

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

# ISO 259-2

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## Information and documentation — Transliteration of Hebrew characters into Latin characters —

### **Part 2:** (Simplified transliteration)

[SIST ISO 259-2:2005](https://standards.iso.org/standards.html)

<https://standards.iso.org/standards.html> [Information et documentation — Translittération des caractères hébreux en caractères latins](https://standards.iso.org/standards.html) — 259-2-2005

*Partie 2: Translittération simplifiée*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 259-2 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Conversion of written languages*.

ISO 259 consists of the following parts: <https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/e592b498-9521-4250-a111-4179445d50b6/sist-iso-259-2-2005>

- *Part 1: Documentation — Transliteration of Hebrew characters into Latin characters*
- *Part 2: Information and documentation — Transliteration of Hebrew characters into Latin characters: Simplified transliteration*

Part 1 is currently published as ISO 259:1984.

Annexes A and B of this part of ISO 259 are for information only.

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## Introduction

This part of ISO 259 is one of a series of International Standards, dealing with the conversion of systems of writing. The aim of this part of ISO 259 and others in the series is to provide a means for international communication of written messages in a form which permits the automatic transmission and reconstitution of these by men or machines. The system of conversion, in this case, must be univocal and entirely reversible.

This means that no consideration should be given to phonetic and aesthetic matters nor to certain national customs: all these considerations are, indeed, ignored by the machine performing the function.

The adoption of this part of ISO 259 for international communication leaves every country free to adopt for its own use a national standard which may be different, on condition that it be compatible with this part of ISO 259. The system proposed herein should make this possible and be acceptable for international use if the graphisms it creates are such that they may be converted automatically into the graphisms used in any national system, so long as it is strict.

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/iso-259-2/1994>  
This part of ISO 259 may be used by anyone who has a clear understanding of the system and is certain that it can be applied without ambiguity. The result obtained will not give a correct pronunciation of the original text in a person's own language; but it will serve as a means of finding automatically the original graphism and thus allow anyone who has a knowledge of the original language to pronounce it correctly. Similarly one can only pronounce correctly a text written in, for example, English or Polish, if one has a knowledge of English or Polish.

The adoption of national standards compatible with this part of ISO 259 will permit the representation, in an international publication, of the morphemes of each language according to the customs of the country where it is spoken. It will be possible to simplify this representation in order to take into account the extent of the character sets available on different kinds of machine.

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# Information and documentation — Transliteration of Hebrew characters into Latin characters —

## Part 2: Simplified transliteration

### 1 Scope

This part of ISO 259 specifies a simplified system for the transliteration of Hebrew characters into Latin characters. This simplification of the stringent rules established by ISO 259:1984 is especially intended to make easier the processing of bibliographic information (catalogues, indices, citations, etc.).

### 2 General principles of conversion of writing systems

**2.1** The words in a language, which are written according to a given script (the converted system), sometimes have to be rendered according to a different system (the conversion system) normally used for a different language. The procedure is often used for historical or geographical texts, cartographical documents and in particular bibliographical work where characters must be converted from different writing systems into a single alphabet to allow for alphabetical intercalation in bibliographies, catalogues, indexes, toponymic lists, etc.

It is indispensable in that it permits the univocal transmission of a written message between two countries using different writing systems or exchanging a message the writing of which is different from their own. It thereby permits transmission by manual, mechanical as well as electronic means.

The two basic methods of conversion of a system of writing are transliteration and transcription.

**2.2 Transliteration** is the process which consists of representing the characters<sup>1)</sup> of an alphabetical or syllabic writing by the characters of a conversion alphabet.

In principle, the conversion should be made character by character: each character of the converted graphical system is rendered by only one character of the conversion alphabet, this being the easiest way to ensure the complete and unambiguous reversibility of the conversion alphabet in the converted system.

When the number of characters used in the conversion system is smaller than the number of characters of the converted system, it is necessary to use digraphs or diacritical marks. In this case, arbitrary choices and the use of purely conventional marks shall be avoided as far as possible, and a certain phonetic logic shall be maintained in order to give the system a wide acceptance.

However, it must be accepted that the graphism obtained cannot always be correctly pronounced according to the phonetic habits of the language (or of all the languages) which usually use(s) the conversion alphabet. On the other hand this graphism shall be such that the reader who has a knowledge of the converted language may mentally restore unequivocally the original graphism and thus pronounce it.

1) A character is an element of an alphabetical or other type of writing system that graphically represents a phoneme, a syllable, a word or even a prosodical characteristic of a given language. It is used either alone (e.g. a letter, a syllabic sign, an ideographical character, a digit, a punctuation mark) or in combination (e.g. an accent, a diacritical mark). A letter having an accent or a diacritical mark, for example â, è, ö, is therefore a character in the same way as a basic letter.

**2.3 Retransliteration** is the process whereby the characters of a conversion alphabet are transformed back into those of the converted writing system. It is the exact opposite of the transliteration process in that the rules of a transliteration system are applied in reverse in order to reconvert the transliterated word to its original form.

**2.4 Transcription** is the process whereby the pronunciation of a given language is noted by the system of signs of a conversion language.

A transcription system is of necessity based on the orthographical conventions of the conversion language. Transcription is not strictly reversible.

Transcription may be used for the conversion of all writing systems. It is the only method that can be used for systems that are not entirely alphabetical or syllabic and for all ideophonographical systems of writing like Chinese.

**2.5** To carry out **romanization** (the conversion of non-Latin writing systems to the Latin alphabet) either transliteration or transcription or a combination of the two may be used depending on the nature of the converted system.

**2.6** A conversion system proposed for international use may call for compromise and the sacrifice of certain national customs. It is therefore necessary for each community of users to accept concessions, fully abstaining in every case from imposing as a matter of course solutions that are actually justified only by national practice (as regards pronunciation and orthography).

When a country uses two systems univocally convertible one into the other to write its own language, the system of transliteration thus implemented shall be taken a priori as a basis for the international standardized system, as far as it is compatible with the other principles exposed hereafter.

**2.7** When necessary, the conversion systems should specify an equivalent for each character, not only for the letters but also the punctuation marks, numbers, etc. They should similarly take into account the arrangement of the sequence of characters that make up the text, for example the direction of the script, and specify the way of distinguishing words and of using separation signs, following as closely as possible the customs of the language(s) which use the converted writing system.

**2.8** When romanizing a script which has no upper-case characters, it is usual to capitalize some words, following national usage.

### 3 Principles of conversion for alphabetical writing systems

**3.1** The conversion may be made at various levels.

The first level is that of completely reversible **stringent transliteration** which is necessary to attain in full the aim given in 2.2. This conversion applies all principles of transliteration without exception. It does not permit variants. The conventional systems of stringent transliteration should be applied as such without any change to meet national or regional customs as regards pronunciation or orthography. They permit the univocal international transmission of messages by mechanical or electronic means.

To permit an international unequivocal communication, International Standards on transliteration must apply by priority the principle of stringent conversion. These can then be used as a basis for the establishment of rules for simplified conversion and for preparation of national standards.

The second level is that of **simplified conversion**. The simplification can be made necessary, for example, by the use of machines that do not accept all the alphabet characters required for stringent conversion. The method of conversion may allow national or regional variants, which may not permit complete reversibility. The simplified conversion may be the subject of International Standards or agreements.

The third level is that of **popular conversion** which, for example, should enable the same foreign names to be written in a uniform manner in the newspapers of a given country. It is obliged to take into account phonetic or graphic practices and therefore can only be national.

**3.2** In cases where the same characters appear in one alphabet used with some differences by different languages, these characters would be transliterated in the same way, irrespective of the language they belong to.

**3.3** If the converted alphabet gives a different form to the same character according to its place in the word (as is the case for example in the Arabic, Hebrew and Greek alphabets), the conversion alphabet will use only one character of constant form.

4 Transliteration tables

Table 1 — Consonants

No.	Hebrew character	Transliteration into Latin character	No.	Hebrew character	Transliteration into Latin character	No.	Hebrew character	Transliteration into Latin character
1	א	ʾ	16	ט	t	31	פ	p
2	ב	b	17	י	y	32	ס	s
3	בּ	b̄	18	י״	y	33	ס׳	s̄
4	ג	g	19	כ	k	34	ק	q
5	גּ	ḡ	20	כּ	k̄	35	ק׳	q̄
6	ד	d	21	ל	l	36	ר	r
7	דּ	d̄	22	ל׳	l̄	37	שׁ	š
8	ה	h	23	מ	m	38	שׂ	š̄
9	הּ	h̄	24	מ׳	m̄	39	שׂ׳	š̄̄
10	ו	w	25	נ	n	40	שׂ׳	š̄̄
11	וּ	w̄	26	נ׳	n̄	41	שׂ׳	š̄̄
12	ז	z	27	ע	s	42	ת	t
13	ז׳	z̄	28	ע׳	s̄	43	ת׳	t̄
14	ח	h	29	צ	ʿ			
15	ט	t	30	ץ	p			

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Table 2 — Vowels

No.	Hebrew character	Transliteration into Latin character	No.	Hebrew character	Transliteration into Latin character
44	—	a	51	יְ	â
45	ֵ	a	52	יֵ	ô
46	ֶ	e	53	ֶֿ	a
47	ִ	e	54	ִֿ	e
48	ֹ	i	55	ֹֿ	o
49	ֻ	o			
50	ֹֿ	u			

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NOTE - Character  $\overset{v}{s}ewa'$  — is omitted.



Table 3 — Non-Hebrew phonemes and abbreviation symbols

	Hebrew character	Transliteration	Examples
Non-Hebrew phonemes	ג' (= j English)	g'	ג'ון – G'wn
	ז' (= j French)	z'	ז'אן – Z'an
	צ' (= ch English)	s'	צ'רצ'ייל – S'erš'iyl
	Foreign words transcribed or transliterated into Hebrew by means of other Hebrew letters having diacritical marks, particularly the apostrophe.	It is recommended to transliterate these letters by the corresponding Latin letters given in table 1 and marked with the same diacritical mark as the original.	
Abbreviation symbols	Single quotation mark (gerš) as abbreviation symbol.	Transliterated by a single quotation mark at the end of the abbreviation.	פרופ' – prwp'
	Double quotation mark (ger <sup>o</sup> šayim) as abbreviation symbol.	Transliterated by a double quotation mark between last two letters.	רמב"ם – ramba"m
	Period as abbreviation symbol.	Transliterated by a period as in the Hebrew.	ק"מ – q"m .ד – d.

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