
INTERNATIONAL STANDARD



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Documentary reproduction — ISO conventional typographical character for legibility tests (ISO character)

Reproduction documentaire — Caractère typographique conventionnel ISO pour essais de lisibilité (caractère ISO)

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0 INTRODUCTION

No documentary reproduction process can avoid giving a more or less impaired image of the characters and illustrations of the original document.

The user is sensitive to this impairment of the legibility of the image, the effects of which range from the impossibility of identifying certain details to the fatigue caused by prolonged reading.

Introduced in this way, the concept of *legibility* may seem subjective, and therefore more difficult to define than are the characteristics usually taken into consideration in this connection by photographers and opticians: for example, resolving power of optical devices, blurring of networks of parallel lines, graininess of the image. But users are less directly conscious of such characteristics, and it seemed desirable to endeavour to make legibility accessible to experiment and even, up to a point, measurable, by specifying with great accuracy a recommended *conventional typographical character for legibility tests*.

This character, which may vary in orientation and size, is mainly used for making *legibility mires* or *legibility test objects* comparable to the typographic mires or test objects used in printing practice. Microcopies are made from these test objects and are known as *micromires* or *micro-test objects*.

The main practical applications of the ISO character are based especially on the following experimental properties:

- a) If, from a group of test characters of a certain height, a particular documentary reproduction process produces an *identifiable image*, it can be assumed that the same process will produce, from a printed text of comparable typeface size, a *satisfactory image* and, in particular, one sharp enough to be read for a certain time without undue fatigue for the reader.
- b) In general, the identification of one and the same group of ISO characters by different observers gives substantially identical results.

The use of test objects and micro-test objects gives manufacturers of reading apparatus, operators and users useful means of investigation on the one hand, and on the other hand the elements of a common language for judging the quality of their apparatus or work.

1 SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

This International Standard specifies the characteristics of the ISO conventional typographical character (ISO character) and its use in legibility tests.

2 REFERENCES

ISO 3, *Preferred numbers — Series of preferred numbers*.

ISO 446, *Microcopying — ISO No. 1 mire — Description and use in photographic documentary reproduction*.

ISO 689, *Microcopying — ISO micromire — Description and use for checking a reading apparatus*.

3 NATURE OF ISO CHARACTER

The ISO character is a conventional typographical character, similar to printing typeface and accurately defined as to shape and size.

4 DESCRIPTION

4.1 Shape

The ISO character consists of a regular octagon with two interior parallel stripes, as shown in figure 1.

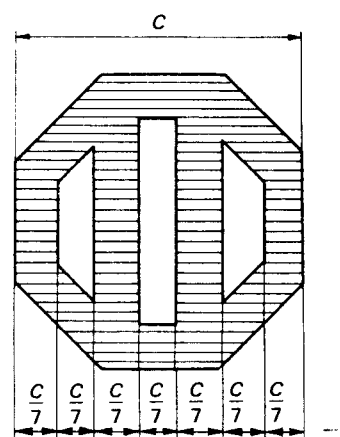


FIGURE 1 — Enlarged drawing of the ISO conventional typographical character for legibility tests