

INSIDE THE PREMISES OF BABEL'S TOWER

LEVEL DIRECTORY

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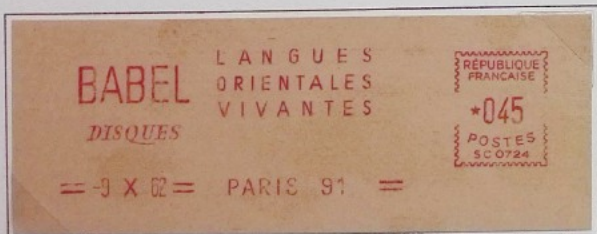
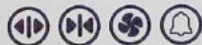
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- 3.1. Building languages (p. 55)
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"Babel Disques, Living Eastern Languages." In the Western world, "Babel" became a synonym for linguistic diversity, but also for confusion. SATAS meter stamp (France, 1962)



Imperforate stamps, 1982

Several European artists elaborated on the concept of the Tower of Babel. The Dutch painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-1569) produced even three of the most famous versions.

The "little" Babel by Bruegel (1563, now in the Dutch Boijmans Museum, Rotterdam) is shown in a modern art composition.

According to the Bible (*Genesis 11:1-9*), Nimrod was a tyrant king in Babylon who decided to erect "a tower to reach Heaven." God then multiplied the languages to stop the work.



Maximum card (Austria, 2011)

On this version (1563), Bruegel likely depicted King Nimrod in the foreground, bottom left.

PROLOGUE

"Now the whole world had one language and a common speech." (*Genesis 11:1*). The construction of the Tower of Babel came to an end when its builders could no longer understand one another. For Western culture, the Tower became a symbol of linguistic diversity, echoed by other myths explaining why humanity speaks thousands of languages.

Language, first oral and later preserved through writing, is governed by rules and conventions that vary across communities. Like living organisms, languages evolve: they develop varieties and new features, spread to new speakers, and may fall silent when their speakers disappear. They are not merely means of communication, but repositories of culture and identity.

Bridging languages has always been a challenge. Interpreters, translators, *linguae francae*, constructed languages such as Esperanto, and modern technologies have served as bridges for communication and international exchange. Foreign-language learning and international cooperation may finally allow the builders to return to the Tower.

This collection is a journey through the floors of the Tower of Babel building. Especially noteworthy philatelic items are placed in a red frame.

Please step into the panoramic lift and begin your ascent.

James Rezende Piton (SUDASTELARO@gmail.com)

Underground: Myths of Language Creation

The origin of language diversity is found and explained by myths in different cultures.

Elegbá, one of the African Orishas - divine spirits or forces. This one linked to language, and a messenger between the Orishas and the men.



A print color proof and other proofs (1942) reusing both sides and even the paper of a proof in the same airmail series

A messenger function was held by Greek god **Hermes** (Roman **Mercury**) as well, who created the languages among the men.

Misperfected stamps



the standard stamp



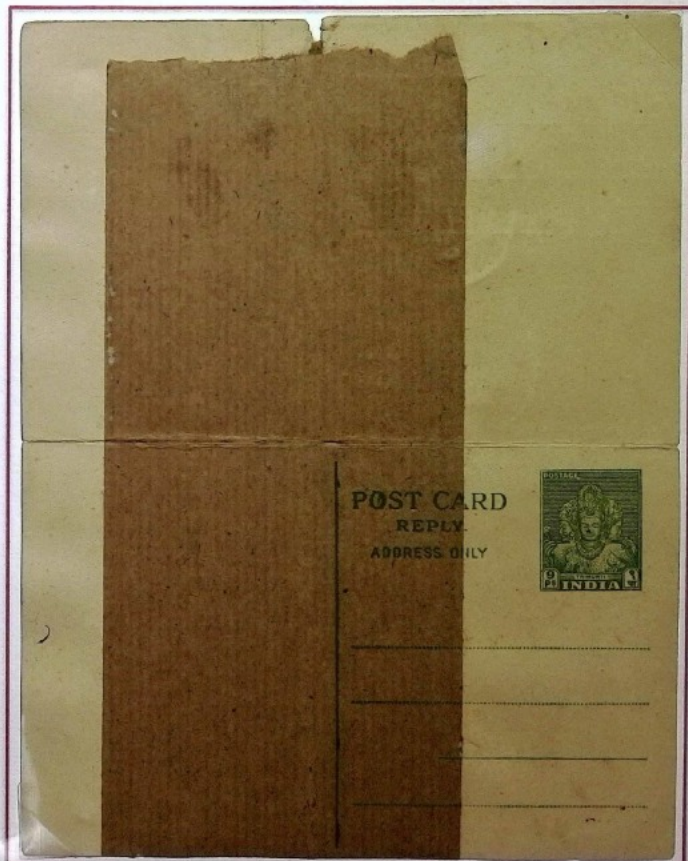
Viracocha on a unissued stamp (Bolivia, 1925, later sold with a "5,000 Bs." overprint in 1960)



Viracocha (for Andean ethnic groups), **Quetzalcoatl** (the feathered serpent in Central America) and **Thoth** (the Egyptian ibis-headed god) were deities linked to language creation and speech.



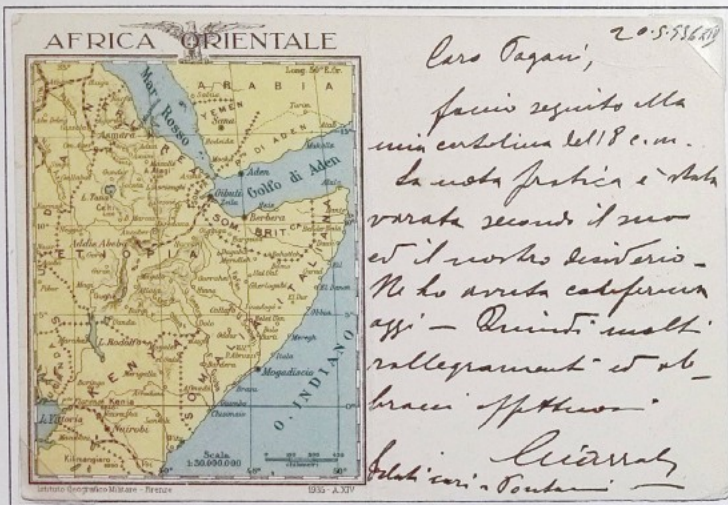
A stationery of local post company **Mercur** in Hannover (Germany, 1897). Private post was legally admitted in local operation, from the German unification (1871) to March 31, 1900, when all postal operations were nationally unified under the **Reichspost**.



In Hindu mythology, **Brahma** felled a tree that reached heaven, and each branch that fell became a different people and a different language.

Brahma is depicted in the "Trimurti" trinity, with Vishnu and Shiva. First stationery (with paid reply) in independent India (1949), partially printed on the tape of a paper coil amendment.

Modern humans — and probably the first speakers of fully developed language — emerged in the Horn of Africa. Language results from the combination of auditory perception, cognitive development, and articulation of sounds.



The discovery of the first Neanderthal fossils happened in 1856
Pitney Bowes meter stamp (2007)



Postal stationery (Switzerland, 1926)

The abilities made the connection available...



Originally evolved for survival, the human auditory system provided the precision that later made speech perception possible through rapid neural processing

The Horn of Africa (in Ethiopia)
Field Post card for
Italian Forces (1936)



Lungs, throat, nose, mouth, tongue, teeth and a brain: the tools needed to produce speech

The hominin brain evolved in size and complexity, enabling the cognitive abilities that likely paved the way for spoken language.

Field Post card for Italian Forces (1943)





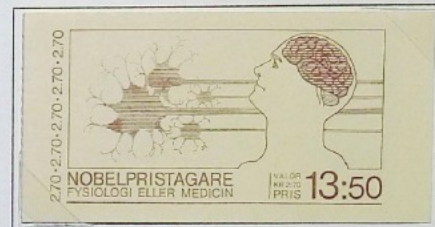
International Day
of Mother
Language
Chinese Meter
stamp (2020)



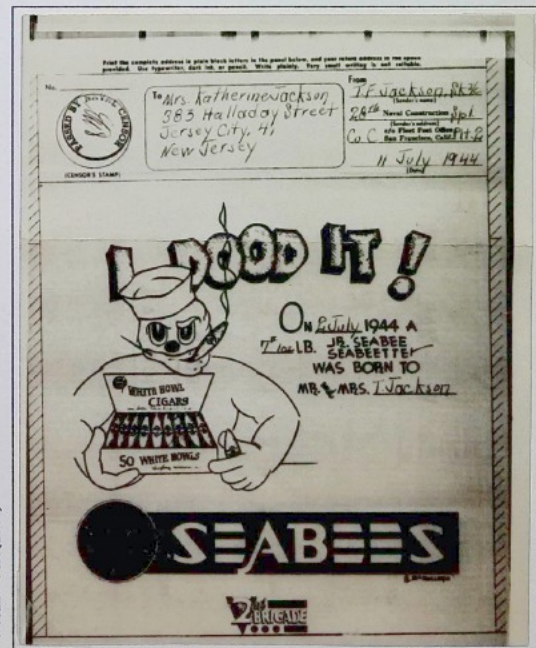
Someone's native language is usually acquired through contact with their mother. This is why it is often called the "mother tongue."

Children do not yet have the phonological system and brain fully developed to produce all sounds, nor to perceive the formal details and exceptions of a language.

"Voio! - Voio!!" - In standard Italian, voglio ("I want") is pronounced /voʎʎo/, with a geminate palatal lateral /ʎʎ/. A child may simplify this sound through gliding, replacing /ʎʎ/ with /ʎ/.



Neurons - Stamp booklet (Sweden, 1984)



From a tendency to generalize patterns, what appears to be innate in humans, a child may produce the past-tense form "I did" as "I dood", trying the patterns used for regular verbs.



From a limited reach and a short-lived duration, the voice extended across the world as technology created different ways to preserve and transmit it.

The telephone as a mean to approximate friends.
1-pence Letter card stationery (New Zealand, 1928)



On this stamp, an audio recording about the country. Scan to hear it.



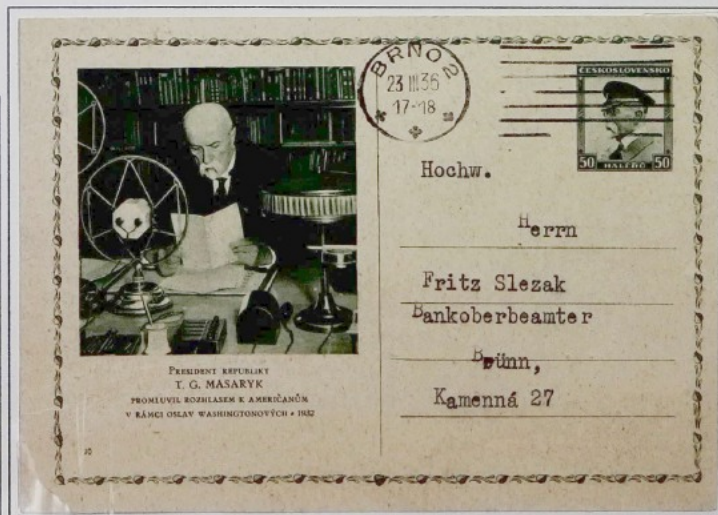
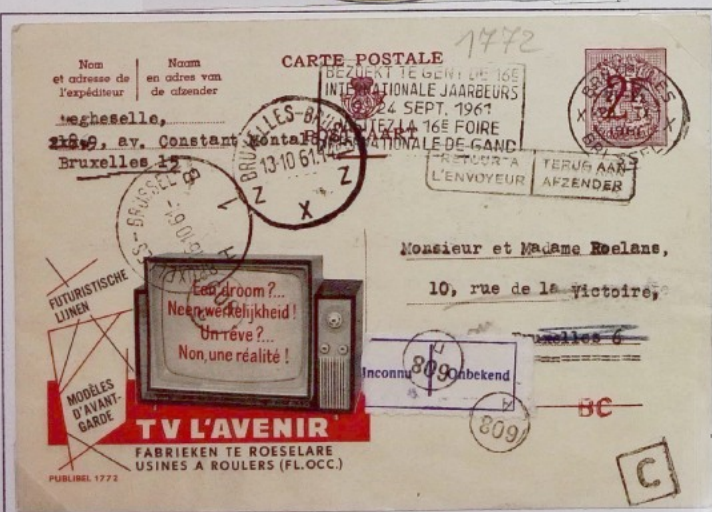
9-ngultrums (NU)
vinyl postage stamp
(Bhutan, 1973)

Stamp for the
Fonopostal service of
recorded voice
messages
(Argentina, 1939)



Color proof

Radio and television broadcasts made it possible to hear people who would otherwise have been beyond reach. These media also disseminated language standards and contributed to the homogenization of linguistic varieties.



President Masaryk delivers a radio address - Postal stationery (Czechoslovakia, 1936)

Publibel stationery (Belgium, 1961) returned - unknown addressee

UBG123
B.1 Human speech
B.1.3 Voice disturbances

Many congenital physiological conditions, neurodevelopmental disorders (like autism), and psychological factors can lead to speech and language impairment.



The voice requires special care, particularly for professional speakers. Voice tonic advertisement on the back of postage stamps (New Zealand, 1893)



Cleft lip and palate are a congenital condition where the upper lip and the roof of the mouth do not form properly. That can be surgically corrected. (India, 2011)



National speaking week - Speech difficulties (UK, 1990)

Many speech disorders can be alleviated through speech therapy, using repetition and specialized techniques.



Winston Churchill on a Feldpost card for German soldiers, with a satirical fake printed stamp marked "not worth a penny" Feldpost (Germany, 1940)



Advertisement for a speech therapist. Francotyp-Postalia meter stamp (Germany, 1991)

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and King George VI overcame through Speech Therapy their stuttering to become inspiring public speakers. The Roman emperor Claudius is traditionally described as having had a speech impediment.



Complete stamp booklet (Brazil, 1992)



The Brazilian comic character Cebolinha (known in English as 'Jimmy Five') is known for replacing the letter R with L in words. From Looney Tunes, Porky Pig stutters and Daffy Duck has a lisp. Gollum, from The Lord of the Rings, has a sibilant, raspy, guttural voice and unusual grammar.

Speech disorders are used to characterize fictional figures in a distinctive and often comic way.





Der Horchposten.

"Listening post" - Feldpostkarte (Germany, 1916)

Hearing plays an important role in the spoken language in the everyday life. Deafness, however, does not prevent people from leading active lives, with sign languages.



The Greetings with Sign Language aims to further create the awareness how to communicate to them in their forms of communication. The stamps featured in this booklet are artistically illustrated by local international artist Tiang Wen Chong

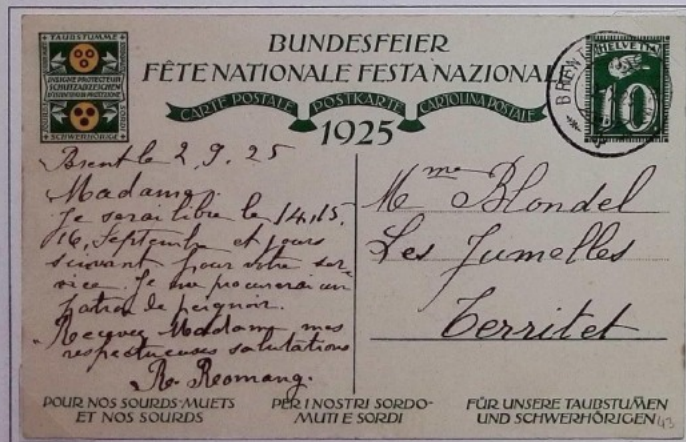
The Singaporean sign language alphabet. Back cover of a complete stamp booklet (Singapore, 2013)

In the Brazilian town of Jaicós (Piauí state), with a high incidence of congenital deafness, a local sign language sign has been developed. (Brazil, 1891)



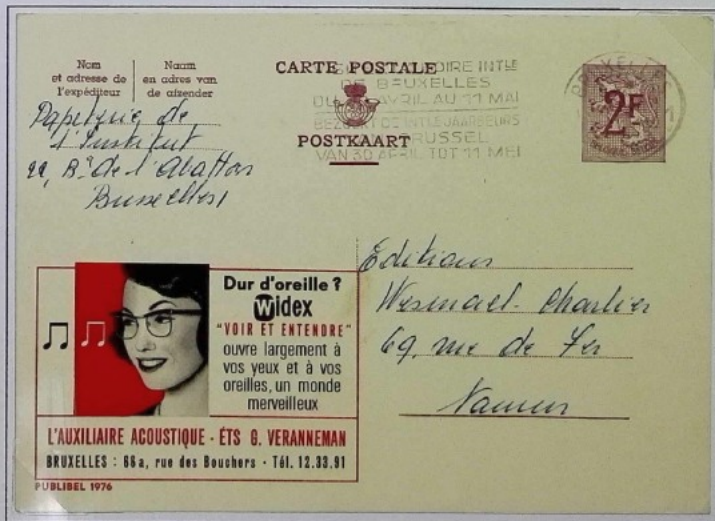
Beethoven began to lose his hearing at the age of 26.

Postal stationery (Austria, 1927)



The term "deaf-mute" in three languages. Top left: two proposed signs to be worn by deaf people and by deaf people unable to speak. (Switzerland, 1925)

Hearing impairment in early childhood can prevent the normal development of spoken language, leading to speech impairment.



"Hearing aids open a wonderful world to your eyes and ears" - Publibel (Belgium, 1964)

B.2 The Preservation and Spread of Ideas

Originally used for accounting, writing later registered rules, religion, ideas, history, news, and art among many other uses of language.

From clay tablets in Sumer to the quill pen and the ballpoint pen, some of key tools that shaped the history of personal writing.



Complete stamp booklets (Finland, 1997 and Israel, 1955)

Starting from the limited reach of personal writing, the development of mechanical printing technologies allowed written information to reach millions of people.

Timbres en caoutchouc

toutes dimensions, tous genres

Timbres à main
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Gummi od. Metall
Selbstfärbende Da-
tumsstempel
Signir-Stempel zum
zeichnen von Kästen,
Pässern, Säcken, etc.
Stempelfarbe
Stempelzylinder
Stempelkissen

Hand-Stempel
Ziffern und Alphabete
Datum-Stempel
Hand u. automatische
Nummerstempel, aus
Gummi od. Metall
Selbstfärbende Da-
tumsstempel
Signir-Stempel zum
zeichnen von Kästen,
Pässern, Säcken, etc.
Stempelfarbe
Stempelzylinder
Stempelkissen

Rasche Lieferung — Prima Qualität

La Chaux-de-Fonds

Advertisement for rubber stamps (publicity concession to Imprimerie Sausser)
Postal checking account statement - Switzerland, 1926



Inspired by wine presses, Gutenberg (1400-68) revolutionized writing with the invention of movable-type printing press (~1450).
Postal stationery (Germany, 1900)



A movable type)



Over the centuries, the process evolved into high-speed printing - Offset printer
Complete stamp booklet (Sweden, 1983)

Typewriter without ink ribbon - Busta Lettera Postale - Italy (1922)

ANSALDO

STABILIMENTI
40
CAPITALE
500 MILIONI

Macchina da Scrivere

Yost

Senza nastro

Scrittura visibile

La Ballena di Scrittura

Milano
Via Dante 19
tel. 31-72

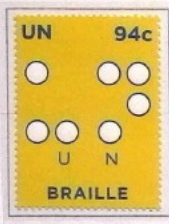
Roma
Via Muratte 38
tel. 36-44

Cercansi agenti ovunque

UBG123

B.2 The Preservation and Spread of Ideas

A wide variety of systems and media has been used to record text or data. We still refer to it as "written" information, even though much of it is encoded electronically, magnetically, or by symbols.



Braille: a tactile writing system invented by Louis Braille in 1824. Using patterns of six raised dots, it enables blind and visually impaired people to read and write independently.



QR Code on a definitive stamp (Brazil, 2019)

Punched cards were introduced in the late 19th century for data recording and processing, an idea of Herman Hollerith. They became the primary medium for input of information in early Computing of 20th century.



Advertisement of Powers Accounting Machine Co., a concurrent of Hollerith/IBM in punched card systems. Francotyp meter stamp (Germany, 1942)



Ad of a school of commercial and parliamentary Stenography Complete stamp booklets (Belgium, 1930)

Stenography (shorthand): first developed in Ancient Rome, is a method of writing that enables speech to be recorded rapidly. It played a vital role in journalism, offices, and the courts before magnetic and electronic recording became commonplaces.



Materials in the braille system enjoy free postage, according to UPU. Cecogramme sent to Fiji, but not delivered for the suspension of routes during the COVID-19 Pandemia (China, sent AUG 14th, back to sender on 15th, 2020)



66th Conference of Stenography - special cancellation using shorthand. (Germany, 1926)



Four letters on a piece of V-Mail microfilm (USA, 1944)

Microfilm, a technique developed in the 19th century, revolutionized document archiving. During World War II, millions of letters were transported on microfilm through two similar systems: the American V-Mail and the British Airgraph.



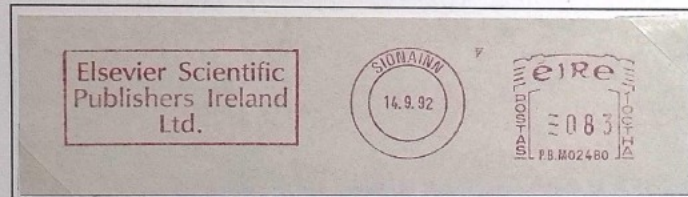
Telegram receipt processed with punched-card technology in an early automation system at CTT, the Portuguese Post (Portugal, 1952)

B.2 The Preservation and Spread of Ideas

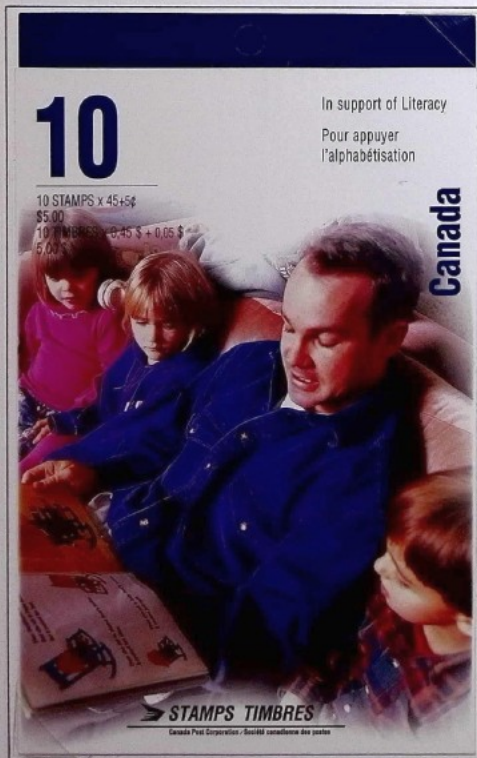


Reading provides access to knowledge accumulated over national borders and over the centuries.

There are thousands of scientific journals and international scientific publishers and that makes Science an universal series of contributions through the world.



To instill the habit of reading in children, the family plays a key role by providing access to books and making reading an enjoyable experience.



Postal stationery from the series "Our Children" (Yugoslavia, 1950's)



The school also plays a role, but a child who enjoys reading learns with more efficiency.

"Literacy begins at home" Complete stamp booklet (Canada, 1996)

Complete stamp booklet (France, 1936)



Traditional (paper) encyclopaedias were published in many volumes.



"Libraries for all" Postal stationery (Switzerland 1922)

Writing was an exclusive (and prestigious) activity of scribes in Antiquity, later only available to those who could afford tuition.



"The Seated Scribe", a statue from Ancient Egypt (c. 2450 BCE)

Complete stamp booklet (Sweden, 1986)



A letter of Crown Prince Gustaf at age six to his father, the king

Literacy, the ability to read and write, usually starts at home, but it is fully acquired at school.



"Through reading and writing, I advance through life." (Marcus Terentius Varro)



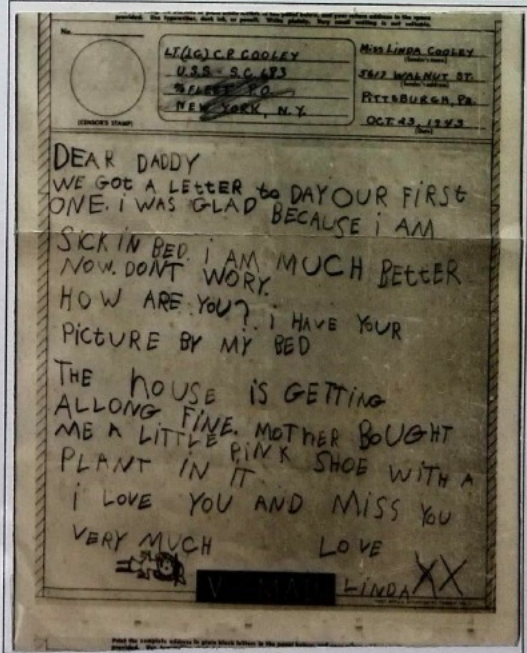
"To read / to write"



Literacy

An irregular handwriting is typical of a child's first writing attempts. V-Mail (USA, 1943)

Hand-guided assistance in writing a letter - Postal stationery (Portugal, 1942)





Comma and semicolon to organize ideas. In Greek, semicolon is the usual question mark.



"Save Energy!" - Spanish has used the inverted exclamation mark (!) at the beginning of a sentence since 1754, when the Royal Spanish Academy introduced it.

The exclamation mark (!) also probably evolved from Latin, from an interjection (io), expressing joy, surprise or commands, written by medieval scribes as an *I* above an *o*.

Conventional written symbols express intonation, rhythm, and even emotions. The question mark (?) probably evolved from the Latin word *quaestio* ("question"), abbreviated by medieval scribes as a *Q* written above an *o*.



The "?" mark alone can convey curiosity.



"How many of us are there?" Unissued stamp (Brazil, 1940)



The first non-stop flight from Europe to America in the aircraft named *Point d'Interrogation* ("Question Mark"), reflecting the uncertainty of the journey.

10-kopek postal stationery sent to Germany (USSR, 1931)



Russian for "Save time and money - subscribe newspapers and magazines!"



"Heroes of the crime novel" - the question mark is the most associated to mystery, the classic "whodunit?". Complete stamp booklet (France, 1996)



The combined punctuation "?! " is employed to express surprise, disbelief, or astonishment.

"Keep quiet! - Every piece of news benefits the enemy" (Italy, 1941)



70 JAHRE
FRÄUNHOFER
70 JAHRE
ZUKUNFT
#WHATSNEXT



Deutsche Post
FRANKIT 0,80 EUR
19.08.19 1D14001247



The hyphen (-) indicates that a word continues on the next line. - interpane pair

A modern graphic convention: the hashtag (#) mark, in the Internet age is used to highlight keywords and group related content: #whatsnext - Neopost (1D) meter stamp (Germany, 2019)

B.3 Writing for eternity

B.3.2 Writing Systems

From the pictorial representation of events in caves, written language evolved about 5,000 years ago to record spoken language.

Papyrus with Egyptian hieroglyphs in the advertisement of an Egyptian exhibition



The oldest systems include **logographic** (one symbol per word), as in Chinese; **logosyllabic** (symbols for words and sounds), as in Egyptian hieroglyphs, and **syllabic** (one symbol per syllable), as in Japanese.



The Phoenician alphabet is the ancestor of the Greek and Latin alphabets.

The Phoenicians introduced the first widely influential alphabet (letters representing individual speech sounds).



Misperforation



"A" stamps for the first-class rate, in a complete stamp booklet (USA, 1975-1981)



Chinese on a perfin (Republic of China, 1916)

公文貼用
("for official service")



The basic 26-letter Latin alphabet for English

The Greek and Latin alphabets were derived from the old Phoenician alphabet.



Overprint "C" for stamps sold by rural postmen with a spurious second perforation (Paraguay, 1921)



Urdu, Birmanian and Chinese texts - V-mail (USA, 1944)

Japanese Occupation of Malaya (WWII)
Overprint "Japan Post"

The fantastic sets of characters were adapted over the centuries to accommodate the very diverse phonetics of different languages.



The name of a letter collection comes from the first two Greek letters, alpha (Α) and beta (Β)



A drop cap "D"



Red color shifted

UB6123
B.3 Writing for eternity
B.3.2 Writing Systems



"F" perfin for "Freitas" trade company
(Hamburg, Germany)



Overprint for official service
("G" for "Government")



Single-letter cancel handstamp ("H") - Boston, late 19th century)

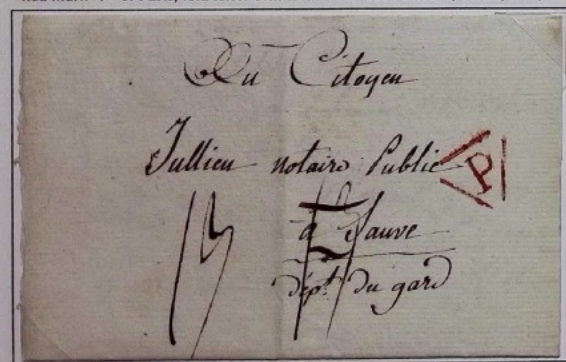


"N", the monogram of French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte



A gilded illumination "O" in the royal library of King Matthias Corvinus

Red mark "P" of Paris, fold letter sent from Hôtel des Postes - (France, 1797)



Imperforate tab with the classic "S" logo of Singer Sewing Machines (Italy, 1924)



Printed obliteration on stamps applied to a Newspaper with a "T" in the title - (France, late 19th century)



PTT Postal parcel delivery tag with a register label "R" (France, 1960s)

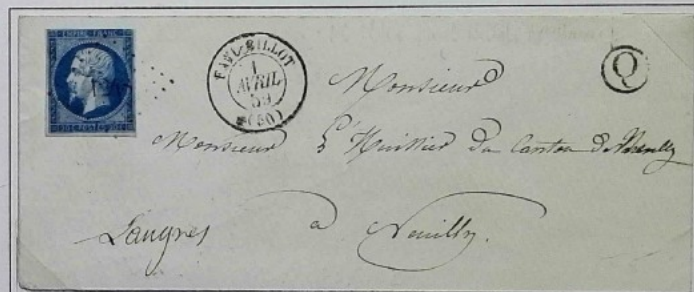


Among all writing systems, the Latin alphabet has the widest global reach. About 6 billion people speak at least one language written in this alphabet.

"Penny Red" with check letters "I" and "J" (i.e. the 9th row, 10th column) in the plate number (171)



"KLM" - the Dutch flight company - Francotyp meter stamp (+ added franking)



Top right: mark "Q" of a countryside collect box in Fayl-Billot, on the back two postmarks: transit in Paris Apr. 1st and arrival in Langres Apr. 2nd (France, 1859)



"U" from "Unterbahn" (subway)



"V" for "Victory", also in the Morse Code notation (-.-) Overprint (1945)



"W" (World) rate - (Ukraine, 2022)



Misperforate stamps

In an alphabetic writing system, the basic unit—the **letter**—is intended to represent a speech sound, but in most languages the relationship between letters and sounds is not perfectly one-to-one. The **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)** aims to represent the sounds of the world's languages.



Phoenician Alphabet
Equivalents to Roman



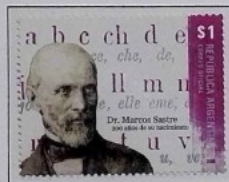
Perfin with letters A, B & C
(Germany, 1921)



IPA description how the
German name "Goethe"
sounds in German.



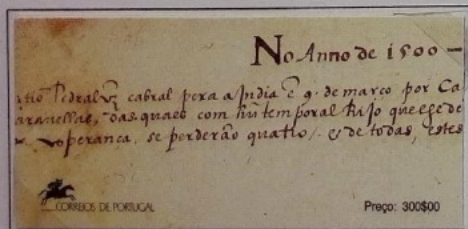
Runic Alphabet equivalents to Roman



Name of letters in Spanish



The ancient Greek and Latin alphabets had only **uppercase letters**. **Lowercase letters** developed during the Middle Ages to make writing and reading easier. Only a few alphabets adopted this distinction.



Handwriting gave rise to lowercase letters. Back cover of a
complete stamp booklet (Portugal, 1991)



ا (alif) and ب (ba'),
first two Arabic letters
(Saudi Arabia, 1990)

Postal stationery sent from São Thomé das Letras (Brazil, 1919)



The town owes its name (like "St. Thomas of the Letters") to inscriptions discovered in a cave.



АБВ ("a-b-v"), the first three letters of the
Cyrillic alphabet, just as "ABC" is for the
Latin alphabet. (Bulgaria, 1987)



труд ("trud"), one of Bulgaria's
best-known newspapers, written entirely in
lowercase in its 1983 logo.



Original metal hand stamps for the postmarks (above) of the Central
Post Office in Sofia (code 1000, Bulgaria). Supposedly unique pieces.

The first three letters of an alphabet are commonly used to
represent the whole set of letters; Arabic uses the first two.

B.3 Writing for eternity
B.3.2 Writing Systems



The name of Pharaoh Tutankhamun (1341-1323 BCE)



Arabic in Saudi Arabia



Punjabi in Pakistan

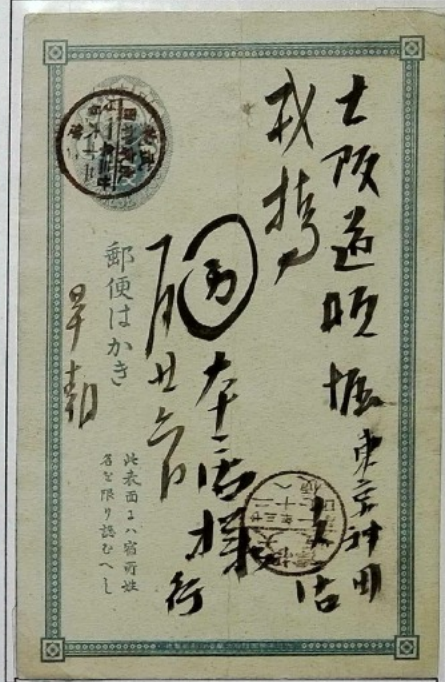


Persian in Iran

The direction of writing is different among the writing systems. Egyptian hieroglyphs had no fixed direction and the choices were purely for aesthetic reasons. Human and animal figures face the beginning of the text.

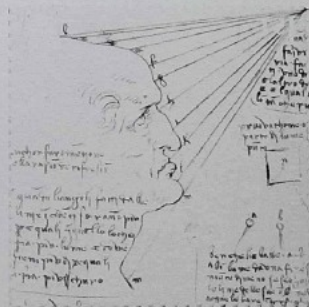
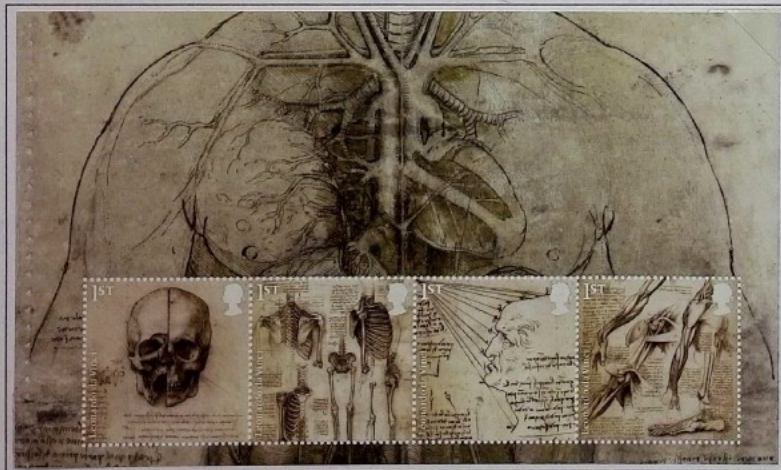


The names of pharaohs were enclosed in cartouches, oval frames that distinguished and symbolically protected royal names. Left, a sample from 1300 BCE; right: a cartouche shown just for decorative purposes.



Traditional Japanese writing is vertically, from top to bottom and right to left. That is called 縦書き (tategaki). The same was used in China and Korea.

Postal stationery (Japan, 1892)



Leonardo da Vinci often wrote in mirror script, so also from right to left.

Historians believe he did so mainly to make his notes less accessible to casual readers.

The third stamp, mirrored. Notice the letters along the face.

A page from a prestige postage stamp booklet (UK, 2019)

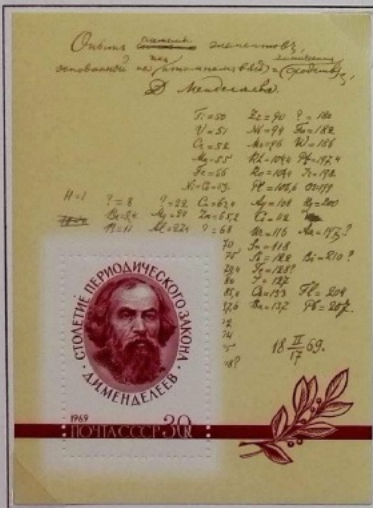


Glyphs are back. People now express emotions with a single small picture – an emoji. The rebus "I ♥" is another popular example.



B.3 Writing for eternity
B.3.2 Writing Systems

Latin letters are universally used...

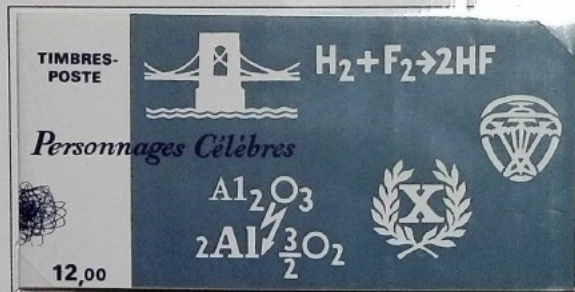


Manuscript notes by Mendeleev (1834-1907), creator of the Periodic Table. He wrote in Russian, but used the Latin-letter symbols.

Both **Mathematics** and **Physics** use letters from Latin and Greek alphabets to represent variables, constants, and operators.



$\hat{H}\psi = E\psi$, the famous Schrödinger Equation in his birth centenary (Austria, 1987)



Chemical compounds and reactions. Complete stamp booklet (France, 1986)



O_2 : an oxygen molecule. FRANKIT postage imprint (Germany, 2013) from a Pitney Bowes (4D...) machine

...in **Chemistry**, upper and lower case Latin letters are used as symbols of the 118 chemical elements identified or artificially produced. Only the letters **J** and **Q** are not used yet.



Kilogram (Kg), the unit of weight. Field post parcel stamp (Germany, 1940)

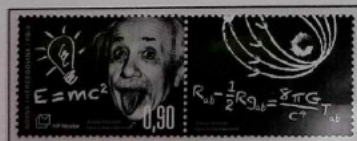
...measurements in the **International System of Units (SI)**, the world's standard system. Unit symbols are written with uppercase and lowercase letters.



Ψ , the first letter of Greek word ψυχή (psyché, "soul" or "mind") became an emblem of Psychology



Uppercase Greek letter Σ (sigma), used as a summation operator.
Stamp sheet margin (Russia, 1987)



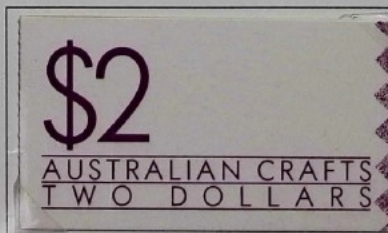
The famous equation of Einstein's Theory of Relativity: $E = m \cdot c^2$ (Bosnia, 2016)



Letters are also modified to role as currency signs.



ATM stamp (Portugal, 2002)



Complete two-dollar stamp booklet (Australia, 1987)

The **L** (from the Latin "libra") evolved into £ as the symbol of the pound sterling.

The euro, introduced in 1999, adopted € , a two-bar Greek epsilon.

Dollar and other currencies use the familiar \$, an S with one or two vertical bars.

The Latin alphabet used V for [oo]/[v]/[w] sounds and I for both [i] and [y] (in "yes"). U and J appeared later, in the Middle Ages, and spread with printing press.



"Yes" and "no" in Swedish sound like [ja] and [nay]. In most Germanic languages, J is pronounced like the English "y" in "yes", whereas in English it sounds like the "j" in "job". In French and Portuguese, it sounds like the "s" in "measure", and in Spanish like the "ch" in Scottish "loch".

Letter J was once used in Italian but is found now only in foreign names and words. Italian printers used U for both [v] and [oo] sounds, and J for double I, as in "sauji" [savii]. Y

"A.Qe." (acque), a 4-soldi prepaid form for carrying petitions to the government between 1608-1797. The sum included a levy for the maintenance of the Venetian canals (Republic of Venice, 1669).

Complete booklet (Vatican, 2001)



In Latin, the semi-vowel I (pronounced like the "y" in "yes") in Iesu (Jesus) and the vowel I in nostri (our) written with the same symbol.

Ricevuto die 12 Septemb. 1669
N 2312



DE ordine dell' Illustris. Sig. Sauji, & Esecutori alle Acque in ista deliberatione per fut Sig. Illustris. presa sotto li 12. Nouemb. 1668. per li Dacio delli soldi 4. per Lettera, si commette à cadanno Cancelliero delle Cancellarie del Stato nostro, che per l'auuenire non dia risposta, nè esecuzione o muna sorte di Lettere che li faranno scritte per cadaun Officio, & Magistrato di questa Città eccettuati però li Eccellentis. Consigli, & Collegi, & l'Oficio Illustris. dell' Auogaria, Auditori Noui, & Nouissimi, & Vecchi, & li Conferuatori delle leggi, se non faranno ogn'vna di esse Lettere incluse, ouero scritte in vno delli presentati nostri mezi fogli stampati, & numerati, & se faranno incluse più di vna fol Lettera debbano le sudette Cancellarie inuiarle al Officio nostro sotto pena di Ducati 100. per cadauna volta che contra faranno da esser diuisa conforme alla deliberatione sudetta, & ancora siano tenui à maggior pene, douendo il tutto in hizar, & l'istessa deliberatione sarà anco offeruata dalli sudetti Officij, & Magistrati di questa Città, sotto le pene inelisa dichiarate, eccettuati li sopranominati officij. Douendosi dar esecuzione à tal nostra deliberatione adi primo Febraro proximo venturo 1668.

Marco Loredan. Dacio Secondo.

*Sp. 2 + Srio Vir. Ho. del nob. Ho. a mori. bno. Innocenzo la sp. bno. fari
pub. suo ministro citato f. 4. o uera alla casa della sua solita habo.
Santo Anai sequenno f. 4. il giorno vero giuridico 2 di redub.
di mato d'offo la cite. Conpari della a uari di noi 26 ott. no a uederi
a tatar f. 4. di suo deb. 2 Come in giud. san di chiano, d'ella
cite. un sua ci dara auito 2 li no.*
Venezia 18 Feb. 1669

*Stato de Mosto f. 4. 1668. Ho. Miro. Ho. 1668. Ho. 1668.
dist. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669.
Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669. Ho. 1669.*

Diacritics — small marks placed above or below letters — may form distinct letters (as in Spanish Ñ), indicate a letter's pronunciation (as in French è), or in addition mark the stressed syllable, as in Portuguese and Modern Greek.



The letter Ñ, so distinct in Spanish, was created to roughly sound as the "ny" in English "Catalunya".



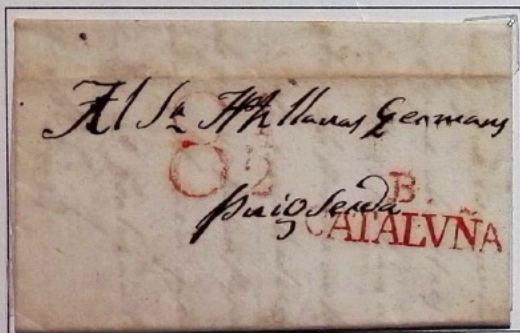
RÉCÉPISSÉ - Registered mail receipt (Senegal, France, 1941)

In French the acute accent is a mark how the letter E sounds (roughly as the "ay" in "say."), so it can be repeated in a word.



Portuguese word borrowed from Yoruba, pronounced roughly [ah-SHEH]

In Portuguese, the acute accent (') is added to mark an open E (as E in "bed") and an open O (AW in "law"). Also to mark the stressed syllable, so it can't be repeated.



Cataluña, the Spanish orthography. Fold letter from Barcelona to Puigcerdà, also in Catalunya, paid rate of 8% reales (Spain, 1833)



Å in a perfin of "Axel H. Agren" (1914 and several Ö in a German word..

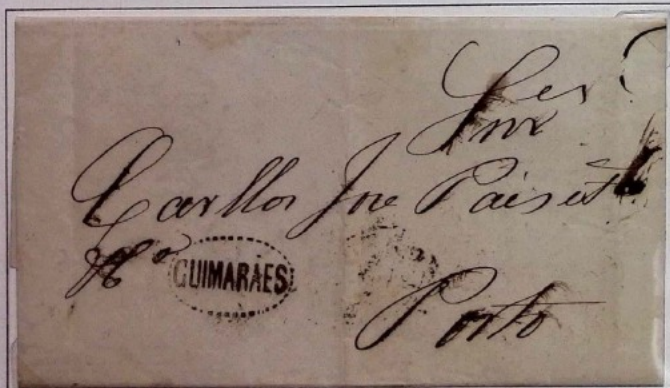
Å Å Å



Digraphs - two or more letter representing just a sound



The tilde is a mark that came from a small letter N as an abbreviation. Spanish *anno* became *año*, Portuguese *mano* became *mão*.



Fold letter from Guimarães to Oporto (Portugal, 27.IX.1862)



Fold letter from Louzã to Oporto (Portugal, 27.IX.1862)

G.1 Language families

The languages, being more than 6,000, are grouped into families and branches, based on common ancestry. They share inherited features from a common ancestral language.



"Language" in several Mexican languages

Native American languages
(15-20 Million speakers)



A lullaby in the Charrúa language in Uruguay



Yoruba words

Niger-Congo languages
(Sub-Saharan Africa,
700 Million speakers)

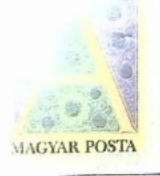


Canadian Inuit syllabics (intr. 1876)

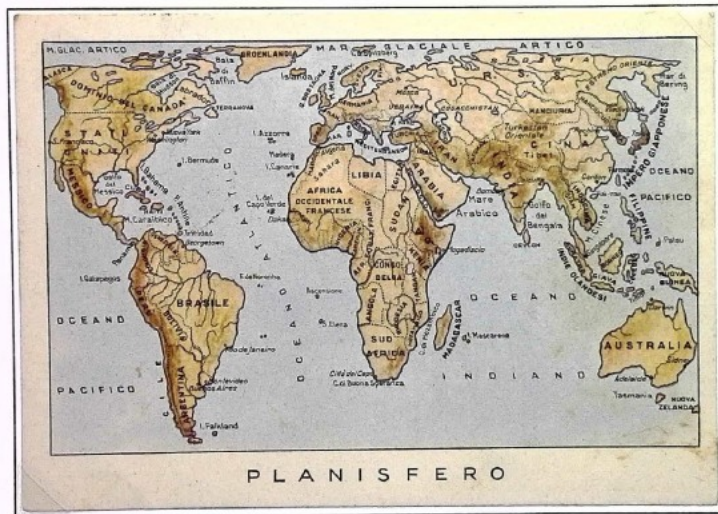


Indo-European languages (most of Europe and America, Iran, India, 3.4 Billion speakers)

Uralic languages
(Finland and Hungary,
30 Million speakers)



Sino-Tibetan languages (China and Tibet; 1.8 Billion speakers)



Field Post card for Italian Forces (P.M. number 41, to Padua, Italy, 28.III.1942)



Koreanic and Japanese languages
(210 Million speakers)



Turkic languages
(from Turkey to Central Asia,
200 Million speakers)



Austronesian languages
(Pacific; 380 Million speakers)



Afro-Asiatic languages (North Africa and the Middle East, 600 Million speakers)

G.1.1 Sino-Tibetan and other families in Asia

Spoken by ~1.5 billion people, **Sino-Tibetan** is one of the world's major language families, including **Chinese**.



Poetry and calligraphy have been a central part of **classical Chinese** language for more than three thousand years.



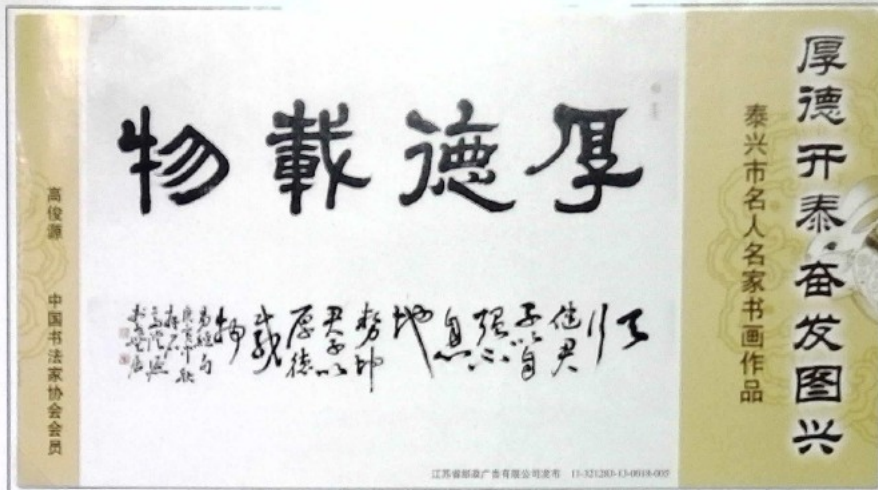
Educator **Cai Yuanpei** (1868-1940) promoted the adoption of **vernacular Chinese**.



Thai belongs to the **Kra-Dai** language family and is a tonal language **Khmer**, the official language of Cambodia, is not tonal and belongs to the **Austroasiatic** language family.



Thai script - Postal stationery locally sent in Bangkok (Thailand, 27.2.1893)



Chinese artistic calligraphy - Postal stationery (China, 2011)

Bopomofo, a name created from its four first symbols, is a phonetic system developed to represent the pronunciation of Chinese characters, used in Taiwan for teaching Chinese.

Khmer
(Cambodian)
language



中一网: www.cn-001.com 那曲在线: www.naqu.net
E-mail: ceo@cn-001.net

"Greetings" in Tibetan - Postal stationery (China, 27.2.1993)

U.B. 1523
G.1 Language families
G.1.2 Japonic and Koreanic language families

Traditional writing - Postal stationery (Japan, 1890s)

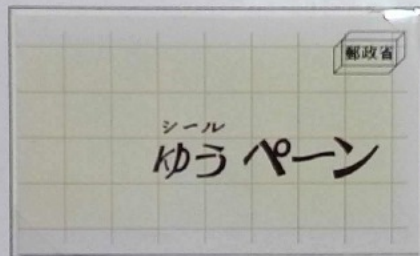


Read top to bottom, right to left:
"This side for the address only."



Two identical stationeries,
one with Japanese inscription
みほん "specimen"
on the front and
issue details on the back

kanji 郵政省 for "Ministry of Post"



Complete 6-stamp booklet sold in ATMs (Japan, 1988)

katakana シール for [shi'ru], "adhesive" (as a loanword from
English "seal") and hiragana ゆう for "postal"

Traditionally written in the vertical, **Japanese** belongs to the **Japonic** language family. Spoken by about 125 million people, it uses three writing systems together: **kanji**, borrowed from Chinese, and two syllabaries, **hiragana** and **katakana**.

The origin of kanji in Japanese
is the Chinese characters (hanzi)

War Tax overprint for
Air Defense (China, 1945)

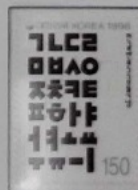
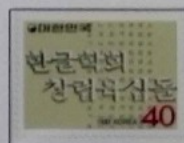


There was a movement **Rōmazi no Nippon** promoting the use of the **Latin** alphabet (**rōmaji**) for writing Japanese. Today, the movement has largely lost its influence.

Some of the
oldest kanji
are
pictographi
c. The kanji
for "gate",
門 (mon),
appears in
many words
and still
resembles a
gate or
doorway.



The "gate" kanji in the red commemorative postmark and on the stamp
"雷門" (the "Thunder's Gate", a landmark in Tokyo)



Korean syllables are made up of
individual letters (jamo), grouped
together:

한 (han) = ㅎ + ㅏ + ㄴ
글 (geul) = ㄱ + ㅡ + ㄹ

King Sejong the
Great and his
scholars designed
hangul as a phonetic
alphabet, and
introduced it in 1446.

平成2年5月1日発行

整理番号	神奈川-160
広告主	財団法人 日本のローマ字社

郵便はがき

3 4 4 -

藤崎文郎様

春日部市大沼3-59-3

五月二十日は
Rōmazi no Hiです

このはがきには1954年昭和29年国内告示第1号による書きかたに示されたものです。これは昨年9月に国際標準化機構 (ISO) でも採択されました。

財団法人 日本のローマ字社
〒101 東京都千代田区神田 淡路町 2-23-401 ☎03-255-2896

4 MAY 1989

売価 36円

Rōmazi no Nippon

The **Korean** language, almost an isolate, uses the **hangul** alphabet, one of the few in the world whose creation, date and inventor are precisely known.



UBG 123 G.1 Language families G.1.3 Semite Branch in Afro-asiatic languages

Semitic languages are an important group of the **Afro-Asiatic** family. Different writing systems nowadays, but an ancestral language in common.



Phoenician, the origin of Greek and Latin alphabets



Maltese uses an adapted Latin alphabet

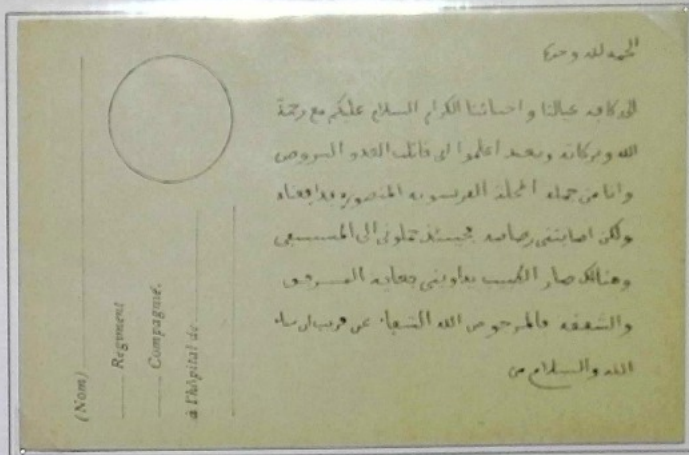


World Day of Arabic Language (Egypt, 2016)

An ancient art, **Arabic** calligraphy is renowned for its graceful curves that transform words into elaborate artistic designs.



Postage-free card in Hebrew for soldiers on active service - Religious card distributed by a Jewish religious foundation - "Inspector 1013" handstamp (Israel, 21.12.1976)



Arabic is written from right to left. A postage-free form card provided to wounded soldiers to send to their families in or from North Africa French possessions. (France, WWI)

Hebrew and Arabic are written in **abjads**, in which mainly consonants are represented. **Amharic**, the largest Semitic language in Ethiopia, is written in the Ethiopic (Ge'ez) script, an **abugida** with consonants combined to vowels, in a total of 231 symbols (33 consonants × 7 vowel forms).



Return handstamps in Amharic language. Letter from Djibouti to Addis Abeba, Ethiopia (10.7.1968)

U16 123
G.1 Language families
G.1.4 Indo-European languages



A landmark in English



The first Bible in Spanish



"Thanks so much", in French

Indo-European is a large language family whose many diverse languages of Billions of people. The languages may seem quite different, yet they all preserve traces of their common Proto-Indo-European (PIE) ancestor.

Registered letter receipt from Wolmar, Livonia Province (now Latvia), for an insured letter valued at 57 rubles. The fees were 7 kopeks for registration and 29 kopeks for insurance up to 57 rubles.

(Russian Empire, 1884)



Cyrillic is the alphabet adopted by the Russian and several other Slavic languages



Official Service cover printed in Sinhala, Sri Lanka's main language, and sent from Katuneriya to the Post Headquarters in Colombo (Sri Lanka, 02.10.1977)



Red color shift - Hindi language day



An Assamese language newspaper

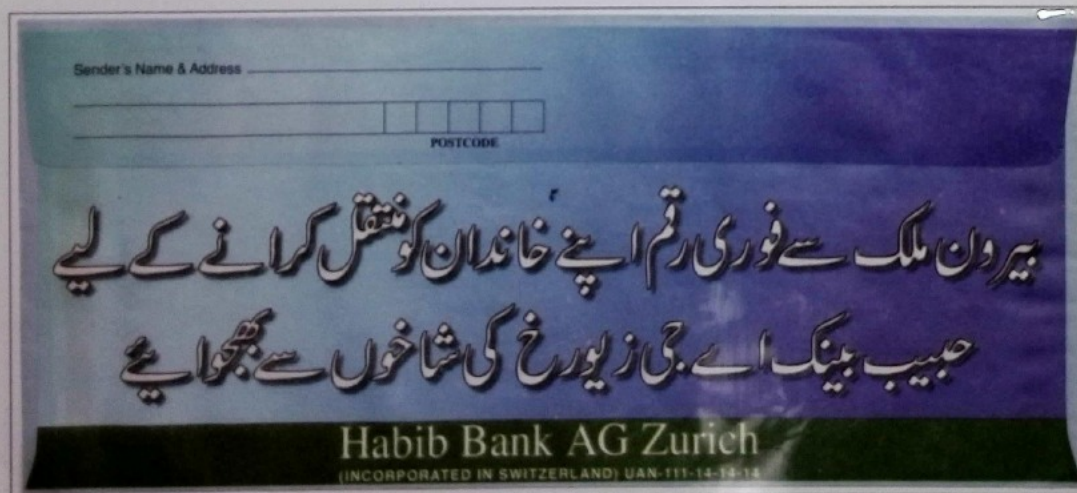
Indian subcontinent is one of the geographical anchors of this vast IE language family, together with Europe.



Odia language (Bamra State, 1890)



Bengali language (Bangladesh)



Message printed in Urdu, featuring a Habib Bank ad on remittances to families abroad. Back of a 4-rupee postal stationery. (Pakistan, 1990s).

Urdu (in Pakistan) and Persian (Farsi, in Iran) adopted the Arabic script, adapted to Indo-Aryan sounds, although they belong to the Indo-European language family.



First Artistic and Cultural Congress of Calligraphy, in Persian (Iran, 1987)

The human inclination to explore new places has brought different languages into contact, fostering the exchange of words and grammatical features and giving rise to new pidgins and creoles.



Arabic *qahwa* (قهوة), meaning first "a drink", then "coffee" ⇒ Ottoman Turkish *kahve* ⇒ Italian *caffè* ⇒ Dutch *koffie* led to English coffee

Advertisement on the back of a postage stamp (New Zealand, 1893)

Arabic rule in the Iberian Peninsula over nearly seven centuries left thousands of words in European languages.



"Sirop", from شراب [sarāb], another word for "a drink" (Belgium, 1930)

"One thousand years of the Kingdom of Badajoz" (Spain, 2014)



Old English got influences from Nordic languages for Viking incursions to British Isles.

Complete stamp booklet (Jersey, 1987)

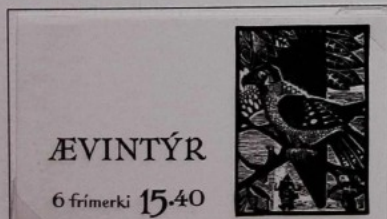


The word "pajama", from Persian پادجامه [pāy-jāmeḥ] "clothes for legs". Pitney Bowes meter stamp (USA, 1947)

Greek and Latin were once the main sources of borrowed words, followed by French and, nowadays, English (as "Hobby" and "Know-how" were incorporated to German).



A FRANKIT meter stamp from a "2D", a Frama machine (Germany, 2010) "Hobby" and "Know-how" incorporated to German.



North Germanic Faroese language has *ævintýr* ("fairly tale" or "adventure") derived from Latin *adventura* ("what is about to happen").

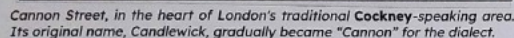
Complete stamp booklet (Faroe Islands, 1984)



Back of a complete stamp booklet (Germany, 1977)



Irish scrúdóir ("censor") derives from Latin scrūtāri ("to rummage through rubbish"), via English scrutinize, "to examine". (Ireland, 9.10.1941)

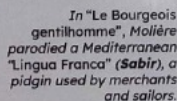


THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE <i>He wants to make good on the bloke. "You can't," says the bloke.</i> <i>C. D. Brown</i> THE BLOKE Australia 27C	THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE <i>"The 'new' Doreen," a kid "The 'old' she's a kid 'The 'new' she's a kid 'The 'old' she's a kid."</i> <i>C. D. Brown</i> THE BLOKE Australia 27C	THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE <i>I only make me believe, I'm in To get the goods in for 'em. "You can't," says the bloke.</i> <i>C. D. Brown</i> THE BLOKE Australia 27C	THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE <i>"You can't make me believe, 'You can't make me believe, 'You can't make me believe, 'You can't make me believe."</i> <i>C. D. Brown</i> THE BLOKE Australia 27C	THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE <i>A bloke who's a bloke who's a bloke when I am gone. Love and the bloke who's a bloke who's a bloke when I am gone.</i> <i>C. D. Brown</i> THE BLOKE Australia 27C
---	---	---	---	---

Ne schöne Groß
rum köliche Fastelovend
(Kölher Karneval)

Kello Hanna!
bom Karneval
Di fühl. ju.
Hate sp du mijs
selbi be-
kengst
Ali

Pidgins are simplified contact languages that appear in ports, border areas and places without a common language. **Creoles** are languages evolved from pidgins that became the native language of a community.



The "Molière Fountain" in Paris. Postal stationery (France, 1936)



"Rache" (German word for "revenge") is a key clue in "A Study in Scarlet", the first Sherlock Holmes novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.
Complete postage stamp (UK, 1986)

The basic unit of language is the **WORD**. Written with one or more symbols, a word can serve different functions and represent from concrete objects to highly abstract concepts.

Magritte's painting *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* ("This is not a pipe") can also be read as a reminder that a word is not the object it names.



Word count is the basis for telegram rates.
"5 pfennig per Word" in this Machine stamp
(Germany, May 11 1959)



A famous linguistic example of a word serving functions is "**Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo Buffalo**," using the city name, the animal (invariable plural) and as a verb (= "to bully")



Pre-adhesive fold letter from Buffalo, NY to Detroit (USA, 1844)



Säästä (Finnish verb for "save, spare") a full abstract concept in just one word.
Machine stamp and a censorship handstamp (Finland, May 6 1943)



A word can be short (as the pronoun "I") or extraordinarily long, but the Welsh village **Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch** (*) is a famous extreme.

(*) The church of St. Mary in the hollow of the white hazel near the rapid whirlpool and the church of St. Tysilio by the red cave."

Scan to hear it:



"Zivilarbeiterpostkarte" (German for "post card for civilian workers" in only one word)

Special stationery issued for civilian workers under the German occupation administration. During the later years of the war, many Belgian civilian workers were employed under compulsory labor schemes (sent to another Zivilarbeiter-Bataillon, January 1918)

Words evolve, change, travel across languages and cultures, acquiring new meanings. The fascinating study of their history is called **Etymology** from ἔτυμος (étymos) = genuine and λόγος (lógos) = study.

Rosa Parks



Rosa Parks

Standard stamp

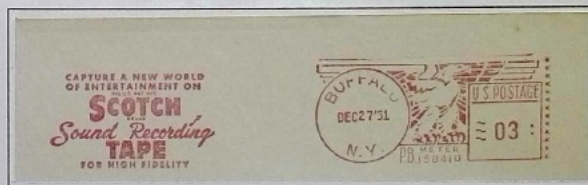
**Missing
serpentine
die-cut around
all stamps**

"Courage" comes from the Latin *cor, cordis* ("heart"), through Old French *corage*.
Border of a 20-stamp pane (USA, 2013)



"Haut les cœurs!" (hearts): a French expression for "Keep your spirits up!"
Postage-free stationery for soldiers during WWI (France, 19.APR.1916)

"Concordia", Italian for concord. The underlying image is "hearts together" (con + cor), people whose hearts are aligned
 Registered letter sent from Concordia sulla Secchia to Modena (Italy, 1911)



A sound recording tape - Pitney Bowes meter stamp (USA, 1951)

"Recording" - given
"heart" in Antiquity was
seen as the seat of
memory, so Latin cordis
produced recordāri
meant "to recall,
remember"

The Latin *cor, cordis* ("heart") has grown into a vast family of words. through centuries of linguistic evolution and the addition of prefixes and suffixes, it has given rise to countless expressions in many languages.

"[agreed] amending agreement": "accord" and "concordat" are two additional words from "heart"



In many cases, the journey is extremely long, yet words preserve most of their "soul". The word *Ebano* ("ebony") is from Ancient Greek ἔβενας (*ébenos*), and from Ancient Egyptian *hbny* [ebenī].



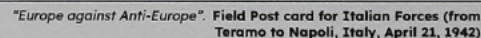
German *Bitumen* (direct from Latin for asphalt, from a PIE root for "resin", Ebano brand **Francotyp meter stamp** (Germany, 1935)



Warning against enclosing notes or objects in the letter sheet.
Back of a 10-lepta letter sheet postal stationery (Greece, 1907)

ἀντί- (anti-) = against, facing
αντικείμενο (antikeimeno) = object

Greek and Latin affixes — elements added to the beginning (**prefixes**) or the end (**suffixes**) of a word — have become international and are still widely used to derive new words.



In Italian the X was replaced by an S.
Stamps for the express service (Fiume and Italy, overprinted
"Libia")

“ΓΟΡΓΟΠΟΤΑΜΟΣ”
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 25.11.1982

ἀντί (anti) = against *plus*
στάσις (stásis) = standing gives "Resistance"
Cancellation on Gorgopotamos' bridge
Sabotage by Greek Resistance (Greece, 1982)

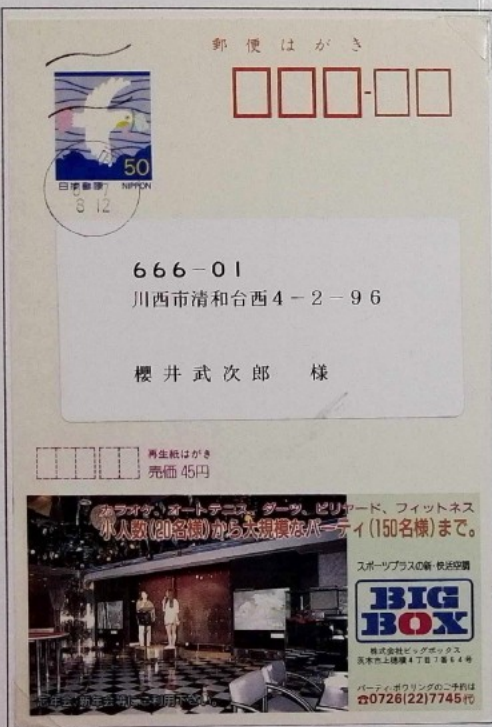
REPUBLICQUE
FRANCAISE
040
POSTES
P-12890

The Latin prefix *super-* ("above, beyond") is still used in many languages to suggest superiority or high quality. **SECAP machine meter stamp (France, 1969)**

The Greek word *mono* (one) is another prefix of great popularity, also in Science. Postal mark of the Italian instance of goods with State monopoly. Sent from Sorrento 13.10, receive stamp in Napoli, 17.10, with "A.C.S." (US Army Censor Station) censorship mark. (Italy, 1945)

UB 123
G.2 An Entire World of Words
G.2.3 New Words and Loanwords

New discoveries, events, inventions and technologies often require **neologisms** (new words) or **loanwords**.



カラオケ: "Karaoke" (Japan, 1961)

From elements of the language, or creating from international roots: **Bildschirm** (screen), **teleprinter** and **telex**.



Showroom was introduced from existing elements in English. **Midget** (Universal Postal Frankers Ltd.) meter stamp (UK, 31.09.1929)
Handstamp used as the meter stamp didn't stroke the added 1p stamp (perfin "N&C")



Cellophane is a portmanteau of cellulose with the French diaphane ("transparent"). **Havas-M** meter stamp (France, 1961)



Bakelite, the material, from inventor's name, Baekeland



Velcro, coined from "velours" and "crochet" - **Havas-M** meter stamp (France, 1962)



Loanwords usually flow from Western to Eastern languages. However, the Japanese words "karaoke" and "tsunami" have become internationally adopted.



Byte is a word coined by IBM engineer Werner Buchholz in 1956 for a basic unit of digital information. **Steiner meter stamp** (Italy, 2000)

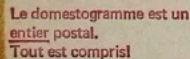


Kwanzaa derives from the Swahili word *kwanza* ("first"). The extra "a" was added when the celebration was created in 1966. **Imperforate stamps** (USA, 2013)



Paparazzi — the Italian plural of the word *paparazzo*, it originated with the character *Paparazzo*, a photographer in Fellini's movie "La Dolce Vita" (1960) and soon became synonymous with celebrity photographers. **Registered letter receipt** of the postal point in the bookshop *Paparazzi*, in the city of La Louvière (Belgium, 2015)

Sometimes commercial brands become very popular, in such a grade that they become a generic name for a class of product. In some countries, that is the case of "gillette" for any razor blade, "maizena" for corn starch and "pyrex" for any tempered glass bowl, and they enter dictionaries (with adaptations) as nouns.



"Domestogramme" a product name formed as "telegramme" **Complete stamp booklet (Canada, 1974)**



ПОЧТОВАЯ КАРТОЧКА
POŠTOVA KARTKA
НАШТОВАЯ КАРТКА
ՆԱՅՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԶԱԿԱՌՈՒՄ
PHILIPS-CHIPS
POSTA KARTE
کرتجیله پوښته
CARTE POSTALE



Куда
 Куди
 Куды
 𐰏𐰣𐰆𐰚
 П^оср
 Nagaĵa
 𐰢𐰆𐰭𐰚𐰤
 Оу

Komy
Komy
Kamy
300
— 11.11
Qima
4.5
A qu

№ 81. Тираж 2.000 000 экз.
Москва, 1931. ГОЗНАК.

Долой суд линча! = **Down with Lynch law** (against black workers) Even Soviets used the name of judge Charles Lynch (1736-1796) to express summary and illegal punishment. **Postal stationery** (USSR, 1931)



Overprint for
airmail
carried
by airships



U.S. & CANADIAN

From the designer's surname, **zeppelin** became a generic term for cigar-shaped airships. **Kiwifruit**, named after New Zealand's national bird, was introduced by exporters as a marketing strategy for "chinese gooseberry"



DRN PRODUCTS COMPANY LTD. KORNHAUSBRÜCKE 7 ZÜRICH

Tit. J. Stähelin-Mohn A.-G.
Kolonialwaren, Oele & Drogen en gros,
Amriswil.



Maizena corn starch — Hasler/P meter stamp (Switzerland, 1934)

& Supply Co.

IN STREETS
OKLAHOMA

SEE WHAT'S
COOKING IN
PYREX WARE



Pyrex for the material or any tempered glass cookware — Pitney Bowes Meter stamp (USA, 1949)

INDIAN POSTS & TELEGRAPHS DEPTT.
RECEIPT FOR INLAND TELEGRAM

Class	Amount	No.	Date
	Rs. A.		(or date stamp)

Office of Origin

This new Razor and 5 New Gillette Blades...at little more than the price of 5 new Gillette Blades alone!

Note the New

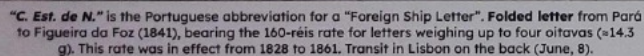
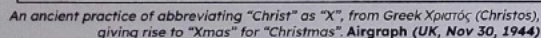


- ① PATENTED POSITIVE-REGISTRATION BLADE THAT ASSURES NEAR-SKIVING COMFORT.
- ② BLADE SPECIALLY TREATED TO RESIST TARNISH OR DISCOLORATION.
- ③ CHANNEL GUARD AND SLIDE TO PROTECT THE SKIVER'S HAND AND KEEP THE SKIVER CLEAN WITH RESPECT SAFETY.

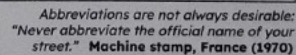
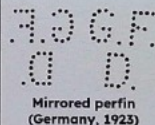
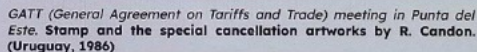


Gillette razor blade advertisement on a Telegram receipt (India, 4.10.1934)

People have always shortened words into abbreviations to save time and space. In most cases they are read as a new word.



Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Complete stamp booklet (USA, 1993)

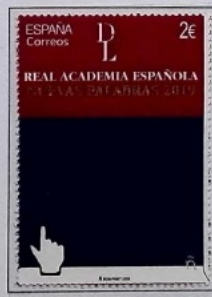
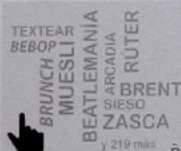


A lexicographer's work of collecting and defining words is painstaking, but the ultimate reward is seeing the author's name become synonymous with his dictionary.



"Littre street" in Paris, named after the lexicographer Émile Littré. Reception mark on the back of a pneumatic postal stationery from P.O. 71 (Place Victor Hugo) at 18:10 to the P.O. 43 (France, 1930)

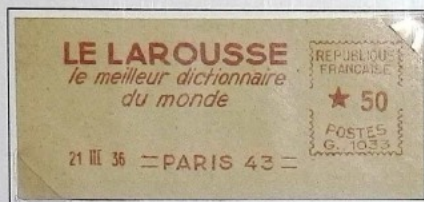
New words (229) were added to a new edition of the dictionary of Royal Spanish Academy, the most important for Spanish. Some are hidden here under a thermal ink cover (Spain, 2019)



In our days, many new dictionary entries come from the digital practices.



A list of 10 new words (or new meanings, like "avatar") for the online world in French Complete booklet of adhesive stamps (France, 2017)



Pierre Larousse (1817-1875) is linked to French dictionaries and encyclopedias. Havas meter stamp (France, 1936)

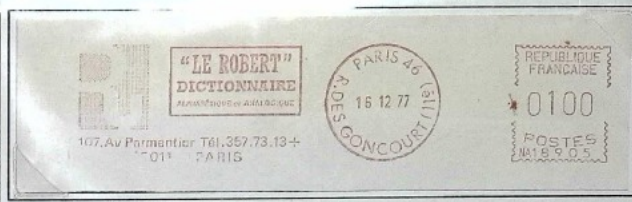


Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

Samuel Johnson's use of literary quotations to illustrate definitions set the standard for every major dictionary that followed.



Konrad Duden (1829-1911). His dictionary since 1880 established the standard spelling of modern German.



"The" Littré, "the" Larousse and "the" Robert: the way major French dictionaries are often treated, with intimacy. Havas meter stamp (France, 1977)



The brothers began the project in 1838. Wilhelm died working on the letter D, and Jacob reached the entry Frucht.

Better known for their fairy tales, the Brothers Grimm began the monumental *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, completed in 1961, 123 years after its publication was launched.

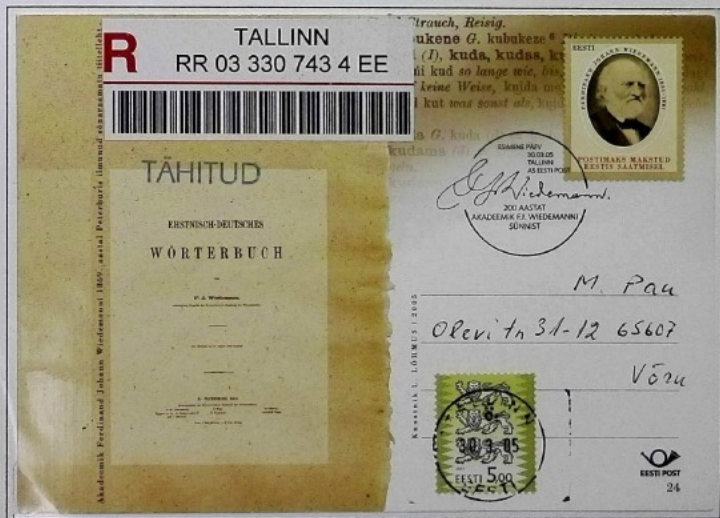
Centenary of a monument to Brothers Grimm Francotyp meter stamp (Germany, 1977)



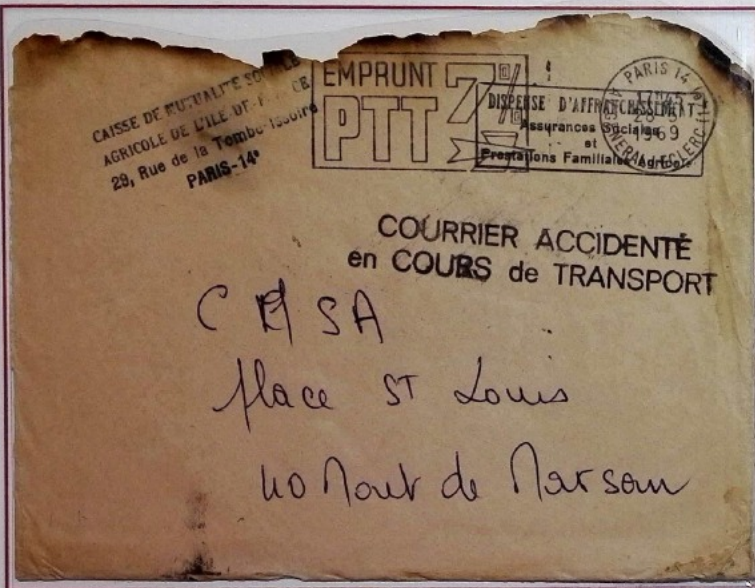
Johan Hendrik van Dale (1828-1872) gave his name to "the Van Dale", the standard dictionary of the Dutch language.

Unlike monolingual dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries provide equivalents between two languages, highlighting their differences. A good one reflects actual usage.

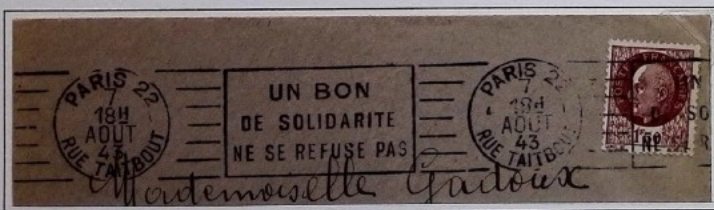
The 1869 edition of the Estonian-German dictionary by Ferdinand Wiedemann (1805-1887). Registered postal stationery (Estonia, 2005)



In Romance languages, the adjectives change according to the gender and the plural of the words, an additional complication for non-native speakers.



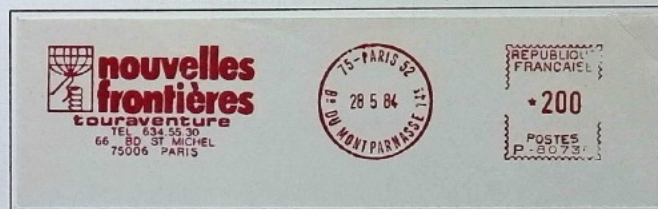
French mark "Mail accidented during the transportation". As "Courrier" is a male word, "accidenté" is a male participle. **Postage-free letter** (from the French Social Security), recovered from a DC4 plane crash at Orly (Paris), 25-may-1969. The letter re-entered the postal system on May 28th (machine stamp)



"Un bon de solidarité ne se refuse pas" - French counts on double negation. Machine stamp (France, 1943)



In Italian, "letter" is a female word, so "affrancata" (franked) with an "A". Folded letter sent from Civita Castellana (Italy, received May 9, 1819)



"New frontiers", with "nouvelles" in plural and feminine, to meet "nouvelle". Havas-Mécanoposte meter stamp (France, 1978)



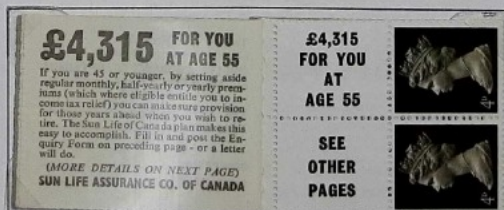
"The new man", being "nouveau" the masculine singular for "new" Havas-Mécanoposte meter stamp (France, 1978)



"Do not swear", with the Dutch negation in the end Pitney Bowes meter stamp (Netherlands, 1978)



In French, "Sang" (blood) is male, "Vie" (life) is female. That is reflected respectively in the masculine "Donné" (given) and the two E for feminine in "Sauvée" - Havas meter stamp (France, 1971)



Invariable adjective in English "new" with the noun "Pages" in plural

Stamp tab in a complete stamp booklet (United Kingdom, 1969)

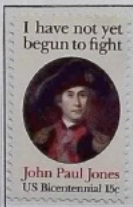
G.3 Grammar: every Word has a Role
G.3.2 Verbs: the Words that make Things Happen

Verbs describe actions, occurrences, and states of being. Their forms vary across languages to express time, mood, aspect, voice, and agreement with the subject.

The **Infinitive** is the basic form of a verb.



French for "To receive"
Postage due stamp
(Tunisia, 1920s)



Auxiliary verb "to have"
(USA, 1976)



HALLE 2
402
SALVADOR-ALLENDE
GEDENKEN
11.10. 1973
VENCEREMOS

Venceremos ("we will win, in Spanish)

Germanic languages need an auxiliary verb to mark actions in the **future**, and the pronoun is necessary.



"I WILL", a perfin from Chicago
(USA, 1943)

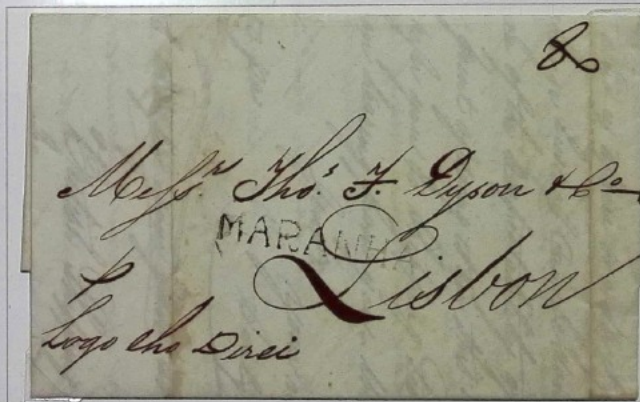


Vi vill vinne
("we will win")
(Norway, 1943)

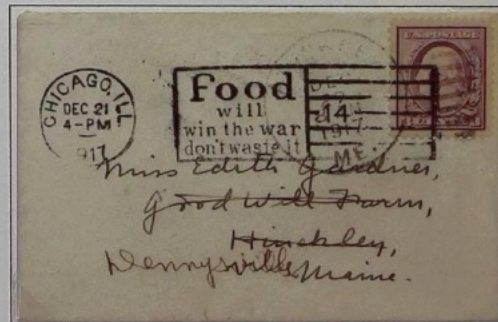


"To act. To react. To decide", verbs in Portuguese, in the 3rd conjugation (infinitive forms ending in -IR)

Detail of a letter sent through "Correio Azul" an official service of express mail. The ATM bears the first domestic rate, up to 20 grams. (Portugal, 2014)



"Logo the direi" (I will tell you soon), the name of the brigantine that carried mail between Brazil and Portugal. The word "direi" is Portuguese for "I will tell". Fold letter from Maranhão Province to Lisbon, paid 80 reis, the first rate for maritime mail (Brazil, 1819)



"Food will win the war" (USA, 1917)



Infinitive forms of French verbs for "To prevent. To heal. To rejuvenate". Letter examined by Belgian Censor No. 191, sent from Switzerland in June 1945.

In most Romance languages, the verbal forms alone are enough to indicate tense, mood, and person.



Ritorneremo! ("We will be back"). The suffix -er- marks the future tense, while the ending -emo indicates the first-person plural "we". Italian military field postcard (from P.M. 43, 1st Army Corps Heavy Motor Unit, to Tronzano Vercellese, Dec. 13, 1942)

1.1 Naming the World

1.1.1 Naming, renaming, nicknaming

Onomastics is the study of names. Our tendency to create names, nicknames and epithets reflects how we understand and remember the world.



"You Quisling!": The surname of Norwegian prime-minister **Vidkun Quisling** (1887-1945) entered several languages as a common noun meaning "traitor" or Nazi "collaborator".



Elizabeth I, "The Virgin Queen" and "Good Queen Bess", and Agatha Christie, "The Queen of Crime": some famous epithets of distinguished British women.

✠ The monogram of the co-princes of Andorra is based on the **Chi-Rho**, a symbol with its own name representing Christ. Complete stamp booklet (Andorra, 1991)



Perestroika: the Russian word for "restructuring" became the symbol of an era, as the reforms introduced in the USSR ultimately led to its dissolution.



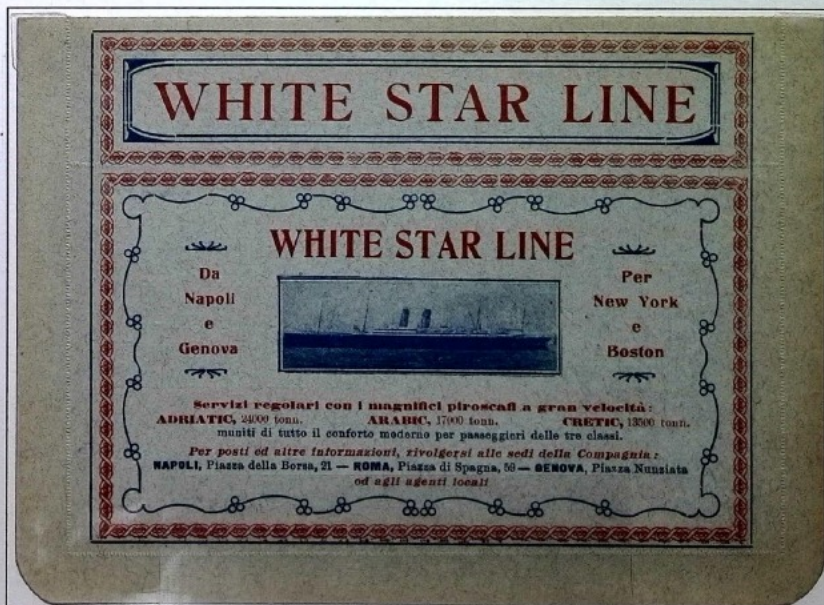
"A Brave Poilu". *Poilu* ("hairy") was the nickname of French soldiers during World War I. Veterans maimed in the war later became known as the **Gueules Cassées** ("Broken Faces"). Field-post form (16 Sep. 1918) and a



Surface-air letter posted at New York Grand Central. Carried across the Atlantic by the S.S. "Majestic" and forwarded by air within Europe to Erlangen, Germany. Transit postmark applied on back at Nuremberg Airport, on 10 January. The 12¢ postage paid the combined surface-and-air US postal service, rate in effect that same day, 1 January 1936.



The veterans maimed in the war later became known by the French as the **Gueules Cassées** ("Broken Faces"). Complete stamp booklet (May 1934) promoting a lottery for wounded veterans.



Adriatic, Arabic, Celtic... Ships have proper names as identifiers, an ancient tradition. The "White Star Line" company gave nearly all its ships names ending in *-ic*, turning a simple ending into the company's trademark, including the tragic Titanic. Busta Lettera Postale from the 3rd series, Toscana (Italy, 1922)

1.1 Naming the World

1.1.2 Places: Toponyms and Exonyms

Toponymy is the study of the origin and evolution of place names, the **toponyms**, many of which date back thousands of years. New political powers, languages, pronunciation and meanings have produced remarkable names.

Addis Abeba, the transliteration of the capital city of Ethiopia in Amharic, means "New Flower".



A

DDI

S



A

BE

BA

An **exonym** is the name a people gives to another country.

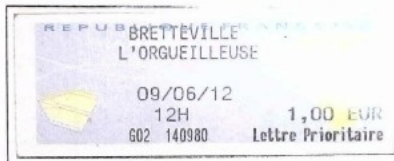
Armenia is an exonym of Persian and Greek origin, while Armenians call their country *Hayastan* [Hayastan], the "Land of the Hay people".



"Dove of Peace" embroidered stamp of a joint issue promoted by United Nations (2025)



The local name *Sverige* and its exonyms in 18 languages on the cover of this Complete stamp booklet (Sweden, 1982)



About this town, "a ville of Britons", there are Latin documents referencing to it as *Orguilloza* (in the year 1078) and *Superba* (1249). It may refer to the pride - or, maybe, the fierceness - of its inhabitants. ATM label (France, 2012)



Egyptian censorship marks. Censor n. 5 handstamp on the back (Cairo to Paris, 30.APR.1945)



The name of the southern French region of *Languedoc* comes from "langue d'oc". In medieval France, people in the south said *oc* for "yes", while those in the north said *oïl*, the ancestor of modern French "oui".



China (transliterated from the *Qin* dynasty) is pronounced differently across Western languages. *Китай* [kee-tye], the Russian form, uses a Turkic-derived word.

German and Russian stamps overprinted for use in their respective post offices in China (1900).

Cairo: the Arabic name القاهرة [al-Qāhira] means "the Victorious" or "the Conqueror" (feminine), a surprising meaning to those unfamiliar with Arabic.



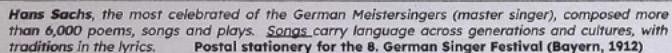
Hungary, called "Magyarország" by its inhabitants, appears here under three exonyms: Russian "Белгрия" [VEN-grya], German "Ungarn", and French "Hongrie". Russian postcard for Hungarian POW. Sent from Orenburg (26 May 1916) to Nyirbátor (arr. 16 June). It bears double censorship: a blue bilingual censor mark from the cemo and the usual red German triangular censor mark applied in Vienna.



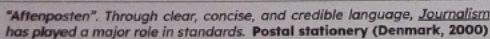
misperforate

Named after King Louis XIV of France, *Louisiana* preserves the memory of French exploration in North America

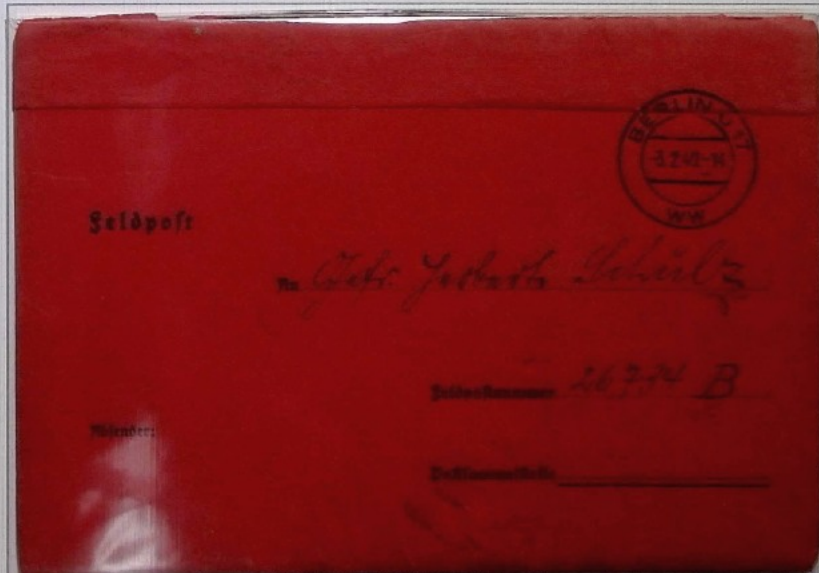
The pleasure of writing led to different ways to express ideas and emotions with art: poet. and songs, journalism, literature or simple letters.



"- Thanks God! A field postcard!" Personal letters carried news, thoughts and expressions of intimacy across great distances. Field post card sent to Hampont (Germany, arr. 11.NOV.1914)

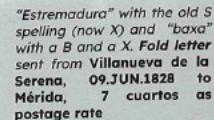
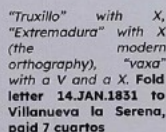
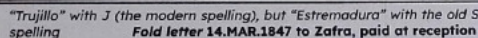


Literature explores the expressive power of language. A course on short story writing. **Proof of stamp** booklet covers from a print plate (UK, 1955)

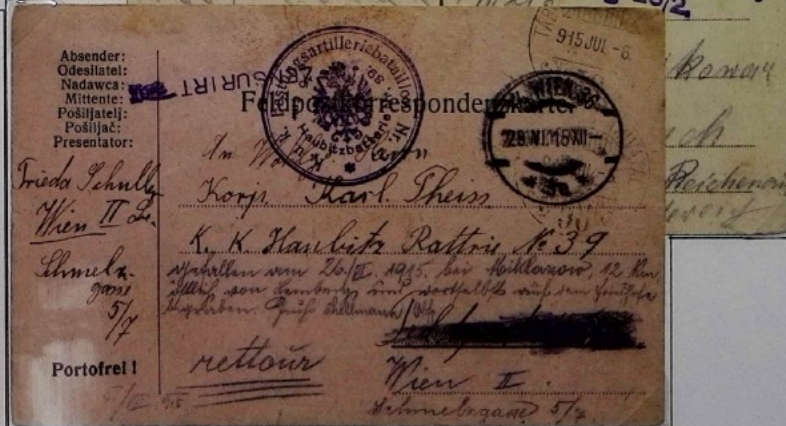


"The History of the Seven Swabs", anonymous author, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 32 pages, price: 20 Pf. Field-post booklet with a wraparound cover serving as both closure and address panel, sent from Berlin to a soldier in the field (3 Feb. 1940).

Orthography standardizes a language's written form through convention, yet it evolves even when pronunciation remains unchanged. Old and new spellings coexisted in the 19th and early 20th centuries.



Multiple letters may represent the same sound, making spelling difficult. As literacy increased, spelling became standardized. In historical Spanish, B and V were pronounced alike, and X, G and J could represent the same sound.



German "censored" appeared in three spellings during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the modern *zensuriert*, the transitional *zensurirt* (without the silent "e"), and the older *zensuriert*, retaining the Latin initial *c*, already pronounced as *Z* [ts]. Three Austro-Hungarian field postcards, from left to right: 14 Dec. 1915, to Bohemia; 28 June 1915, addressed to a corporal and returned with annotation *der Herrschaften*, with little blue notations and a picture postcard of Trieste sent to *Reichenau*, bearing the signature handstamp of a military censor.

1.2 The Art of Language

1.2.2 Orthography

The historical /b/ and /v/ sounds merged in Spanish into a single phoneme. The spelling how the word sounds gave "Almodobar" and "billa" instead of "villa".

"Billafranca" with a "B", instead of a "V".
Fold letter 01.AUG.184. 5 cuartos rate



"Almodobar" with a "B": Fold letter,
01.AUG.1857, 6 cuartos rate.



"Jalapa" with J, leaving the traditional X. Two-reales stamp with district overprint "Jalapa"
01.AUG.185x to Ciudad de Mejico (with J)



The Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) in the 1760's made J the standard for the aspirated sound but allow proper names to retain X. Mexico kept the old X, whereas the state of Jalapa adopted the new spelling with J.



"Mejico" (1864)



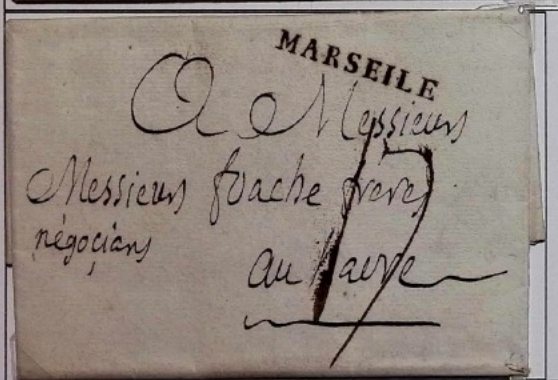
"Diez y seis" instead of modern "dieciséis"



"Portuguesa": this spelling changed to "S" in 1911



"Ytu", a town in Brazil, now spelled with an I, "Itu" (c. 1850)

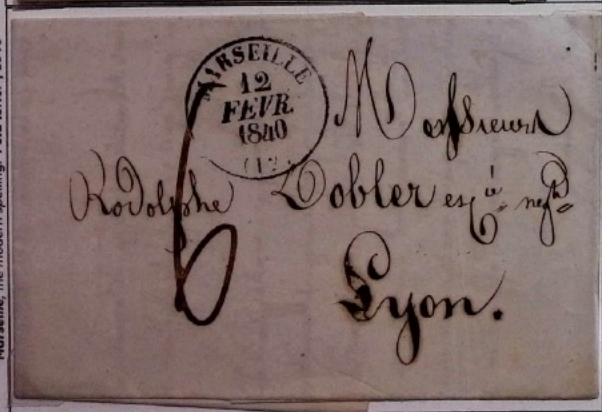


The orthography of a language evolves through the years and occasional reforms.

"Marseille", just an occasional spelling. Diderot's Encyclopédie (1751) already used double LL. Fold letter sent to Le Havre, 1787.



In the short-lived Spanish Republic (1873-74), one of the earliest postal stationeries in the country was issued with the misspelling "Tarjeta". Sent from Valencia to Barcelona, 23.May.1874



UBG 123

1.2 The Art of Language

1.2.2 Orthography

In formal writing, correct spelling is absolutely necessary. Yet typographical errors, the "typos", are inevitable and revisions a necessity.



"Egyp^t" instead of "Egypt"



Belle Glade (FL), pre-cancelled stamp misspelled as "Grade"



"Ofical" instead of "Official"



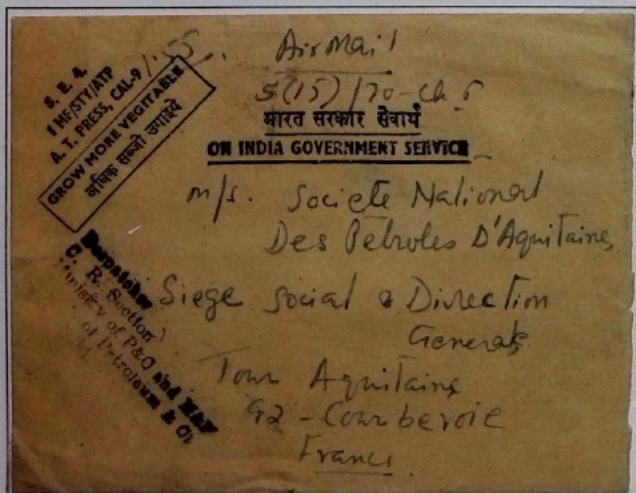
DEUTSCHES X "DFUTSCHES" misspelling



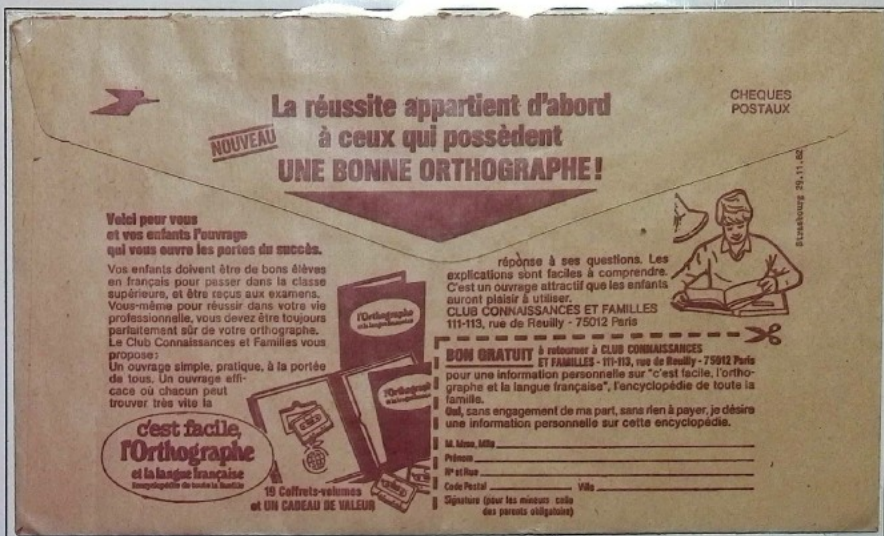
Hypercorrection happens when speakers or writers overapply a rule, producing an unintended error.



"Philatélique", with a "TH", doesn't exist in French. It was caused for the many "the", as in "bibliothèque". Machine stamp (France, 2002)



"Grow more vegetable" (instead of "vegetables"), an error for the sound postage-free official cover (India to France, 1971)



Voici pour vous et vos enfants l'ouvrage qui vous ouvre les portes du succès.

Vos enfants doivent être de bons élèves en français pour passer dans la classe supérieure, et être reçus aux examens. Vous-même pour réussir dans votre vie professionnelle, vous devez être toujours parfaitement sûr de votre orthographe. Le Club Connaissances et Familles vous propose:

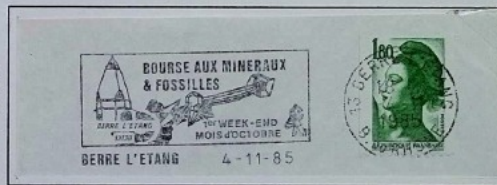
Un ouvrage simple, pratique, à la portée de tous. Un ouvrage efficace où chacun peut trouver très vite la

réponse à ses questions. Les explications sont faciles à comprendre. C'est un ouvrage attrayant que les enfants auront plaisir à utiliser. CLUB CONNAISSANCES ET FAMILLES 111-113, rue de Reuilly - 75012 Paris

OFFERT GRATUIT à retourner à CLUB CONNAISSANCES ET FAMILLES - 111-113, rue de Reuilly - 75012 Paris pour une information personnelle sur "c'est facile, l'orthographe et la langue française", l'encyclopédie de toute la famille. Quel, sans engagement de ma part, sans rien à payer, je désire une information personnelle sur cette encyclopédie.

Nom, Prénom, Adresse, Code Postal, Ville, Signature (pour les mineurs: celle des parents obligatoires)

"Fossilles", with double "LL", is an error, a form never used in French. That probably happened for the many words with a final "ille". Machine stamp (France, 1985)



"Success belongs above all to those who master correct spelling" Postal check cover (France, 1990s)

"Cosinheiro (S instead of Z)" is a bad spelling (Portuguese) for a "cook", that form never was used. Francotyp CC meter stamp (Portugal, 1958)



ESTABELECIMENTOS
JERÓNIMO MARTINS & FILHO
LIMITADA
FUNDADOR EM 1923
IMPORTAÇÃO
EXPORTAÇÃO
13. R. GARRET, 23
E
55. R. IVENS, 61
P.P.C.A. 32181
LISBOA—PORTUGAL
ENDEREÇO
TELEGRÁFICO
"VIVERES"

LUSITANIA
COMPANHIA PORTUGUESA DE PESCA

FIGUEIRA DA FOZ

P.S. Ma chère,

Bien reçu ta carte. D'accord avec toi, les fromages belges sont excellents. Je t'en servirai à ta prochaine visite afin que tu m'en fasses aussi quand je viendrai chez toi. On est toujours tous les deux, pas vrai?

PUBLIBEL 2306 F



Handwritten postal cancellations from Itabuna (Brazil, late 19th cent.) and from Aliá (Cáceres), Spain, during the Civil War. (7.9.1938)

Among the characteristics that make handwriting unique are letter formation, slant, spacing, pen pressure, line quality, and other individual writing habits.

Nom et adresse de l'expéditeur

Laurent Jean-pierre
av. Chey Chandoche

CARTE POSTALE

SPY



(15 ans)

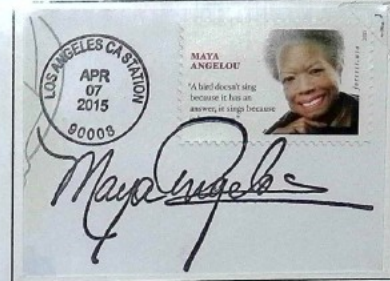
P.S. Ma chère,

Bien reçu ta carte. D'accord avec toi, les fromages belges sont excellents. Je t'en servirai à ta prochaine visite afin que tu m'en fasses aussi quand je viendrai chez toi. On est toujours tous les deux, pas vrai?

PUBLIBEL 2306 F

Belgian cheese advertisement designed as a handwritten message.
Publibel stationery (Belgium, 195)

Handwriting is an entirely personal trait. Likewise, each signature has a unique form that can identify its author.



Postmark with a facsimile of the singer Maya Angelou's signature



An Italian meeting on forensic handwriting examination

Forensic handwriting examination is the scientific comparison of handwriting to legally determine authorship or verify authenticity.

Graphology links some handwriting features to a number of personality traits but that lacks scientific support and is considered a pseudoscience.



A page advertising Graphology in a complete stamp booklet (France, 1959)



Emperor Hirohito declared in radio the defeat of Japan using the vocabulary of the Court. Citizens had a hard time to understand the Emperor's Japanese language.

V-Mail (Palau, WWII)



"Chouette" (an owl) is a French slang for "cool".



A gala event is typically associated with more formal language. Telephoned telegram through Companhia Telefônica Rio Grandense, a regional operator authorized by the Brazilian Post (14.DEC.1946)



Received Pronunciation (RP), often called the "Queen's English", is a prestige accent of British English

Complete stamp booklet (Australia, 2003)



Campaign: "Fight Swearing, Don't Swear" (Netherlands, 1983)

Among friends, slang, colloquial expressions, and swear words are freely used. Many grammatical typical structures

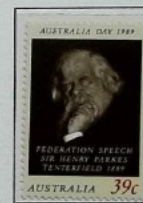
Language reflects different degrees of intimacy and formality toward the interlocutor or audience. In formal settings, the style, grammar and vocabulary are used more carefully. In some languages, vocabulary even differs according to the speaker's gender.

Back

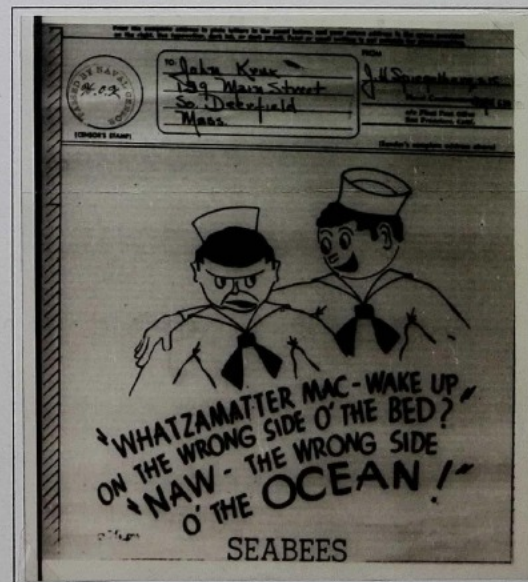


On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech to some 250,000 supporters in Washington, D.C. He eloquently described his faith in equality, justice, and freedom for all. CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1960

Martin Luther King Jr.'s eloquence made him one of the most influential orators of the 20th century.



The Tenterfield Oration of Henry Parkes exemplifies persuasive political rhetoric, combining appeals to unity, reason and national identity in Australia.



"Whatzammatter" (What's a matter), a colloquial form V-Mail (USA, WWII)

Learning a foreign language usually requires a considerable amount of time and some investment, with results very individual.

Le lingue estere vi sono necessarie

Studiatele da soli, in casa, nei ritagli di tempo col Metodo Linguaphone, la scoperta scientifica più sorprendente nel campo dell'insegnamento linguistico.

È un metodo mirabile

dice S. E. Gr. Croce Prof. PIETRO FEDELE, Ministro di Stato, Senatore del Regno, Prof. della R. Univ. di Roma, già Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale, il quale scrive: «Ho sperimentato io stesso il corso di conversazione per la Lingua Inglese dell'Istituto Linguaphone e l'ho trovato eccellente. È un metodo mirabile per apprendere facilmente, rapidamente e con purezza di accento le lingue straniere. - L'aver nella propria casa, in ogni momento lasciati liberi dalle nostre occupazioni, un maestro docile e paziente, ed anche con modestissima spesa, è una vera fortuna.

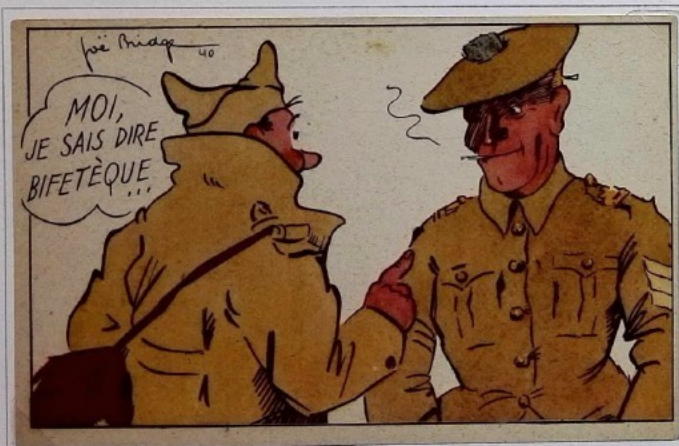
Le lingue inglese, francese, tedesco, spagnola, ecc. bisogna conoscerle. L'Istituto Linguaphone ha inciso 54 corsi in 23 lingue. Ogni vostra richiesta può essere esaudita. Assistenza gratuita, con scambio di corrispondenza, agli allievi.

Sconto di L. 50.-

a chi si serve, nell'acquisto, del presente avviso. - Indirizzare offerte alla "Pubblicità Telegrafica", - Milano - Via Cerva, 40

CHIEDETE IL CATALOGO ILLUSTRATO GRATIS

"Foreign languages are necessary to you — learn by yourself at home and during your free time with the Linguaphone method. 'It is a wonderful method' says professor..." *Language learning has always marketed that as something easy and quick. Italian Post Telegramme sent to Torino (11 JUL 1935)*



A French soldier proudly demonstrates his command of English to a British soldier: "Moi, je sais dire 'bifetèque'" (I know how to say *beefsteak*).

FM Field postcard (France, 1940)



"Learn German in Göttingen" and English through a network of paid hosts providing lodging, to practice the language with native speakers.



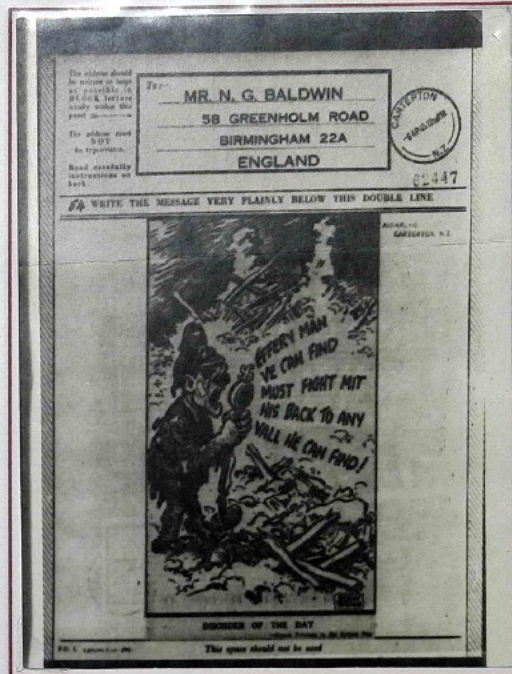
"Size matters not." The character Yoda, from the Star Wars saga, may sound like someone who learned a foreign language later in life, with interference from their native language affecting word order.

Learning a second language (the "L2") so thoroughly that no trace of one's native language remains is quite difficult. Accent and grammar often reveal that it was acquired later in life.



Martin Van Buren grew up speaking Dutch at home and learned English at school. He was the only U.S. president whose first language was not English. He is often said to have spoken English with a Dutch accent, but there is little contemporary evidence to confirm this.

Colour variants (US, 1936)



Adolf, being a native German speaker, would show some typical features of a German accent when speaking English: the letters "v" and "w" pronounced as in German (sounding like [f] and [v]), a guttural [R], and the interference of "mit" instead of "with".
Airmail from Carterton (New Zealand) to Birmingham, 6 APR 1945



Resources for language learning have evolved with technology. To the century-old courses in vinyl discs, tapes, and cassettes were added, followed by CDs, text and chat tools in the 1990s, and eventually digital files, games, websites and smartphone applications.



Linguaphone disc and tape for the learning of a language. Complete stamp booklet (Sweden, 1976)

1.3 Crossing Language Barriers

1.3.2 From Language to Language

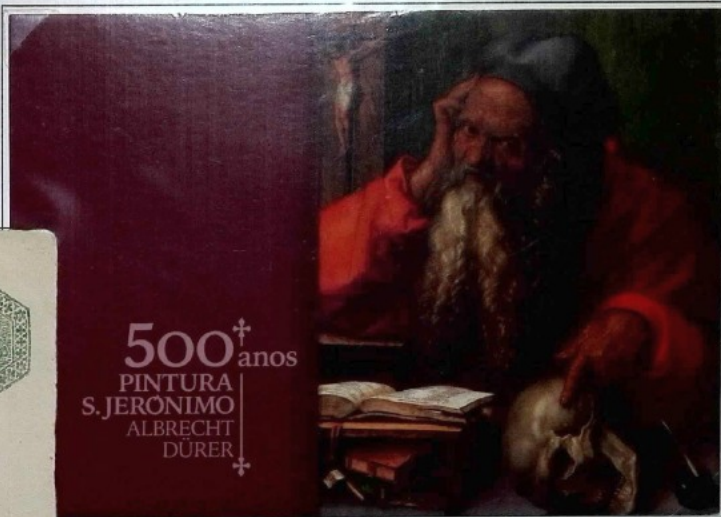
Translators deal with written language, whereas interpreters deal with live conversations.



Jeend, Jind or Jhind? - transliterations are conventions fixed by the usage

راج جینڈ STATE POST CARD جینڈ راج
صرف آطر نام مقام اور نام مکتوب الیہ درج ہوگا
THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.

Postal stationery (Jeend State, Punjab-India, c. 1890)



Saint Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, opening the way to many. His principle of translating the sense rather than the words became a landmark in the history of translation.

Postal stationery (Portugal, 2021)



A fictional interpreter in a Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes novel



Interpreters make high-level international meetings effective. While postal censors filtered texts in other languages, interpreters had an additional task: communication in prisoner-of-war camps.

DICTIONNAIRE-GUIDE
DU **BAIGNEUR** ET DU **TOURISTE**
Eaux minérales Stations hivernales
Bains de mer Ville de plaisance
DEUX ÉDITIONS PAR AN
dans les gares de chemin de fer et dans
les librairies. — Prix: 3 fr. 50.
Administration, 10, Chaussée d'Antin, PARIS.

A LA MENAGÈRE
3, Visux Marché aux Grains
BRUXELLES
POÈLES AMÉRICAINES
ET TOUTS AUTRES GENRES
de Poêles à combustion lente
ARTICLES DE MÉNAGE AU COMPLET

"LA MISSIVE" Carte lettre à 5 c. 10, rue de
la Chaussée d'Antin, PARIS.

THIEN
TRADUCTEUR-JURÉ
28, rue Royale-S^e-Marie
BRUXELLES
LANGUES GERMANIQUES
SPECIALISTE DE LANGUES SLAVES
RUSSE, POLONAISE, ETC.

M^{ME} THIEN
CHIRURGIEN-DENTISTE
Baignoire avec douche
28, rue Royale-S^e-Marie
BRUXELLES
DENTS ET DENTIFIERS
TOUTES OPÉRATIONS DENTAIRES
ET MALADIES DE LA BOUCHE

LE KOSMOS
Compagnie d'Assurances sur la VIE
Fondée en 1862
TARIFS LES PLUS AVANTAGEUX
RACHAT DE MUES-PROPRIÉTÉS
Direction pour la BELGIQUE et le GRAND DUCHÉ
131, Rue Royale. — BRUXELLES
AGENCES DANS TOUTES LES PROVINCES

S'ADRESSER
pour les
ANNONCES
DANS LA
Carte-Lettre-Annonce
VENUE
5 Centimes
à
LA MISSIVE
ADMINISTRATION
10, Chaussée d'Antin
PARIS
NE POUVEZ-VOUS PAS LA CIGARETTE
FABRIQUE ET VENTE EN GROS

Advertisement of a sworn translator, a translator whose translations have legal validity and enjoy public faith. The 10-centime stationery was sold for 5 centimes, with the difference paid by advertisers.

Postal stationery from the 313th issue (1891), published by "La Missive", a French enterprise authorized by the French State in 1887 to sell advertising space on postal stationery (and like this, in Belgium)



Double-censored letter from Dessau (Germany) to a prisoner in the POW camp of Romans, Southeastern France. Censored in Germany and by a camp interpreter. (Z1SEP1915)

Wordplaying is a linguistic universal. Every language exploits similarities in sound, spelling or meaning to create puns, jokes and memorable slogans.

des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"...
à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le
des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"... Dites-le avec des "Prêt-à-Poster"...

LA POSTE

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A pun on the famous French expression prêt-à-porter, created by substituting poster ("to mail") for porter ("to wear").
Release liner on the back of a postal stationery of permanent use (France, 1995)



L'Amiraglio inglese: — Eccellenza, vi propongo di ribattezzare la "Home Fleet": chiamiamola "Verità". Chissà che non rivenga a galla.

"Your Excellence, I propose to rename our Home Fleet to 'Truth'. Perhaps it would eventually come to the surface". An ironical play with Shakespeare's "The truth always comes to light." after many defeats of British Army.

Field post for Italian Forces (Italy, WWII).

"Quod cito perit, cito fit" –
The Dutch Storm-ramp relief campaign reversed the well-known Latin proverb turning it into a call for rapid reconstruction, after a disaster that left thousands homeless.

Postal stationery with an authorized overprint by Huygens Bookshop for the 1925 Storm Relief Fund (Netherlands)



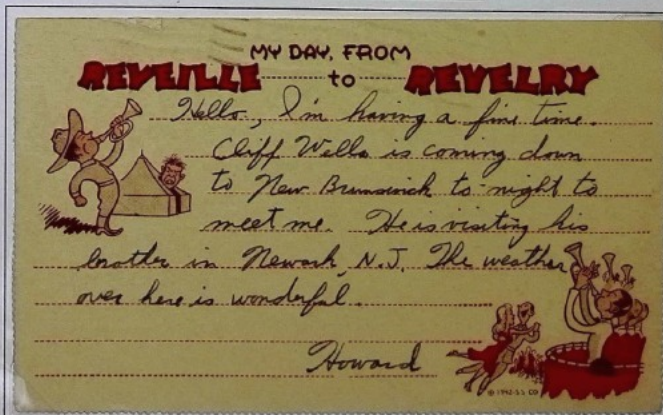
SEE MORE

ON CHANNEL 4



Pitney Bowes meter stamp and additional machine stamp to cancel the stationery (USA, 1960)

Rhymes and alliterations are resources to produce a sound-based wordplay.



The slogan combines alliteration and paronomasia: reveille and revelry share similar sounds but have contrasting meanings. Postage-free V-card for use of soldiers (USA, WWII)

"The word 'envelope' has 8 letters" a pun on the two meaning of the word "letter", among several other postal puns. Complete stamp booklet (France, 2005)



1.4 Playing with Language

1.4.2 Fun from Language

Words are not only used to communicate, but also to play.

Countless **games** and **pastimes** are based on speaking, writing and solving language puzzles.



The tradition of oral riddles is rooted in many cultures. Greeks adopted the **Sphinx** (Σφίγξ), an Egyptian guardian figure with a lion's body and a human head. The greek monster challenged travellers with a **riddle** by saying: "Solve it or I will devour you!"



The children's game **Telephone** (also known as "Chinese whispers") illustrates how spoken messages can become **distorted** as they are passed from person to person.

Stamp made as a lenticular flip image (Switzerland, 2007)



The Sphinx of Giza near the Great Pyramid Postal stationery (Egypt, reception mark on the back: ISMAILIA 14 JA 1891)

Illustrations and humorous rhyming verses, a popular form of entertainment, relying on rhythm (and repetition) rather than literary sophistication.



Rhymed couplets on the soldier's life on an Italian military field postcard (sent from the 8th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment in Ceva (Cuneo) to Verona on 20 February 1943)

A **rebus** is a word puzzle in which pictures, symbols and letters represent a message.



A rebus read as "Hen...ton" Fancy cancellation used by the Post Office in Henton, Illinois, (reception mark on the back: Menasha, WI, USA, NOV 10, 1931)



A French rebus to be read as "Half the city of Quimper is heated by gas" Havas meter stamp (France, 1986)

"Although now regarded as a children's toy, the principle of the **string telephone** through vibration was studied by Robert Hooke in 1667..."



UBG123

1.4 Playing with Language

1.4.2 Fun from Language

A written language game entertains all ages, alone or together. It can be a pastime or an educational resource.



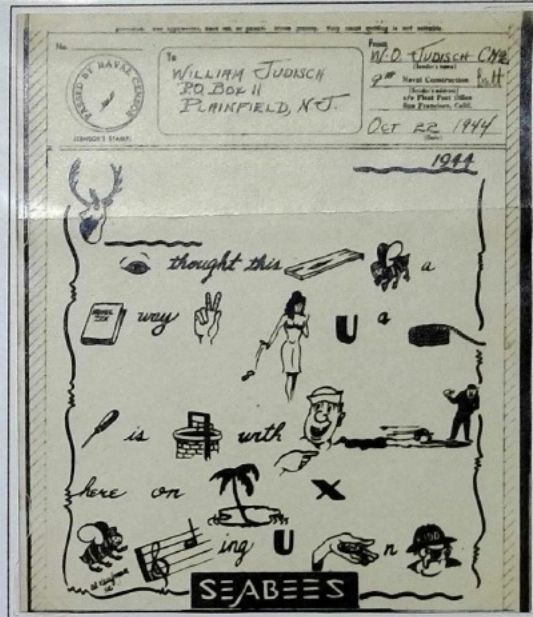
An explained rebus in a dateless (for a bulk mail lower rate) Pitney Bowes meter stamp (USA, 1940's)



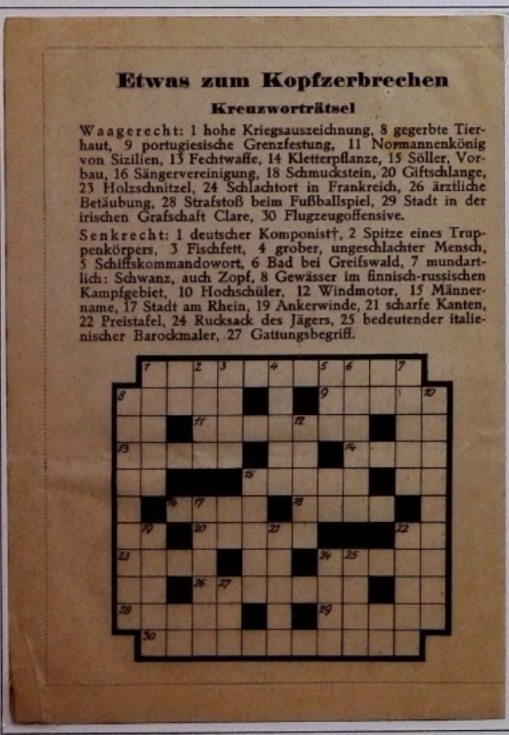
The Roman magical "SATOR Square" is a five-word Latin palindrome: (what can be read in all directions) meaning "The sower Arepo carefully guides the wheels" Its purpose remains uncertain. Mini-Sheet (Macau/China, 2014)



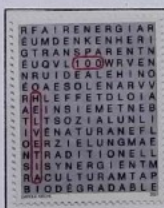
Scrabble, a group game invented in 1938 to improve vocabulary. The letters have a value according to their frequency.



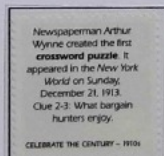
A Rebus Letter starting with "Dear _____, I thought this would be a novel way to..." V-mail (USA, OCT. 22, 1944)



A Crossword Puzzle on a printed field postcard (Germany, WWII)



Modern word search puzzles were first published in the 60's.



Back inscription on a 32c stamp (USA 2013).



Alphabet pasta has been used in soups since at least 1867.



Be a "Friend of Children" - promotion of O.D.D., the Soviet Society founded in 1924, to provide literacy, secular education and children's welfare. It ended in 1935. Postal stationery (USSR, local sending in Kamenets-Podolsk, 15.OCT.1930)

UBG123 2.1 Language and Identity

Because of their profound emotional and cultural significance, languages are central to personal and cultural identity.

The Siegel (Victory) rhune exploited by Nazis for tradition and identity



The Gothic script has long been associated with German culture.

Daf dato ein *Re* mit Gelde *R. S.* sign. worin *4* *Rthlr.* 237
10 Gr. 5 Pf. nach *Treptow* an *H. Thieme*
im hiesigen Post-Amt mit Gr. a Pfund, Loth
wohl eingeliefert worden, wird hiermit attestirt.
Stettin, den *13* April 1791
Königl. Preuss. Grenz-Post-Amt.

Gothic letters in public documents. Noteworthy is that the second, the sixth and the last words, ("dato", "sign." and "attestirt"), are printed in Roman script, because they are "foreign", not Germanic words. Receipt from the Royal Prussic Border P.O. in Stettin, now Poland. Sent 4 thallers, 10 groschen e 5 pfennig sent to Treptow (12.APR.1791)

The many names of Frisian—Fräiske rāid, Frascherādi, Frysk—reflect the rich diversity and strong local identities of its speech communities.



'Orero, the traditional Tahitian art of oratory, celebrates the Tahitian language as a symbol of cultural pride.



"Language, the soul of a Nation" (Indonesia)



Stop polluting our language! A slogan against neutral gender in German language. Individual stamp (Austria, 2022)

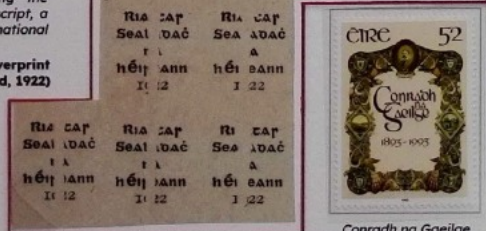
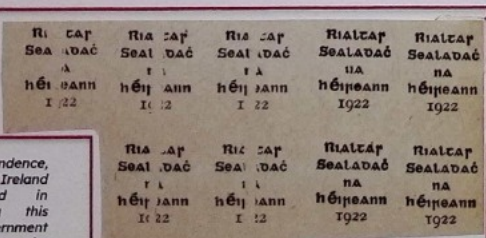


Eurovision has long balanced linguistic identity and international appeal, with the choice of language reflecting both national pride and the desire to reach a wider audience. Pitney Bowes DM800i Frankit meter stamp (Germany, 06.DEC.2010)



With the independence, British stamps in Ireland were overprinted in Irish, including this "Provisional Government of Ireland", using the traditional Irish script, a mark of national identity.

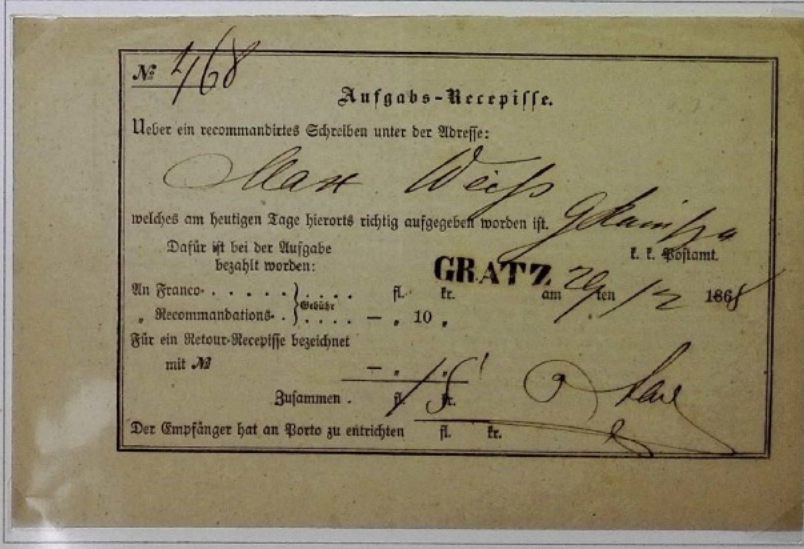
Proofs of the overprint (Ireland, 1922)



"Irish Free State"



Conradh na Gaeilge (Gaelic League), created to promote the language



Gothic letters in all words

Certificate of Postage (Graz, Austria, 29.DEC.1868)

2.2 How some languages have spread
2.2.2 Language expansion

In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias became the first European to round the Cape of Good Hope, paving the way for the sea route from Europe to India and establishing Portugal as a major maritime power.

Complete stamp booklet
(Portugal, 1987)



A colony in Delaware (US)

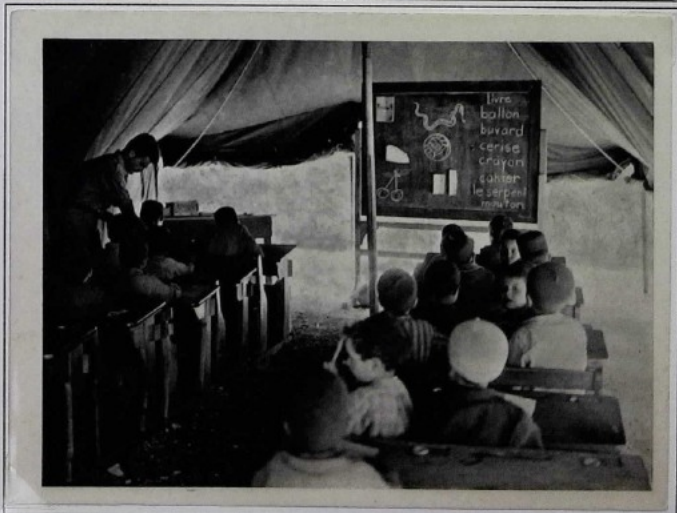
When no common language existed, interpreters relied on gestures, observation, and gradually acquired vocabulary. Many early interpreters learned local languages through prolonged contact, captivity, or residence among foreign peoples.



A Missionary teaching Portuguese to members of an African colonies Postal stationery (Portugal, 23.DEC 1941)



(top, right): Growing contact between colonizers and colonized peoples accelerated the spread of colonial languages. Onepence Mulready stationery (UK, postmarks Birmingham 09.APR.1841 and arrival to London 10.APR)



French military teaching his language to children in Algeria
Postage free field postcard "F.M." (France, 1950s)



Fold letter from Santarém, Portugal, 17.DEC.1840



As part of his program to modernize and Westernize Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk replaced the Arabic script (and many Persian terms) used in Ottoman Turkish with the Latin alphabet, in 1928.



Atatürk showing the Latin alphabet (1938)

Turkish borrowed "Enternasyonal" (Turkey, 1940)

Turkish Post money order (from Ankara, 8.AUG.1925), written in Ottoman Turkish.



Marquis of Pombal - Archive exemplar (Portuguese Guinea, 1925)

Seeking to establish the language of State in colonial Brazil, the Portuguese Prime Minister Marquis of Pombal prohibited the use of the *Língua Geral* (Nheengatu), widely promoted by Jesuit missionaries. In 1758, his brother, governor of Grão-Pará, renamed a number of places after cities in Portugal, Like Santarém (formerly known as native "Tapajós"), as part of the Portuguese policy for the language.

Santarém in Brazil, 1918



The Marquis with plans of reconstruction of Lisbon (after the tremendous earthquake) Proof plate (Mozambique under Portuguese dominion, 1925)



Occupiers imposed their own languages on the postal system of invaded countries. Stamps were overprinted or replaced with the new languages.

Italian occupation issue for the Fiume-Kupa Occupied Zone, overprinted on Yugoslav stamps (1941-42). Double perforation



Spanish issue for the Philippines under the rule of Spain (until 1898)



British in Batum, now in Georgia (1918)



Japanese occupation issues for the Philippines and an overprint for occupied Indonesia



US postal stationery for The Philippines, police censorship and stamps issued in Japanese only: フィリピン [firipin] (LAPR.1943)

Overprint in Tagalog, after independence (1946)

2.3 State Interventions

Language became an instrument of Nazi policy. Throughout occupied Europe, German replaced local languages in administration, education and public life, germanizing place names and making "German only" a commonplace.

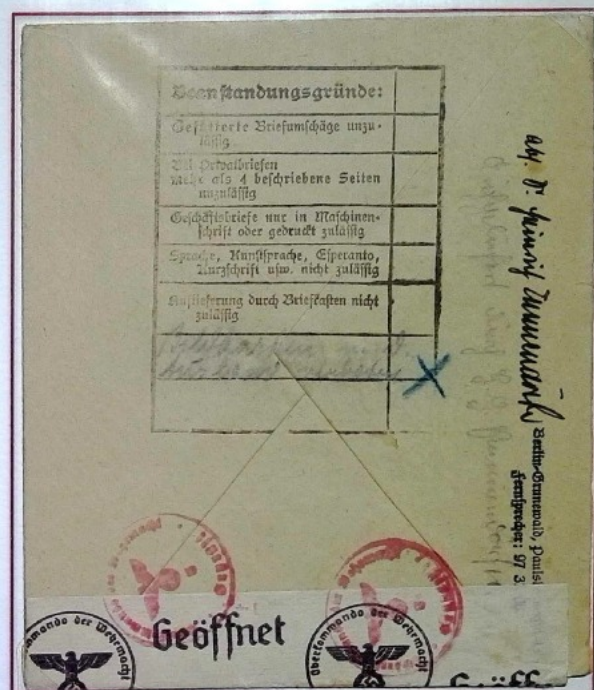


Saint M. Kolbe, a Catholic priest and advocate of Esperanto († 1941 in Auschwitz)



Returned after censorship inspection. An auxiliary return handstamp cites the Decree regulating communications of 2 Apr. 1940, published in the Official Gazette (p. 823). It bears Frankfurt censor mark "e" (for correspondences with Switzerland) on the reverse, along a hand stamp that states: "Private printings not admitted". Mourning letter addressed to Switzerland (Germany, 30 May 1942)

Hebrew, Yiddish and Esperanto were specially mentioned in the Decree. The Holocaust destroyed much of the Yiddish-speaking world.



Returned-to-sender handstamp on the reverse indicating the reason for non-delivery of this letter. From Berlin to Netherlands and marks of opening by nazist censorship letter "e" (in Cologne, for Netherlands, Belgium and North France). Among the devolution reasons: "language, artificial language, Esperanto and so on are not admitted". (Germany, 27.DEC.1940)

5 h Lidonie Eiden Theresienstadt
Brodiansgasse 6

POSTKARTE
DOPISNICE

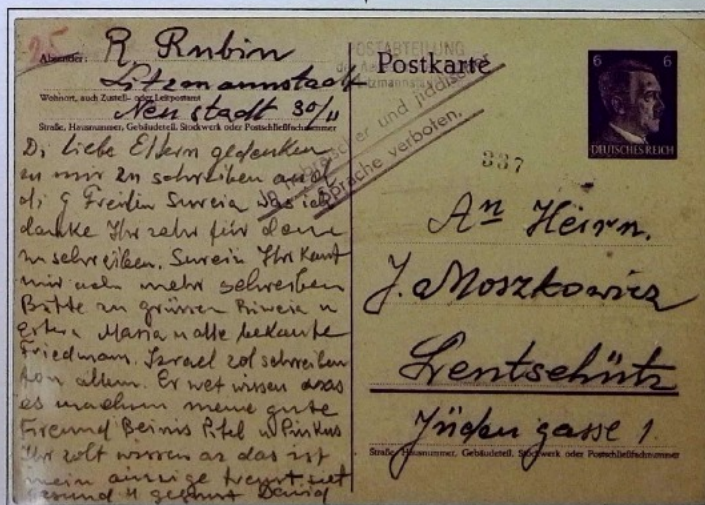
Frau
Herrn Mayer,

Prag-Litzmann
Litzmannstadt 1

Rückantwort nur
auf Postkarten in deutscher Sprache
vor den Klappen der Juden in Prag V.
DE Philipp de Monte Casale 18.

1940

Handstamp warning "REPLIES ONLY in Postcards written in German through the Jewish Council of Elders in Prague." Card sent from the Theresienstadt Ghetto to the Prague Ghetto. Censor stamp "11b".

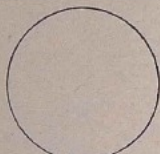


Handstamp warning that "In Hebrew and Yiddish [it's] prohibited" and the "Postal Dept. of Jewish Council of Elders in Litzmannstadt." (1940) Card sent from the Ghetto of Litzmannstadt (now: Łódź) to a street within the Jewish quarter in Lentschütz (now: Łęczyca), probably inside the wartime ghetto. Censor mark 337.

2.3 State Interventions

PRINT THE COMPLETE ADDRESS IN PLAIN BLOCK LETTERS IN THE PANEL BELOW, AND YOUR RETURN ADDRESS IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT SUITABLE.

No. _____

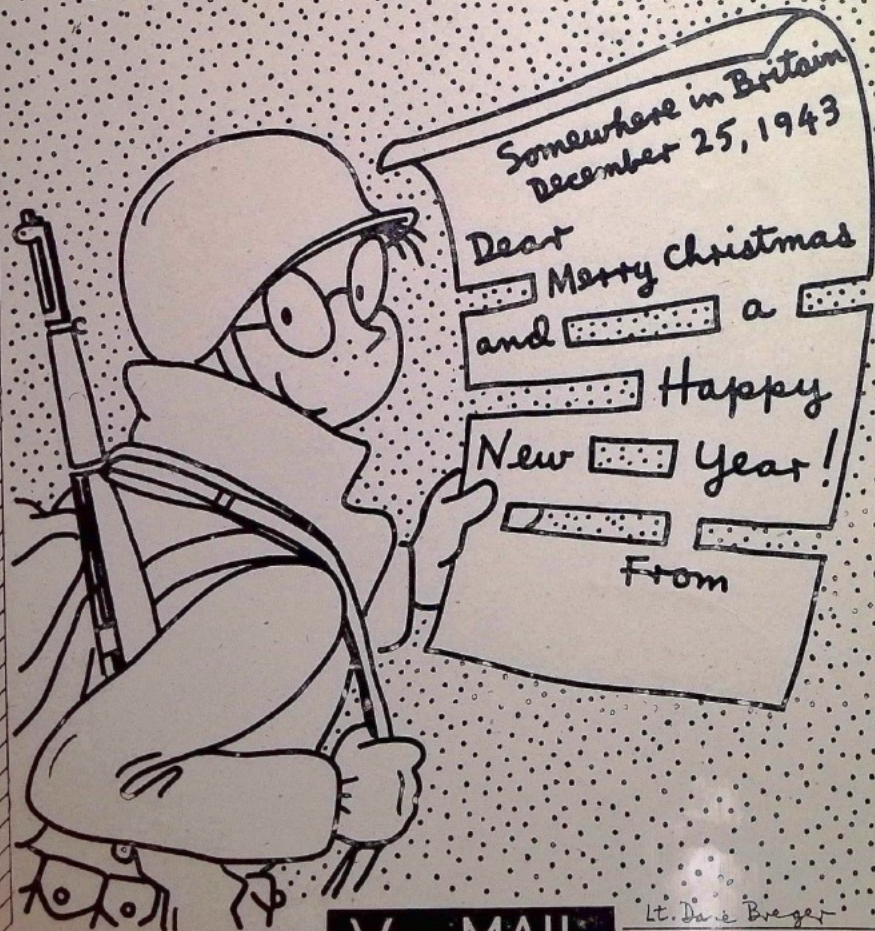


CENSORS STAMP

SENDER'S NAME _____

SENDER'S ADDRESS _____

DATE _____



V---MAIL

Lt. Dave Breger



V-mail processed and an original form (USA, 31 DEC. 1944)



Postal censorship often used a brush to cover sensitive text rather than scissors.

V-mail (USA, 28 AUG. 1943)

2.2 How some languages have spread

2.2.1 Multilingualism

The Austro-Hungarian Empire dealt with a diversity of small and regional languages.
Nine-language field postcard (Bohemia, 11.OCT.1916)

Israel Postal Authority

www.postil.com



Dear Citizen - for your security!!!

Do not open this parcel before verifying if you were expecting a parcel from this return address. Should you have any doubts, please inform the postal employee.

ОСТОРОЖНО!!!
Уважаемый гражданин!
В целях вашей безопасности:
Не вскрывайте посылку до тех пор пока не убедитесь, что отправитель вам известен. Если у вас появились подозрения, пожалуйста, дайте знать об этом почтовому служащему.

(11/01)

732-0008

זהירות!!!

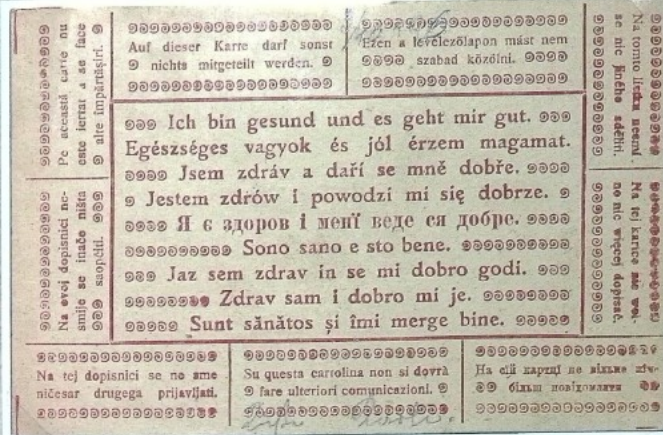
אורח נכבד, למען בטחונך:
אל תפתח את החבילה לפני שבודקת את כתובת המענה.
אם אתה ספקית לחיבה מעט, אנא הודיע לנו כדי שנוכל לסייע.

تحياتكم !!!
أيها المواطن الكريم حرصاً على أمنك:
لا تفتح هذا الحزمة قبل أن تتأكد من هوية المرسل.
إذا كان لديك أي شك بلغ الموظف.

More than half of the world's population uses two or more languages in daily life. Multilingualism is the norm rather than an exception.

Label affixed to parcels handled by Israel Post warning against postal terrorism (2001).

Hebrew and Arabic (until 2018) were the official languages of Israel. English and Russian were also used to reach the country's many foreign visitors and immigrants.



TELEGRAM.

MAKE YOUR OWN FILMS & HAVE IN YOUR OWN HOME A

Pathe-Baby CINEMA CAMERA

CINEMA CAMERA Rs. 80
CINEMA PROJECTOR Rs. 60
NEGATIVE FILMS EACH Rs. 1/12
DEVELOPING & SPOOL Rs. 2

PATHE-INDIA
PATHE BUILDING
Ballard Estate, BOMBAY.



THE "RELAY" AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE Co.'s SYSTEM

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The Times of India Illustrated Weekly INDIAS BEST PICTURE PAPER.



11 languages in 1936



15 languages since 1956 (1976)



An ink setoff on the same stamp (1976)



The ribbons of the Soviet coat of arms bore the motto in each of the USSR's official languages, reaching 16 (1947 stamp).



In a country with enormous linguistic diversity like India, a typewriter claiming to "TYPE IN EVERY LANGUAGE" (left bottom) was both meaningful and invaluable. Advertisement on the back of an India Post telegram (29 Aug. 1928).

Bolivia recognizes Spanish and 36 Indigenous languages as official, in its rich linguistic heritage. Standard stamp and a Proof printed black laver (Brazil. 1943)

3. Let's Finish Building Babel

3.1 Building Languages



Claudius Galen (129-216), best known for his medical studies, developed a symbolic notation as an international means of communication.



Hundreds of planned languages have been created. Most remained little more than theoretical projects, exotic solutions or published descriptions, never acquiring a community of users.



Confucius, Francis Bacon and René Descartes formulated ideas about the advantages of a planned language for international communication.



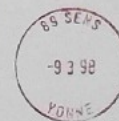
Discours "de" la méthode



error: Discours "sur" la méthode

INTERLAND

... vos libera de tote frontiera
e barriera de linguas
... liberigas vin el ĉiaj
landimo kaj lingva barilo



Interlingua and Esperanto in a Havas meter stamp

Interlingua, introduced in 1951, was designed to be immediately understandable to educated speakers of Romance languages.



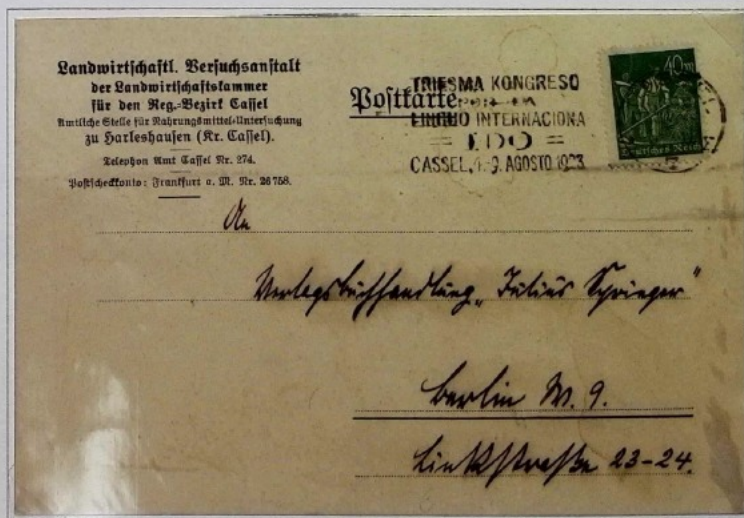
Jan Komenský (1592-1670) advocated the idea of a universal language to promote education and understanding among nations. **Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716)** proposed a universal symbolic language to express knowledge with precision.



Saint Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), abbess, created the *Lingua Ignota*.



Italian mathematician Giuseppe Peano (1858-1932) simplified Latin by eliminating its inflections to make it easier to learn and use. **Personalized stamp (Germany)**



The Third Congress of the International Language IDO Cassel, Germany (1923)

3. Let's Finish Building Babel

3.2 Esperanto, a Study Case

After centuries of proposals and many failed attempts, **Ludwik Lazar Zamenhof** (1859-1917), a Polish eye doctor, launched in 1887 under the pen name **Dr. Esperanto** ("the one who hopes"), the first planned language to achieve lasting international use.

Coated paper



Fold paper error &

Misperforate (Brazil, 1960)



Advertising tab of a Vegetarian Restaurant "Esperanto" in Munich (Bavaria, 1911)



Publishing house Hachette contracted with Zamenhof to publish books and dictionaries.



Perfin L.H. for "Librairie Hachette" (France, 1925)



Color proofs



Esperanto word roots come from Western languages, but the regular system of word formation makes it easier to learn across the world.

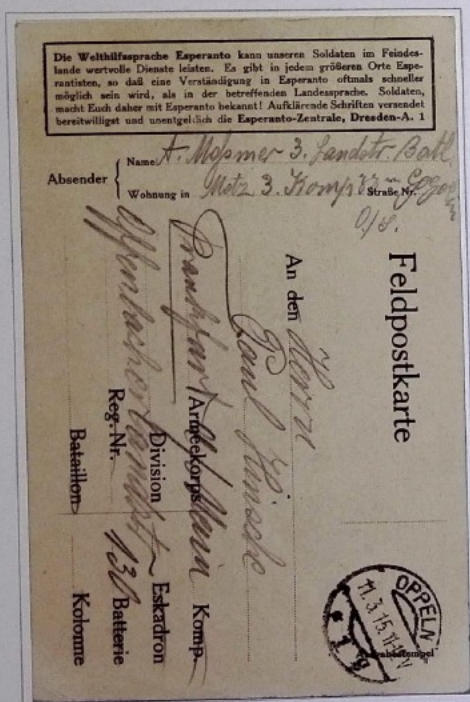


"Esperanto, a language for Europe and all the world" Francotyp meter stamp (West Germany, 1984)

Alee Zamenhof in Lázně Bělohrad - Postal stationery (Czechoslovakia, 1938)



Esperanto speakers soon organized the Esperanto movement to promote the language in local clubs and international organizations, and use Esperanto in events.



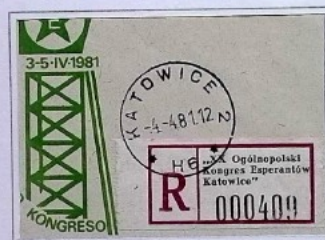
Esperanto Central in Dresden, publicity for soldiers
Field postcard (Germany, March 11, 1915)



Proletarian Esperanto Congress
Missing red color error (USSR, 1926)



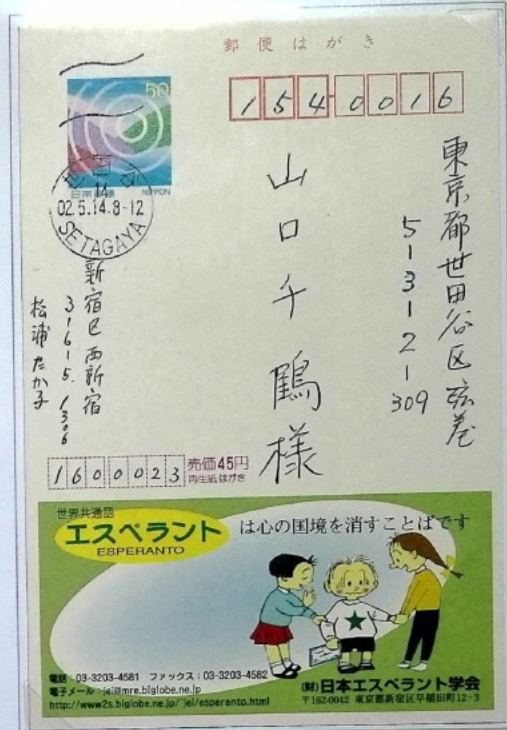
10th Brazilian Esperanto Congress - Proof (1945)



20th Polish Esperanto Congress
Special registration label (Poland, 1981)

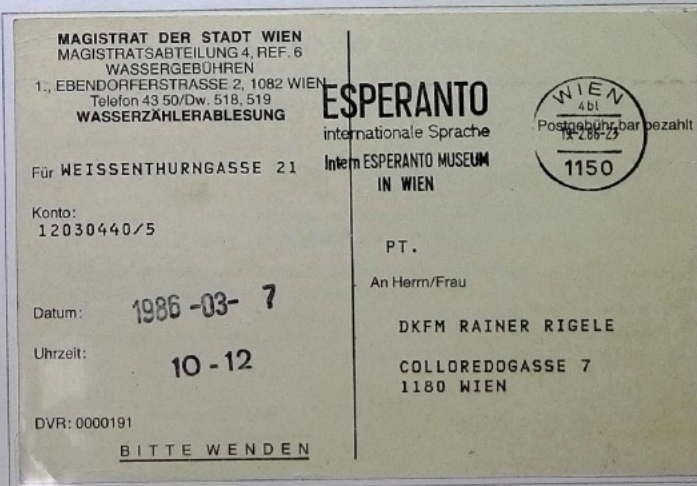


"Esperanto House" was a rural centre for courses and summer holidays. Between 1937 and 1939, it collected visitors' mail during the summer and it had a postal mark for the office. Postcards had a 5 cent rate, so this was surcharged with 6 cents (Netherlands, 1937)



Esperanto removes barriers - Japanese Esperanto Institute
Postal stationery (Japan, 2002)

An international culture emerged among the speakers.



The Esperanto Museum created in 1927 at the Austrian National Library
Machine stamp on a postage free water service bill of Wien administration (Austria, 1986)

3. Let's Finish Building Babel 3.2 Esperanto, a Study Case

Esperanto has attracted people of different social classes and background. Among the speakers, some prominent names in their fields.

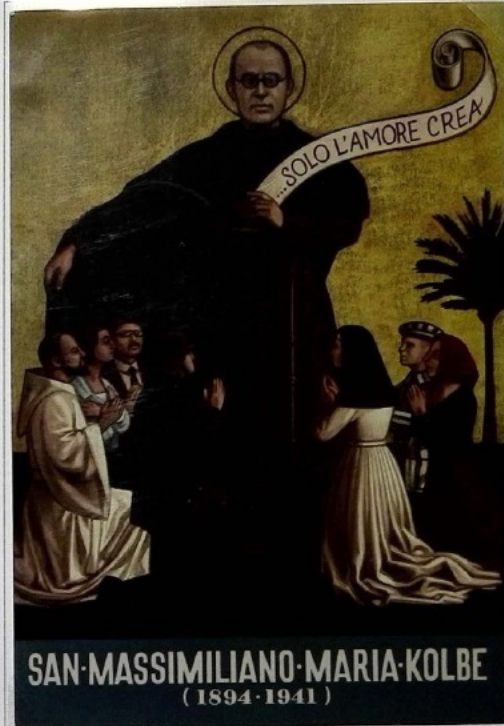


A green star represents the community of Esperanto speakers.



Shifted black color.

Among the intellectuals who learned Esperanto were the Peruvian scientist **F. Villarreal**, the Brazilian writer **Guimardes Rosa**, the Chinese educator **Cai Yuanpei**, and the Cuban anthropologist **Fernando Ortiz**.

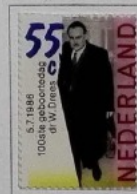


Franciscan friar **Maximilian Maria Kolbe** promoted Esperanto and was canonized in 1982 after sacrificing his life for another prisoner at Auschwitz.

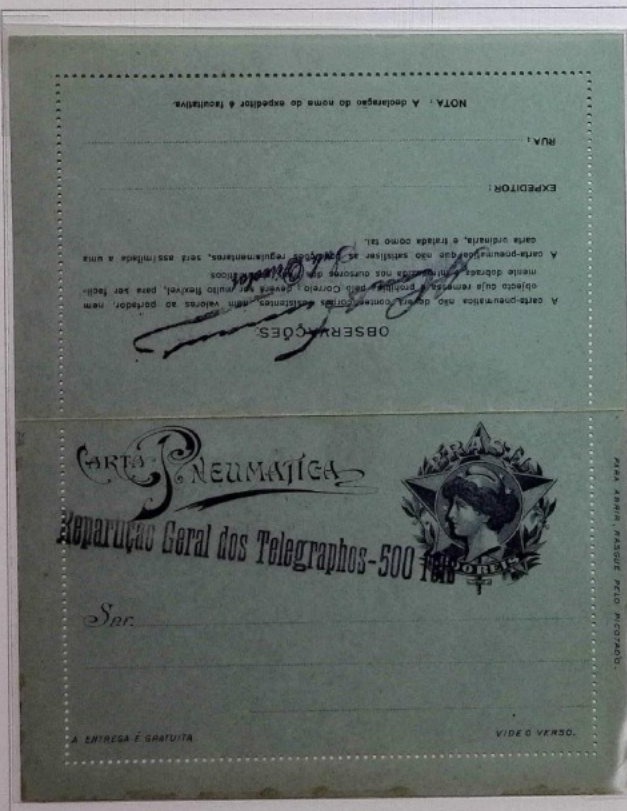
Postal stationery (Vatican, 2016)



The painter **Martin Benka** was the founder of Modernism in Slovakia, and a speaker of Esperanto, as German **Ludwig Renn**, the Austrian president **Franz Jonas** and the Dutch prime-minister **Willem Drees**.



Mark of **Alberto Couto Fernandes** (1871-1946), Deputy Director of the National Telegraph Service. Regulations required the **pneumatic letter forms** to bear a clerk's mark to avoid falsifications. He was president of the Brazilian Esperanto League (BEL) for 35 years.



3. Let's Finish Building Babel

3.2 Esperanto, a Study Case

Since 1905, the World Esperanto Congress (known as "UK") has brought together thousands of participants, demonstrating Esperanto's practical value as a language for international communication.



NITOBE Inazō

Imperforate >



In 1921, the League of Nations sent Under-Secretary-General **Nitobe Inazō** (1862-1933) to observe the UK in Prague. His highly favourable report praised how naturally people of different native languages communicate in Esperanto.



The 10th World Esperanto Congress had attracted 3 700 participants from dozens of countries. A temporary post office opened as participants began to arrive. On that very day, France declared war and closed its borders, forcing the cancellation of the congress before it opened.

Only four covers bearing this special postmark are known.
Special cancellation (France, Aug. 2, 1914, arrival mark Aug. 4 on back)



Rathaus DANZIG Urbdomo

**XIX.
UNIVERSALA KONGRESO
DE ESPERANTO**

DANZIG, 28. JULIO — 4. AŬGUSTO 1927

Postkarte
Poŝtkarto



Herrn
John Hencke
Hamburg 36
Valentinskamp 12

The name "congress" can be somehow misleading, as in reality it is a big festival of international art and culture in Esperanto.



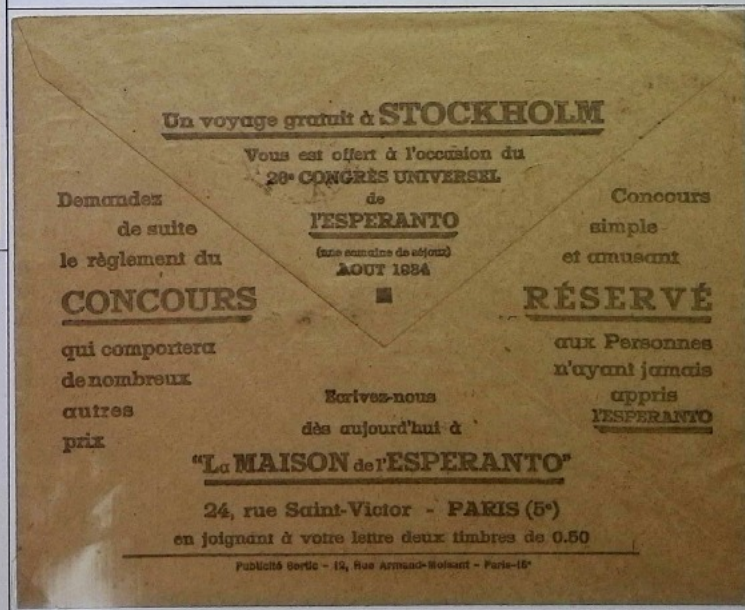
Shifted green star



"It will all be fine."
Personalized stamp for the 107th UK in Montreal (Canada, 2020) cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemics. The congress was finally held two years later.



Overprint for use in Trieste (Zone B)



Advertisement of a concourse whose prize was a trip to the Congress in Stockholm
Postal check cover (France, used Sept. 22, 1934)

3. Let's Finish Building Babel

3.2 Esperanto, a Study Case

By the early twentieth century, year after year Esperanto was finding practical applications in trade fairs.



International trade fair of Rio. Stamps with text in Portuguese and Esperanto - paper proof



The 1935 standard

Red, the chosen color for 1936



Not issued in blue, (wrong color for 1936)



The Brazilian Minister of Public Works, Laura Müller, who declared Esperanto "plain language" in telegraphy in Brazil, in 1906, long before ITU. Coil amendment (Brazil, 1964)

Brazil was the first country to accept Esperanto as "plain language" in telegraphy. International Telegraph Union (ITU) countries also did it later (1925).



"Paris invites you" - an exhibition about Esperanto (1937)

"Golden jubilee of Esperanto" - color proofs printed on board paper



The standard color