

## 10 Keyboard Techniques To Create Cool Symbols

All of us use the keyboard to create symbols daily. Look at the thumbnail. That's a simple symbol created with just four keys.

Symbols existed even before the alphabets. Over the years they have been part of folklore, myths and legends. Symbols have remained potent. If you doubt their visual power, then look no further than logos. People shell out millions for a three-pointed star on a sleek hood or a prancing horse. Puzzled? The first one is the Mercedes logo and the latter is Ferrari's.

Look at some symbols or images that we can reproduce using just the keyboard. The superset of creating images using letters/symbols on the keyboard goes by the name of ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) art. You need two things to draw keyboard art; creativity and lots of patience.

### How Do We Create Cool Symbols Using The Keys On Our Keyboard?

Text art/ ASCII art can be drawn using any text editor, online or offline. The simplest is Notepad on Windows or TextEdit for Mac. More advanced word processors have features which are more adept at selection and alignment functions like Overtyping and Insert.

Can text art be learned and are there any special techniques to create cool figures? The answer to the first is yes, it's fairly easy to learn. There are some basics of course that need to be kept in mind. The rest as they say is practice.

Some basic techniques for keyboard symbols are :

1. Use a fixed width (Courier, Monaco, and Fixedsys) font, to draw your symbols because every type of computer has them. Also called as a monospaced font, they are fonts whose letters each occupy the same amount of space and thus they are also easier to align with one another.
2. Experts speak about noticing the difference between serif (with a short line at the end of the character) and sans serif (without the line at the end) fonts for text art. The display may differ from one computer to the next depending on the default type of font. One advice usually is to use the vertical bar (|) instead of the capital I (I) to draw vertical lines with the sans serif font.

3. Draw in the *Overtyp*e mode on your word processor. This makes it easier to put in another character without re-aligning the neighboring ones. (normally defaulted)
4. Use the Space key instead of the Tab key.
5. Draw a rough sketch of the figure on paper and then put in place keyboard symbols and letters that best approximate the angles and curves of your figure. For instance, **o** or **@** for eyes, “ for hair etc. The most common symbols used in ASCII art are: / \ | - \_ ( )
6. Start small with simple symbols or figures. Example ““ a rose or a face.
7. Begin from a simple area of the figure which has a shape that’s easy to type in.
8. Go for close approximation rather than pinpoint accuracy”!after all, accuracy is more suited for line art.
9. Correct your mistakes early because leaving them for later will mar the precision and placement of symbols.
10. Free your imagination!



See the visual impact created using just keyboard symbols and a text editor. Looking at them will give you an idea of the techniques involved.

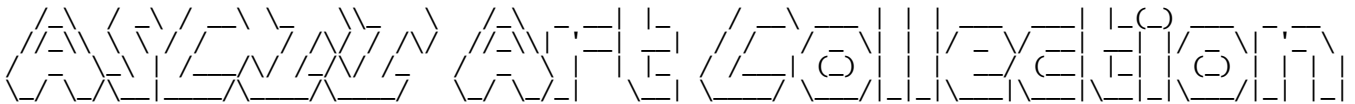


Star Trek

Part A

Using nothing but line and diagonal keys, - \_ | \ / write out your first and last name

See sample



Part B

Create a single graphic using various keys and symbols from the keyboard, Examples:

(image of the house from the works of Yvonne Adams) DO NOT COPY THESE



Star Trek



