

Education Pack

Starter Set

Year 9

These materials may be freely distributed
and copied for educational purposes.

What's in this document?

This document contains worksheets and handouts for use in teaching Language to students in Year 9. The worksheets can be integrated into a lesson plan, or used on their own. They are designed to match specific outcomes of the Australian Curriculum.

Each activity is prefaced with some information about how that worksheet may be used, as well as which Curriculum Sub-strand it addresses.

Year 9

- Writing Without Vowels
- Language Change: Our Father
- Blissymbolics

This set of materials is a starter pack. A more complete set of materials is available at

www.iolinguistics.com

We are available for consultancy in language education and teacher development training.

We hope you will find these materials useful, and contact us with suggestions. We can be reached at

info@iolinguistics.com

Writing Without Vowels

Year 9

Topic area

Writing systems; Spelling

Sub-strand

Expressing and developing ideas

Spelling: Knowledge for spelling including knowledge about how the sounds of words are represented by various letters and knowledge of irregular spellings and spelling rules

Understand how spelling is used creatively in texts for particular effects, for example characterisation and humour and to represent accents and styles of speech

Outcomes

Students will:

- learn about 'abjads', or consonantal alphabets
- recognise the roles of vowels in English, and in other languages
- gain familiarity with non-Roman scripts

Materials

This worksheet, and a writing implement

Preparing students for the activity

The first page of the activity is intended to give students some background into abjads, or writing systems without vowels. A bit of group discussion would be appropriate, as would bringing in some newspapers or writing materials in Hebrew or Arabic.

Format of the activity

Students can try the activity on their own, followed by small group or class discussion.

Ideas for further discussion

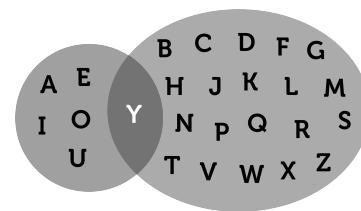
Which words were the most difficult to get?

How would your name (or your teacher's name) be written without vowels? Could it be mistaken for another name? Would writing names in this way this alleviate any problems?

It could help the difficulty of distinguishing names with 'Mc' and 'Mac', as well as 'Anderson' and 'Andersen'.

Writing Without Vowels

You probably already know about the consonants and vowels of English. (The letter 'y' is a bit of both.) English writing uses consonants and vowels, but some languages work differently.



Arabic with no Vowels

Here is some text in Arabic. Next to it is the same text rewritten in the English alphabet. It looks very hard to pronounce: all those consonants in a row!

هاتوا برهنكم إن كنتم صدقين	h'tw' brh'nkm 'n kntm Sdqyn
Produce your proof, if you are telling the truth. Sura 2:111	

But Arabic isn't spoken that way any more than English. In fact, they have a way of writing the vowels, but most of the time, they choose not to. Here is the same text with vowels.

هَاتُوا بُرْهَنَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ	ha'tuw' burha'nakum 'in kuntum Sa'diqiyna
---	---

The vowels are the little dots and dashes above (and sometimes below) the consonants. There's even a sign to show that there is no vowel after a consonant.

This example was taken from the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. The vowel markings were originally designed for writing to the Qur'an to make sure that people knew how to pronounce it correctly.

Scripts like Arabic in which you normally don't write the vowels are called *abjad scripts* after the original order of the first letters in the Arabic writing system (ʾ, b, j, and d).

Hebrew

Hebrew is like Arabic, and doesn't usually write down the vowel sounds. Here's some Hebrew text, first without the vowels, then with the vowel signs put in.

With vowels	Without vowels
חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, אֶל-יַעֲזֹבֶךָ קֶשֶׁרם עַל- גְּרָרוֹתֶיךָ; כְּתָבָם, עַל-לוּחַ לִבְךָ:	חסד ואמת, אל-יעזבך: קשרם על- גרגרותיך; כתבם, על-לוח לבך.
Don't let kindness and truth leave you, tie them around your neck like a necklace, chisel them into the benchtop of your heart. Proverbs 3:3	

If you look at an Israeli Hebrew newspaper (such as <http://www.ynet.co.il>) or an Arabic one (such as <http://www.ahram.org.eg>), you'll see that there are no vowels marked.

I N S T R U C T O R ' S C O P Y

English with no vowels

Sometimes people write English with no vowels, or at least few vowels. Generally, this is when they are trying to save space on a small piece of paper, in a text message, or on Twitter.

Here is some text without any vowels (apart from *y*) at all. It's about a koala named Blinky, and his friend Snubby. Can you write this out, but putting the vowels back in?

The days and nights came and went, and Blinky grew into a strong bear. Always up to some mischief, he kept the older bears in a constant state of watchfulness. He was very venturesome and scrambled up to the highest twig on the tree, or out to the farthest branch, scrapping and hugging his playmate or grabbing a nice tender leaf from him just as it was about to pop into Snubby's mouth.

Here is another piece of text without vowels *except* when a word starts with a vowel — then it stays. Most people say that this is easier to read. The names here are 'Mrs Koala' and 'Mrs Grunty'. Write this out with the vowels as well.

One night Mrs Koala and Mrs Grunty decided to go for a walk. They gathered their cubs together and in a stern voice Mrs Koala gave her orders.

"I'm going for a walk over the hill, Blinky, and don't you move out of this tree. No skylarking and romping while I'm away; and be good to Snubby."

As you can see, it's really not too hard to read at all. In Arabic, it's even easier. The language is organised in such a way that consonants carry most of the information that couldn't be worked out in some other way.

I N S T R U C T O R ' S C O P Y

Questions for discussion

1. What are the benefits of dropping vowels? What are the disadvantages?

Dropping vowels can save on space, while not taking much away from legibility. Writing like this is tricky for a language like English, but it works well with other languages because they encode their information differently. They encode one kind of information on the consonants and another on the vowels. The less predictable-from-context information, such as the root meaning of a verb, is encoded on the consonants, which are always present in the written form. Information that is easier to predict from context (such as whether something is past or present, singular or plural) is encoded on the vowels. That means dropping the vowels – and the more predictable information – isn't a problem. English does a bit of this with irregular verbs and nouns like 'hide/hid', 'breed/bred', or 'man/men'.

On some Internet forums, moderators deal with troublesome or obnoxious commenters (or 'trolls') by automatically stripping their comment of vowels. This punishment, known as 'disemvowelling', enables readers to easily ignore the comment, while still allowing the troll to get their message across if readers care to put in the effort to read it.

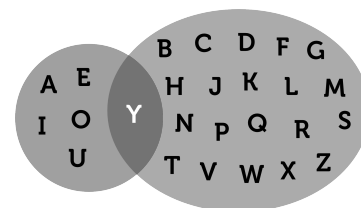
2. Name some English words that could be mistaken for each other if the vowels were dropped. Would this pose a problem, or do you think you could tell the difference?

As just one example, there's 'board', 'beard', 'bird', 'braid', 'bread', 'brood', 'bored', 'breed', 'bred', 'bride', and even 'abroad'. That's a lot of chances for mix-ups, but even then, it might not cause too much of a problem in an actual sentence. If you saw 'brd and bttr', you'd probably realise it was 'bread and butter' because of the frequency with which those words appear together. It's a little unusual to see a phrase like 'bird and butter'.

We use a lot of contextual information when reading, and this helps us to read quickly. We might not even notice the occasional typo.

Writing Without Vowels

You probably already know about the consonants and vowels of English. (The letter 'y' is a bit of both.) English writing uses consonants and vowels, but some languages work differently.



Arabic with no Vowels

Here is some text in Arabic. Next to it is the same text rewritten in the English alphabet. It looks very hard to pronounce: all those consonants in a row!

هاتوا برهنكم إن كنتم صدقين	h'tw' brh'nkm 'n kntm Sdqyn
Produce your proof, if you are telling the truth. Sura 2:111	

But Arabic isn't spoken that way any more than English. In fact, they have a way of writing the vowels, but most of the time, they choose not to. Here is the same text with vowels.

هَاتُوا بُرْهَنَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ	ha'tuw' burha'nakum 'in kuntum Sa'diqiyna
---	---

The vowels are the little dots and dashes above (and sometimes below) the consonants. There's even a sign to show that there is no vowel after a consonant.

This example was taken from the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. The vowel markings were originally designed for writing to the Qur'an to make sure that people knew how to pronounce it correctly.

Scripts like Arabic in which you normally don't write the vowels are called *abjad scripts* after the original order of the first letters in the Arabic writing system (ʾ, b, j, and d).

Hebrew

Hebrew is like Arabic, and doesn't usually write down the vowel sounds. Here's some Hebrew text, first without the vowels, then with the vowel signs put in.

With vowels	Without vowels
חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, אֶל-יַעֲזֹבֶךָ קֶשֶׁר עַל- גְּרִירוֹתֶיךָ; כְּתִבֵּם, עַל-לוּחַ לִבְךָ:	חסד ואמת, אל-יעזבך: קשרם על- גרגרותיך; כתבם, על-לוח לבך.
Don't let kindness and truth leave you, tie them around your neck like a necklace, chisel them into the benchtop of your heart. Proverbs 3:3	

If you look at an Israeli Hebrew newspaper (such as <http://www.ynet.co.il>) or an Arabic one (such as <http://www.ahram.org.eg>), you'll see that there are no vowels marked.

English with no vowels

Sometimes people write English with no vowels, or at least few vowels. Generally, this is when they are trying to save space on a small piece of paper, in a text message, or on Twitter.

Here is some text without any vowels (apart from *y*) at all. It's about a koala named Blinky, and his friend Snubby. Can you write this out, but putting the vowels back in?

Th dys nd nghts cm nd wnt, nd Blnky grw nt
strng br. lwys p t sm mschf, h kpt th ldr brs
n cnstnt stt f wtchflnss. H ws vry vntrsm nd
scrmbl d p t th hghst twg n th tr, r t t th
frthst brnch, scrppng nd hggng hs plymt r
grbbng nc tndr lf frm hm jst s t ws bt t pp
nt Snubby's mth.

Here is another piece of text without vowels *except* when a word starts with a vowel — then it stays. Most people say that this is easier to read. The names here are 'Mrs Koala' and 'Mrs Grunty'. Write this out with the vowels as well.

On nght Mrs Kl and Mrs Grnty dcdd t g fr a
wlk. Thy gthrd thr cbs tgthr and in a strn vc
Mrs Kl gv hr ordrs.

"I'm gng fr a wlk ovr th hll, Blnky, and dn't y
mv out of ths tr. N skylrkng and rmpng whl
I'm awy; and b gd t Snubby."

As you can see, it's really not too hard to read at all. In Arabic, it's even easier. The language is organised in such a way that consonants carry most of the information.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the benefits of dropping vowels? What are the disadvantages?
2. Name some English words that could be mistaken for each other if the vowels were dropped. Would this pose a problem, or do you think you could tell the difference?

English Through Time

Year 9

Topic area

Language Change

Sub-strand

Language variation and change

Understand that Standard Australian English is a living language within which the creation and loss of words and the evolution of usage is ongoing

Outcomes

Students will:

- learn how Old English and Middle English differ from Modern English,
- analyse samples of language for evidence of change in spelling, syntax, and semantics,
- examine their own usage for language change,
- understand that language is not set, and can change over time.

Materials

- This worksheet, and a writing implement

Preparing students for the activity

You could begin the activity by playing a recording of someone reading the text, without telling the students what the text is. See if they can guess.

A recording can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/ourfather-oe>

Format of the activity

This activity works well for students in groups of two or three. There are a number of ways to approach the data.

- Have all students work on all the data, picking out anything they find.
- Assign groups to the different time periods; for example, studying only the differences between Old English and Middle English.
- Assign groups to look at only one area of language over the whole range of time; for example, only spelling, or only semantics.

Ideas for further discussion

Ask: The English of 1,000 years ago is still recognisable, but it takes effort and a little extra knowledge to read. How do think English will change in the next 1,000 years?

In the next 500 years, will English change more than it has in the last 500 years, or less?

There are arguments to be made on both sides. All languages change, but it could be argued that English will change more slowly than it has because so much of English is locked down in books. On the other hand, social and technological change is happening faster than ever, and language is changing to keep pace, especially in the amount of words that we create.

English Through Time

As a text, the Bible is a good way to study how English has changed through time. Many different translations have been made at many different times, and they each show what was happening at particular points in the history of English.

Examine these extracts from the Bible, and answer the following questions.

Old English (c. 11th century CE)	Middle English Wyclif Bible, c. 1390	Early Modern English (1559 CE)	Late Modern English (1965–70 CE)
Fæder ure, þu þe eart on heofonum,	Oure fadir that art in heuenes,	Our Father which art in heaven,	Our Father in heaven,
si þin nama gehalgod.	halewid be thi name;	Hallowed be thy name.	hallowed be your name,
To becume þin rice.	thi kyndoom come to;	Thy kingdom come,	your kingdom come,
Gewur þe ðin willa on eor ð an swa swa on heofonum.	be thi wille don in erthe as in heuene:	Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.	your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf (<i>loaf</i>) syle (<i>sell</i>) us to dæg.	gyue to us this dai oure breed ouer othir substaunce;	Give us this day our daily bread.	Give us today our daily bread.
And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfa ð urum gyltendum.	and forgyue to us oure dettis, as we forgyuen to oure dettouris;	And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge,	and lede us not in to temptacioun,	And lead us not into temptation,	And lead us not into temptation,
ac alys (<i>loose</i>) us of yfele (<i>evil</i>).	but delyuere us fro yuel.	but deliver us from evil	but deliver us from the evil one.

Questions

1. Spelling

A. What letters did they use in Old English that we no longer use?

You may wish to point out a few Old English letters that are no longer in use today. There are two: **þ**, which is called 'thorn', and **ð**, which is called 'eth' (and sounds like the middle of the word 'tether' – it doesn't rhyme with 'breath'). Both of these characters were used to write the sounds at the ends of the words 'teeth' and 'teethe'. We don't use these characters in English today, but they are still used in Modern Icelandic.

B. How has the usage of the letters 'i', 'u', 'v', and 'y' changed over time?

This is most noticeable in Middle English. The letters 'i' and 'y' seem to switch places, as though the writer wasn't sure what to do with them. Before English writing was standardised (which happened in waves, but mostly around the 1500s), some words were spelled according to the conventions that were in effect at the various schools in which scribes studied.

I N S T R U C T O R ' S C O P Y

The same is true of the letters 'u' and 'v', which before the 1500s were considered variants of the same letter. They would pronounce it like a 'u' when they knew it was acting like a vowel, and like a 'v' when it appeared in places that a consonant would. (You may have wondered why we call it a 'double-u' when it looks more like a 'double-v'. For them, there wasn't much difference.) By the 1500s, things had settled down, and printers had assigned 'u' and 'v' to the places we're now familiar with.

2. Semantics

A. Which words changed the most in meaning from Old English to Middle English?

Quite a few of these words have changed their meaning.

- The word **'sell'** had a different meaning in Old English, 'to give'. About 1000 CE, the word took on the current meaning 'to give in exchange for money'.
- In Old English, the word **'hlaf'** (loaf) and 'bread' were just about the same thing; people would say "Have some loaf," or "Have some bread."
- We think of **'guilt'** as a feeling, but this sense of the word didn't appear until the 1680s. In Old English, the word 'gyltas' meant something like "crime" or "sin".
- The word **'rice'** (which in Old English sort of rhymed with 'teacher') means 'kingdom', and is no longer used in English except as part of the word 'bishop**ric**'. We do have **'rich'**, which has the same connotations of wealth and power. The Old English word comes from an earlier word 'reg', which is where Latin 'rex' (king) comes from. Additionally, German still has the word 'reich'.
- Many students ask about **'swa swa'**. The word 'swa' meant both 'like' and 'as', so putting them together give us "like as", or perhaps "in **like** manner **as**".

B. What words from Early Modern English are no longer used in ordinary conversation?

- **Hallowed.** This is not a very common word in English today. Ask students to complete the phrase: 'the hallowed _____. They might say words like 'halls', 'ground', or even 'turf', but beyond that, it's difficult to think of others.
- **Thy.** Not many people use 'thee', 'thou', and 'thy' anymore (though some religious communities still do). We think of it as very formal, so it's surprising to find that it was once used as a sign of familiarity. Other languages (especially Romance languages like Spanish, French, and Italian) use a formal 'you' and a familiar 'you', but English no longer does.

3. Syntax: How has the order of words changed over time?

Some words have swapped places, including

- ♦ Determiners and nouns, like "our father" v. "fæder ure"
- ♦ The order of words in negatives has changed. Early Modern English has "lead us not" with the 'not' after the verb, but Modern English would be "Do not lead us..." with the 'not' in front.

I N S T R U C T O R ' S C O P Y

4. What changes have you noticed in English in your lifetime?

Probably the most obvious example is the creation of new words, especially in areas of technological and social change.

English Through Time

As a text, the Bible is a good way to study how English has changed through time. Many different translations have been made at many different times, and they each show what was happening at particular points in the history of English.

Examine these extracts from the Bible, and answer the following questions.

Old English (c. 11th century CE)	Middle English Wyclif Bible, c. 1390	Early Modern English (1559 CE)	Late Modern English (1965–70 CE)
Fæder ure, þu þe eart on heofonum,	Oure fadir that art in heuenes,	Our Father which art in heaven,	Our Father in heaven,
si þin nama gehalgod.	halewid be thi name;	Hallowed be thy name.	hallowed be your name,
To becume þin rice.	thi kyndoom come to;	Thy kingdom come,	your kingdom come,
Gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.	be thi wille don in erthe as in heuene:	Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.	your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Urne gedæghwamlīcan hlaf syle us to dæg.	gyue to us this dai oure breed ouer othir substaunce;	Give us this day our daily bread.	Give us today our daily bread.
And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum.	and forgyue to us oure dettis, as we forgyuen to oure dettouris;	And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge,	and lede us not in to temptacioun,	And lead us not into temptation,	And lead us not into temptation,
ac alys us of yfele.	but delyuere us fro yuel.	but deliver us from evil	but deliver us from the evil one.

Questions

- Spelling
 - What letters did they use in Old English that we no longer use?
 - How has the usage of the letters 'i', 'u', 'v', and 'y' changed over time?
- Semantics
 - Which words changed the most from Old English to Middle English?
 - What words from Early Modern English are no longer used in ordinary conversation?
- Syntax: How has the order of words changed over time?
- What changes have you noticed in English in your lifetime?

Blissymbolics

Year 9

Topic area

Writing systems

Sub-strand

Expressing and developing ideas

Visual language: How images work in texts to communicate meanings, especially in conjunction with other elements such as print and sound

Analyse and explain the use of symbols, icons and myth in still and moving images and how these augment meaning

Outcomes

Students will:

- learn to decipher a system of symbols designed to communicate meaning
- examine how symbols can be combined to make new symbols with new meanings
- explore how writing systems work

Materials

- This worksheet, and a writing implement

Preparing students for the activity

This exercise could start with some discussion about writing in *pictograms*: pictures used for communication. Our alphabet started out as pictograms, but then evolved so that symbols no longer stood for words, but sounds. This made it easier to write abstract concepts like *love* or *justice*.

Blissymbolics was designed to allow communication by building up from a small set of pictures. It's meant to be intuitive, but is it really?

Format of the activity

Have students try filling in only the 'Matching' section in groups of two or three. Stop and ask what their answers they settled on. How did they come to their decisions? Ask them to explain their reading of the symbols. Then give the correct answers, and discuss possible explanations for the symbols.

Once the correct answers have been revealed, have the students continue with the rest of the worksheet. It can be useful to have students work on their own for a short time before discussing their answers within a small group.

Ideas for further discussion

Does this system seem intuitive? How would you change it?

What could a person do if they ran across a word they didn't know?

It would be tempting to ignore it, but if the same word kept being used, it would be necessary to ask someone or look it up somehow.

What would a Blissymbolics dictionary look like? How might it be ordered?

It would seem logical to sort them by first symbol, just like a regular alphabet. The difficulty is: which symbols come first? In Chinese script, this is solved by looking at the number of strokes in a character; characters with fewer strokes come first. It may be possible to settle on the order of characters in Blissymbolics on this basis. On the other hand, some people have tried to organise the characters by meaning (<http://www.inference.phy.cam.ac.uk/dasher/development/bliss/abi/BlissDasher.pdf>).

You can find out more about Blissymbolics at this URL:

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/blissymbolics.htm>

Blissymbolics

Blissymbolics is a writing system invented by Charles K. Bliss (1897–1985). The symbols correspond to ideas and words, not to sounds. Blissymbolics is meant to be an easy-to-understand writing system for anyone, no matter what language they speak.

Here are some examples of Blissymbols.



eye



mouth



paper



knowledge



water

Matching

Here are some concepts in English words.

to kiss

happy

to forget

knife

to read

to explain

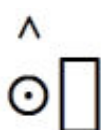
library

to say

to cry

And here are the symbols for them, in no particular order. Can you match the symbols to their appropriate concept? Write the words beneath the symbols.

The answers are given below, along with one possible explanation of the sign. But don't explain these to the students yet! Let them work out their own explanations through their analysis (especially in the 'Translation' section below).



to read
(eye looking at paper)



knife
(looks like a sword)



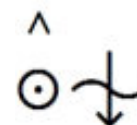
to say (something done
with the mouth)



to forget
(knowledge goes away)



library
(a place with books)



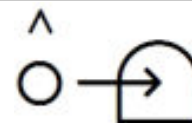
to cry (water comes down
out of an eye)



happy
(emotions are 'up')



to kiss
(two mouths together)



to explain (mouth leads to
knowledge)

I N S T R U C T O R ' S C O P Y

Analysis

1. What part of speech is a symbol if it has a ^ over it? verb
2. What part of speech is a symbol if it has a ˇ over it? adjective

Translation

Based on your analysis, what do these symbols mean?



book



sad



water



rain



to cut



saliva

How would you write the following concepts in Blissymbols?

1. to spit



2. theatre



3. wet



More analysis

Here are some characters that use a symbol that looks like this: 1

--	--	--	--	--

1. Match the characters to these words:

certain	stupid	to dry	nothing	raisin
---------	--------	--------	---------	--------

2. What does 1 mean? not

I N S T R U C T O R ' S C O P Y

Your turn

Think of one very simple new sign. How would you combine it with the existing signs to make new words?

Blissymbolics

Blissymbolics is a writing system invented by Charles K. Bliss (1897–1985). The symbols correspond to ideas and words, not to sounds. Blissymbolics is meant to be an easy-to-understand writing system for anyone, no matter what language they speak.

Here are some examples of Blissymbols.



eye



mouth



paper



knowledge



water

Matching

Here are some concepts in English words.

to kiss

happy

to forget

knife

to read

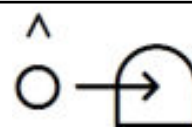
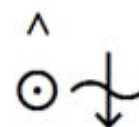
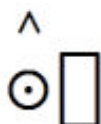
to explain

library

to say

to cry

And here are the symbols for them, in no particular order. Can you match the symbols to their appropriate concept? Write the words beneath the symbols.

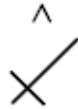


Analysis

1. What part of speech is a symbol if it has a ^ over it? _____
2. What part of speech is a symbol if it has a ˇ over it? _____

Translation

Based on your analysis, what do these symbols mean?



How would you write the following concepts in Blissymbolics?

1. to spit
2. theatre
3. wet

More analysis

Here are some characters that use a symbol that looks like this:

--	--	--	--	--

1. Match the characters to these words:

certain	stupid	to dry	nothing	raisin
---------	--------	--------	---------	--------

2. What does mean? _____

Your turn

Think of one very simple new sign. How would you combine it with the existing signs to make new words?