

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 Kan
 A stetli plçv-dom dikri:
 Wer &lf, q sekr:d r;vr, r@n
 %ru k@vrnz mçvl: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.*

Φ AZORI?N

FONETIK & LFBET

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S!MBL	SWND	NEM	K&P!TL L&TRZ	SMQL L&TRZ
1. A a	<i>ah</i> (<i>ah</i>)	'apa' 'uhpa'	ANR [HONOR] ABWT [ABOUT]	kam [calm] koma [coma]
2. B b	<i>b</i>	'bee'	BOL [BOWL]	kab [cob]
3. C c	<i>ch</i>	'chee'	CYNA [CHINA]	koc [coach]
4. D d	<i>d</i>	'dee'	DAL [DOLL]	fynd [find]
5. E e	<i>ay</i>	'aypa'	ES [ACE]	cer [chair]
6. F f	<i>f</i>	'ef'	FLAK [FLOCK]	lof [loaf]
7. G g	<i>g</i>	'ghee'	GRON [GROWN]	veg [vague]
8. H h	<i>h</i> <i>ng</i>	'hay' 'eng'	HOM [HOME] FIHGR [FINGER]	ahød [ahead] wihk [wink]
9. I i	<i>ee</i>	'eepa'	IZI [EASY]	cirz [cheers]
10. J j	<i>j</i> <i>öö</i>	'jay' 'oot'	JIR [JEER] LJK [LOOK]	daj [dodge] bjcr [butcher]
11. K k	<i>k</i>	'kay'	KROM [CHROME]	tork [torque]
12. L l	<i>l</i>	'el'	LIG [LEAGUE]	trei [trail]
13. M m	<i>m</i>	'em'	MED [MADE]	bam [bomb]
14. N n	<i>n</i>	'en'	NOZ [NOSE]	revn [raven]
15. O o	<i>oh</i>	'opa'	ODR [ODOR]	koko [cocoa]
16. P p	<i>p</i>	'pee'	PLEN [PLANE]	grep [grape]

17. Q q	(<i>th</i>) <i>aw</i>	'thee' 'awt'	QOZ [THOSE] QLSO [ALSO]	briq [breathe] sq [saw]
18. R r	<i>r</i>	'ar'	REDIO [RADIO]	fir [fear]
19. S s	<i>s</i>	'es'	STRIK [STREAK]	glqs [gloss]
20. T t	<i>t</i>	'tee'	TOKN [TOKEN]	cit [cheat]
21. U u	<i>oo</i>	'oopa'	UZI ^H [OOZING]	tu [two]
22. V v	<i>v</i> <i>ũ</i>	'vee' 'umpa'	VOTD [VOTED] VNDR [UNDER]	karv [carve] fvn [fun]
23. W w	<i>w</i> <i>ow</i>	'wee' 'owpa'	WER [WHERE] WTR [OUTER]	tw;n [twin] kw [cow]
24. X x	<i>sh</i>	'esh'	XAK [SHOCK]	lix [leash]
25. Y y	<i>y</i> <i>ī</i>	'yee' 'eyepa'	YQN [YAWN] YTMZ [ITEMS]	yor [your] kry [cry]
26. Z z	<i>z</i>	'zee'	ZU [ZOO]	xer [share]
27. & @	<i>ǎ</i>	'at'	&KTR [ACTOR]	k@x [cash]
28. £ ¢ # =	<i>ě</i>	'et'	£LDR [ELDER] #LDR	p¢n [pen] p=n
29. ! ;	<i>ĩ</i>	'it'	!NTU [INTO]	w;k [wick]
30. ? :	(<i>ũ</i>)	'ut'	K?NTEN [CONTAIN]	l@t:r:l [lateral]
31. % /	<u><i>th</i></u>	'thay'	%RYS [THRICE]	nyn/ [ninth]
32.] \	<i>zh</i> <i>oi</i>	'zhay' 'oipa']ANRA [GENRE]]STR [OYSTER]	li\r [leisure] p\nt [point]
33. \$ +	<i>ks</i> <i>yu</i>	'exa' 'yoopa'	T&\$I [TAXI] F\$Z [FUSE]	m;+ [mix] k+ [cue]

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 tφr:s:z
twihkld qer miri:d v bryt fes:z ;n flit & gl@nsih glim. 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 stren/ q lvlz
xortnd ;n len/ t;l qer waz a strqh & stφdi blo ql q tym, & q vyol:nt pvfs @t
;nt:rvlz, & svdn wrlih k:r:ntz.

[The tips of the cottonwoods and the oaks waved to the east, and the rings of aspens along the terraces twinkled their myriad of bright faces in fleet and glancing gleam. A low roar rose from the leaves of the forest, and the spruces swished in the rising wind.... as it increased in strength the lulls shortened in length till there was a strong and steady blow all the time, and the violent puffs at intervals, & sudden whirling currents.]

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, Amφr;ka, sφpia, !ndoni\ɑ]. 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* [pjɪ] 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, *ö*, 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 cɔk] and *The cost of coffee ought to fall by August*. [Q kɔst v kɔfi qt tu fɔl by Qg:st.]

The **V** doubles as the stressed *ũ* sound as in *fund* [fvnd]; the **W** doubles as the *ow* sound as in *crown* [krwn]; and the **Y** doubles as the *ī* 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 @, #, ¢, 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 *ã* sound, as in *Albert* [&lbrt]. 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 *ã* is represented by **@**, a symbol now familiar in e-mail addresses.

£ ¢ The *ě* sound is represented by **£** in caps and **¢** 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 *ě* are designed, however, to remain unaltered, regardless of whether **£ ¢** or **# =** are used.

! ; The designs for the upper case and lower case symbols for *ĩ* resemble **I** and **i** and they get plenty of work in Azorean as the *ĩ* sound often is almost unstressed in many words, such as in *comic* [kam;k] and *infinity* [;nf;n;ti]. Since no words end in the *ĩ* 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 *ĩ* is (*ũ*), 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* [lvkxri]. Note that except for the *er* sound, any stressed *ũ* is represented by **v**, as in *sun* [svn], *under* [vndr], and *roughly* [rvfli].

% /

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:ra\], *treasury* [trç\;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* [nç+t], *tuxedo* [tv+ido], and *accept* [@+çpt]. 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

27	28	29	30	31	32	33
€@	£ə	!;	?:	71	22	\$#

Script Letters

27	28	29	30	31	32	33
€@	£ə	71	7r	ff	72	77

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 *ě* sound. (Alternatively, a hand-printed ç 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 l 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 used 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;nzi &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* [utϕnsl] and *Ulysses* [Ul;sis].

[3] The bigraph *ex* when it appears initially may be written **+** instead of **ϕ+**, 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 *ing*, **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 **y:r** or **yjr**, 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* [ϕniwer], *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;cuexn]. 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;cuexnz]. However, the **:** must always be used to avoid repeated letters, as in *ended* [ϕnd:d], *phrases* [frez:z], and *error* [ϕr:r].

[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 (**£ ϕ**) can be used for the Spanish **ñ** ('*enya*') as in *mañana* [maϕana]. 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)

**LUS!TENIA 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 KRYS!S !Z &T H&ND**

(TYPEWRITER SAMPLE — 1952 BUSINESS LETTER)

P&KRD MOTR KARZ

1227 NOR% W!NZR DRYV • DITRJT 14, M!X?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 riqu=st for ;nfrmexn, pliz fynd =nklozd a broxur v ql q 1952 madlz, plvs a prys l;st, & s=vr:l 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,

Wilyam E. Wylly

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

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

Q orlist pleih kardz ar bilivd tu hāv orj:netel
in Sāntril Eqa in q tēnq sām:ri. For-sutd dā#
w;ly p;ker kardz ivelvd bifor 1370 in Wāstrn Ur:p.

(SCRIPT SAMPLE — REMARK BY JOHN F. KENNEDY)

*If art iz tu nprix q rute v pulcr,
sreysti most set q artjet fri tu
falo hiz v;ly wesev it ter him.*

(ITALICS SAMPLE — EXCERPT FROM 'LOST HORIZON')

Ahéd, & onli a xort d;st:ns awe, le q lam:sçri v X@hri-La.... !t myt h@v b;n a v;\n flvt:rih wt v q@t sal:tçri r;qm ;n w;c l@k v a+:jn h@d çnkvm:p:st ql h;z f@k:ltiz. !t waz. ;ndid. a strenj & qlmost ;ndçl:bl syt. A grup v kvlrd p:v;ly:nz klvh tu q mwnt:nsyd w;/ nvn v q gr;m d:l;b:rexn v a Rynl@nd K@sl,... !t waz suprb & +qu;z;t. &n qstir imoxn k@rid q y vpwrđ frvm q m;lk-blu rufs tu q gre rak b@scn ab:v,... Biand q@t, ;n a d@zlih pir:m;d, sord q sno-slops v K@r:kal. !t myt bi, Kanwe /qt, q most tçr:fyih mwntn-skep ;n q wrld, & hi ;m@jnd q ;mçns strçs v sno & glexr agçnst w;c q rak fvkhxnd @z a jyg@nt;k ritenih wql. Svm de, prh@ps, q hol mwntn wjd spl;t, & a h@fv K@r:kal'z ysi splçndr wjd kvm taplih ;ntu q v@li. Hi wvndrd ;f q slytn:s v q r;sk k:mbynd w;/ ;ts firf:ln:s myt ivn bi_fwnd agri:bli st;m+letih.

(TEXT SAMPLE — LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE USA)

• Waxihtn • J. &d:mz • Jçfrsn • M@d:sn • Manro • J. Q. &d:mz • J@+n • V@n B+r:n • H@r:sn • Tylr • Polk • Telr • F;lmor • Pirs • B+k@n:n • Lihkn • A. Jansn • Gr@nt • Hez • Garfild • Ar/r • Klivl:nd • B. H@r;sn • MaK;nli • %. Roz:vçlt • T@ft • W;lsn • Hardih • Kul;j • Huvr • F. Roz:vçlt • Trumn • Yz:nhwr • Kçn:di • L. Jansn • N;+n • Ford • Kartr • Regn • J. Bjx • Kl;ntn • J. W. Bjx

Wvn ;nt:r=stih t@sk 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;drd ;n ordr tu asyn a nvmbur v p)nts frvm 1 tu 10 for ic v q 33 l=trç. For 'dvbl:ts' q k:mbynd friqu=nsi v bo/swndz xjd bi tekn ;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 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+ xjd bi onli 1. A s:gj=std s=t v 108 tylz ;z xon bilo:

A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	B ₃	B ₃	C ₈	D ₂	D ₂	D ₂	D ₂	E ₁	E ₁	E ₁	E ₁
E ₁	E ₁	F ₄	F ₄	G ₄	G ₄	H ₂	H ₂	I ₁	I ₁	I ₁	I ₁	I ₁	I ₁	J ₅	K ₃
L ₁	L ₁	L ₁	L ₁	M ₃	M ₃	N ₁	N ₁	N ₁	N ₁	N ₁	N ₁	O ₁	O ₁	O ₁	O ₁
O ₁	O ₁	P ₃	P ₃	Q ₅	R ₁	R ₁	R ₁	R ₁	R ₁	R ₁	S ₁	S ₁	S ₁	S ₁	S ₁
S ₁	T ₁	T ₁	T ₁	T ₁	T ₁	T ₁	U ₃	U ₃	V ₃	V ₃	W ₄	W ₄	X ₈	Y ₂	Y ₂
Y ₂	Z ₁	Z ₁	Z ₁	Z ₁	& ₁	& ₁	& ₁	& ₁	& ₁	£ ₁	£ ₁	£ ₁	£ ₁	! ₁	! ₁
! ₁	! ₁	! ₁	? ₁	? ₁	? ₁	? ₁	% ₁₀] ₁₀	\$ ₈	0	0				