

A writing system for teaching
English phonology and pronunciation:
a usage manual

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Introduction

This manual presents a way of writing with English phonemes, as a means of teaching English pronunciation and phonology to students. The writing system focuses mainly on the phonemes of General American and Received Pronunciation.

Example text

The example text is a part of the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica article on 'dog-fish'.

Source:

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Dog-fish

Archived at:

http://web.archive.org/web/20151012051207/https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Dog-fish

The example text on the next page reads the following:




DOG-FISH, a name applied to several species of the smaller sharks, and given in common with such names as hound and beagle, owing to the habit these fishes have of pursuing or hunting their prey in packs. The small-spotted dog-fish or rough hound (Scyllium canicula) and the large-spotted or nurse hound (Scyllium catulus) are also known as ground-sharks. They keep near the sea bottom, feeding chiefly on the smaller fishes and Crustacea, and causing great annoyance to the fishermen by the readiness with which they take bait.


/U\ E J M, 6 eia 6 q z o i / 7 =
 r e L 6 o 6 z r q i i r i i r 6 E J I 6 r 9 o z 6 o
 n o o r a, s o / r d L 6 o d o r u 9 6 o = d J
 r c m e i a r s r z o o / s o / q i i r z,
 u d e 7 = J I 6 z s q d 7 J i i x E J M 6 r z s L
 6 E q i c o r a d e u o z c o 7 d e J I e q i o e i
 d o q i s r a. J I 6 r 9 o z \ r q i u 7 6 / / U \
 \ E J M u o o c E z o o / s o / J I 6 z o o x i \
 \ r q i u 7 6 / u o o c o r a z o o / o o o u o
 s r r o o o / \ n o o r a. J I e r i q i o i i o J I 6
 r i i q u 7 6 7, E i i / d e r i i i E z i i u o J I 6
 r 9 o z 6 o E J M 6 r s o / r o c r 7 e i o, s o /
 r o x d e r o e i 7 6 o u i 6 o r 7 = J I 6
 E J M 6 o 9 6 o q o i J I 6 o e / i i o 6 r = d J
 = d M J I e i 7 e i r q e i 7.




Character Table




Word examples are based on General American English.



Consonants (24)



M	N	NG / ŋ
<u>m</u> ap, <u>m</u> an	per <u>s</u> on, <u>n</u> ews	read <u>ng</u> , <u>nk</u>
		

S	SH / ʃ	TCH / tʃ
<u>s</u> tory, <u>s</u> ky	<u>sh</u> , <u>sh</u> rimp	wa <u>tc</u> h, <u>it</u> ch, <u>ch</u> ese
		

Z	ZJ / ʒ	DZJ / dʒ
<u>z</u> ebra, <u>lizz</u> ard	vi <u>s</u> ion, treas <u>ure</u>	fr <u>idge</u> , <u>angel</u> , jazz
		

W	V	F
<u>w</u> orld, <u>w</u> oman	lo <u>v</u> e, <u>v</u> ideo	<u>f</u> amily, <u>f</u> riend
 same character as <u>foot</u>		

D	T
<u>d</u> og, <u>d</u> ance	<u>t</u> ea, <u>t</u> ennis
	

G	K
eag <u>l</u> e, <u>g</u> ift	<u>c</u> ake, <u>c</u> at, <u>c</u> ar
	

B	P
<u>b</u> read, <u>b</u> ean	<u>p</u> erson, <u>p</u> lant
ɸ	ɸ

TH / θ	TH / ð
<u>m</u> ath, <u>t</u> hink	wea <u>th</u> er, <u>t</u> his
ɸ	ɸ

L
<u>l</u> ove, <u>l</u> eek
ɸ

R
<u>r</u> oad, <u>r</u> abbit
ɸ

H
<u>h</u> ouse, <u>h</u> orse
ɸ

J
<u>y</u> es, <u>y</u> east
ɸ

(short) Monophthongs (8)

ʊ	ɔ	ʌ	ə
<u>f</u> oot, <u>w</u> ood	<u>d</u> og	<u>B</u> us, <u>b</u> ug	o <u>v</u> al, ba <u>n</u> ana
= same character as w	ɸ	ɸ	ɸ

The main difference between 'ʌ' and 'ə' is that the 'ʌ' only appears in stressed syllables and the 'ə' is never stressed.

ɪ	ɛ	æ	ɑ
<u>c</u> ity, <u>m</u> ilk	<u>f</u> riend, <u>k</u> ettle	<u>t</u> ram, <u>c</u> at	<u>a</u> rt, <u>f</u> ather
ɸ	ɸ	ɸ	ɸ

Diphthongs & long vowels (10)

- au: and u: are merged in some accents so you may not see the difference
- ɔ: and ɒ are merged in some accents so you may not see the difference
- the ɔ: / ɑ: phoneme is very inconsistent across accents

ɔ: & ɑ:	oʊ	aʊ	ʊ:	u:	ju: / ju:
<u>law</u> , <u>paw</u> , thought, <u>hawk</u> , <u>palm</u>	<u>goat</u> , <u>toe</u>	<u>town</u> , <u>cow</u>	school, <u>moon</u> , <u>food</u>	<u>news</u> , <u>clue</u> , <u>jewel</u>	<u>you</u> , <u>cute</u> , <u>cure</u> , <u>Europe</u>
ə	ʊ	oʊ	≡	ɔ	ju

It's redundant (but not disallowed) to write a 'W' after a vowel preceding an 'u:'. It's redundant **and disallowed** to write a 'W' after one of the above diphthongs except the first one on the left (**aw**).

i:	aɪ	eɪ	ɔɪ
che <u>ese</u> , slee <u>p</u>	<u>light</u> , <u>tire</u>	<u>rain</u> , <u>clay</u>	<u>boy</u> , <u>coin</u>
ɪ	ɔɪ	eɪ	ɔɪ

It's redundant (but not disallowed) to write a 'J' between an 'i:' and a vowel (e.g. hyena. employee, agreeeable, fiasco). It's redundant **and disallowed** to write a 'J' after one of the above three diphthongs 'aɪ', 'eɪ', or 'ɔɪ'.

Special (9)

- The 'stretch' characters are optional, as in you can choose to never use them.
- The 'glottal stop' and 'emphasis' characters are perfectly optional too.
- Use the glottal stop character like a consonant.

The explanation of how to use these is under 'Rules and Explanations', under the 'How to use the 'stretch' and 'emphasis' ' section.

stretch	stretch for 1st part of diphthong	stretch for 2nd part of diphthong
66	76	79

glottal stop	emphasis
H	H

Rules & explanations

General explanations, grammar & orthography.

Break any rule if doing so will make your text easier to understand or to read, or if doing so will better get across the meaning of your text to your intended audience. Basically use your head and write as you see fit. I'm not a linguist and my ideas on grammar are limited by my lacking knowledge, experience, and skill.

Whenever there's some grammar that isn't mentioned, presume it to be the same as the usual English grammar.

Why are the **i: / j** and **u / w** characters the same?

The 'y' (j) and 'ee' as in 'yeet' have the same character. The 'w' and 'ou' as in 'would' also have the same character. This works because 'j' and 'w' are the only phonemes that can only ever appear before a vowel. When the sounds appear after a vowel they change that vowel and turn it into a diphthong. So there's never any confusion!

If you see one of these characters before a vowel, it is the consonant ('y' and 'w') and in all other cases it is the vowel ('ee' and 'ou').

Examples:

Yeet, yield, would/wood

Handwritten phonetic notation:
| | | /
| | | z /
= = /

How to use the 'stretch' and 'emphasys' characters?

You add a 'stretch' or 'emphasis' on the right of the character to which it applies. If you want to emphasize a whole syllable, you should emphasize the vowel in that syllable.

Examples in order:

heeeey~ (stretch on the first half of the diphthong)

shhhhhh! (simple stretch)

wo'uh ('water' but in British :))

that's nice, BUT (emphasis on the 'u' in 'but')

ㄱㄴㅇㄹㅁ ㄴㅇ! =ㅍㅊㅆ
ㅈㅊㅆ'ㄴ ㅍㅇㅈ, ㅆㅊㅆ...

How to clarify something?

Any words that sound the same are written the same way. If you need to clarify a word that isn't clear from context you may use square braces.

For example 'red' the color, and 'read' the past tense of 'reading' can be written like this:

RED[color] or RED[shade] or RED[hue] versus
RED[text] or RED[book] or RED[word]

Clarifiers like this are not meant to be read out loud, they're just a helper to tell the reader what word it is.

The clarification should go after a word. Try to find a clarification that's as short as possible, just a hint should be enough.

examples:

- bank[money], bank[river]
- count[sum] or count[math], count[lord]

You'll almost never need to clarify, because context makes most things clear just like it does in speech. But if you ever need to you can do it this way.

Contact and copyright info

Contact info:

Discord: FlutterLord#9000

Email: miraflutty@hotmail.com

Website with up to date links and info: <https://miraflutty.neocities.org/>

I choose to keep my name anonymous.

Feel free to contact me about questions and suggestions, or whatever else you want. I won't bite!

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Special thanks to Troy from <https://www.twitch.tv/zz1axel1zz> for reviewing my writing system and proofreading!

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