AZOREAN: NEW SPELLING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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The world has rockets, computers, radios, skyscrapers, and miracle medicines, but it is still plagued with the same archaic spelling from centuries ago. Isn’t it time that the spelling of words in English caught up with the advances of modern times? There is no rational reason for spelling ‘though’ with six letters when two can do the job admirably. The main thrust behind reform spelling systems has been to have one symbol for one sound so that there are no inconsistencies and no silent letters. With reformed spelling all words are spelled exactly as they are sounded, students learn to read much faster, and 20% of paper costs are saved as most words are spelled with fewer letters.

Introducing the Azorean Phonetic Alphabet

To this end, a number of systems have been developed that use newly designed symbols, which would be expensive for typewriters and computer keyboards to incorporate. A practical solution is to use the 26-letter alphabet, add some new symbols that are already on keyboards, and then double the use of some letters so that all of the 40+ sounds in English can be accommodated. This goal has been achieved with the AZOREAN PHONETIC ALPHABET which this writer has devised beginning with his visit to the Azores Islands in the Atlantic Ocean in 1976. During these 25 years a staggering number of changes have occurred in the process of inventing a practical, aesthetic phonetic alphabet for the English language that requires no newly designed printed symbols. In 2001, this task was finally completed, and the result is a modern alphabet that hopefully by 2020 will replace our standard one. Not a single word in the AZOREAN alphabet has more letters than in standard English spelling; actually, an overwhelming majority of words have fewer letters.

Azorean features 33 letters: Seven additional letters are added to the A to Z sequence that we learned as children, so that the new alphabet ranges from A to $ (‘apa’ to ‘exa’). All seven of these additional entries (14 if one counts upper case and lower case symbols separately) are on the standard computer keyboard. Each added symbol has a hand-printed and cursive equivalent so that printing by hand or writing in script is fully possible.

Nine symbols of the 33 are ‘doublets’ and serve dual functions, usually that of a consonant and a vowel. The doublets have been organized so that there is no ambiguity as to which of the two sounds each serves in a particular word.

In Z@nadu d;d Kubla Khan
A stetti pleV-dom dikri:
Wer &If, q sekr:d r;yr, r@n
%ru k@vrnz meVl:s tu m@n
Dwn tu a svnl:s si.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
## AZOREAN Phonetic Alphabet

### Φ  AZORI?N

**FON/K & LF?B?T**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>SWND</th>
<th>NEM</th>
<th>K&amp;P'TL LÊTRZ</th>
<th>SMQL LÊTRZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A a</td>
<td>ah</td>
<td>'apa'</td>
<td>ANR [HONOR]</td>
<td>kam [calm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ah)</td>
<td>'uhpa'</td>
<td>ABWT [ABOUT]</td>
<td>koma [coma]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. B b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>'bee'</td>
<td>BOL [BOWL]</td>
<td>kab [cob]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. C c</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>'chee'</td>
<td>CYNA [CHINA]</td>
<td>koc [coach]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. D d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>'dee'</td>
<td>DAL [DOLL]</td>
<td>fynd [find]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. E e</td>
<td>ay</td>
<td>'aypa'</td>
<td>ES [ACE]</td>
<td>cer [chair]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. F f</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>'ef'</td>
<td>FLAK [FLOCK]</td>
<td>lof [loaf]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. G g</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>'ghee'</td>
<td>GRON [GROWN]</td>
<td>veg [vague]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. H h</td>
<td>h ng</td>
<td>'hay'</td>
<td>HOM [HOME]</td>
<td>ahed [ahead]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'eng'</td>
<td>FIHGR [FINGER]</td>
<td>wihk [wink]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I i</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>'eepa'</td>
<td>IZI [EASY]</td>
<td>cirz [cheers]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. J j</td>
<td>j ḍō</td>
<td>'jay'</td>
<td>JIR [JEER]</td>
<td>daj [dodge]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'oot'</td>
<td>LJK [LOOK]</td>
<td>bjcr [butcher]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. K k</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>'kay'</td>
<td>KROM [CHROME]</td>
<td>tork [torque]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. L l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>'el'</td>
<td>LIG [LEAGUE]</td>
<td>trel [trail]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. M m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>'em'</td>
<td>MED [MADE]</td>
<td>bam [bomb]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. N n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>'en'</td>
<td>NOZ [NOSE]</td>
<td>revn [raven]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. O o</td>
<td>oh</td>
<td>'opa'</td>
<td>ODR [ODOR]</td>
<td>koko [cocoa]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chart shows the AZOREAN PHONETIC ALPHABET, how each letter is sounded, its name, and a sample in caps and lower case. (Hand-printed and script symbols for the seven additional letters are presented later.) The first five lines of Coleridge's familiar "Kubla Khan" can serve as a suitable introductory sample. The text is easy to read because each sound is always only one symbol: Words are spelled exactly as they are pronounced so no misspellings should ever occur.

For WORD WAYS readers, new palindromes would have to be designed, as the old ones (‘A man, a plan, a canal — Panama’) will not work in Azorean! Other recreational ideas for words are fully adaptable, though, and even crossword puzzles can be rendered.

Before explaining Azorean further, see if you can read a text of ‘purple prose’ by Zane Grey in his most famous cowboy novel, Riders of the Purple Sage. (‘Q’ or ‘q’ alone is the, and ‘v’ alone is of. These are two of the several ‘brevs’ [short-form words] incorporated in this alphabet for very common words.) The standard spelling for this entry follows the Azorean text.

Q t;ps v q kat: nwjdz & q o+ wevd tu q ist, & q rihz v @ spnz alqh q t¢:r:s:z twihkld qer miri:d v bryt fes:z ;n flit & gl@nsih glin. A lo ror roz frvm q livz v q for:st, & q sprus:z sw;xt ;n q ryzih w;nd.... &z;t ;nkrist ;n stre:n/ q lvz xortnd ;n len/ t;l qer waz a strqh & st¢di blo ql q tym, & q vyol:nt pvfs @t ;nt:rvlz, & svdn wrlih k:r:ntz.

Consonants and Vowels

Many of the consonants in Azorean fill their expected roles using the same sounds as in standard spelling, such as B for the b sound, M for the m sound, etc. Other consonants represent a sound for which they are customarily used in a particular foreign language. For example, C is the ch sound — as in Italian and Malay spelling; X is the sh sound — as in Portuguese.

In Azorean, the vowels A, E, I, O, and U represent ah, ay, ee, oh, and oo, as they do in Spanish and many other languages. Other letters and sounds in this reform spelling system are explained below along with examples.

Doublets

The nine doublets in Azorean handle their dual roles well. The first letter A is the ah sound as well as the almost unstressed (ah) that is in words where this sound appears initially and alone. Examples: about, alone, a, allowed, and amoeba [abwt, alon, a, alwd, amiba]. The (ah) sound also appears in final position, as in cola, America, sepia, and Indonesia [kola, Amer;ka, s¢pia, !ndoni:a]. The next doublet H is odd in that it serves as two consonants, rather than a consonant and vowel. The standard h sound never appears in final position and rarely appears in the middle of a word, whereas the ng sound never appears initially. So, the match is perfect for this doublet.
The seven other doublets are combination consonant/vowel, and there is never confusion. For example, the J in pull [pjl] cannot have the consonant j sound in that it appears between two consonants — it must be a vowel, and the assigned sound here is the rarest vowel in English, œő, as in book. Likewise, the doublet Q easily serves as the soft (th) consonant sound as well as the vowel aw. Q (or q) alone is also used for the most common word in English, the. Examples: the chalk [q cql] and The cost of coffee ought to fall by August. [Q kqlt v kqf ti qf by Qg: st.]

The V doubles as the stressed ū sound as in fund [fvnd]; the W doubles as the ow sound as in crown [krwn]; and the Y doubles as the i sound as in might [myt]. V (in upper or lower case) is also used for the third most common word in English, of. The last two doublets are among the seven additional symbols in Azorean and are explained next.

The New Letters

Currently, many type fonts unfortunately do not incorporate matching designs for various miscellaneous symbols. Thus, characters such as @, #, ĕ, and % often appear strange and out of place. However, fonts such as Helvetica, Verdana, and Courier (standard typewriter type) do not have this flaw, so these type styles are the most recommended ones for Azorean.

Historically, the ampersand — & — was sometimes listed in elementary school books as the 27th letter of the alphabet, and so it is 27th in Azorean. The & is used for the capital ā sound, as in Albert [&lbtr]. Additionally, it keeps its function as a one-letter word for and, being used for this second most common English word at all times, regardless of where and occurs in a sentence. The lower case symbol for ā is represented by @, a symbol now familiar in e-mail addresses.

The ā sound is represented by £ in caps and ĝ in lower case, and both of these symbols appropriately resemble E and e in appearance. Presently, one or both of these symbols often does not appear on the standard keyboard, except when activated with the computer’s Option key. In typing e-mail correspondence or using a standard typewriter, these keys are often lacking. So long as this remains the case, as shown on the Azorean chart, # and = respectively are used instead. The script capital and small letter for ē are designed, however, to remain unaltered, regardless of whether £ ĝ or # = are used.

The designs for the upper case and lower case symbols for ř resemble I and i and they get plenty of work in Azorean as the ř sound often is almost unstressed in many words, such as in comic [km:k] and infinity [:nf:n:ti]. Since no words end in the ř sound, there is never a problem with the ; at the end of a word. In such a case, it can only be the semi-colon punctuation symbol.

A related sound to ř is (ū), and as expected, the symbols used are similar in appearance to the ! and ; symbols: ? for caps and : for lower case. This sound is the unstressed vowel and is the most common sound in all of English. The ‘ut’ is also used with r to form the er sound, whether stressed or not, as in earn [:rn], terrain [t:ren], and hurry [h:ri]. The : when used with r optionally is omitted between two consonants or between a consonant and a vowel when there is no confusion in pronouncing the word, as in bird [brd], murder [mrdr], and luxury [lrvxr]. Note that except for the er sound, any stressed ū is represented by v, as in sun [svn], under [vndr], and roughly [rvfl].
The 30th letter of Azorean represents the hard *th* sound as in *through* \([/ru]\), *zither* \([z:\!/\!r]\), *moth* \([mq/\!]\) and *Thursday* \([%rzde]\). It should not be confused with the voiced \((th)\) as in *father* \([faqr]\), *bathe* \([beq]\), *thus* \([qvs]\), and *though* \([qo]\). The lower case / is used for all ordinal numbers expressed numerically, such as *5th* \([5/\!]\), *23rd* \([23/\!]\), *91st* \([91/\!]\).

This is a doublet and it is used for *zh*, the rarest consonant sound English, and *oi*, one of the rarest vowels. Examples: *beige* \([be\!]\), *garage* \([g:\!/\!a\!]\), *treasury* \([tr\!:\!/\!ri]\); *void* \([v\!d]\), *oyster* \([\!str]\). Standard typewriters do not have the \(\) and so \(\) can be used instead.

The last letter of Azorean serves as a doublet, representing two different combination-sounds: *ks* and *yu*. As expected, an 'x-type' symbol has been selected: $ for caps and + for lower case. Examples: *next* \([n\!\!+\!t]\), *tuxedo* \([tv+i\!do]\), and *accept* \([@+\!\!pt]\). The *yu* sound appears in such words as: *music* \([m+z;k]\), *avenue* \([@\!\!v+n\!]\), *computer* \([k\!\!mp+tr]\) and *fuel* \([f+l]\).

### Hand-Printed Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>27</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£@</td>
<td>££</td>
<td>!;</td>
<td>?;</td>
<td>7!</td>
<td>£o</td>
<td>$!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Script Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>27</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£@</td>
<td>££</td>
<td>!;</td>
<td>?;</td>
<td>7!</td>
<td>£o</td>
<td>$!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hand-Printed Letters

Hand-printed and script equivalents for the seven additional letters are presented above. All of them are easy to write and blend well with the standard alphabet. Samples of writing using these new letters are presented later. As regards the 28th letter, the lower case entry is derived from the Russian letter for the ē sound. (Alternatively, a hand-printed ſ may be used.) For the 31st letter, the hand-printed lower case symbol has been redesigned as opposed to just using the /, as the latter might look like a small i if not carefully rendered. Likewise, for the 32nd letter, the upper case and lower case symbols are patterned after the script entries in preference to symbols that would look exactly like / and \. With the 33rd letter, for style purposes, the + has a double-horizontal line through it and a longer vertical line so that it is more akin to the hand-printed upper-case $.
Script Letters

Each of the new cursive symbols has been designed so that it connects easily with any letter that precedes or follows it. However, with a few it is necessary to lift one's or pen or pencil to complete the letter, just as one does when dotting an i or crossing a t. For the lower case 29th and 30th letters, these should be written so that they drop a little below the line. The latter script symbol is designed to resemble the 'schwa', which looks like an upside-down e (the symbol used to express the unstressed vowel in formal phonetics). Lastly, the cursive entries for the 32nd letter are derived from PHONETICA, a script alphabet this writer invented in college, several years before Azorean was first designed.

Guidelines

For either style or ease of use, the guidelines below are in writing in Azorean. The samples that follow this section incorporate these modifications.

[1] The qu combination is used instead of kw, so that the traditional look of standard English spelling is kept, as in: quaint [quent], aqua [@qua], cuisine [qu;zin], and John Quincy Adams [Jan Qu;nz &d mz]. Likewise, gu is used instead of gw, as in guava [guava] and jaguar [j@guar].

[2] Because so few words begin with the oo sound (as in moon), initially U or u may be used instead of S or =, as in United States [Unytd Stets], utensil [utnsnl] and Ulysses [Ul;sis].

[3] The bigraph ex when it appears initially may be written + instead of e+, as in extremely [+trimli], exit [+t], x-ray [+re], and EXTRA [$TRA].

[4] Double letters are extremely rare. To avoid vv, the combination :v is used in such words as love [l:v], oven [vn], and discover [d:sk:vr].

[5] For the trigraph ih, ih is always used, instead of ;h, as in thing [ih] and finger [fihgr].

[6] For the or sound, as in form, or is used, rather than possibly using qr.

[7] For the stressed vowel sound as in security or purify, +r is used, rather than perhaps yr or yr:, thus the spellings for these words are [s:k+r:ti] and [p+r:fy].

[8] For the vowel sound in a word like dare, the e is used: [der].

[9] The hw sound is written as just w, as in anywhere [gniwer], what [wat] and why [wy].

[10] The unstressed vowel (‘ut’) is so common in Azorean that when it would be used in the next to last position in between a consonant and l, m, and n, it may be omitted, such as in tribal [trybl], bottom [batm], and situation [s;ceuexn]. If, with these letters, the past tense d is added or s or z is added for pluralizing, the : may still be omitted, as in bottomed [batmd] and situations [s;ceuexnz]. However, the : must always be used to avoid repeated letters, as in ended [end:d], phrases [frez:z], and error [err].

[11] When it is difficult to determine if the unstressed vowel should be written as ; or : use the :.

[12] It should be observed that the hand-printed letters for a and g customarily are written as a and g.

[13] While Azorean currently is only for English spellings, the 28th letter (€) can be used for the Spanish ñ ('neya') as in mañana [mañana]. Later, other sounds in foreign languages (such as for ts, kh, ya, and French nasal vowels) can each be assigned one of the 33 Azorean letters. For foreign words and names that would be difficult to render in Azorean, one should use standard spelling, such as for Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Buenos Aires, bonjour.

[14] For one-letter words, besides using q for the, v for of, and & for and, the pronouns I and you are always written capitalized, as I and U. Other shortened words ('brevs') can be assigned later if this alphabet gains a sufficient following.
(ALL CAPS SAMPLE — 1915 NEWSPAPER HEADLINE)

LUSTENIA SVHK BY SVBM?RIN, 1,260 D£D;
X!P !Z TWYS TORPIDOD QF V Q YR!X KOST;
SIH$ !N 15 M!N!TS; V&NDRB!LT ST!L M!SIH;
WAXIHTN BILIVZ GREV KRY!S !Z &T H&ND

(TYPEWRITER SAMPLE — 1952 BUSINESS LETTER)

P&KRD MOTR KARZ
1227 NOR% WINZR DRYV • DITRT 14, MIX?GN • T#L.: RY 4-0852

F=bru=ri 29, 1952
TU: Mr. Ern:st W. X=ldn
I s;nsirli aprixiet yor ;ntr:st ;n q nu 1952 P&KRD. !n rispans tu yor rigu=st for ;nfrmexn, pliz fynd =nklozd a broxur v q1 q 1952 madlz, plvs a prys 1;st, & s=vr:1 vqr =nklo\rz. Wi invyt U tu v;z;t a dilr nir U tu ;nsp=kt q nu f@b+l:s P&KRD v=ri sun!

Korj:li,
W;ly:m &. Wyli

W;ly:m &. Wyli - Vys Pr=z:d=nt

(HAND-PRINTED SAMPLE — THE ORIGIN OF PLAYING CARDS)

Q srli:st pleih kardz ar bilivd tu hav orij:netd in Sentr:il Eqa in q t@ng semx:ri. For-sutd da t

(SCRIPT SAMPLE — REMARK BY JOHN F. KENNEDY)

ff ant iz tu npjx q ruta v kverc,
sprysti movst sat q ortjat fri tu
jalo hjz viln wezaur st ter hjm.
Ahéd, & onli a xort d; st:ns awh, le q hme:scri v X@hri-La.... ! It myt h@v b;n a v; n flvt:rih wt v q@t sal:teri r;qm ;n w; c l@k v a+;j h@d enkvm;p:st ql h; z f@k;livz. ! It waz. ;ndid. a strenj & qmost ;ncl:bl syt. A grup v kvlrd p+vly:nyz klhv tu q mwnt:nsyd w; /nv v q gr:m d:l; b:rexn v a Rynl@nd K@sl,... ! It waz suprbl & +qu:z; t. &n qstrip imoxn k@rid q y vpwrd frvm q m;lk-blu rufs tu q gre rak h@scn ab:v,... Biand q@t, ;n a d@zlir pir;m;d, sord q sno-slops v K@r:kal. ! It myt bi, Kamwe /q, q most ter:fyih mwntn-skew ;n q wrld, & hi ;m@jnd q ;mens stres v sno & glexr agenst w;c q rak fvyknd @z a yjg@nt;k ritenh wql. Svm de, prh@ps, q hol mwntn wjd spl:t, & a h@f v K@r:kal'z ysi splenwr wjd kvm taplih ;ntu q v@li. Hi wnvndr d;f q slyn:s v q r;sk k:mbyd w;/ ts firt:ln:s myt ivn bi,fwnd agri:blj st;m+letih.

(TEXT SAMPLE — LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE USA)

- Waxihtn • J. &d:zm • Jfrsn • M@d:sn • Manro • J. Q. &d:zm • J+a+n • V@n
- B+r:n • H@r:sn • Tytr • Polk • Tefl • F;lmor • Pirs • B+k+n:n • Lihkn
- A. Jansn • Gr@nt • Hez • Garfild • Ar/r • Klvln:nd • B. H@r;sn • MaK;nl
- %, Roz:vqlt • T@ft • W;Isn • Hardih • Ku;j • Huv • F. Roz:vqlt • Trumn
- Yz:nhwr • K€n:di • L. Jansn • N;+n • Ford • Kartr • Regn • J. Bjx • Kl;ntn
- J. W. Bjx

Wvn ;nt:r=stih tês for WRD WEZ readers ;z tu mek %n Azori:n "SCRABBLE®" s=t v 100 to 110 tylz. Q friqu=nsi v ic swnd mvst bi k;ns;dryd ;n ordr tu asyn a nvmb v p)nts frvm 1 tu 10 for ic v q 33 l=trz. For 'dvlbl:ts' q k:mbyd friqu=nsi v bo/swndz xjd bi tek; ;ntu akwnt. Q s=knd cor ;z tu disyd hw m=ni v ic tyl tu provyd. Not q@t a l=tr svc %z wjd nat bi wr/ 10 p)nts %z ;n standard "SCRABBLE®"; s;ns ;t wjd bi q l=tr for mor plur:l wrdz q@n ivn S, ;ts p)nt v@l+x xjd bi onli l. A s:gj=std s=t v 108 tylz ;z xon bilo:

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