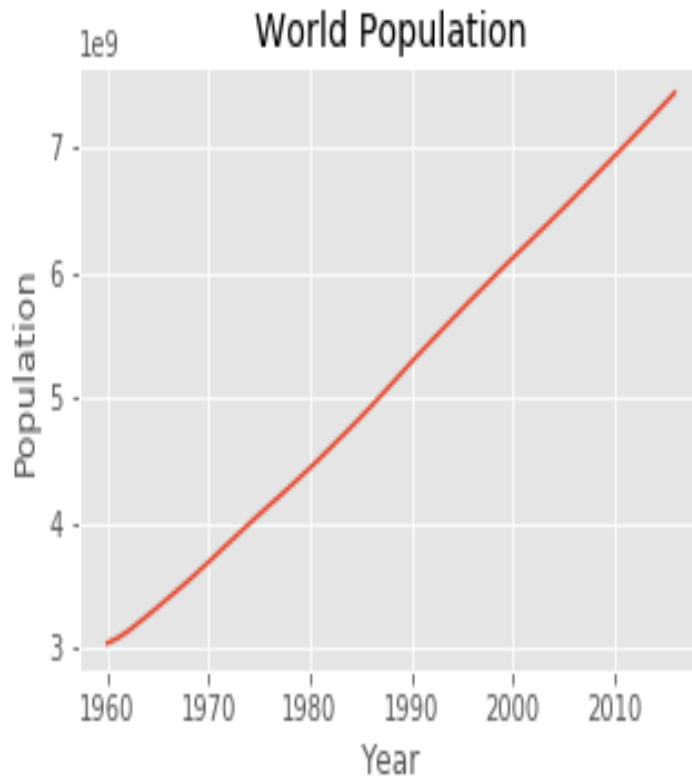


W



W (named double-u, plural double-ues) is the 23rd letter of the modern English and ISO basic Latin alphabets. == History == The sounds /w/ (spelled **W**) and /b/ (spelled **B**) of Classical Latin developed into a bilabial fricative /β/ between vowels in Early Medieval Latin. Therefore, **W** no longer adequately represented the labial-velar approximant sound /w/ of Germanic phonology. The Germanic /w/ phoneme was therefore written as **VV** or **uu** (**u** and **v** becoming distinct only by the Early Modern period. By the 7th or 8th century, the earliest writers of Old English and Old High German. Gothic (not Latin-based), by contrast, simply used a letter based on the Greek Y for the same sound. The digraph **VV**/**uu** was also used in Medieval Latin to represent Germanic names, including Gothic ones like Wamba. It is from this **uu** digraph that the modern name "double U" derives. The digraph was commonly used in the spelling of Old High German, but only sporadically in Old English, where the /w/ sound was usually represented by the runic **wynn**. In early Middle English, following the 11th-century Norman Conquest, **uu** gained popularity and by 1300 it had taken **wynn**'s place in common use. Scribal realization of the digraph could look like a pair of Vs whose branches crossed in the middle. An obsolete, cursive form found in the nineteenth century in both English and German was in the form of an **n** whose rightmost branch curved around as in a cursive **v**. The shift from the digraph **VV** to the distinct ligature **W** is thus gradual, and is only apparent in abecedaria, explicit listings of all individual letters. It was probably considered a separate letter by the 14th century in both Middle English and Middle German orthography, although it remained an outsider, not really considered part of the Latin alphabet proper, as expressed by Valentin Ickelshamer in the 16th century, who complained that: In Middle High German (and possibly already in late Old High German), the West Germanic phoneme /w/ became realized as [v]; this is why, today, the German **w** represents that sound. There is no phonological distinction between [w] and [v] in contemporary German. == Use in writing systems == == English == English uses **w** to represent /w/. There are also a number of words beginning with a written **w** that is silent in most dialects before a (pronounced) **r**, remaining from usage in Old English in which the **w** was pronounced:

wreak, wrap, wreck, wrench, wroth, wrinkle, etc. Certain dialects of Scottish English still distinguish this digraph. In the Welsh loanword *cwm* it retains the Welsh pronunciation, /w/. == Other languages == In Europe, there are only a few languages with **w** in native words, all in a central-western European zone between Cornwall and Poland: English, German, Low German, Dutch, Frisian, Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Walloon, Polish, Kashubian, Sorbian, Wymysorys, Resian and Scandinavian dialects. German, Polish, Wymysorys and Kashubian use it for the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ (with Polish, Wymysorys and related Kashubian using **w** for /w/), and Dutch uses it for /w/. Unlike its use in other languages, the letter is used in Welsh and Cornish to represent the vowel /u/ as well as the related approximant consonant /w/. Modern German dialects generally have only [v] or **v** for West Germanic /w/, but [w] or [β] is still heard allophonically for **w**, especially in the clusters **schw**, **zw**, and **qu**. Some Bavarian dialects preserve a "light" initial [w], such as in *wuoz* (Standard German *weiß* [vaʃs] 'I know'). The Classical Latin [β] is heard in the Southern German greeting *Servus* ('hello' or 'goodbye'). In Dutch, **w** became a labiodental approximant /w/ (with the exception of words with **-eeuw**, which have /eβ/, or other diphthongs containing **-uw**). In many Dutch-speaking areas, such as Flanders and Suriname, the /β/ pronunciation is used at all times. In Finnish, **w** is seen as a variant of **v** and not a separate letter. It is, however, recognised and maintained in the spelling of some old names, reflecting an earlier German spelling standard, and in some modern loan words. In all cases, it is pronounced /w/. In Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, **w** is named double-v and not double-u. In these languages, the letter only exists in old names, loanwords and foreign words. (Foreign words are distinguished from loanwords by having a significantly lower level of integration in the language.) It is usually pronounced /v/, but in some words of English origin it may be pronounced /w/. The letter was officially introduced in the Danish and Swedish alphabets as late as 1980 and 2006, respectively, despite having been in use for much longer. It had been recognized since the conception of modern Norwegian, with the earliest official orthography rules of 1907. **W** was earlier seen as a variant of **v**, and **w** as a letter (double-v) is still commonly replaced by **v** in speech (e.g. WC being pronounced as VC, *www* as VVV, WHO as VHO, etc.) The two letters were sorted as equals before **w** was officially recognized, and that practice is still recommended when sorting names in Sweden. In modern slang, some native speakers may pronounce **w** more closely to the origin of the loanword than the official /v/ pronunciation. Multiple dialects of Swedish and Danish use the sound however. In Denmark notably in Jutland, where the northern half use it extensively in traditional dialect, and multiple places in Sweden. It is used in southern Swedish, for example in Halland where the words "wesp" (wisp) and "wann" (water) are traditionally used. In northern and western Sweden there are also dialects with /w/. Elfdalian is a good example, which is one of many dialects where the Old Norse difference between v (/w/) and f (/v/ or /f/) is preserved. Thus "warg" from Old Norse "vargr", but "åvå" from Old Norse "hafa". In the alphabets of most modern Romance languages (excepting far northern French and Walloon), **w** is used mostly in foreign names and words recently borrowed (le week-end, il watt, el kiwi). The digraph **ou** is used for /w/ in native French words; **oi** is /wa/ or /wɔ/. In Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, [w] is a non-syllabic variant of /u/, spelled **u**. The Japanese language uses "W", pronounced /daburu/, as an ideogram meaning "double". It is also a short form of an Internet slang term for "www", used to denote laughter, which is derived from the word *warau* (**w**, meaning "to laugh"). In Italian, while the letter **w** is not considered part of the standard Italian alphabet, the character is often used in place of *Viva* (hooray for...), while the same symbol written upside down indicates *abbasso* (down with...). In the Kokborok language, **w** represents the open-mid back rounded vowel /ɘ/. In Vietnamese, **w** is called *vê* **úp**, from the French double *vê*. It is not included in the standard Vietnamese alphabet, but it is often used as a substitute for *qu* in literary dialect and very informal writing. It's also commonly used for abbreviating **w** in formal documents, for example *Trung Quốc* is abbreviated as TW even in official documents and document ID number "W" is the 24th letter in the Modern Filipino Alphabet and is pronounced as it is in English. However, in the old Filipino alphabet, *Abakada*, it was the 19th letter and was pronounced "wah"; there was an equivalent letter in the old Baybayin script of the Philippines. == Other systems == In the International Phonetic Alphabet, **w** is used for the voiced labial-velar approximant. == Other uses == W is the symbol for the chemical element tungsten, after its German (and alternative English) name, Wolfram. It is also the SI symbol for the watt, the standard unit of power. == Name == Double-u, whose name reflects stages in the letter's evolution when it was considered two of the same letter, a double U, is the only modern English letter whose name has more than one syllable. It is also the only English letter whose name is not pronounced with any of the sounds that the letter typically makes in words, with the exception of H for some speakers. Note: Symbols considered part of the English alphabet at

some periods of the past include the following: The ligature œ (whose name was pronounced similarly to the human name Ethel) &, at some stages a ligature for the word "et" in Latin (and in some other languages that adopted its use); it has in some periods been treated as part of the alphabet, and is still is named ampersand, but generally pronounced "and" except when setting type. Some speakers shorten the name "double u" into "dub-u" or just "dub"; for example, University of Wisconsin, University of Washington, University of Wyoming, University of Waterloo, University of the Western Cape and University of Western Australia are all known colloquially as "U Dub", and the automobile company Volkswagen, abbreviated "VW", is sometimes pronounced "V-Dub". The fact that many website URLs require a "www." prefix has been influential in promoting these shortened pronunciations, as many speakers find the phrase "double-u double-u double-u" inconveniently long. In other Germanic languages, including German (but not Dutch, in which it is pronounced wé), its name is similar to that of English V. In many languages, its name literally means "double v": Portuguese duplo vê, Spanish doble ve (though it can be spelled uve doble), French double vé, Icelandic tvöfalt vaff, Czech dvojité vé, Finnish kaksois-vee, etc. Former U.S. president George W. Bush was given the nickname "Dubya" after the colloquial pronunciation of his middle initial in Texas, where he spent much of his childhood.

== Related characters ==
 === Ancestors, descendants and siblings ===
 ■: Semitic letter Waw, from which the following symbols originally derive U : Latin letter U V : Latin letter V ■ ■ : W with hook ■ ■ : Latin letter VY IPA-specific symbols related to W: ■ ■ ■ ■ Uralic Phonetic Alphabet-specific symbols related to W: U+1D21 ■ LATIN LETTER SMALL CAPITAL W and U+1D42 ■ MODIFIER LETTER CAPITAL W ■ : Modifier letter small w is used in Indo-European studies W with diacritics: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ (double vav): the Yiddish and Hebrew equivalent of W
 === Ligatures and abbreviations ===
 ■ : Won sign, capital letter W with double stroke
 == Computing codes ==
 1 Also for encodings based on ASCII, including the DOS, Windows, ISO-8859 and Macintosh families of encodings.
 == Other representations ==
 == See also ==
 Tungsten Voiced labio-velar approximant Wh (digraph) ω (omega) W stands for Work in physics W is the symbol for "watt" in the International System of Units (SI)
 == References ==
 Informational notes Citations == External links ==
 The dictionary definition of W at Wiktionary The dictionary definition of w at Wiktionary