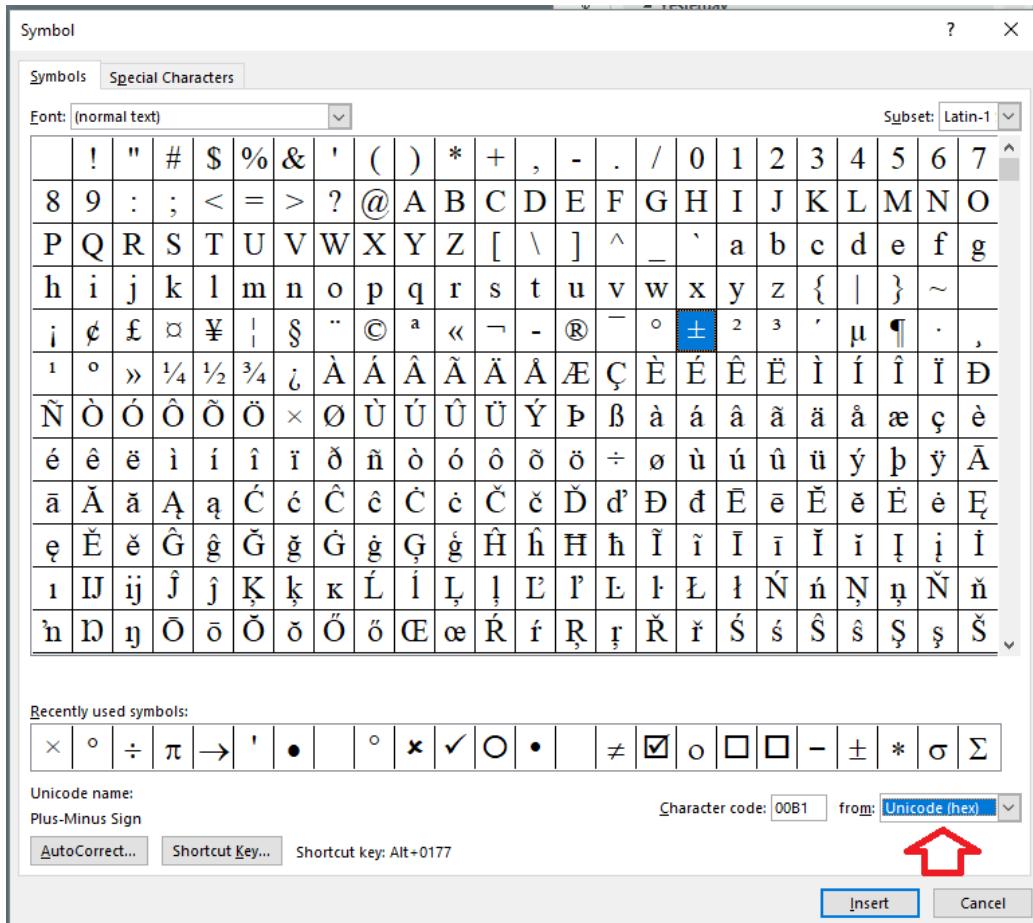


In Word (Windows), if you go to Insert → Symbol → More Symbols, the resulting dialogue box lets you select characters graphically but also gives the ASCII (decimal) and Unicode (hex) number for each glyph. You can choose whether you see the decimal or hex using a little dropdown menu.

The screenshot below shows the hex value for the ‘plus or minus’ sign. Note the red arrow.



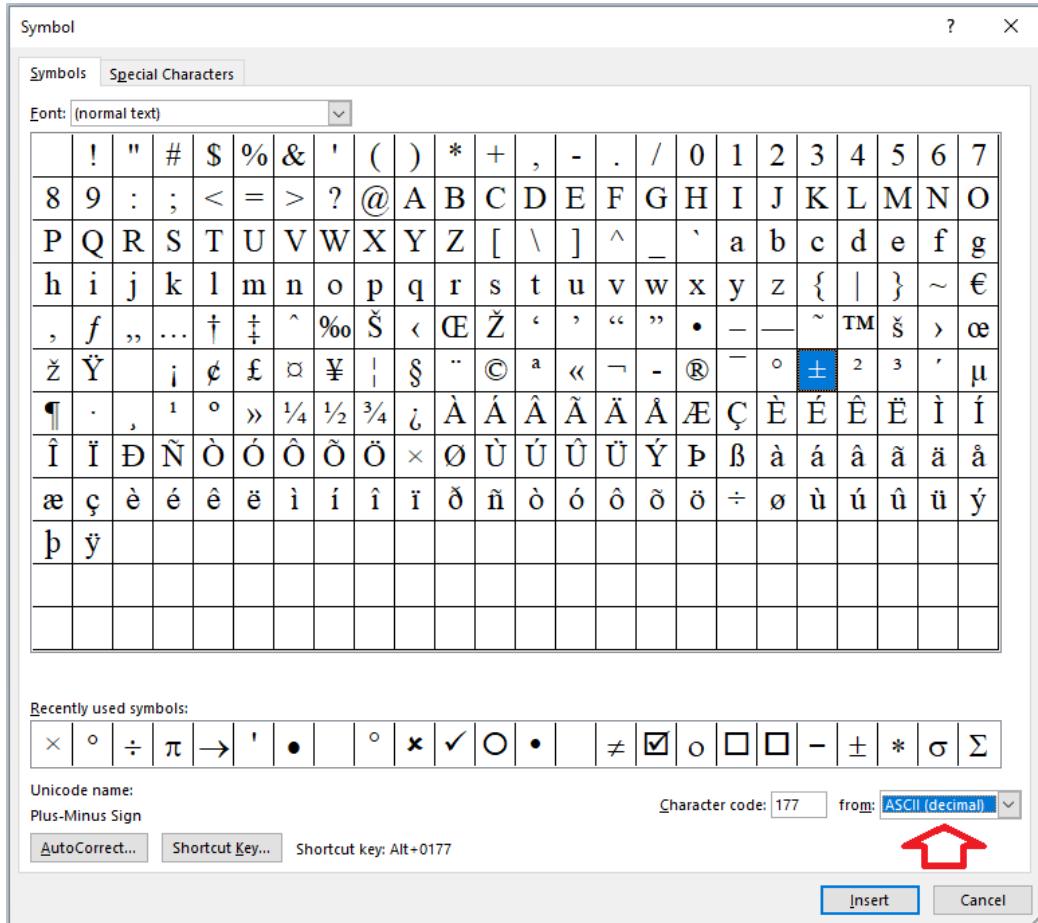
If you want to insert a character in Word using the hex code, you type the number (it will appear in the document like normal text) and then hit Alt+x and the 4 digits of the number will be converted into the symbol. Note that it is a hexadecimal number (that is, it is in base 16 where we usually work in base 10), so the 4-digit number may include letters A to F (case does not matter).

So, to insert a ‘plus or minus’, type 00b1 or 00B1 then immediately type Alt+x: ±.

If the character immediately preceding the 00b1 is a hex digit (0–9, A–F), Word gets confused since it does not know where the hex number starts.

This method works for many but not all of the glyphs you can find in the More Symbols dialogue.

If you use the dropdown to view the decimal code for a character, as shown below, you can insert the character by holding down Alt and typing the number on the keypad (not using the row of digits at the top of the keyboard). This does not work for all characters.



So, for example, to insert the ‘plus or minus’ symbol using this method hold down Alt, type 0177 on the keypad then let go of Alt: ±.

I don’t know how these methods translate to Mac or into other products like PowerPoint, Articulate and Excel, though often they do work. ‘Your mileage may vary.’

The next page gives a table showing some example codes for both methods. The hex code is used with the ‘Alt+x’ method, the decimal with the ‘Alt+keypad’ method. For the keypad method, leading zeroes must be included (0160 will give a different result from 160, for example). For the Alt+x method, leading zeroes may be omitted.

Note that for some symbols, like the nonbreaking space, there are other methods again (Ctrl+Shift+Space, for example, at least on Windows; on Mac it probably uses the Option key).

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Hexadecimal</b>	<b>Decimal</b>
—	nonbreaking space	00a0	0160
—	en rule	2013	0150
—	em rule	2014	0151
—	minus	2212	na
×	multiplication	00d7	0215
÷	division	00f7	0247
□	‘empty space’ symbol	2423	na
°	degree	00b0	0176
†	dagger	2020	0134
‡	double dagger	2021	0135
¶	pilcrow	00b6	0182
§	section sign	00a7	0167
*	math asterisk	2217	na
±	plus or minus	00b1	0177

Notes:

A minus is *not* an en rule. Compare: em rule, keyboard hyphen, minus, en rule: — - - -

The math asterisk given above is not the keyboard asterisk. Compare math and keyboard asterisks: \* \*