

American-French Genealogical Society French Accents Macintosh

Examples of how to produce French Accents on a Macintosh.

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Suggestions regarding producing French accents on a Macintosh.

There are basically three approaches; the first two work on any Macintosh:

- (1) Note use of a small chart,
- (2) use of Key Caps, and
- (3) use of the Canadian French keyboard layout

NOTE: In the first two methods described below, the French accents do NOT work in UPPER CASE, whether by using caps lock or the shift key. To get accents on upper case vowels, the Canadian French keyboard layout is the only capability. The upper case letter then shrinks in height to accommodate the accent.

(1) The small chart. This works on any Macintosh, including very old ones, with most of the standard fonts. Most accented characters need a combination of two keys, plus the desired character.

Diacritical mark	Key combination
Grave accent (`)	Option-`, then character desired
Acute accent (´)	Option-e, then character desired
Circumflex (^)	Option-i, then character desired
Tilde (~)	Option-n, then character desired
Umlaut (¨)	Option-u, then character desired
Letter "c" with cedilla (ç)	Option-c

The option key combinations will work only with legitimate accent/letter combinations.

(2) Key Caps.

Open Key Caps in the Apple Menu. This presents the lower case keys on the screen. Press Shift to see the upper case keys. Press Option to get a large set of symbols including those presented in the small chart above. Notice that the accent keys have shaded borders; option-clicking on any one of these and then releasing will highlight those few character keys (including spacebar) which can legitimately be affected.

Press Shift-Option for yet another large set of symbols, but notice that the accent keys already seen do not change and remain available for use with upper case characters. While Key Caps is active, one can practice the same keystrokes as given in the chart above, without affecting documents at hand. With the more recent operating systems, the Finder Help utility which appears on the desktop can lead the user through this capability.

(3) Canadian French Keyboard Layout.

This capability first appeared in one of the later OS 7.5 variants. Open the Keyboard Control Panel to view the set of international keyboards available. Rather than describing the brief process here, the user should go to the Finder Help, search for "accent" or "fonts" and follow the process. This establishes a new pull down menu that appears in the upper right corner. The two choices should be French Canadian and U.S. When in French Canadian mode, use Key Caps as described above to discover the use of those keys that change function.

NOTE: Treatment of the ligatures (or diphthongs) æ and ï. Words for the second one include ïil, ïuf, and ïuvre. In case the fonts do not translate well on your screen, I'm referring to the characters ae and oe, each presented as one character.

Diacritical mark	Key combination
Ligature (æ)	Option-apostrophe
Ligature (ï)	Option-q

However, on the Canadian French keyboard layout, the first ligature (æ) is at Option-semi-colon.