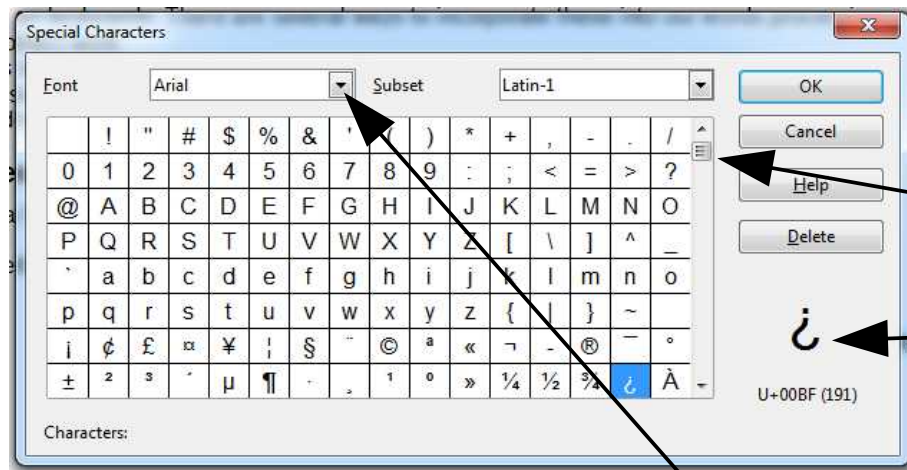


OpenOffice and Libre Office *Writer* – non-keyboard characters

A whole raft of characters that are so useful in our documents cannot easily – or obviously – be found on keyboards. There are several ways to incorporate these into our words processing (and other) work. In this section we will explore just one of them as it applied to OpenOffice and Libre Office's *Writer* word processor. Having said that, we will also point out along the way how Microsoft's Word also provides an almost identical facility.

Accessing the Special Characters palette

With a *Writer* document opened as usual, go to **Insert ► Special Character...**



A palette of characters similar to this pops up:

Note the extensive scroll option – there are some 250 or more symbols in this box!

To choose a symbol, simply click on it – it goes blue and an enlarged copy appears below the buttons at the right of the dialogue box.

Note that you can also select the font you want here which often comes with a different set of symbols. **Lookout, in particular, for Wingdings and Webdings for loads of useful characters.**

Clicking **OK** inserts your chosen symbol/character into your word processor document at the current cursor position.

Note: The only difference for Microsoft Word is that this dialogue box is accessed by **Insert ► Symbols** and selection is followed by a click on **Insert** rather than OK.

Multiple inserts

Another useful feature, and not immediately apparent, is that the chosen symbol/character is kept in memory (on the 'clipboard') until the next **Paste** operation (also accessible by CTRL-V) so using a single symbol or character at intervals through a document does not require repeated visits to menus.

This feature is, in practice, a standard feature of the **Copy – Paste** routine; once a section of text has been copied, it remains on the clipboard until something else is copied, which replaces it. In the intervening time, any Paste operation will add the previously copied section as many times as required. One example of this could be for a poem or lyric which has a repeated chorus or similar section; just copy the first appearance of the chorus lines and then paste this at the end of every verse – time saved!

Simple fractions

It's worth noting that *Writer*, along with many other word processors, recognises keyboard input sequences such as 1 followed by / followed by 2 as fractions, turning them into $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ for example. This usually only applies to quarters and halves!