

(B) Junk Mail: Letters We Don't Need (1/2) [Solution]

The alphabet of Duw Ulbubud is summarized in these two tables, which are equivalent. The one on the left is useful for translating from Duw Ulbubud to English while the one on the right is useful for the reverse direction.

Duw Ulbubud letter(s)	English letter(s)
u	a, e, i, o, u, y
b	b, m, p
d	d, n, t
g	c, g, k
l	l
r	r
v	f, v
w	w
z	j, s, z
[nothing]	h (i.e., h is deleted)
gz	x

English letter	Duw Ulbubud letter(s)
a	u
b	b
c	g
d	d
e	u
f	v
g	g
h	[nothing] (i.e., h is deleted)
i	u
j	z
k	g
l	l
m	b
n	d
o	u
p	b
q	g
r	r
s	z
t	d
u	u
v	v
w	w
x	gz
y	u
z	z



(B) Junk Mail: Letters We Don't Need (2/2) [Solution]

Translation of sample texts in Duw Ulbubud (which, by the way, means New Alphabet):

Headline: WORDS WILL BE SPELLED DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF “NEW ALPHABET”

Article: For better or for worse, the transformed alphabet will make writing look like a puzzling jumble of random letters. We just have one major question: is it justified? Expect lots of complaints from people who grew up with the old system.

B1. words: wurdz the: du fifth: vuvd squeaky: zguguu
jazz: zuzz bagpipes: bugbubuz vertex: vurdugz calming: gulbudg

B2. *Moby Dick* in Duw Ulbubud: Bubu Dugg Misinterpretation of this title: Baby Duck

B3. In Duw Ulbubud, *Give me a minute* is written *Guvu bu u bududu*. That last word, *bududu*, is the source of the confusion: even though it's intended to mean *minute*, it could also mean *banana* or *potato*. Thus, the fruit was a banana, and the vegetable was a potato.

B4. Stuffy-Nose Talk

Some Linguistic Background: (This information is totally unnecessary for solving this problem):

Consonants are generally defined by three properties called voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation. Voicing describes whether a sound is produced with the vocal folds vibrating or not; if the vocal folds vibrate, the sound is voiced, as is the z sound; otherwise the sound is voiceless, as is the s sound. All consonants are produced by some sort of constriction in the vocal tract, and place of articulation states exactly where the constriction occurs. For example, b and p have a labial place of articulation (i.e., at the lips) because they are produced by closing the lips. Manner of articulation describes how complete the constriction is: some sounds, such as b and p, are called stops and involve a complete closure; others, such as s and z, are called fricatives and involve a nearly complete closure; and still others, such as r and l, are called approximants and do not involve a very large constriction. Consonants can also vary in a property called nasality: sounds produced with the nasal tract open, such as n and m, are called nasal, while other sounds are called oral.

In Duw Ulbubud, vowels are all grouped together, and consonants are put into groups that share place and manner of articulation but that may vary in voicing and/or nasality. The voiced, oral member of the group is the one chosen for inclusion in Duw Ulbubud. (J actually has a slightly different place of articulation than s and z, but it was close enough for those three to be grouped together). X was replaced by two letters because it actually stands for two sounds. H was removed entirely because the letter h is often silent (as in “what” and “hour”), and even in words where h is not silent it often disappears in casual speech (for example, “What did he say?” may actually be pronounced “What did ‘e say?”).

The problems with Duw Ulbubud mostly arise from the fact that Duw Ulbubud is a phonetically-based system, yet English spelling is not very phonetic. A single English letter may represent multiple sounds; for example, Duw Ulbubud treats y as a vowel, even though it sometimes acts as a consonant, and Duw Ulbubud treats c as if it were always pronounced like k even though sometimes it is produced as the s sound. At the other end of the spectrum, multiple English letters can stand for a single speech sound such as “sh,” “th,” or “ou,” but Duw Ulbubud does not treat these pairs as individual entities but rather as two separate letters. Lastly, English contains many silent letters which generally create strange results when they are transformed into Duw Ulbubud.

