

Accents

HAVE YOU EVER NEEDED to set an accented character in copy but couldn't find it on your keyboard? If these characters leave you feeling naïve, you're not alone. Diacritic characters, as these accented letters are called, are essential to the proper pronunciation and meaning of many foreign words.

When you come across an accented letter, don't assume it can be eliminated without consequence, or you might end up misspelling a person's name! Accent marks also turn up frequently in foreign-born words and phrases that have become part of common English usage, such as résumé, passé and tête-à-tête. Happily, diacritic characters can be accessed or created with most professional-quality fonts.

Printed Material

Most well-made fonts from reputable manufacturers include a selection of the diacritic marks needed to set foreign

words and names. Some of these are composite characters, which combine characters with accents. Others are simply the marks by themselves. These are "floating" accents, which can be combined with any letter.

The easiest way to locate composite characters is to use the glyph chart which is available in many recent applications, or any utility which shows the available characters in an installed font. You can then either copy and paste the character you need, or access it with the specific key combinations indicated. Key combinations are different on Mac and PC platforms, but in both cases they define a combina-

á à â ä å Æ Á À Â Ã Ä Å ç Ç é è ê ë É È Ê Ë
î ï Î Ï Ñ Ñ ó ò ô ö õ Ó Ò Ô Õ Õ
ú ù û ü Ú Ù Û Ü ü Ÿ
/ ¨ \ ^ ~ - v • ° " ˇ
s l

These are standard floating accents and accented characters available in most Type1 and TrueType fonts.

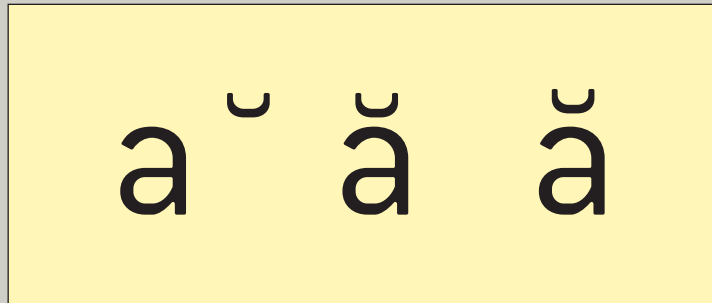
tion of keys which, when pressed in sequence, access the character you're looking for.

If the accented character you need is not available but the appropriate floating accent is, you can create the character with kerning and baseline (or vertical) shifting. (Most design applications support these functions). First type the character, then the accent. Then, use extreme kerning until the accent is positioned above the character. Use the baseline-shift function as necessary to position the accent vertically.

What about the Web?

Some composite characters can be accessed on the Web by inserting the appropriate HTML code. Unfortunately, you can't use accented characters that you've created with floating accents and kerning on the Web.

NOTE: An OpenType font, a relatively new font format which can incorporate thousands of characters, often includes many more accented characters than a typical Type1 or TrueType font.



Floating accents can be used to create accented characters with kerning and the baseline shift function.