# About wild cards and pattern matching in APA

You can reduce the number of instructions in the APA file by using wild cards and pattern matching.
Wild cards take advantage of similarities in page names. Without wild cards, you must include a line for each page that you want to assign. You must also include a line for each page to which you want to assign geometry settings.
To enter wild cards, use the buttons in the **Insert Wild Cards** area. All of the buttons are described below.
**Note:** If you are creating an APA file in a text editor or on the **Raw APA File** tab, see About wild cards in raw APA. If you also use more than one wild card in the file name pattern it is best to use references for those named patterns. See About named patterns as back references in raw APA.

### Matching letters and digits

Use the **Match Letters** button, **Match Digits** button, or the **Match Either** button to match alphabetic characters, numbers, or both.
After inserting the wild cards, you can enter the number of characters that you want the wild card to match. To verify the number of characters to be matched, move the cursor over the icon and check the length that is listed.

### Assigning to all page sets

Use the **All Page Sets** button to assign one or more designated pages to all page sets in the job. For example:

| Refined file name | Page set name/prefix | Position | Layer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Job12345.p1.pdf | | 1 | 1 |

The above example assigns Job12345.p1.pdf to layer 1 of the first position for all page sets in the job.

### Back references to page set position

Use the **This Position** button to use the page number in the page name as a back reference to the page position. For example:

| Refined file name | Page set name/prefix | Position | Layer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Page.p .pdf | pageset1 | | 1 |

For example, you have refined filenames Page.p1.pdf, Page.p2.pdf, Page.p3.pdf. You can use the page number (1, 2, 3, and so on) as a back reference to the page position. The system will assign Page.p1.pdf to page position 1, Page.p2.pdf to position 2, Page.p3.pdf to position 3, and so on.
You can use simple addition and subtraction expressions in the back references to positions. For example:

| Refined file name | Page set name/prefix | Position | Layer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chapter1.p .pdf | 8-up | | 1 |
| Chapter2.p .pdf | 8-up | + 25 | 1 |

The above instructions use the page number as a back reference to the page position. Chapter 1 has 25 pages. An offset of 25 is used to determine the page assignments for Chapter 2.

**Back references to page set name**

Use the **This Page Set** button.

| Refined file name | Page set name/prefix | Position | Layer |
|---|---|---|---|
| .p .pdf | | | 1 |

For example, you have page sets called Cover and Inside. You have refined page names Cover.p1.pdf, Cover.p2.pdf, Cover.p3.pdf, Inside.p1.pdf, Inside.p2.pdf, and Inside.p3.pdf. Replace the first part of the page name with a **This Page Set** icon. (Add the second icon using the **This Position** button.)
The system will assign:
Cover.p1.pdf to position 1 of the Cover page set
Cover.p2.pdf to position 2 of the Cover page set
Cover.p3.pdf to position 3 of the Cover page set
Inside.p1.pdf to position 1 of the Inside page set
Inside.p2.pdf to position 2 of the Inside page set
Inside.p3.pdf to position 3 of the Inside page set

**Legend**

**Match Letters**

Match letters (a-z, A-Z) in the page filename. For example `.p1.pdf` matches filenames Book.p1.pdf, Front matter.p1.pdf, and JobXYZ.p1.pdf.
You can also specify the number of characters that this wild card will match.
To verify the number of characters that will be matched, move the cursor over the icon and check the length that is listed.

**Match Digits**

Match numbers (0-9) in the page filename. For example .p .pdf matches filenames 12345.p1.pdf, 05282003.p2.pdf, and 01.p165.pdf.
You can also specify the number of characters that this wild card will match.
To verify the number of characters that will be matched, move the cursor over the icon and check the length that is listed.

**Match Either**

Match letters or numbers (a-z, A-Z, 0-9) in the page filename. For example .p .pdf matches filenames 12345.p1.pdf, ABCDE.p2.pdf, Book cover99.p76.pdf, Book052803.p205.pdf.

**Note:** .p .pdf matches the same filenames.

You can also specify the number of characters that this wild card will match.
To verify the number of characters that will be matched, move the cursor over the icon and check the length that is listed.

**This Position**

Indicates that this part of the page name is the same as the page position to which the page will be assigned.
For example if you enter Book.p .pdf, a matching wild card is inserted in the **Position** column. Book.p1.pdf is assigned to position 1, Book.p2.pdf is assigned to position 2, and so on.

**This Page Set (Page Set Assignment mode only)**

Indicates that this part of the page name is the same as the name of the page set or page set prefix to which the page will be assigned.
For example, if you enter .p1.pdf, a matching wild card is inserted in the **Page Set Name/Prefix** column. Book.p1.pdf would be assigned to the Book page set.

**All Page Sets (Page Set Assignment mode only)**

Assigns the page to the designated page position in all sets in the job.

**This Product (Run List Assignment mode only)**

Indicates that this part of the page name is the same as the name of the product.
For example, if you enter .p .pdf, a matching wild card is inserted in the **Product Run List** column. If your product is Book, page Book.p1.pdf will be assigned to position 1 in the Book run list, page Book.p2.pdf will be assigned to position 2 in the Book run list and so on.

**All Products (Run List Assignment mode only)**

Assigns the page to the designated page positions in the run lists of all the products.

**This Part (Run List Assignment mode only)**

Indicates that this part of the page name is the same as the name of the part.
For example, if you enter .p .pdf, a matching wild card is inserted in the **Part Run List** column. If your part is Cover, page Cover.p1.pdf will be assigned to position 1 in the Cover run list, page Cover.p2.pdf will be assigned to position 2 in the Cover run list and so on.

**All Parts (Run List Assignment mode only)**

Assigns the page to the designated page positions in the run lists of all the parts.