

Aren't Alphabets Amazing?: What do we know about the Latin alphabet?

Age recommendation:	9–11 years
Key Stage:	KS2
Duration:	35–40 minutes (video: 25 minutes; activity: 10–15 minutes)
Key words:	Writing systems, Latin alphabets, Latin alphabet and spelling rules in different languages
Languages:	English (references to Swedish, Serbian, Spanish and German provided)
Resources provided:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video on the Latin alphabet• Transcript of the video• Quiz sheet
Other materials:	Florian Coulmas: The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writing Systems https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781118932667

AIM

The aim of the activity is to introduce children to different versions of the Latin alphabet that they are already familiar with. The variations exist for different languages, potentially unfamiliar to pupils, and the activity showcases similarities and differences between them. In the video children also learn about the relationship between spoken language and written language, about how sounds and words in different languages can be represented in different ways in writing, even in languages that use the same alphabet, such as English and Swedish, or Serbian, which all use the Latin alphabet.

PREPARATION

The teacher watches the video and prints the quiz sheets.

If there are children in the class who speak other languages than English and for whose writing the Latin alphabet is used (for instance, Polish, or Spanish, or Romanian), the teacher can ask them to bring some signs, packaging or photographs. All children, including monolingual English ones, can be asked to look out for these as product labels often contain text in more than one language. It could be useful for the teacher to collect examples (or find images on the internet) that show examples of Latin alphabets that are different from the one used for English, in case the children cannot or don't bring any examples.

ACTIVITY

1. Before watching the video: pupils can be put in groups to have a look at the inscriptions and food labels collected by the teacher and pupils and see if they can find any letters that are missing from that language's alphabet or are different to the letters in the Latin alphabet children are familiar with. The teacher can ask children who have brought the resources to read a few words or say and write a few words in these different languages. The teacher can have a discussion with the children about why they think there are different versions

of the Latin alphabet and if they knew for which languages the Latin alphabet is used. The opinions can be collected and the teacher can play the video and return to the different opinions expressed by the children and establish what the answer to the question is.

2. Watch the interactive video and pause when a question is asked in the video and give children an opportunity to present their answers.
3. After the video is played children in the class can be divided in groups, a sheet with quiz questions can be distributed and children can do the quiz related to the video's content together in groups to check how much they have remembered.

Key to the quiz questions: 1a 2c 3b 4b 5b 6b 7c 8a 9b 10b