



ἵπποπόταμος
WoLLoW the HiPPo

The World of Languages
and Languages of the World



Queen Mary Invented
Languages Scheme

Creating Alphabets, Verbs and Tenses

Let's look at how you will write your language down and think about how you'll show tenses

Acknowledgements

Adapted with thanks from the Queen Mary Invented Languages Scheme materials, protected under CC-BY-NC.

Thanks to Professor David Adger and Dr Coppe van Urksor at <https://creatinglanguages.org/>



Writing things down - Tools

Throughout the centuries and throughout the world, people have written words, pictures and symbols down in different ways and using different tools and surfaces.

Which examples can you think of?

How about...



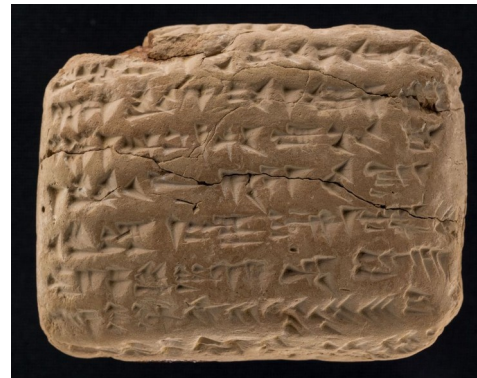
Mayan carvings



Runic Carvings



Chinese brush strokes



Babylonian clay tablets



Malayalam palm leaves





Design Choice 6

Writing Words

Think about what technology your creatures on your island will use to write down their language.

What will they write with and what will they write on?

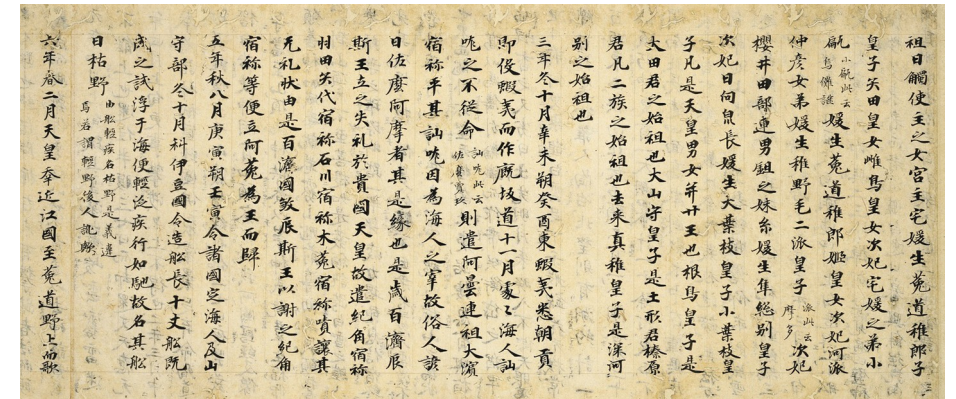
Design Choice 7

Directions.

- English writes right to left, horizontally across the page.
- Arabic writes left to right, horizontally.
- In some ancient Greek texts, they write right to left on one line and then left to right on the other. This is called boustrophedon.
- Japanese writes left to right vertically.

THIS EXAMPLE OF BOUSTROPHEDON TEXT WAS ADAPTED FOR THE WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE ON THIS OX TURNING METHOD OF COVERING A WALL IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ELSEWHERE

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY



innohōmōs
WOLLOW the HIPPO



Design Choice 8: Your alphabet

- Do you want your alphabet to run ABCD... or will you order it differently, perhaps with vowels first, followed by consonants?
- Write down all the letters in your writing system. You now have your alphabet.
- Will you have capitals? If so, how will they look compared to your lower-case letters? Where will you use capitals? In English we have capitals for names. In German they have capitals for all nouns. Indic languages (e.g. Hindi) have no capitals.



inno4mapoc
WOLLOW the HIPPO

Verbs

You have an alphabet and you can label things (nouns).
You also know how to make these things multiple (plurals).

Your island creatures are busy doing – to describe their actions,
we need to create verbs.

Following your sound choices and syllable rules, create words for:
run, fly, eat, hit, drink, sit, wait, sleep

Tenses

Whenever we use a verb to say what someone/thing is doing, we mark the verb to express whether the action already happened, is happening, or is going to happen.

These different forms of the verb are called **tenses**.

English has a **past tense** morpheme *-ed* and a future morpheme **will**:

I wait.

I wait-**ed**.

I **will** wait.

Other languages have no tense at all, like Mandarin!

Wo zai Taipei gongzuo.

I in Taipei work

'I am working in Taipei.' or 'I worked in Taipei.'

Adding more tenses

Other languages have more tenses. For example, Inuit has a **remote past** and a **remote future**:

ilisai-lauqsima-junga

study-RemotePast-I

'I studied some time ago.'

uqaq-laaq-tara

talk-RemoteFuture-I

'I will talk some time in the future.'

Design Choice 9: Tenses

You have words for run, fly, eat, hit, drink, sit, wait, sleep

What kind of tenses do you have in your language, and how do you change the verbs to express them?

Do you use prefixes, suffixes, separate words (and do the words come before or after the verb?), reduplication, something else?

Write down examples of your verbs in their tenses using your writing system.



Acknowledgements

- Adapted with thanks from the Queen Mary Invented Languages Scheme materials, protected under CC-BY-NC.
- Thanks to Professor David Adger and Dr Coppe van Urksor at <https://creatinglanguages.org/>