

Omniglot *a guide to written language*

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Latin alphabet

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Ancient Latin alphabet

The earliest known inscriptions in the Latin alphabet date from the 6th century BC. It was adapted from the [Etruscan](#) alphabet during the 7th century BC. The letters Y and Z were taken from the [Greek](#) alphabet to write Greek loan words. Other letters were added from time to time as the Latin alphabet was adapted for other languages and many letters had several different shapes.

AΛ a	Bβ b	⊃ c	D⊃ d	Eϛ e	Fϛ v	[GI] z
HΘ h	I i	Kκ k	LJ l	MΜϣ m	NΝϣ n	O o
Pϛ p	Qϣ q	Rϣ r	Sϣ s	T t	V u	ϣ ks

Other versions of the Latin alphabet

Ancient Latin, [Irish Uncial](#), [Old English](#)

Roman alphabet for Latin

The Romans used just 23 letters to write Latin:

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y Z

There were no lower case letters, and **K**, **Y** and **Z** used only for writing words of Greek origin. The letters **J**, **U** and **W** were added to the alphabet at a later stage to write languages other than Latin. **J** is a variant of **I**, **U** is a variant of **V**, and **W** was introduced as a 'double-v' to make a distinction between the sounds we know as 'v' and 'w' which was unnecessary in Latin.

Modern Latin alphabet

The modern Latin alphabet consists of 52 letters, including both upper and lower case, plus 10 numerals, punctuation marks and a variety of other symbols such as **&**, **%** and **@**. Many languages add a variety of **accents** to the basic letters, and a few also use **extra letters and ligatures**.

The lowercase letters developed from cursive versions of the uppercase letters.

Uppercase

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Lowercase

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Accented letters & special characters**Accented letters**

Many languages supplement the basic Latin alphabet with a variety of accented letters:

Á á acute	È è grave	Î î circumflex	Õ õ tilde	Ū ū ring	ÿ ÿ umlaut / diaeresis
Ą ą ogonek	Ě ě caron	Ī ī macron	Ŏ ŏ horn	Ŭ ŭ breve	Ÿ ŷ hook
Â â inverted breve	Ë ë double grave	İ i dot above	Ø ø slash	Ű ű double acute	Ỳ ỳ dot below
Ç ç cedilla	Ð ð bar	Ł ł middle dot	Ɔ middle tilde	Ʀ ʀ slash	ǰ top bar

These accented letters can have a number of different functions:

- Modifying the pronunciation of a letter
- Indicating where the stress should fall in a word
- Indicating emphasis in a sentence
- Indicating pitch or intonation of a word or syllable
- Indicating vowel length
- Visually distinguishing homophones

How to type accented letters in [Windows](#), [Mac](#) and [HTML](#)

Some extra letters

Ð ð Þ þ Ľ ĺ ƿ ƿ ə ə I i Ŋ ŋ Ŋ ŋ ɛ ɛ Ɔ ɔ

eth thorn yogh wynn schwa dotless i eng

Eth, Thorn, Yogh and Wynn were used in [Old English](#); Eth and Thorn are also used in [Icelandic](#); the dotless i is used in [Turkish](#), and the schwa is used in [Azeri](#). The other letters are used in a number of West African languages, particularly in Ghana.

Ligatures (two or three letters joined together)

These are used in a number of languages including French, German, Icelandic, Croatian and Dutch:

Æ æ	Dz dz	Dž dž	Ij ij	Lj lj	Nj nj	Œ œ	Oj oj	ß
a-e	d-z	d-ž	i-j	l-j	n-j	o-e	o-i	f-s
ff	fi	fl	ffi	ffl	ft	st		
f-f	f-i	f-l	f-f-i	f-f-l	f-t	s-t		

Click [here](#) to find out how to type ligatures in [Windows](#), [Mac](#) and [HTML](#)

Further information about diacritics and their usage

<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/dia/diacritics-revised.htm>,

Some of the languages written with the Latin alphabet

[Afaan Oromo](#), [Afrikaans](#), [Albanian](#), [Aromanian](#), [Aymara](#), [Azeri](#), [Basque](#), [Belarusian](#), [Breton](#), [Catalan](#), [Cebuano](#), [Chechen](#), [Cheyenne](#), [Cimbrian](#), [Choctaw](#), [Comanche](#), [Cornish](#), [Corsican](#), [Croatian](#), [Czech](#), [Danish](#), [Dutch](#), [English](#), [Esperanto](#), [Estonian](#), [Ewe](#), [Faroese](#), [Fijian](#), [Filipino](#), [Finnish](#), [French](#), [Frisian](#), [Galician](#), [German](#), [Guarani](#), [Hausa](#), [Hawaiian](#), [Hungarian](#), [Icelandic](#), [Ido](#), [Indonesian](#), [Interlingua](#), [Irish](#), [Italian](#), [Jèrriais](#), [Kashubian](#), [Kiribati](#), [Kurdish](#), [Latin](#), [Latvian](#), [Lingua Franca Nova](#), [Lithuanian](#), [Lojban](#), [Lombard](#), [Luxembourgish](#), [Malay](#), [Maltese](#), [Manx](#), [Maori](#), [Mi'kmaq](#), [Nahuatl](#), [Navajo](#), [Naxi](#), [Norwegian](#), [Occitan](#), [Old Norse](#), [Piedmontese](#), [Polish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Quechua](#), [Romanian](#), [Saami/Sami](#), [Samoan](#), [Scots](#), [Scottish Gaelic](#), [Serbian](#), [Sioux](#), [Slovak](#), [Slovene](#), [Slovio](#), [Sorbian](#), [Southern Sotho](#), [Spanish](#), [Swahili](#), [Swedish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Tahitian](#), [Tatar](#), [Taiwanese](#), [Tlingit](#), [Tongan](#), [Turkish](#), [Turkmen](#), [Uyghur](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Volapük](#), [Walloon](#), [Welsh](#), [Wolof](#), [Yoruba](#), [Zulu](#)

Other alphabets

[Armenian](#), [Avestan](#), [Bassa \(Vah\)](#), [Beitha Kukju](#), [Coptic](#), [Cyrillic](#), [Elbsan](#), [Etruscan](#), [Fraser](#), [Georgian \(Asomtavruli & Nuskhakhucuri\)](#), [Georgian \(Mkhedruli\)](#), [Glagolitic](#), [Gothic](#), [Greek](#), [Hungarian Runes](#), [International Phonetic Alphabet \(IPA\)](#), [Irish](#), [Korean](#), [Latin](#), [Manchu](#), [Mongolian](#), [N'Ko](#), [Old Church Slavonic](#), [Ogham](#), [Old Italic](#), [Old Permic](#), [Orkhon](#), [Pollard Miao](#), [Runic](#), [Santali](#), [Somali](#), [Sutton SignWriting](#), [Tai Lue](#), [Thaana](#)

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