

How to Change Character Encoding in Microsoft Word?

<https://www.webnots.com/how-to-change-character-encoding-in-microsoft-word/>

Unicode consortium assigns a unique code point for each character you can type using keyboard. This is code point in hexadecimal format like U+2714 for [check mark ✓ symbol](#). However, individual applications use Character encoding to convert this Unicode code point to a binary computer code. When you type the code, your computer will convert it into a character using locale code page. So, character encoding of documents is important to view it in a readable format.



Process Steps in Character Display

Are You Viewing Junk Characters in Word?

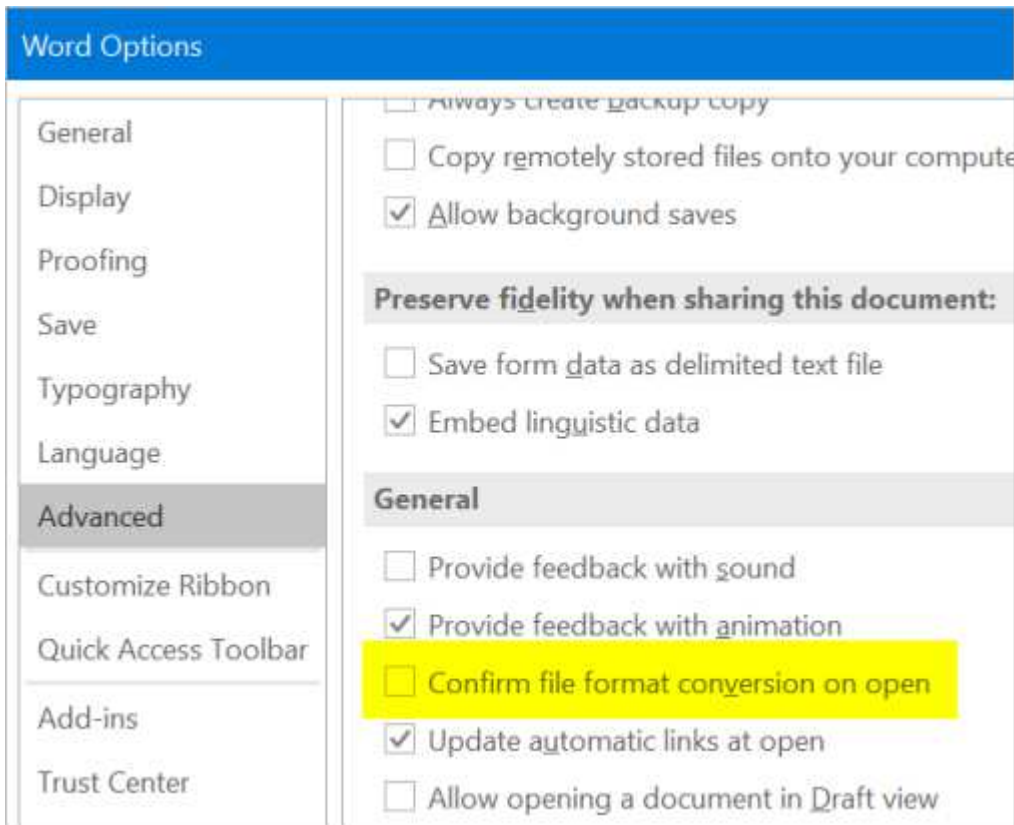
Microsoft Word uses default Windows or macOS character encoding for the file extensions like .doc and .docx. You will see junk characters when opening a plain text file having different character encoding. This does not mean the document is corrupted. It means the document was saved with different encoding standard and you need to change the encoding to view in Word.

How to Change Character Encoding in Microsoft Word?

Whenever you open an incompatible document, Word will show a file conversion dialog. However, if you are not seeing it, it is easy to enable that option. You can open any Word document to enable this setting, as it will be applied to all documents.

Enable File Format Conversion Dialog

- Open a document and navigate to “File > Options” menu.
- Click on the “Advanced” section and scroll down to “General” section on the right pane.
- By default, Word disables the setting for “Confirm file format conversion on open”.
- Check the box to enable this option.
- Click “OK” to apply the changes and close all open documents.

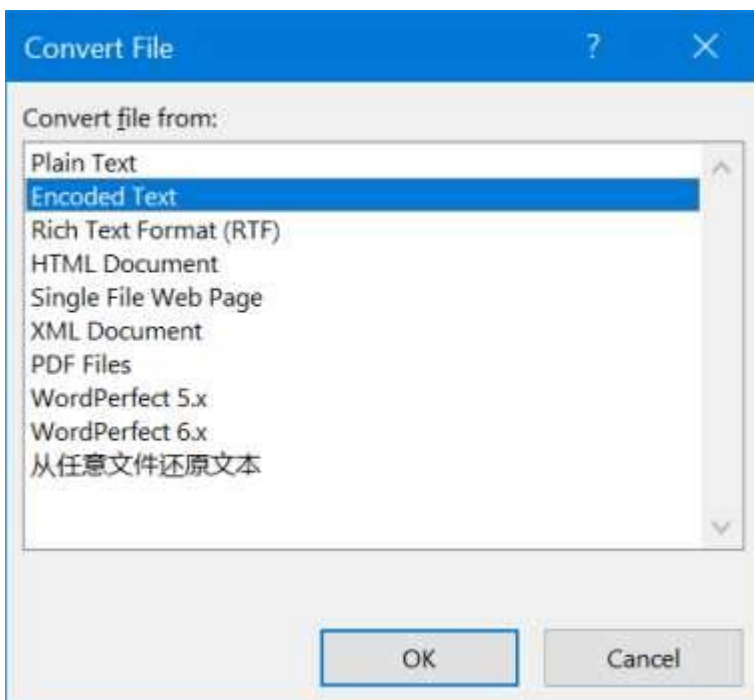


Confirm File Format Conversion on Open

This option will help you to trigger a dialog box whenever you open file formats other than .doc or .docx. For example, if you use Word to open a plain text file with .txt extension, you will get a prompt for checking the file format.

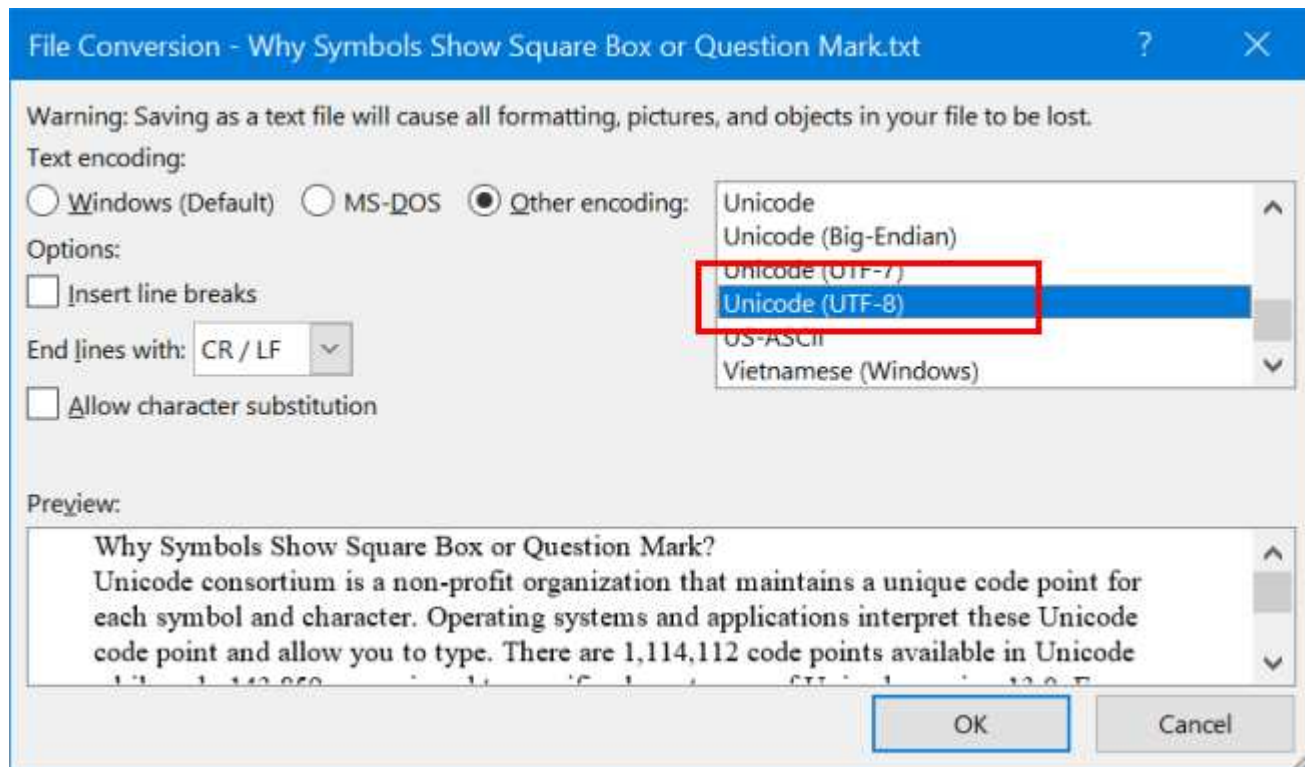
Change Character Encoding

Now, open the file you want to change the character encoding. Word will show you the “Convert File” dialog box like below.



Convert File

Select the file format if you know like plain text or [HTML](#) document. If you are not clear, select “Encoded Text” option and click on “OK” button. Next, you will see “File Conversion” dialog box. Generally, “Windows (Default)” will choose the encoding based on your locale settings. This may create problems when [viewing special symbols and characters](#).



File Conversion with Encoding Change

Choose “Other encoding” option to enable the list box beside. You will see a list of encoding options available in the list and choose “Unicode (UTF-8)” format. If required, choose insert line breaks and allow character substitution options. Click “OK” to complete the process. Now, you have successfully changed the file’s character encoding to UTF-8.

This will help you to view the file’s content in readable format, as UTF-8 should support most of the characters.

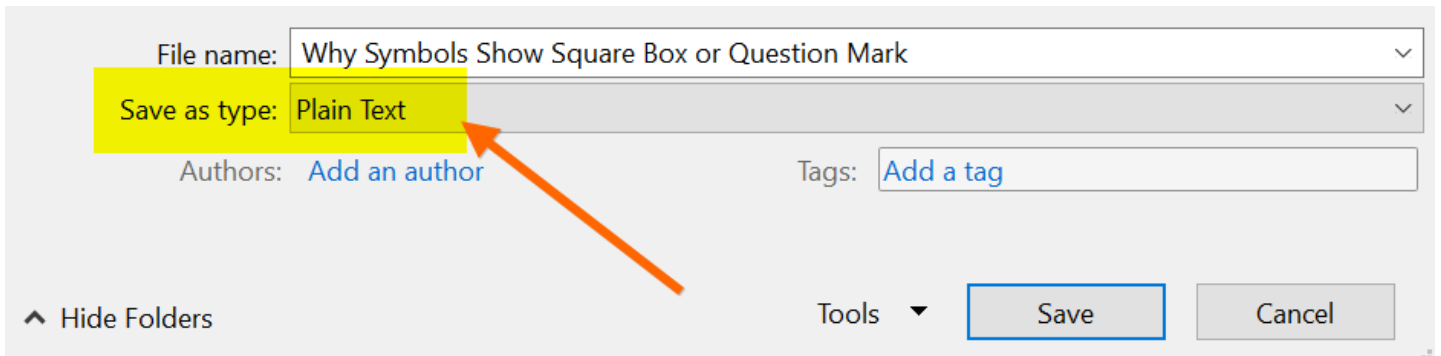
Disable File Conversion

Once you are done with changing character encoding of a file, ensure to disable the file conversion option. Go back to “File > Options” and change the settings under “Advanced” section. This will help you to disable the file conversion dialog in future.

Saving Files in Different Encoding

You can’t change the encoding of a file that you are saving as a .docx file. Word will assign the character encoding by default based on your regional language installation or UTF-8. However, you can change the encoding by changing the file into plain text format.

- Go to “File” menu and select “Save As” option.
- Click on the “Save as type” dropdown and select “Plain Text” option.



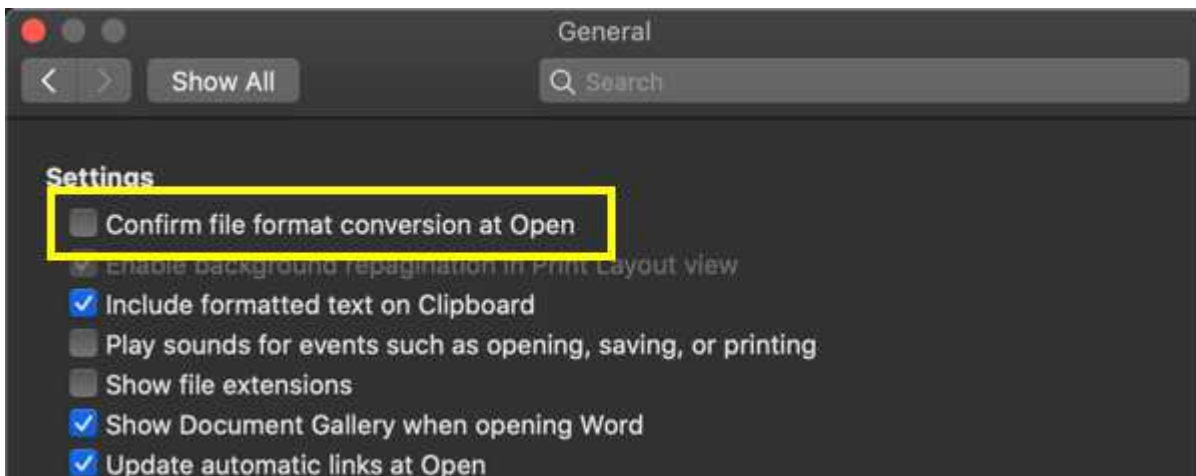
Save Word Document in Plain Text

Click on the “Save” button and Word will open “File Conversion” dialog box as explained above. From there, you can change the encoding and save your document.

Change Encoding in Word Office 365 on Mac

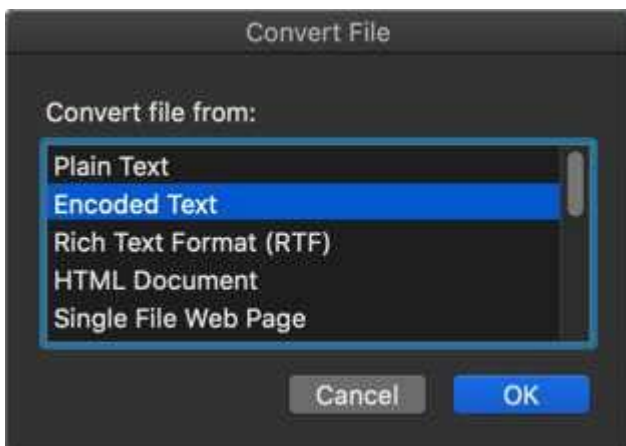
Similar to Windows, [Office 365 version](#) on Mac also has options to enable file format check and offer conversion.

- Open Microsoft Word document and go to “Word > Preferences...” section.
- Click on “General” under “Authoring and Proofing Tools” section.
- Enable “Confirm file format conversion at Open” under “Settings” section.
- Close all open documents for the changes to take effect.



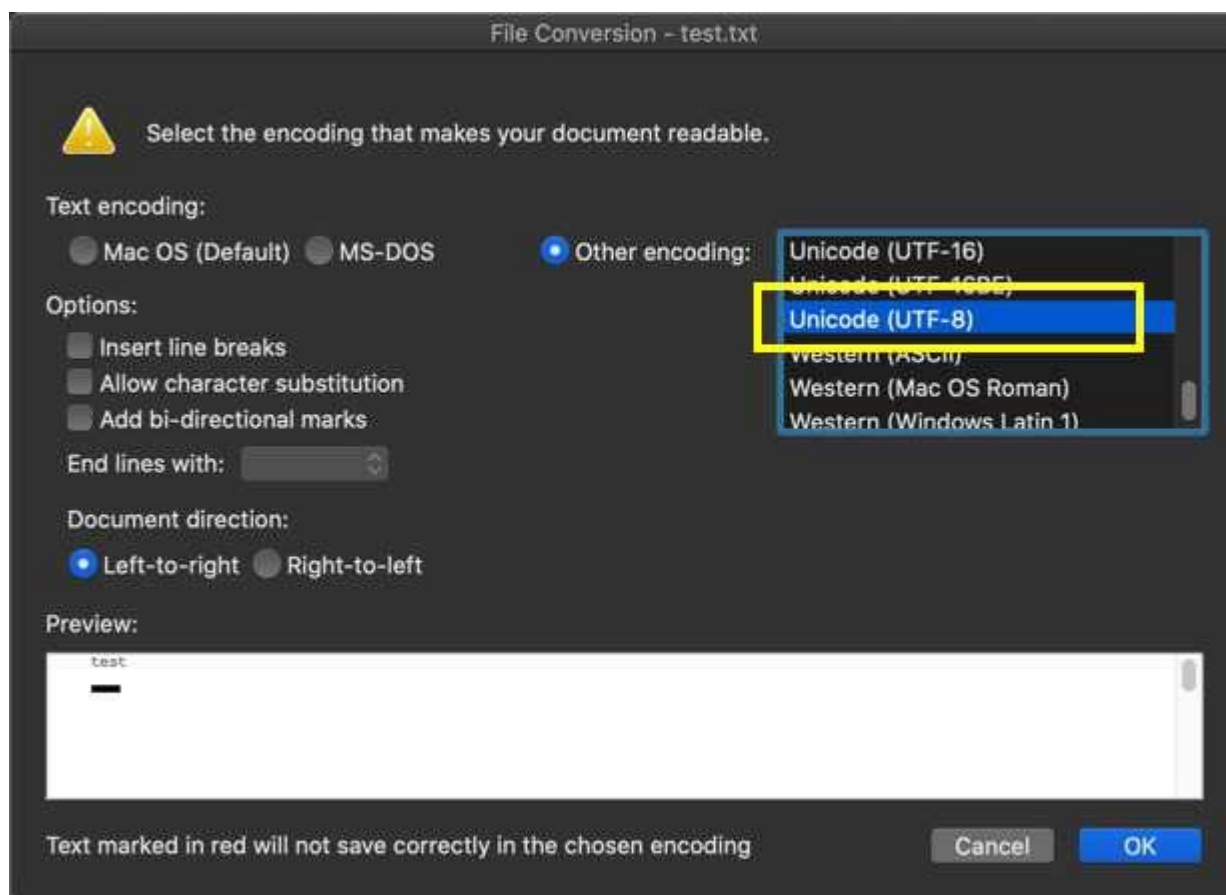
Enable File Format Check in Mac Word

Whenever you open an incompatible file, Word will show you the convert file from options dialog box.



Convert File Option in Mac

Choose “Encoded Text” or the file format if you know and click on “OK” button. On the next dialog box, you can select “Other encoding” option and choose “Unicode (UTF-8)” encoding.



Change Encoding in Mac

Unlike Windows, here you can clearly see the warning message showing select the encoding that makes your document readable. Also, you can find the incompatible text are marked with red with a message indicating those text will not save correctly with the selected encoding.

In addition, you can also save the file in plain text format to change the encoding in Mac same like in Windows Word version.