CharBar

Special characters made simple · v3.5 Preview 5

Getting Started

Your first language, character and note

Choose a set. Place the caret. Click a character.

For Windows

CharBar v3.5 Preview 5 · Charbar
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Instructions for the application’s workflows. Consult the in-app lists for available Packs, character sets and font guidance as the collection grows.

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1. Install and choose a language

Run the current **CharBar v3.5 Preview 5 Windows x64 installer** on 64-bit Windows. Close an older CharBar first. Setup installs CharBar, offline guides and included document fonts for your Windows account. Choose your shortcuts, then open CharBar and Getting Started at the final screen.

This installer is **unsigned**. Windows may show a SmartScreen warning or an unknown publisher. Obtain it from the official CharBar repository and check its published checksum if required. Keep Windows security protections enabled.

If **Use my previous settings** appears, leave it ticked to retain your bars, favourites and Pack selections. Untick it for a fresh setup. Saved clipboard notes are kept separately and remain available.

For a fresh setup, all appearances start with **System**, following the OS light/dark setting. New bars and Settings follow H1 until separately customised; keeping previous settings preserves saved choices.

For a fresh setup:

1. Type a language name under **Find your language**.
2. Select its result and check the preview. **Browse by continent instead** is also available.
3. Choose **Use this language**. You can add more content later.

CharBar does not change your Windows keyboard language. For many Latin-script languages, type ordinary letters on your physical keyboard and use CharBar for additional letters and accents.

2. Insert your first character

1. Open Notepad or a word-processing document.
2. Click its editable writing area to place the text cursor, or **caret**.
3. Click a character on CharBar. It appears at that caret; if you selected text first, it replaces the selection.

For a combining accent, enter the base letter first, then the mark. The dotted circle on a mark button is a display aid and is not inserted. Your editor controls paragraph direction, including right-to-left text.

If the document shows boxes, question marks or unexpected rune shapes, choose the appropriate **font inside that editor**. Setup makes the included families available, but does not apply them to documents. Restart the editor if its font list has not refreshed. **Settings > About > Fonts, languages and packs** explains which font to select.

3. Find more languages or symbols

Click the bar's **cog** to open its own Settings. The title and red target outline identify the bar you are changing.

- **For one language:** open **Packs**, search by name, select a language result, and choose **Add and use on this bar** or **Use on this bar**.
- **For a collection:** browse by continent or subject, optionally select a region, inspect a Pack and click **Install Pack**. Shared languages appear once even when supplied by several Packs.
- **To select available content:** open **Languages** or **Symbols**, choose a set, then click **Use on CharBar**.

Choose **Save and Close** to keep bar preferences. **Apply** previews changes without saving them; **Revert** or closing Settings discards those trial changes. Pack installation/removal and direct language additions take effect immediately and are not undone by Revert.

Modern Nordic remains under Europe. Historical, Symbols, IPA and Runic can be browsed as subjects. The available content can grow; use the in-app catalogue for current choices.

4. Understand H1 and H1+

H1 is the first horizontal bar. **H2** is an optional independent second horizontal bar. **V1** and **V2** are optional side bars. Enable and position them through **Bar Locations**.

Some selections use a pair. Choose their main entry on **H1** and CharBar automatically shows **H1+** for extra letters, uppercase, accents, signs or variants. It temporarily occupies the H2 row; your ordinary H2 settings and enabled state are kept and return when you leave the paired selection.

If H2 is already showing an application collection, it temporarily moves to the top while H1+ is active. All three horizontal bars remain available, and H2 returns to its saved edge when H1+ closes.

When a pair is active	How to use it
H1	Stable base row; both favourite selectors are hidden and disabled.
H1+ for a language	Use **L** to cycle its prepared language groups. **S** is hidden and disabled.
H1+ for Braille	Use **S** for Uppercase, Numbers, Punctuation, Indicators and Patterns. **L** is hidden and disabled.

These restrictions keep the companion attached to its purpose. Its relevant selector cannot be switched off, because that would hide access to its groups. On ordinary unpaired bars, **L/S/C/A** all start off. Enable L in Languages, S in Symbols, C in Tools and A in Appearance when wanted. L can mix languages and Custom Bars; C cycles a separate Custom Bar list. Greyed-out paired settings are intentional.

Use H1+'s own cog for its appearance and favourites. The full manual's **Appendix A** lists the paired selections. They include Koine and Modern Greek, Menuqad Biblical Hebrew, Vietnamese, Cyrillic alphabets, Armenian, Georgian, Yiddish, Gothic, Runic and Braille. Other Hebrew forms are ordinary rows.

For Braille, the dot composer appears on H1 only. Choose six or eight dots, toggle a pattern and use **Insert cell**. It inserts Unicode cells; it does not translate prose or add contractions.

5. Keep a clipboard note

1. Open an ordinary bar's **Settings > Tools**.
2. Click **Use Clipboards on this bar**, then **Save and Close**. Tools are enabled directly; you do not need to visit Packs first.
3. Click a numbered button to open its editor. Its ID includes its bar, such as **H2-01**.
4. Click in the writing area, type, or use another CharBar bar to insert characters.
5. Click **Save**. The saved date appears, and saved contents return when you reopen that slot later.

Notes support plain and formatted text, without images. Bold, Italic, Underline and font controls format selected text. **Ctrl+click** a recognised web URL to open it; an ordinary click edits.

Exchange text with…	Use…
Another CharBar note	**Cut**, **Copy**, **Paste**, or Ctrl+X/C/V in the editor; these use CharBar's internal buffer.
Another application	**Paste from Windows** to import; **Copy to Windows**, then paste in the other application, to export.
Another whole note	Choose a destination ID. **Move to** appends and clears the source; **Merge into** appends and keeps the source. Review and save.

Closing an editor hides it and retains its session contents; it does not save. When exiting CharBar, **Save and exit** saves unsaved notes, **Discard changes and exit** keeps the last saved files and discards new changes, and **Cancel** lets you continue. Bar **Save and Close** saves preferences, not notes.

6. Make it yours and keep your work

Use **Appearance** for colour families with Light, Medium and Dark shades, including Coffee. Custom choices also cover key edges and font colour. Use **Behaviour** to move controls, and **Bar Locations** for screen edges and extra bars. Long side-bar sets have pages; use their arrows or scroll over their characters.

Settings follows H1 by default. Its **A scroller beside Reset to defaults** offers Follow H1, System or a separate appearance, saved immediately. Right-click it to return to Follow H1. Tool windows have separate appearance controls in Tools; confirmations follow their owning window.

Back up saved work with CharBar closed:

Data	Default location and uninstall behaviour
Preferences and Pack selections	`%LOCALAPPDATA%\CharBar`; uninstall offers Keep (default) or Remove, including retained preference copies.
Retained settings backup	`%LOCALAPPDATA%\CharBar-RetainedSettings`; a later installer can restore missing preference files.
Saved clipboard notes	`%LOCALAPPDATA%\CharBar-Clipboards`; always kept separately by uninstall. Use **Open saved folder** in a note.
Document fonts	Installed for this Windows account. Uninstall defaults to keeping them; a separate checkbox requests removal of unchanged fonts installed by CharBar. Existing fonts are preserved.

For complete instructions, open **Settings > About > User manual** or **PDF manual**. The manual covers H1+ assignments, Braille, fonts, note transfers, recovery, startup and uninstall.

For support, **Advanced > Refresh content inventory > Copy all diagnostics** provides the current application information; review it before sharing.

7. Make a Custom Bar

Open **Settings > Tools > Custom Bars > Custom Bars C1–C10…**. Type a descriptive name, choose **New custom bar**, select H2, V1 or V2, then click **Activate** to show it. You can save ten named bars. H2 allows 30 keys; vertical bars allow 18, including blanks. Keys page when needed.

Choose **Edit keys**, click a blank on the Custom Bar and then the desired H1 character. During editing the bars take focus and H1 does not insert text into your document. Add blanks with **+**; finish with **Done / Cancel assignment** or Escape. Click your document before using the completed bar.

To fill a blank with a tool, select it in the manager and use **Add Clipboard…** or **Add Dictionary…**, then **Assign tool**. These open existing notes and dictionaries. Dictionary data must be downloaded separately. Custom Bar actions save immediately; note contents need their own Save.

Restore ordinary content on selected host returns the host's saved content and keeps the Custom Bar. Deleting a key or bar keeps its underlying notes and dictionaries. A small active H2 Custom Bar can move temporarily to a vertical host while H1+ needs H2, then return afterwards.

For favourites, add the named bar alongside languages in **Languages** for L, or under **Tools > Custom Bar favourites (C)** for C, or both. Enable the desired scroller and **Save and Close**. See manual section 18 for the full workflow.

Find a dictionary

Open **Settings > Tools > Dictionary packs**. Search by language or native name, or browse by area and region. **Available in CharBar** entries can be installed; **Free source identified** and **Coverage review needed** entries show future source options and gaps without installation controls. Character Packs and dictionaries are separate. If lookup is disabled, read its status and choose **Install or manage selected dictionary…**, then **Download and install**. Choosing a source or adding a book button does not install it. After installing a dictionary, use **Open dictionary lookup** in Tools or attach its book button to a bar. All installed dictionaries support English searches; Greek and base Icelandic search English definitions and return headwords for you to assess.

Tool appearance settings in Tools control the dictionary and Clipboard theme, font and interface text size. Enable their **A** switch and define favourite themes to cycle by click or scroll. Clipboard document text has its own labelled font-size control beside the font family.

In a Clipboard note, **Change case…** previews uppercase, lowercase, title, sentence and toggle case. Select text first or convert the whole note, and choose the casing language. **Apply** keeps the complete previous note for **Restore original**. Cancel leaves it alone. Save normally when you want to retain the result.

Read the dictionary guide for installation, lookup, sources and licences.

Launcher shortcuts in v3.4

Drag an application, folder or file onto **+** on a Custom Bar to add a shortcut without moving or opening the original. For keyboard access, create a blank with **+**, open **Edit**, select the blank and choose **Add Application**, **Add Folder**, **Add File** or **Add Web Address**. Use **Edit selected**

shortcut to repair or rename a launcher. Missing targets are kept. Scripts are not supported. H2 retains 30 slots and vertical bars 18. Keep pre-upgrade settings if you might roll back to v3.3.

Application collections and AppBar controls in v3.5

CharBar now includes AppBar v1.0 application collections, discovery, icons and bar options. Open Settings → App collections to view the current bar content without changing it. Choose Use apps explicitly to switch. Return to language bar is visible on that page and above every application Settings page; it restores the saved language, symbols or custom keys and keeps the application collections. CharBar keeps stacking and its existing character, language, font, dictionary and Clipboard functions.

Repeated Settings opens reuse checked catalogue data while CharBar is running. Changes to Pack definitions, activation choices or the starting language refresh the relevant snapshot. The first open after restarting CharBar performs the checks again. Saved settings and pending edits are always read afresh; explicit Pack activation and repair still verify the actual files.

Review setup suggestions: some buttons may be misplaced, unwanted or access a feature unsupported by your computer. With many Windows, hardware and application configurations, automatic setup cannot be 100% accurate. Move entries or right-click → Remove shortcut; original items are kept.

The **i On/Off** button controls hover descriptions. **Apply appearance to all bars** includes inactive bars and button-edge colours. The complete new workflow, mixed custom-bar copying, data retention and settings are explained in the Application collections guide.