

24.93 “The search for meaning”

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<https://kvf.me/fyd>

Lecture 4/12

Writing

The first rule for thinking about writing

Writing/Orthography \neq Language/Grammar

“Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by visible marks.”

– Leonard Bloomfield, Language (1933)

Top Ten GRAMMAR Peeves

1. “Your“ and “you're” are not the same word.
2. Apostrophes don't form plural nouns.
3. “There,” “they're,” and “their” are completely different words.
4. The contraction of “could have” is not spelled “could of.”
5. “To, ” “too,” and “two” are also completely different words.
6. “Its” is the possessive form of “it.” “It's” is the contraction of “it is.”
7. “Then” shows sequence of events. “Than” is used to compare nouns.
8. “Affect” is a verb and “effect” is a noun.
9. “Irony” does not mean “anything that is unexpected.”
10. Your pants are “loose.” You “lose” your keys.



Like



www.facebook.com/Grammarly

Language/Grammar

- species universal
- acquired automatically
- largely unconscious
- arose hundreds of thousands (maybe millions) of years ago

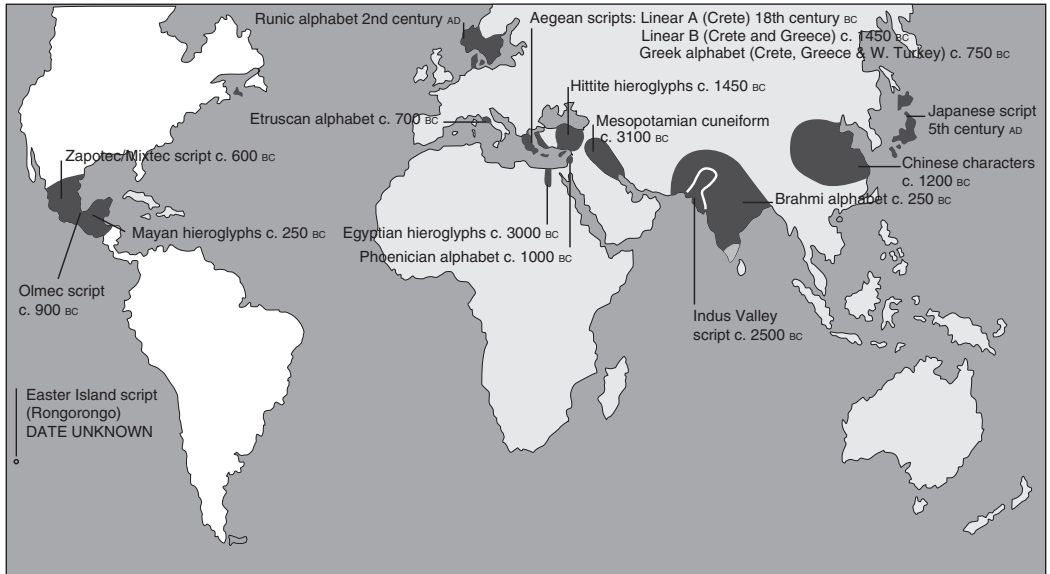
Writing/Orthography

- cultural technology
- not universal
- needs to be taught
- first invented a few thousand years ago

Writing is not faithful

- not an accurate representation of the sound stream (or sign stream)
- does not represent intonation, gestures, facial expressions
- removed from “live” context
- may contain elements not found in spoken/signed language (tables, punctuation)

Some history and terminology



Not yet writing

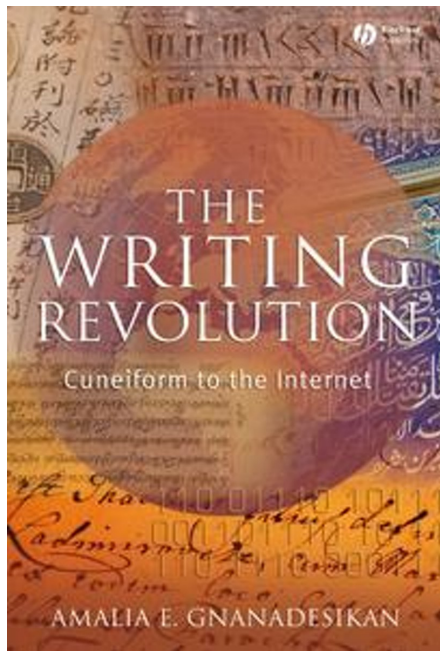
- prewriting
- pictograms

Writing

- logograms
- syllabaries
- alphabets

Caution

All known writing systems are complex.





Pictograms/Ideograms

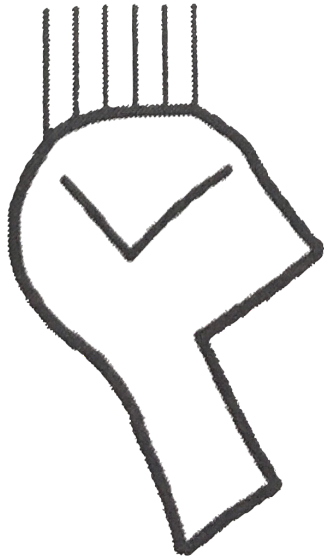


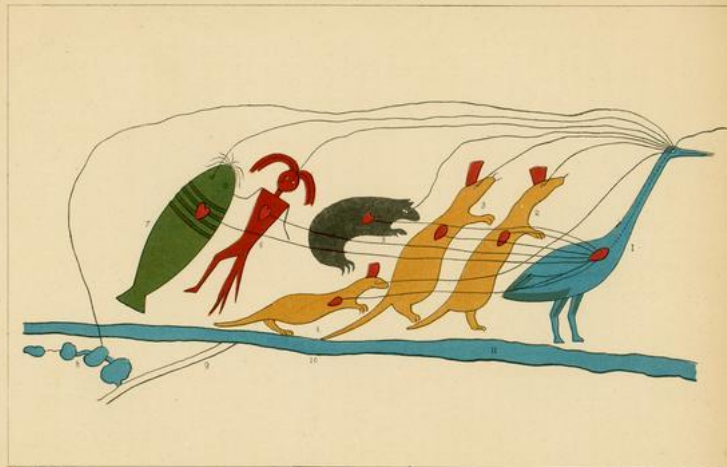
2. These pictograms from Mesopotamia appear on Sumerian clay tablets, dating from c. 3000 BC. They have the following meanings:

top row: hand/day/cow/eat/pot/date-palm

middle row: pig/orchard/bird/reed/donkey/ox

bottom row: head/walk, stand/fish/barley/well/water





Drawn by S. Eastman, U.S.A.

Printed in Colors by F.S. Davis, Philad.

SYMBOLIC PETITION OF CHIPPEWA CHIEFS,
presented at Washington, January 28th 1849, headed by Oshcabawis of Monomoneeou, Wisconsin.

Modern pictograms



Explosive



Flammable



Oxidizing



Compressed Gas



Harmful/Irritant



Dangerous for the Environment



Health Hazard

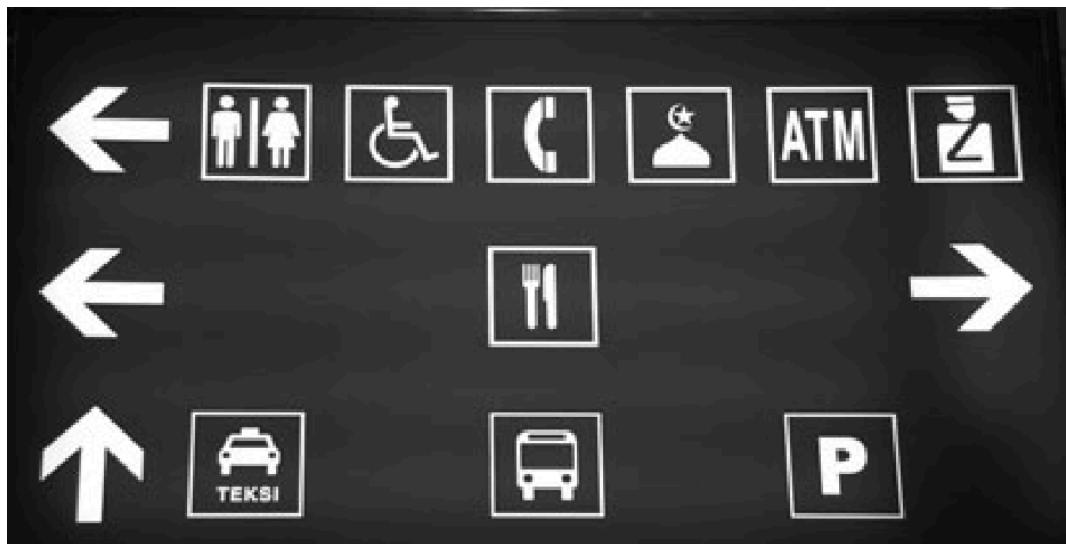


Corrosive



Toxic

Flag	ICS Meaning as Single Flag
	"I have a diver down; keep well clear at slow speed."
	"I am taking in or discharging or carrying dangerous goods." (Originally used by the Royal Navy specifically for military explosives.)
	"Affirmative." ^[a] ^[b]
	"Keep clear of me; I am maneuvering with difficulty."
	"I am altering my course to starboard ." ^[b]
	"I am disabled; communicate with me."
	"I require a pilot ." <i>By fishing vessels near fishing grounds:</i> "I am hauling nets."
	"I have a pilot on board."
	"I am altering my course to port ." ^[b]
	"I am on fire and have dangerous cargo on board: keep well clear of me." or "I am leaking dangerous cargo."
	"I wish to communicate with you."





The ideographic language of Charles K. Bliss



The ideographic language of Charles K. Bliss



“I want to go to the cinema”

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blissymbols>)



The pronoun “I” is formed of the Bliss-character for “person” and the number 1 (the first person). Using the number 2 would give the symbol for singular “You”; adding the plural indicator (a small cross at the top) would produce the pronouns “We” and plural “You”.



The Bliss-word for “to want” contains the heart which symbolizes “feeling” (the classifier), plus the serpentine line which symbolizes “fire” (the modifier), and the verb (called “action”) indicator at the top.



The Bliss-word for “to go” is composed of the Bliss-character for “leg” and the verb indicator.



The Bliss-word for “cinema” is composed of the Bliss-character for “house” (the classifier), and “film” (the modifier); “film” is a composite character composed of “camera” and the arrow indicating movement.

Why this kind of system won't win the day

- limited expressive power
- would have to be just as conventionalized as natural languages
- impossible to learn the same way as natural languages

Wonderland









“And what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”

The only culture we know that actually has a fully developed pure ideographic system ...



The ideographic language of Arrival

