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# THE GLOBAL ALPHABET

BY

HON. ROBERT L. OWEN

Former Senator from the State of Oklahoma

A METHOD OF TEACHING ENGLISH  
TO THE WORLD



PRESENTED BY MR. THOMAS OF OKLAHOMA

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THE GLOBAL ALPHABET

BY  
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Author of "The World's Languages"  
A METHOD OF TEACHING ENGLISH  
TO THE WORLD



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GLOBAL ALPHABET--NAMES, SOUNDS AND FORMS

The NAMES of all global letters are their sounds, as indicated below.

Huh Juh Guh Kuh Luh Ruh:      Buh Puh Duh Tuh Fuh Vuh:      Muh Nuh Suh Zuh CHuh THuh.

— — — — —      — — — — —      — — — — —

The Global form represents the sounds of the capital letters in the words given below.

Six compound consonants: SHut  $\Delta$ , aZure  $\nabla$ , THick  $\Delta$ , WHen  $\cup$ , QUick  $\cup$ , siNG  $\cup$

Vowels: Ah At All: too bUt FEW: hE mEt hER: nO nOt FOR: bAbIbYE: bOY nOW OuT

U preceding a vowel equals W as in Wet  $\cup^{\wedge}$  ; ^ preceding a vowel equals Y in Yes  $\cup^{\wedge}$

The Global sign | indicates that a proper name follows.

The Global Alphabet can be learned in one day. Every known language can be printed with the Global Alphabet using the keyboard of a monotype machine for the composition of type. The type are presently available. No global letter is silent. Every global letter immutably represents one sound only. Anyone knowing the Global Alphabet can pronounce intelligibly at sight any language printed in the Global Alphabet. The Global Alphabet is strictly phonetic.

It uses 18 consonants, 18 vowel sounds and 6 compound consonants. With these forms every word in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary can be written and intelligibly pronounced using the Global Alphabet. All difficulties in spelling vanish, as spelling consists merely of writing down the sounds with global letters in serial order as they occur in any syllable or word. Every global letter begins and ends on the center line of writing. Therefore, it can be written rapidly with the pen by reasonable practice.

For the purpose of practice reading and writing, there follows the 16th Chapter of St. John written in global letters in Spanish and English side by side so that a student could read and pronounce intelligibly both languages knowing the meaning of each if he knew either language.

Using this system, it is proposed to issue bilingual (and trilingual) books with a suitable glossary and phrases of common words so as to teach people to speak other languages with the least possible difficulty. The great difficulty in learning English is its unphonetic spelling.

In global the syllable or sound ri is written with two letters only and always means that and never anything else; but in English the syllable ri can be pronounced two ways and the syllable ry can be pronounced two ways. The sound of ri is written in English in many other ways, to wit: In the following words the different ways of spelling ri are shown: ri; ry; rye; wry; right; wright; write; Rhine; rhein. Such spelling is not only unphonetic, it is chaotic and fantastic and extremely difficult for foreigners to understand and to learn; whereas, the Global Alphabet is easy to learn and free from complications.

Moreover, the Global Alphabet in printing English books would take only about one-half the paper for type of the same legibility, half the storage, half the cost of transportation, doubling the work done by the paper which is available, but above all, saving the time of the people of the world in learning conversational English and in learning to read English books printed in the global letters. The Global Alphabet opens the door to all human knowledge and its distribution by a mass production at incredibly low cost.

Rev. Frank C. Laubach, Ph.D., calls English spelling "chaotic;" Professor Mario A. Pei calls it "anarchical;" Theodore Roosevelt called it "foolish and fantastic." I am content to call it "unphonetic, wasteful, and indefensible."

## THE GLOBAL PHONETIC ALPHABET

A great world revolution is taking place in waging war on illiteracy and human ignorance. It is moving forward with majesty and power. It has abolished illiteracy in Russia, in Turkey, and is in process of abolishing illiteracy throughout India, China, Africa, and the Latin American Republics of the western hemisphere.

The vital elements of this revolution in the abolition of illiteracy has come to full fruition in the seventeen Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia. These factors are as follows:

Step 1. The compulsory adoption of phonetic alphabets, which can be learned in one day by an intelligent person. The Russian alphabet consists of thirty-three letters. These Russian phonetic alphabets are used printing over two hundred Russian dialects any one of which can be instantly learned so as to read and write and print any Russian dialect. But the Russian phonetic alphabet is not enough and the Soviets had the wisdom to know it so they took the second step of making education compulsory by taking what I designate as step number two.

Step 2. Compulsory education in every Russian dialect beginning with the kindergarten, the elementary school, the high school, the college, the university, the technological laboratories all over Russia, and education was made free and well financed. The Russian Soviets saw to it that the children were fed, clothed, and sheltered while pursuing their education. Their education was further stimulated in suitable cases by actual employment in the Russian factories under competent scientific leadership. It was not enough to teach them to read and write Russian with the Russian alphabet, but the third step was taken under the auspices of the government.

Step 3. Organized production of books in the phonetic alphabets teaching vocational instruction, agriculture, horticulture, animal industry, arts and sciences; books dealing with entertainment, music, and dramatic arts, military and naval training; the handling of modern machinery, collective farming, and other cooperative activities of the Soviets. In 1939 they published over 43,000 separate books by title and over 701,000,000 books, four times as many as the United States published in the same year, not to mention an overwhelming supply of newspapers printed all over Russia to keep the people currently informed.

The cheapness of some of the Russian publications in Russia and abroad is astounding. I recently bought one hundred copies of the magazine form of a book entitled, "The Soviet Power," written by the Rev. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, at a cost of 4¢ each, the book containing 90,000 words approximately equal to about 300 pages octavo. This was done by the rotary press and mechanical processes in an issue of one million copies.

Step 4. The Russians have not been content with the first three steps; they have organized these processes which are being directed from Moscow, where there are the greatest scholars, the most distinguished authors, and laboratories involving the most modern knowledge, in which the Russian scientists are now leaders.

Under this management they are harnessing all the great water powers of Russia. They are sending the electric current to produce light, heat, and power everywhere in Russia. They have the most advanced laboratories in the world, and huge plants dealing with steel, iron, and other metals, and textiles, making automobiles, tractors, trucks, and the machinery for the building of improved highways, radios, airplanes, and hard surfaced roads.

Under this system they are giving every known incentive to labor with important differences in wages and salaries, with ready conveniences, with honorable mention on roles of honor in the public newspapers and over the radio, with medals and membership in societies which record men of distinction, and with bronze statues of those who deserve it.

The effect of this revolution in the abolition of ignorance and the establishment of knowledge, is manifesting itself now on the battlefield in which the Russians have not only driven the invading armies of the Germans from Russian territory but are now fighting on German territory itself holding the "master race" to account.

The United States and its leaders in the Senate and in the House of Representatives and in the Executive office cannot afford to overlook the evidences above submitted on the most important revolution the world has ever known—the war against ignorance and poverty and the establishment of human knowledge, abundance, power, and human brotherhood through intelligent cooperative services.

Under these processes Russia has increased its national income and productive power over 400% and the end is not yet.

#### TURKEY

In 1930 Turkey made the phonetic alphabet of 29 letters compulsory. By edict Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the George Washington of Turkey, required all printing after June 30, 1930 to be in the modern phonetic alphabet, and Turkey has become sufficiently powerful to command the respect even of Adolf Hitler.

#### THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD LITERACY AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The Committee on World Literacy has been established by representatives of one hundred twenty-three foreign Christian missionary societies. Under the leadership of Rev. Frank C. Laubach, Ph. D. eighty-four different nationalities have adopted phonetic alphabets, and great progress is being made in abolishing illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty in India, Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. During the last year the system has been established in Jamaica, Santo Domingo, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and various republics in South America.

#### MEXICO

Z Within the last two months the president of Mexico has, with the approval of all the leaders of Mexico, issued an edict requiring all citizens of Mexico to learn how to read and write the Spanish language phonetically under the Laubach system, "Each one teach one." The edict makes it a civil duty of all the authorities of Mexico from the President and governors and mayors down to the humblest officers and citizens, requiring each one who can read and write Spanish to teach the phonetic system to one other who cannot read and write. The edict requires each one who cannot read and write Spanish to learn the new system and to receive a certificate to that effect from his teacher. After fifteen months it will become a civil misdemeanor not to be able to read and write phonetic Spanish.

May I not urgently call the attention of the Senate and House of Representatives to this war on ignorance by our nearest neighbor and urge upon them the importance of considering the relationship of this process of education in multiplying the production of goods and services by the whole world, and thereby contributing to the tremendous campaign now being waged for the establishment of a new world of knowledge and abundance pledged by the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China in the Moscow Conference, and the Cairo and Teheran agreements.

R. L. O.

A FEW FURTHER TESTIMONIALS

Dr. Daniel C. Buchanan, associated with Mr. Elmer Davis, of the Office of War Information, sent me the reports of the Japanese and Chinese experts, as follows:

To: Dr. Daniel C. Buchanan  
From: T. A. Miyakawa  
Subject: "GLOBAL ALPHABET"

May 5, 1943.

1. After due consideration of the "Global Alphabet" as created by Senator Robert Owen, it is thought that with very few alterations or additions, the system contains the possibility of practical world-wide application.

2. It is a recognized fact that in most languages the symbols representing particular sounds are not immutable. This results in utilizing a given symbol to represent a multiplicity of sounds leading to not only mispronunciation but difficulty in language comprehension.

3. In utilizing a phonetic alphabet it is more possible to arrive at a solution whereby the above difficulty is eliminated without the danger of employing too many signs to represent each of the different audible sounds. It is as stated in "Bulletin B" that the "visible form of the audible sound need be accurate only to the extent of bringing to the mind of the writer or reader the word which the context indicates."

4. It is further believed that this use of the "Global Alphabet" be encouraged as an instrument through which the thoughts and ideas of one tongue may be transported into the minds of those of another.

(signed) T. A. MIYAKAWA.

To: Dr. Daniel C. Buchanan  
From: Chau Wing Tai  
Subject: GLOBAL ALPHABET.

May 5, 1943.

I had a talk with Senator Owen sometime ago about the Global Alphabet invented by him and was highly impressed by it. I think that it is the very thing that now-a-day China needs in order to facilitate and expedite the education of the great mass of her illiterates.

I have studied the "sample sheet" very carefully and have come to the conclusion that the system provides all signs necessary to cover all the sounds of the Chinese spoken languages.

By utilizing this system, a Chinese student may save many years of hard study in order to master the Chinese written language.

(signed) CHAU WING TAI

Dear Sir:

February 11, 1944.

I see no reason why the Global Alphabet could not easily be applied to Japanese. Japanese sounds are clear and simple, in fact, as clear as and very similar to the ancient Roman pronunciation of Latin. \*\*\*\* Japanese could be written in the Global Alphabet more easily even than English or French. The Japanese are in sad need of a simple alphabet. The average Jap. boy spends about seven years in school before he can read an ordinary newspaper with any kind of ease, so difficult are the Chinese ideograms in which he writes. \*\*\*\*

Yours faithfully,  
(S) R. WALKER SCOTT  
Professor of Japanese, Trinity College.

Dear Mr. Owen:

October 6, 1944.

I have finished the text of the first Global Alphabet bilingual book teaching the Spanish and English to converse with each other through the Global Alphabet. As you very well know, this book is in four vertical columns horizontally arranged. In column one the Spanish word or phrase appears in Roman letters as the Spanish print it; column two the global equivalent, which can be read and intelligibly pronounced by an English speaker at sight; third column, the English equivalent in the Global Alphabet which the Spanish can read and pronounce intelligibly at sight; fourth, the English equivalent in Roman letters as printed in current English Roman type. The book will contain about 1,500 words with a glossary arranged under the head of topics employed in conversation.

With this book the English speaker should be able to speak conversational Spanish within 60 to 90 days, and what is of more importance the Spanish can in 60 to 90 days learn to speak acceptably conversational English. These words are taken from Professor Mario Pei's selected English words and the words used by the Basic English system with 300 or 400 words additional of common use.

As you know, I took the degree of M. A. and Ph. D. from the University of Virginia, and for many years served as Professor of Greek and Latin, Converse College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, and have been a student of other languages. I have been concentrating on your Global Alphabet and I express to you my considered opinion about it.

I regard the Global Alphabet as a miracle of prodigious value in advancing the cause of human knowledge, abolishing illiteracy, multiplying human production, mutual understanding and brotherhood, and am dedicating myself to that cause. By using the phonetic alphabet, all the leading nations can be taught conversational English quickly, economically using the "each one teach one" system so successfully used by that consecrated Christian scholar and missionary, Dr. Frank C. Laubach, Ph.D.

With kindest regards,

Your friend,  
(S) Janet H. C. Meade.

Dear Mr. Owen:

May 15, 1944.

Answering your inquiry, I have taught two classes of children to read and write the Global Alphabet since January 1. They could read it after a few hours of instruction and have been pleased and interested with it. I have found no word in the English language that I could not write in the letters of the Global Alphabet.

One of my children of 10 years of age speaks Portuguese and I had her write in Portuguese the phrase, "Can we go home?" I translated this in the Global Alphabet and found that my children could immediately read and intelligibly pronounce the Portuguese sentence. They were delighted to read the Portuguese. Of course, you would know this, but it surprised and pleased them because they could not read and intelligibly pronounce the Portuguese as written in Roman letters. The name of the child who speaks Portuguese is Helena Fonseca. Her father is a diplomat in the employ of the Brazilian Government. She is 10 years old.

Yours respectfully,  
(S) Mrs. Frances D. Dorman,  
Teacher, Murch School, District of Columbia.

C O P Y

Columbia University  
in the City of New York  
Romance Languages  
French

October 29, 1944.

Hon. Robert L. Owen,  
2400 Sixteenth St., N. W.,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Owen:

The project which you described to me at our meeting last Thursday involves the presentation in printed form, and on parallel columns, of words and expressions in English, Russian and Chinese, all transcribed into Global Alphabet characters, so that the student who is familiar with the Global Alphabet system, whichever of the three languages he may be familiar with, will be enabled without further study to learn the corresponding word or expression in the other two tongues.

It seems to me that this is an extremely useful and worth-while project. It will give the English speaker the possibility of learning directly spoken-language Russian and Chinese expressions without going into the Cyrillic alphabet of Russian or the complicated ideographic system of Chinese writing; the Russian learner will be enabled to learn his Chinese with the same ease, and his English without entering into our intricate and anarchical spelling; while the Chinese learner will enjoy similar advantages for what concerns both the Russian Cyrillic alphabet and our spelling system. There is no doubt that this presents a splendid and ingenious short-cut to international understanding for practical spoken-language purposes. The enormous advantage presented by your project over all methods of transcription of sounds employed at present is that it works immediately and directly in three different ways, combining in one book what would otherwise have to be spread over six different works.

Certain additions will have to be made to the Global Alphabet as it appears at present to bring in a few Russian and Chinese sounds that have no English counterparts. A system for indicating the Chinese tones and the Russian stress will also have to be devised. But these are relatively simple matters.

Your idea opens up very wide horizons in the field of language-learning for practical, oral purposes. You have selected, for your initial experiment, the three tongues which surpass all others in number of speakers, and which at the present moment are of greatest political and military significance. There is no reason, however, why it should not also apply to the other great world languages. I can envisage, for example, a similar work dealing with English, Spanish, and Portuguese, or with English, French, and German. With a different page-width and a double-page arrangement, you could also prepare a polyglot word and phrase-book covering ten languages.

I should like to suggest, as an introduction to your book, a chapter, repeated three times, in English, Russian, and Chinese, presenting the Global Alphabet system to the readers of each of the three groups, and explaining to each group those sounds and symbols which do not appear in its own language, but appear in the others. Your title should also appear in the three tongues. Your work would then be available for immediate use, and without any further effort, by the

250 million speakers of English, the 180 million speakers of Russian, and the 300 million speakers of China's Kuo-yu.

Very sincerely yours,

/S/ Mario A. Pei.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The following was enclosed with the above letter.

October 29, 1944.

Dear Mr. Owen:

Enclosed is the official letter we discussed last Thursday. It was not possible however, to hold it down to "a few lines." The merits of your idea loom larger and larger as one devotes more thought to it. It seems to me that you have devised what will prove to be an ideal short-cut for mass language-learning, and the repercussions of this upon the field of international relations may very well prove to be gigantic.

Enclosed is a reprint of my "Town and Country" article about an international language. Could you supply me with the name and address of the Russian gentleman who was with us last Thursday? He seemed to take such an intelligent interest in the problem that I should like to send him a reprint, too.

The very best of regards and good wishes, and may God favor your splendid efforts to bring about international friendship and a cessation of wars.

Cordially,

/S/ Mario A. Pei.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The following is the testimony of Rev. Frank D. Laubach, Ph. D., Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, 156 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

\*\*\*\*\*  
"I have long since learned that the greatest single obstacle to the use of English as a universal language is its chaotic spelling. Experience in 80 languages shows that if we can adopt a phonetic spelling it will be exceedingly simple to pronounce every word correctly. We then have only the problem of acquiring the meaning of words to make English universal.

"I grow increasingly satisfied with your alphabet as I experiment with it, for I find it easy to write connected letters, and it is swift, since there is but one stroke for each letter. I believe your idea of writing above and below a line and of using curves upward, downward, and straight lines is the best ever yet devised.

"Yours for a great cause,

/S/ Frank C. Laubach."

Lección 1 c. *no, Anita, Juan* 1 c.

*no, Anita, Juan* 1 c.

Lesson 1 c.

no	<i>no</i>	no,	el (m.)	<i>el</i>	the
Anita	<i>Anita</i>	Anita,	la (f.)	<i>la</i>	the
Juan	<i>Juan</i>	John,	hermana	<i>hermana</i>	sister
Juan es mi hijo.			<i>John es mi hijo.</i>	John is my son.	
Anita es mi hija.			<i>Anita es mi hija.</i>	Anita is my daughter.	
Juan tiene una madre.			<i>John tiene una madre.</i>	John has a mother.	
Anita tiene un padre.			<i>Anita tiene un padre.</i>	Anita has a father.	
Juan ama a Anita.			<i>John ama a Anita.</i>	John loves Anita.	
Juan tiene una hermana.			<i>John tiene una hermana.</i>	John has a sister.	

Lección 2 a. *el niño, hermano, la casa* 2 a.

*el niño, hermano, la casa* 2 a.

Lesson 2 a.

el niño	<i>el niño</i>	the child,	grande	<i>grande</i>	large
hermano	<i>hermano</i>	brother,	bonito, (a)	<i>bonito, (a)</i>	pretty
la casa	<i>la casa</i>	the house,	bravo, (a)	<i>bravo, (a)</i>	brave
El niño es bueno.			<i>El niño es bueno.</i>	The child is good.	
Mi hermano es bravo.			<i>Mi hermano es bravo.</i>	My brother is brave.	
Mi hermana es bonita.			<i>Mi hermana es bonita.</i>	My sister is pretty.	
El niño ama a mi madre.			<i>El niño ama a mi madre.</i>	The child loves my mother.	
Su padre es bravo.			<i>Su padre es bravo.</i>	His father is brave.	
La casa es grande.			<i>La casa es grande.</i>	The house is large.	

Lección 2 b. *dulce amiga, la mesa, la niña* 2 b.

*dulce amiga, la mesa, la niña* 2 b.

Lesson 2 b.

dulce amiga	<i>dulce amiga</i>	sweetheart,	hermoso, (a)	<i>hermoso, (a)</i>	pretty
la mesa	<i>la mesa</i>	the table,	él	<i>él</i>	he
la niña	<i>la niña</i>	the girl,	ella	<i>ella</i>	she
Mi hermano tiene una dulce amiga.			<i>Mi hermano tiene una dulce amiga.</i>	My brother has a sweetheart.	

FIRST FOUR LESSONS FROM SPANISH-ENGLISH WORD BOOK

Lección 1 a

Lesson 1 a.

El vocabulario

Vocabulary

yo	I,	bueno (m)	good
Vd.	you,	buena (f)	good
mi	my,	yo tengo	I have
mi padre	my father,	Vd. tiene	you have
mi madre	my mother,	un (m)	a
es	is,	una (f)	a
Yo tengo un padre.			I have a father.
Vd. tiene una madre.			You have a mother.
Mi madre es buena.			My mother is good.
Mi padre es bueno.			My father is good.

Lección 1 b.

Lesson 1 b.

hija	daughter,	su	his or her
hijo	son,	ama	loves
		tiene	has

Mi madre tiene una hija.			My mother has a daughter.
Mi madre tiene un hijo.			My mother has a son.
Mi padre tiene una hija.			My father has a daughter.
Mi padre ama a su hija.			My father loves his daughter.
Mi madre ama a su hijo.			My mother loves her son.
Mi padre ama a mi madre.			My father loves my mother.
Mi madre ama a mi padre.			My mother loves my father.