Operators and Special Symbols in Lex

The following table summarizes the operators and special symbols used in Lex. Note that a given character often has an entirely different meaning when used in a regular expression and in a character class. Character classes are always delimited by brackets; they are often operands of regular expressions.

Symbol	Meaning in Regular Expressions	Meaning in Character Classes
(	Matches with **)** to group sub-expressions.	Represents itself.
)	Matches with **(** to group sub-expressions.	Represents itself.
[	Begins a character class.	Represents itself.
]	Represents itself.	Ends a character class.
{	Matches with **}** to signal definition expansion.	Represents itself.
}	Matches with **{** to signal definition expansion.	Represents itself.
"	Matches with **"** to delimit strings (only **** is special within strings).	Represents itself.
****	Escapes individual characters. Also used to specify a character by its octal code.	Escapes individual characters. Also specifies a character by its octal code.
.	Matches any one character except \n.	Represents itself.
|	Alternation (or) operator.	Represents itself.
*****	Kleene closure operator (zero or more matches).	Represents itself.
+	Positive closure operator (one or more matches).	Represents itself.
?	Optional choice operator (zero or one matches).	Represents itself.
/	Context sensitive matching operator.	Represents itself.
^	Matches only at beginning of a line.	Complements remaining characters in the class.
$	Matches only at end of a line.	Represents itself.
–	Represents itself.	Range of characters operator.