'kéha or Mohawk.

Other uses

In Emilian-Romagnol, a grave accent placed over *e* or *o* denotes both length and openness. In Emilian *è* and *ò* represent [ɛː] and [ɔː], while in Romagnol they represent [ɛ] and [ɔ].

In Portuguese, the grave accent indicates the contraction of two consecutive vowels in adjacent words (crasis). For example, instead of *a aquela hora* ("at that hour"), one says and writes *àquela hora*.

In Hawaiian, the grave accent is not placed over another character but is sometimes encountered as a typographically easier substitute for the ‘okina: *Hawai`i* instead of *Hawai‘i*.

English

The grave accent, though rare in English words, sometimes appears in poetry and song lyrics to indicate that a usually-silent vowel is pronounced to fit the rhythm or meter. Most often, it is applied to a word that ends with -ed. For instance, the word *looked* is usually pronounced /lʊkt/ as a single syllable, with the *e* silent; when written as *lookèd*, the *e* is pronounced: /ˈlʊkɪd/ (*look-ed*).

In this capacity, it can also distinguish certain pairs of identically spelled words like the past tense of learn, *learned* /lɜːrnd/, from the adjective *learnèd* /'lɜːrnið/ (for example, "a very learnèd man").

A grave accent can also occur in a foreign (usually French) term which has not been anglicised: for example, *vis-à-vis*, *pièce de résistance* or *crème brûlée*. It also may occur in an English name, often as an affectation, as for example in the case of Albert Ketèlbey.

As surrogate of apostrophe or (opening) single quote

The layout of some European PC keyboards combined with problematic keyboard driver semantics causes many users to use a grave accent or an acute accent instead of an apostrophe when typing in English (e.g. typing Brian `s Theater or Brian ´s Theater instead of Brian's Theater).^[3]

Additionally ASCII grave accent character (U+0060 ` GRAVE ACCENT) was often used as surrogate of opening single quote, together with ASCII typewriter apostrophe (U+0027 ' APOSTROPHE) used as closing single quote; double quotes were sometimes substituted by two consecutive grave accents and two consecutive typewriter apostrophes (` `..."). Although Unicode now provides separate characters for single and double quotes, such style is sometimes used even nowadays; examples are: output generated by some of UNIX console programs, rendering of man pages within some environments, technical documentation written long ago or written in old-school manner. However, as time goes on, such style is used less and less, and even institutions that traditionally were using that style are now abandoning it.^{[4][5]}

Technical notes

The Unicode standard makes dozens of letters with a grave accent available as precomposed characters. The older ISO-8859-1 character encoding only includes the letters à, è, ì, ò, ù, and their respective capital forms. In the much older, limited 7-bit ASCII character set, the grave accent is encoded as character 96 (hex 60). Outside the US, character 96 is often replaced by accented letters. In the French ISO 646 standard, the character at this position is μ. Many older UK computers, such as the ZX Spectrum and BBC Micro, have the £ symbol as character 96, though the British ISO 646 variant ultimately placed this symbol at position 35 instead.

description	character	Unicode	HTML
grave above	◌̃ combining, accent	U+0300	̀
	◌̄ combining, tone	U+0340	̀
	` spacing, symbol	U+0060	`
	` spacing, letter	U+02CB	ˋ
double grave	◌̈ combining	U+030F	̏
	◌̋ spacing, middle	U+02F5	˵
middle	`		

On many computer keyboards, the grave accent is a key by itself. Due to the character's presence in ASCII this is primarily used to actually type that character, though some layouts may use it as a dead key to modify the following letter. On a US and UK QWERTY keyboard, the ` key is placed in the top left corner to the left of the 1 key. On a Czech QWERTZ keyboard, the equivalent keystroke is usually mapped to Alt Gr + ý.

On a Mac, to get a character such as à, the user can type ⌘ Option + ` and then the vowel. For example, to make à, the user can type ⌘ Option + ` and then a, and to make À, the user can type ⌘ Option + ` and then ⇧ Shift + a. In iOS and most Android keyboards, combined characters with the grave accent are accessed by holding a finger on the vowel, which opens a menu for accents. For example, to make à, the user can tap and hold a and then tap or slide to à. Mac versions of OS X Mountain Lion (10.8) or newer share similar functionality to iOS; by pressing and holding a vowel key to open an accent menu, the user may click on the grave accented character or type the corresponding number key displayed.

On a system running the X Window System, to get a character such as à, the user should press Compose followed by `, then the vowel. The compose key on modern keyboards is usually mapped to a ⊞ Win key or ⇧ Shift + Alt Gr.^[6]

Games

In many PC-based computer games in the US and UK, the ` key (on U.S. English and U.K. keyboards) is used to open the console so the user can execute script commands via its CLI. This is true for games such as *Battlefield 3*, *Half-Life*, *Halo CE*, *Quake*, *Half-Life 2*, *Blockland*, *Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix*, *Unreal*,

grave	spacing, middle	U+02F4	˴
grave below	◌̣ combining	U+0316	̖
	◌̀ spacing, letter	U+02CE	ˎ
additional diacritic	Latin		
—	À à	U+00C0 U+00E0	À à
	È è	U+00C8 U+00E8	È è
	Ì ì	U+00CC U+00EC	Ì ì
	Ò ò	U+00D2 U+00F2	Ò ò
	Ù ù	U+00D9 U+00F9	Ù ù
	Ñ ñ	U+01F8 U+01F9	Ǹ ǹ
	Ŵ ŵ	U+1E80 U+1E81	Ẁ ẁ
	Ỳ ỳ	U+1EF2 U+1EF3	Ỳ ỳ
diaeresis	Û ü	U+01DB U+01DC	Ǜ ǜ
double grave	Ä ä	U+0200 U+0201	Ȁ ȁ
	Ë ë	U+0204 U+0205	Ȅ ȅ
	Ï ï	U+0208 U+0209	Ȉ ȉ
	Ö ö	U+020C U+020D	Ȍ ȍ
	Ř ř	U+0210 U+0211	Ȑ ȑ
	Ü ü	U+0214 U+0215	Ȕ ȕ
macron	È è	U+1E14 U+1E15	Ḕ ḕ
	Ò ò	U+1E50 U+1E51	Ṑ ṑ
	Ă ă	U+1EA6 U+1EA7	Ầ ầ

Counter-Strike, Crysis, Morrowind, Oblivion, Skyrim,^[7] Fallout: New Vegas, Fallout 3, Fallout 4, RuneScape, and others based on the Quake engine or Source engine.

Use in programming

Programmers use the grave accent symbol as a separate character (i.e., not combined with any letter) for a number of tasks. In this role, it is known as a **backquote**, or **backtick**.

Many of the Unix shells and the programming languages Perl, PHP, and Ruby use pairs of this character to indicate command substitution, that is, substitution of the standard output from one command into a line of text defining another command. For example, using \$ as the symbol representing a terminal prompt, the code line:

```
$ echo It is now `date`
```

is equivalent, after *command substitution*, to the command:

```
$ echo It is now Tue Mar 17 20:40:43 GMT 2020
```

which then, on execution, produces the output:

```
It is now Tue Mar 17 20:40:43 GMT 2020
```

It is sometimes used in source code comments to indicate code, e.g.,

```
/* Use the `printf()` function. */
```

This is also the format the Markdown formatter uses to indicate code.^[8] Some variations of Markdown support "fenced code blocks" that span multiple lines of code, starting (and ending) with three backticks in a row (`` ` ``).^[9]

Various programming and scripting languages use the backquote character:

circumflex	Ě ě	U+1EC0 U+1EC1	Ề ề
	Ö ö	U+1ED2 U+1ED3	Ồ ồ
breve	Ă ă	U+1EB0 U+1EB1	Ằ ằ
horn	Ȑ ȑ	U+1EDC U+1EDD	Ờ ờ
	Ų ų	U+1EEA U+1EEB	Ừ ừ
Cyrillic			
—	È è	U+0400 U+0450	Ѐ ѐ
	Й й	U+040D U+045D	Ѝ ѝ
	Ÿ ÿ	U+0476 U+0477	Ѷ ѷ
Greek (varia)			
—	`	U+1FEF	`
	Ά ὰ	U+1FBA U+1F70	Ὰ ὰ
	Έ ἐ	U+1FC8 U+1F72	Ὲ ὲ
	Η ή	U+1FCA U+1F74	Ὴ ὴ
	Ι ϊ	U+1FDA U+1F76	Ὶ ὶ
	Ό ὀ	U+1FF8 U+1F78	Ὸ ὸ
	Υ ὺ	U+1FEA U+1F7A	Ὺ ὺ
	Ω ὦ	U+1FFA U+1F7C	Ὼ ὼ
	͂	U+1FCD	῍
	͂Α ὰ	U+1F0A U+1F02	Ἂ ἂ
͂Ε ἐ	U+1F1A U+1F12	Ἒ ἒ	
͂Η ή	U+1F2A U+1F22	Ἢ ἢ	
͂Ι ϊ	U+1F3A U+1F32	Ἲ ἲ	
smooth breathing			

Bash shell and Z shell

The ``...`` syntax is referred to as *command substitution*. It replaces a command with its output.^{[10][11]}

The use of backticks for command substitution is now largely deprecated in favor of the notation `$(...)`, so that one of the examples above would be re-written:

```
$ echo It is now $(date)
```

The latter syntax allows easier multiple nesting than with backquotes such as, for example:

```
$ cd $(dirname $(type -P touch))
```

BBC BASIC

The backquote character is valid at the beginning of or within a variable, structure, procedure or function name.

D and Go

The backquote surrounds a raw string literal.

F#

Surrounding an identifier with double backquotes allows the use of identifiers that would not otherwise be allowed, such as keywords, or identifiers containing punctuation or spaces.

Haskell

Surrounding a function name by backquotes makes it an infix operator.

JavaScript

ECMAScript 6 standard introduced a "back-tick"^[12] character which indicated a string or template literal. Its application include (but are not limited to): string interpolation (substitution), embedded expressions, and multi-line strings. In the following example `name` and `pet` variable's values get substituted into the string enclosed by grave accent characters:

	ˆO ø	U+1F4A U+1F42	Ὂ ὂ
	— Û	— U+1F52	— ὒ
	ˆΩ ώ	U+1F6A U+1F62	Ὢ ὢ
rough breathing	ˆ ˆ	U+1FDD	῝
	ˆA ă	U+1F0B U+1F03	Ἃ ἃ
	ˆE ë	U+1F1B U+1F13	Ἓ ἓ
	ˆH ĥ	U+1F2B U+1F23	Ἣ ἣ
	ˆI ï	U+1F3B U+1F33	Ἳ ἳ
	ˆO ö	U+1F4B U+1F43	Ὃ ὃ
	ˆY ÿ	U+1F5B U+1F53	Ὓ ὓ
	ˆΩ ώ	U+1F6B U+1F63	Ὣ ὣ
	iota subscript	— ç	— U+1FB2
— ñ		— U+1FC2	— ῂ
— ç		— U+1FF2	— ῲ
smooth breathing, iota subscript	ˆAι ă	U+1F8A U+1F82	ᾊ ᾂ
	ˆHι ĥ	U+1F9A U+1F92	ᾚ ᾒ
	ˆΩι ώ	U+1FAA U+1FA2	ᾪ ᾢ
rough breathing, iota subscript	ˆAι ă	U+1F8B U+1F83	ᾋ ᾃ
	ˆHι ĥ	U+1F9B U+1F93	ᾛ ᾓ
	ˆΩι ώ	U+1FAB U+1FA3	ᾫ ᾣ
diaeresis	ˆ ˆ	U+1FED	῭
	— ï	— U+1FD2	— ῒ
	— —	— —	— —

```
const name = "Mary", pet = "lamb";  
//  
let temp = `${name} has a little  
${pet}!`;  
console.log(temp);  
// => "Mary has a little  
lamb!";
```

ù

U+1FE2

&#8162;

Lisp macro systems

The backquote character (called *quasiquote* in Scheme) introduces a quoted expression in which comma-substitution may occur. It is identical to the plain quote, except that symbols prefixed with a comma are replaced with those symbols' values as variables. This is roughly analogous to the Bourne shell's variable interpolation with `$` inside double quotes.

m4

A backquote together with an apostrophe quotes strings (to suppress or defer macro expansion).

MySQL

A backquote in queries is a delimiter for column, table, and database identifiers.

OCaml

The backquote indicates polymorphic variants.

Pico

The backquote indicates comments in the programming language.

Python

Prior to version 3.0, backticks were a synonym for the `repr()` function, which converts its argument to a string suitable for a programmer to view. However, this feature was removed in Python 3.0. Backticks also appear extensively in the reStructuredText plain text markup language (implemented in the Python docutils package).

Windows PowerShell

Uses the backquote as the escape character. For example, a newline character is denoted ``n`. Most common programming languages use a backslash as the escape character (e.g., `\n`), but because Windows allows the backslash as a path separator, it is impractical for PowerShell to use backslash for a different purpose. Two backticks produce the ``` character itself. For example, the nullable boolean of .NET is specified in PowerShell as `[Nullable``1[System.Boolean]]`.

TeX

The backtick character represents curly opening quotes. For example, ``` is rendered as single opening curly quote (') and ```` is a double curly opening quote ("). It also supplies the numeric ASCII value of an ASCII character wherever a number is expected.

Tom

The backquote creates a new term or to calls an existing term.

Scala

An identifier may also be formed by an arbitrary string between backquotes. The identifier then is composed of all characters excluding the backquotes themselves.^[13]

Unlambda

The backquote character denotes function application.

Verilog HDL

The backquote is used at the beginning of compiler's directives.

See also

- Acute accent
- Circumflex
- Diacritic
- Double grave accent

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External links

- The dictionary definition of à at Wiktionary
 - The dictionary definition of è at Wiktionary
 - Diacritics Project – All you need to design a font with correct accents (<http://diacritics.typo.cz>)
 - ASCII and Unicode quotation marks (<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mgk25/ucs/quotes.html>) – "Please do not use the ASCII grave accent as a left quotation mark"
 - Keyboard Help (<http://www.starr.net/is/type/kbh.html>) – Learn how to create world language accent marks and other diacriticals on a computer
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