

The NATO Phonetic Alphabet

History

The “NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) phonetic alphabet” is a “spelling alphabet” and was invented due to a need for uniformity and consistency when spelling over the radio or telephone. Its uses include military, aviation and radio communication. It was adapted from earlier aviation spelling alphabets. The first internationally recognized alphabet was created by the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) in 1927. The ITU made several changes to the alphabet in 1932. The new alphabet was adopted by the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) and was used in civil aviation until the middle of World War II. It continued to be used by the IMO (International Maritime Organization) until 1965:

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| A | AMSTERDAM | N | NEW YORK |
| B | BALTIMORE | O | OSLO |
| C | CASABLANCA | P | PARIS |
| D | DENMARK | Q | QUEBEC |
| E | EDISON | R | ROMA |
| F | FLORIDA | S | SANTIAGO |
| G | GALLIPOLI | T | TRIPOLI |
| H | HAVANA | U | UPSALA |
| I | ITALIA | V | VALENCIA |
| J | JERUSALEM | W | WASHINGTON |
| K | KILOGRAMME | X | XANTHIPPE |
| L | LIVERPOOL | Y | YOKOHAMA |
| M | MADAGASCAR | Z | ZURICH |

Other spelling alphabets were created by different organizations (see the table on the next page). Many sounds were unique to English, so an alternative “Ana Brazil” alphabet was used in Latin America. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), recognizing the need for a single universal alphabet, presented a draft alphabet to the ICAO in 1947 that had sounds common to English, French, and Spanish. After further study and modification by each organization, the revised alphabet was implemented on 1st November 1951 for all civil aviation. After more modifications, the final version was implemented by the ICAO on 1st March 1956, and adopted by the IMO in 1965:

| | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| A | ALPHA (or ALFA) | N | NOVEMBER |
| B | BRAVO | O | OSCAR |
| C | CHARLIE | P | PAPA |
| D | DELTA | Q | QUEBEC |
| E | ECHO (or ECO) | R | ROMEO |
| F | FOXTROT (or FOX) | S | SIERRA |
| G | GOLF | T | TANGO |
| H | HOTEL | U | UNIFORM (or UNIFORME) |
| I | INDIA (or ÍNDIA) | V | VICTOR |
| J | JULIET (or JULIETE) | W | WHISKEY (or WISKY) |
| K | KILO (or KILOMETRO) | X | X-RAY (or XADREZ) |
| L | LIMA | Y | YANKEE |
| M | MIKE | Z | ZULU |

Exercises.

1. Write the words that your teacher spells, using the phonetic alphabet.
2. Use the phonetic alphabet to spell the following words:

magazine yesterday extinct jeopardy acknowledge

Other spelling alphabets:

| British Navy | British Air Force | | US Military | US Police Forces |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1914 - 1918 | 1924 - 1942 | 1943 - 1956 | 1941 - 1956 | 1941 - Present |
| Apples | Ace | Able/Affirm | Able | Adam |
| Butter | Beer | Baker | Baker | Babe |
| Charlie | Charlie | Charlie | Charlie | Charles |
| Duff | Don | Dog | Dog | David |
| Edward | Edward | Easy | Easy | Edward |
| Freddy | Freddie | Fox | Fox | Frank |
| George | George | George | George | George |
| Harry | Harry | How | How | Henry |
| Ink | Ink | Item | Item | Ida |
| Johnnie | Johnnie | Johnny | Jig | John |
| King | King | King | King | King |
| London | London | Love | Love | Lincoln |
| Monkey | Monkey | Mike | Mike | Mary |
| Nuts | Nuts | Negat | Nan | Nora |
| Orange | Orange | Oboe | Oboe | Ocean |
| Pudding | Pip | Peter/Prep | Peter | Poppy |
| Queenie | Queen | Queen | Queen | Queen |
| Robert | Robert | Roger | Roger | Robert |
| Sugar | Sugar | Sugar | Sugar | Sam |
| Tommy | Toc | Tare | Tare | Tom |
| Uncle | Uncle | Uncle | Uncle | Union |
| Vinegar | Vic | Victor | Victor | Victor |
| Willie | William | William | William | William |
| Xerxes | X-ray | X-ray | X-ray | X-ray |
| Yellow | Yorker | Yoke | Yoke | Young |
| Zebra | Zebra | Zebra | Zebra | Zebra |

References:

<https://blog.privatefly.com/history-of-the-nato-phonetic-alphabet>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/APCO_radiotelephony_spelling_alphabet

My version of a phonetic alphabet:

Antidisestablishmentarianism

Bamboozle

Cataclysmically

Discombobulate

Epichlorohydrin

Floccinaucinihilipilification

Gnat

Hoojamafli

Incredulously

Jurisprudence

Knight

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch

Mnemonic

Nincompoop

Ophthalmologist

Pneumatic

Querulousnesses

Repetitiveness

Serendipity

Transmogrifying

Unmelodiousness

Verisimilitude

Whatchamacallit

X: Twitter

Yokefellows

Zooxanthellae