

Meta Script Alphabet

A a B b C c D d E e F f G g H h I i J j K k L l M m N n O o P p R r S s T t U u V v W w Y y Z z (37 characters)

Context

Modern written English sucks. Whether because of our latin-script alphabet which is [not ideal for our language's sounds](#), or [the great vowel shift](#) beginning at the same time we standardized our language via the newly invented printing press, written English is a mess.

Why does this matter? Any involved parent or elementary school teacher will tell you how hard it is to teach kids English. The language is highly inconsistent, and often seemingly arbitrary with its spelling. The fact that we even have spelling bees, dubbing the ability to spell as some grand achievement, is a huge failure for our language. And for plenty of adults today, if you were to ask them to spell the word 'piece' out loud, half of them would put the e before the i. English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and as kids globally continue to grow up in the internet age, English is only becoming more and more prominent. It is beyond due time for our language to receive an update which makes it consistent, intuitive, and easy to learn.

My goal is to improve the written English language.

The philosophy is simple: spell words as they are pronounced. For this to happen we need one letter to represent each sound. Nothing more, nothing less. Writing reflects speech. Not the other way around. For this to happen, we need a new alphabet. This video makes my point: [Pronunciation TikTok](#). This video refers to pronunciations using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Most people are probably familiar with the IPA as the weird "misspelling" next to whatever word you were looking up in the dictionary as a kid. While the IPA is a great tool in linguistics, characterizing every piece of information you need to be able to pronounce a word, it is just not necessary for us to have all that information in the vast majority of cases. Plus, some of the sounds in IPA are not even used in English, unnecessarily inflating the alphabet for our purposes. Not to mention how unintuitive some of those characters would be for current Anglophones. Basically, it's useful, but too complex for actual regular text.

Meta Script will not be case sensitive. Not even all of our current letters have a different form per case (z, x, v, etc.). Plenty of major languages don't have cases. Any desire to implement case will be signaled by letter size.

The proposed letters in this paper will be presented like so:

Meta Script Letter

Modern English sound equivalent

Example of an english word with that sound

Any special notes regarding the letter

I've written for dozens of hours to practice and improve this proposed letter system.

An underrated benefit will be that less paper and file size will be needed for written documents, given the removal of unnecessary letters.

How do we actually implement this? Now that is beyond the scope of my work. But right now I'm thinking a 40 year plan. We take 40 years to transition our country over to Meta Script. The same way documents are offered in both English and Spanish in areas with a bilingual population, everything will be offered in both traditional modern English and Meta Script. It will also be taught in schools, similar to how both cursive and print were taught back in the day. I am choosing the number 40 because this allows for anyone young to have plenty of time to learn it before everything shifts over, and for anyone older who is opposed to change to live the rest of their life without having to learn it. France has a governmental language department, The Académie Française, which is responsible for regulating and updating the language. French used to have many words with 'es' where the 's' is silent. An improvement was officially [standardized in the French language](#) when the Académie Française dropped the mute consonant in the 18th century and replaced 'es' with 'ê'. This linguistic change started decentrally though, and eventually made its way to ubiquity. Which is what I hope this paper can inspire for English. So pLEz LrN aNd JAr metu sKRipT! θAnKs Φor REdEng :)

Vowels Context

All of our vowels represent at least two sounds. For example, 'a' represents FOUR (about, all, cap, rake). That is ridiculous. Learning English is basically memorizing thousands of words, rather than actually learning how to read them.

In IPA, our vowel sounds are represented as diphthongs and monophthongs. We do this by putting imaginary 'y's and 'w's at the end of a lot of them. In Meta Script, this diphthong effect from our accents would be ignored. For example, the word 'no'. Mexicans would pronounce it as 'no', Americans as 'now', Austrailians as 'naur', etc.

Intuitively, previously upper-case forms will represent hard vowel sounds and lower-case forms will take soft sounds.

My proposed vowels and consonants are below.

Meta Script Vowels

A

hard A

e.g. cake

This could be represented by ʌ, which would save a pen stroke, but I decided against this as it was too unintuitive for me to shake the muscle memory of adding the crossbar. I'm not too pressed, as in the 21st century, typing is more prevalent than writing.

a

short A

e.g. cat

E

hard E

e.g. meat

e

short E

e.g. pet

I

hard I

e.g. kite

Gone are the days of asking yourself "Is that a lower-case I or an upper-case I...". All I's in Meta Script will have a baseline and cap height serif

i

soft I

e.g. sit

O

hard O

e.g. poke

o

soft O

e.g. mop

Lower-case and upper-case O have the same form, so I had to find inspiration from elsewhere to add a new letter. I took the open O from the IPA, and makes the soft o sound.

y

hard U

e.g. super

Figuring out characters for all three u sounds was difficult, but I found this to be the best solution. This is one of the less intuitive parts of Meta Script, but I found no better solution. Inspired by my learning of the cyrillic alphabet, in Russian, y makes the hard u sound.

U

soft U

e.g. cup

u

alt U

e.g. push

Many may think of this sound as typically being represented by oo, but actually the /ʊ/ sound is represented by the letter 'u' [in 45% of cases](#). This character is from IPA. Commonly referred to as the horseshoe u.

Meta Script Consonants

B

B

e.g. bed

C

Ch

e.g. chat

Very happy with this one. I got rid of 'c' because 'k' and 's' can do both of its sounds, but brought it back when I realized it would be an intuitive way to represent the ch sound. Both because it is the first letter in the ch sound, but also because in different European languages, č, ċ, or ċ could represent the ch sound.

d

D

e.g. dog

I'm not really happy with this character, but I always thought capital D looks too close to O when written, and would also be to similar to eth in Meta Script.

Ð

voiced Th

e.g. that

Used in Icelandic and Faroese, eth represents a sound which we currently have no letter for.

Φ

F

e.g. fat

I didn't like either of our current F or f characters. They feel cringe to write. Phi feels more natural.

g

G

e.g. goofy

H

H

e.g. hippo

Lower-case h would save a penstroke, but it looks too close to n.

θ

unvoiced Th

e.g. think

Probably my favorite addition from Meta Script (along with c). We need a letter to represent th and most Americans are already familiar with the Greek alphabet.

J

J

e.g. jump

K

K

e.g. kale

L

L

e.g. hello

Gone are the days of asking yourself "Is that a lower-case l or an upper-case l...". All L's in Meta Script will take the upper-case form.

m

M

e.g. monkey

Lower-case form felt more natural to write.

N

N

e.g. need

n

voiced velar nasal

e.g. english

Yes, it's different from N

p

P

e.g. pig

R

R

e.g. really

r

Er

e.g. great

Yes, it's different from R

S

S

e.g. snake

ʃ

Sh

e.g. shake

Great and necessary addition to English. Referred to as esh. From the IPA.

T

T

e.g. tiny

†

flap/tap

e.g. butter

Yes, it's different from T

V

V

e.g. very

W

W

e.g. wink

Y

Y

e.g. yellow

3

voiced postalveolar fricative

e.g. garrage

Uncommon but worthy addition to written English. Referred to as ezh. From the IPA.

Z

Z

e.g. zebra

Extra

I am not really satisfied with 'd'. Feels silly to write, especially for such a hard sound. But if I used 'D', that would be perhaps too similar to 'Đ', and I never liked how similar it felt to 'O' when writing. I think my hands are tied on this one.

One sound, or lack thereof, that I didn't address was the 't' in 'mountain'. Realistically, it's not actually pronounced. But we can't just omit it, given that we purposely put a pause where it is. Similar to how British people say 'butter'. Almost as if the first syllable is staccato, not legato. I think I would spell 'mountain' as 'mawN-N', where '-' would now also be used in words with a quick stop in them.

In the future, I may examine improvements to punctuation. I don't think this is nearly as necessary as the need for a new alphabet, but I found [this video](#) to be extremely interesting.

Hopefully the syntax/grammar wasn't too bad in this paper. That was not my focus. I'm into linguistics, not writing lol.

-Jordan