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# Input Masks

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## What are Input Masks?

An **input mask** is a string of characters that indicates the format of valid **input** values. You can use **input masks** in table fields, query fields, and controls on forms and reports. The **input mask** is stored as an object property. You use an **input mask** when it's important that the format of the **input** values is consistent.

## How to Use

In an input mask, special characters correspond to the possible values that a user can enter. These are:

Character	Purpose
n	An optional digit (0-9)
N	A mandatory digit (0-9)
a	An optional letter (a-z or A-Z)
A	A mandatory letter (a-z or A-Z)
?	An optional character (any printable character)
&	A mandatory character (any printable character)
\	The escape character. This removes the special meaning of the mask character

Any other character matches the character itself. The match is not case sensitive.

## Examples

- "nN%" matches "5%" and "87%" but not "12" or "123%"
- "ANnn" matches "P52" and "B273" but not "983" or "Y"
- "A(Nnn)" matches "Q(154)" and "R(29)" but not "R29" or "A(N12)"
- "aaaaaaaa" matches any combination of up to 8 letters
- "&&&" matches "25%" but not "1234" or "LL"
- "Nnnn \Nu\ns" matches "26 nuns" but not "26 8u7s"
- "bob" matches "BOB" and "Bob"

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