

The World's Most Popular Writing Scripts

By [Amber Pariona](#) on October 23 2019 in [Society](#)

The Latin script is the most common type found in the world.

Languages from around the world are written by using a number of scripts. These writing scripts can be classified into the following categories: logogram, syllabary, and alphabet. Logograms are written by using one character to represent an entire word or idea. Syllabary is a script that uses symbols to represent the syllables in a word. An alphabet uses separate symbols that represent a specific sound to form a word. This article takes a closer look at some of the most widely used writing scripts in the world.

The Most Popular Writing Scripts in The World

1. Latin

Latin is an alphabet type of script and the most widely used in the world. Around 4.9 billion people or 70% of the global population relies on this alphabet, which generally consists of an average of 26 letters, to write a range of languages. This script originated in present-day Italy and has since spread around the world with the help of several historic events, most notably: the Roman Empire, Christianity, and European colonization. The Latin alphabet is also used as the basis for the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is used to express the phonetics of all languages. Some of the major language families that utilize this script include: Germanic, Romance, Polish, Austronesian, and Turkish (among others).

2. Chinese

The second most widely used script in the world is Chinese, also known as hanzi, kanji, or hanja. The characters of this writing script are considered logograms and used in several different languages across Asia, including: Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. In fact, an estimated 1.34 billion people around the world use Chinese characters in written communication. This script

consists of thousands of characters and is considered the oldest continuously utilized form of writing in the world, with evidence of its use dating back to as early as the Shang Dynasty of 1200 BC.

3. Arabic

Arabic is the third most widely used script in the world. Around 660 million individuals use Arabic script to communicate in a number of languages, including: Urdu, Pashto, Arabic, Punjabi, Persian, Malaysian, and Kurdish (to name a few). Unlike the other previously mentioned scripts, Arabic is written from right to left. This script dates back to around 400 AD, although its first large-scale use was to write the Qu'ran. As Islam spread around the world, it took the Arabic script with it. Over time, more characters and symbols were added to accommodate the needs of other regional languages.

4. Devanagari

Devanagari script is considered an alphasyllabary system of writing. It is used to communicate in around 120 languages, including the following: Nepali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and Marathi. Estimates suggest that around 608 million people around the world utilize Devanagari on a regular basis, making it the fourth most widely used script in the world. This script is written and read from left to right and can be easily recognized by its circular-like shapes and straight-lined outlines. It consists of 47 principal characters, 33 of which are consonants and 14 are vowels. Its current form is believed to have originated in the 10th century AD, although some researchers suggest that it was first developed around the 1st century AD.

The chart published below offers a more in-depth look at additional popular writing scripts used around the world today.

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Rank	Name of script	Type	Population actively using (in millions)
1	Latin Latin	Alphabet	over 4900
2	Chinese 汉字 漢字	Logographic	1340
3	Arabic العربية	Abjad	660+

Rank	Name of script	Type	Population actively using (in millions)
4	Devanagari देवनागरी	Abugida	608+
5	Bengali-Assamese বাংলা-অসমীয়া	Abugida	300
6	Cyrillic Кириллица	Alphabet	250
7	Kana かな カナ	Syllabary	120
8	Javanese	Abugida	80
9	Hangul 한글 조선글	Alphabet, featural	78.7
10	Telugu తెలుగు	Abugida	74
11	Tamil தமிழ்	Abugida	70
12	Gujarati ગુજરાતી	Abugida	48
13	Kannada ಕನ್ನಡ	Abugida	45
14	Burmese မြန်မာ	Abugida	39
15	Malayalam മലയാളം	Abugida	38
16	Thai ไทย	Abugida	38
17	Sundanese	Abugida	38
18	Gurmukhi ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ	Abugida	22
19	Lao ລາວ	Abugida	22
20	Odia ଓଡ଼ିଆ	Abugida	21
21	Ge'ez ግዕዝ	Abugida	18
22	Sinhala සිංහල	Abugida	14.4
23	Hebrew עברית	Abjad	14
24	Armenian Հայոց	Alphabet	12
25	Khmer ខ្មែរ	Abugida	11.4
26	Greek Ελληνικό	Alphabet	11
27	Lontara	Abugida	7.6
28	Tibetan བོད་	Abugida	5
29	Georgian ქართული	Alphabet	4.5
30	Modern Yi 𑜉𑜂𑜆𑜏	Syllabary	4
31	Mongolian ᠮᠣᠩᠭᠣᠯ	Alphabet	2
32	Tifinagh	Abjad	1
33	Syriac	Abjad	0.4
34	Thaana	Abugida	0.35
35	Inuktitut ᐃᓄᐅᓂᓂ	Abugida	0.035
36	Cherokee ᏣᏍᏔ	Syllabary	0.02