

## Today's topics:

- **Writing systems**
- **Orthographic depth**

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*Background:*

- *Language Files* Ch 3, Files 3.0–3.1 (on phonology)

# 0. Key points today

- Checking in on the course so far
  - Key ideas
  - Questions/clarifications
- Writing systems of the world
  - Review: What is an alphabet?
  - Other types of writing systems
- Orthographic depth
  - Examples of deep and shallow orthographies

# 1. Checking in

## Group discussion

- On a piece of paper, note down one or two **key points** from the course so far (one topic per group)
  - a. Phonics and teaching methods
  - b. Spoken vs. written language
  - c. Consonants and vowels of American English
  - d. Phonology: allophones, syllable structure
- (Time permitting) Add to your notes: Any **questions** or points to **clarify** from any of these topics?

# 1. Alphabets

Some concepts we've seen:

- Every (spoken!) language has an inventory of **phonemes** — mental sound categories
  - These are individual consonants and vowels
  - Some phonemes have multiple **allophones** (pronunciation options), often by context
- The **alphabetic principle** (see Reading Rockets [Phonics](#) page)
  - Clarification: the idea that **letters** represent the **phonemes** (or, more rarely, allophones) of spoken language

# 1. Alphabets

- An **alphabetic writing system**, or **alphabet**, is a system of symbols for writing that follows the alphabetic principle
  - What are some examples of alphabets?  
[see Omniglot, "[Alphabets](#)" page]

## 2. Beyond alphabets

### Discussion

- Consider the word: *spoon*  
How can we break this into...?
  - syllables
  - phonemes
  - onset + rime
  - head + coda

## 2. Beyond alphabets

- Consider this word in Japanese
  - [roppoŋgi] (a place name; 'Six Trees')
  - ろっぽんぎ spelled in *kana*
  - [ro,p,po,ŋ,gi] *kana*-phoneme correspondence
- Which of these levels of analysis does the spelling of the word most closely represent?
  - syllables
  - phonemes
  - onset + rime
  - head + coda
- But see below on how this system is classified!

## 2. Beyond alphabets

- Consider this word in Japanese
  - [roppoŋgi] (a place name; 'Six Trees')
  - 六本木 spelled in *kanji*
  - [rop,poŋ,gi] *kanji*-phoneme correspondence
- This example is ambiguous: Do the kanji symbols represent syllables — or morphemes?
  - A **morpheme** is a meaningful unit of language (a **sound/meaning correspondence** that contains no smaller unit with a sound/meaning correspondence)



### 3. Types of writing systems

<i>Type</i>	<i>Unit per grapheme</i>	<i>Example</i>
<b>alphabet</b>	phoneme	English
<b>abjad</b>	consonants only	<a href="#">Hebrew</a>
<b>abugida (alphasyllabary)</b>	consonants, with vowel diacritics	Hindi ( <a href="#">Devanāgarī</a> )
<b>syllabary</b>	syllable	Japanese <a href="#">kana</a>
<b>logograms</b>	morpheme	Japanese <a href="#">kanji</a>

- “Unit per grapheme” can be approximate!
- Links go to examples on Omniglot.com

## 3. Types of writing systems

### **Group activity**

- What kind of writing system does [Cherokee](#) use?

## 4. Orthographic depth

- Guess! How would you read the following words and phrases of **Finnish** aloud?

**huomenta**

'good morning'

**päivää**

'how do you do'

**hauska tutustua**

'pleased to meet you'

**Anteeksi, mutta minä en puhu suomea.**

'Sorry, but I do not speak Finnish.'

(Audio, spellings, and English translations from *Finnish for Foreigners*, at <http://donnerwetter.kielikeskus.helsinki.fi/FinnishForForeigners/ch1-en/ch1-8-tervehtimiset.htm>)

## 4. Orthographic depth

- Guess! How would you read the following words of **French** aloud?

**houx**

'holly tree'

**acheter**

'to buy'

**cher**

'dear, expensive'

**ville**

'city, town'

**fille**

'girl, daughter'

## 4. Orthographic depth

- Guess! How would you read the following words of **French** aloud?

<b>houx</b>	[ u ]	'holly tree'
<b>acheter</b>	[ aʃte ]	'to buy'
<b>cher</b>	[ ʃɛʁ ]	'dear, expensive'
<b>ville</b>	[ vil ]	'city, town'
<b>fille</b>	[ fij ]	'girl, daughter'

## 4. Orthographic depth

- **orthography**: conventions for writing a language
  - **shallow** orthography: correspondence with pronunciation is **systematic**
  - **deep** orthography: correspondence with pronunciation is **irregular**
- Which language has a more **shallow** orthography, Finnish or French?
- What do people actually mean when they say a language has a “phonetic” spelling system?

## 4. Orthographic depth

- Orthographic depth is not only relevant for alphabets
  - Which system is a more **shallow** orthography, Japanese *kana* or Japanese *kanji*?

## 4. Orthographic depth

Reminder: **phonics** (from Reading Rockets):

“Phonics instruction teaches the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.”

- Do you expect the use of phonics methods in reading education to matter more for languages with **deep** or **shallow** orthographies?
- How would you classify the orthography of **English**: deep or shallow?



## 5. For next time

- **RE #2** gives you a chance to reflect on languages, sounds, and writing systems
- We will begin talking about larger units of language structure:
  - morphemes (word structure)
  - syntax (sentence structure)