

## Studyguide chapter 16 -- LIN 510

There is a lot of information in this chapter. You should not focus on the details but on the general characteristics of the writing systems, to wit pictographic, logographic, syllabic and alphabetic. Some writing systems are mixed. (I will NOT ask: "Describe the Japanese writing system in a paragraph" or "Provide an instance of an Old Egyptian word"). You should also be familiar with the Rebus Principle, hieroglyphics, the Acrophonic Principle and with the pros and cons of English Spelling Reform.

From Fromkin & Rodman. Try, just for fun:

Match the ten samples of writing and the ten languages. There are enough hints in this chapter to get most of them. (The source of these examples, and many others, is *Languages of the World* by Kenneth Katzner, 1975, New York: Funk & Wagnalls.)

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| a. ____ Cherokee              | 1. 仮に勝手に変えるようなことをすれば。                                 |
| b. ____ Chinese               | 2. Κι ὁ νοῦς του ἀγκάλιζε πονετικά τὴν Κρήτη.         |
| c. ____ German (Gothic style) | 3. «Что это? я падаю? у меня ноги подкашиваются».     |
| d. ____ Greek                 | 4. הָאֵלֹהִים יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.         |
| e. ____ Hebrew                | 5. Sàá sàre yi bàg atakya bí á mpòtoro áhyé           |
| f. ____ Icelandic             | 6. 既然必須和新的群众的时代相结合。                                   |
| g. ____ Japanese              | 7. Եթ Ժ ԺԻ ԵՏԹԹ ԸԽԿ ԸԹԻԿ.                             |
| h. ____ Korean                | 8. Þótt þú langföruhl legðir sérhvert land undir fót, |
| i. ____ Russian               | 9. Þharao's Unblið var wunderbar.                     |
| j. ____ Twi                   | 10. 스위스는 독특한 문화                                       |

Another writing system that is somewhere between the consonantal alphabet of Hebrew and the true alphabetic system of the Cyrillic or Roman alphabets is one in which all symbols automatically have a following vowel sound (usually short [a] or [ə]), unless another vowel symbol is used. Many of the languages of South Asia make use of such a system. Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Nepali and others use a writing system called Devanāgarī, shown in Figures 6 and 7.

Compare Figure 6 with the symbols in Figure 7. When the sound [ə] appears at the beginning of a word, it has its own symbol, as in [ət̪i]. But when it appears after a consonant, it is not written, as in [tət̪ə] or [udə]. This vowel is called the *inherent vowel*: it is inherent in any consonant. Now look at the words for 'across' and 'very': the first has a short [i] sound, the second has a long [ī] sound. However, you might notice something odd: the short [i] precedes the consonant it is pronounced with. On the other hand, the long [ī] follows the consonant. In both cases, however, the vowel is pronounced after the consonant.

अति	[ət̪i]	'across'
अतीव	[ət̪iv̪ə]	'very'
तत	[tət̪ə]	'father,' 'dad'
तत्र	[tət̪r̪ə]	'herein'
कुल	[kulə]	'herd'
उद	[udə]	'water'
धनम्	[dʱənəm]	'wealth'
बुद्ध	[buddʱə]	'enlightened,' 'Buddha'

Figure 6. Sanskrit words in Devanāgarī.

अ [ə]	इ [i]	उ [u]	ए [e]
इ [i]	व [və]	क [kə]	घ [dʱə]
त [tə]	उ [u]	कु [ku]	द्ध [ddʱə]

Figure 7. How to write some syllables in Devanāgarī.

(Look at the word for 'father' if you want to see the symbol for [t̪].) Now compare the symbols for [d] and [dʱ] in the words 'water' and 'wealth'. Notice that to combine them in the word 'enlightened' they are stacked. As you can see from these examples, there are several different ways sound symbols combine with each other. As an exercise, compare the words 'herd', 'water', and 'enlightened' and figure out how the sound [u] is represented in different positions.