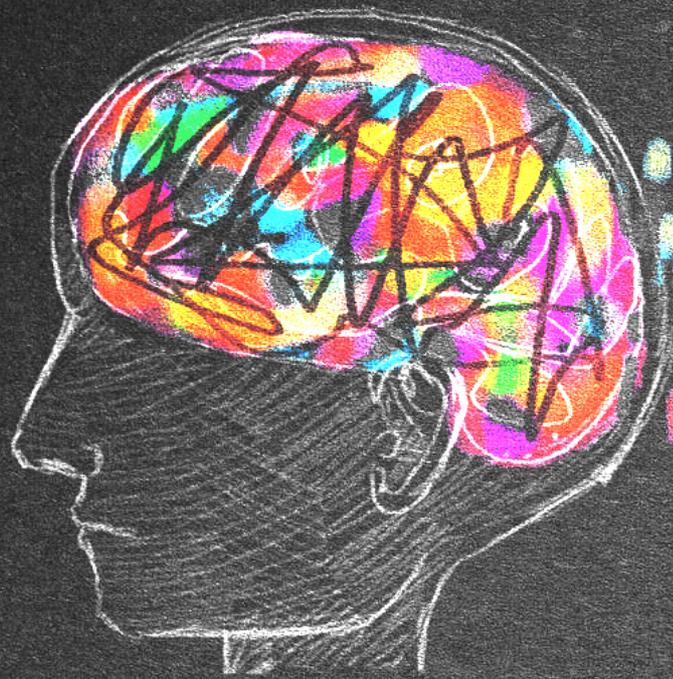
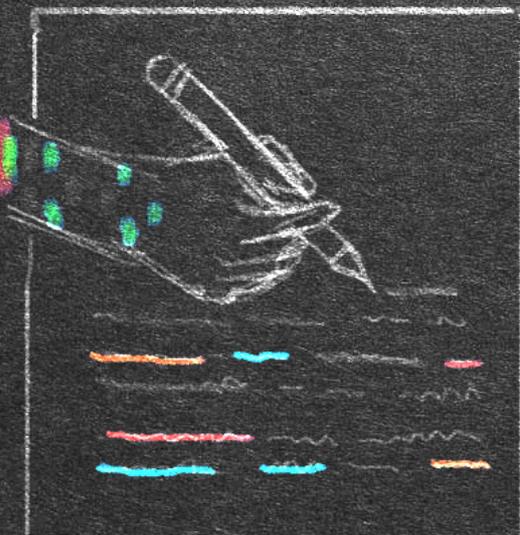


TVP M



LANGUAGE: WRITING



TVPM QUIZ AND UPDATES:

It took a long time to finally release this issue (TVPM #25), and in short, here's why: As we've mentioned before, the TVPM team is mainly made up of two humans, Ray and myself (Tio), and it happened that both of us had important and unavoidable issues to deal with over the past few months. For example, Ray has been spending the last four months at his parents home, caretaking for both of them while his mother recovers from two lung cancer surgeries just two months apart (she is now thought to be clear of cancer, with no further treatments needed). Meanwhile, I was very sick for over 3 months, and am still somewhat sick while writing this article. Over that time, I've been experiencing abdominal pains, acute indigestion, occasional fever, I lost quite a lot of weight, and so on. I've been to the hospital many times (including the ER) and so far, the tests do not show anything severe, but I still have to go through more tests (all updates in regards to my health and how it influences my work for TVPM, you can find on my blog here). I feel better now, but sometimes I don't, so it's an up and down ride for now (and maybe for much longer - I have no idea). Anyways, all of my recent health problems also caused me to experience a lot of stress, since being sick for more than three months tends to make you think that you might have something more critical, so I was even less able to focus on the magazine. Couple that with a snail-like healthcare system where it takes weeks to do a test, and more weeks to do another, and so on, and you can realize the amount of stress it can put you through.

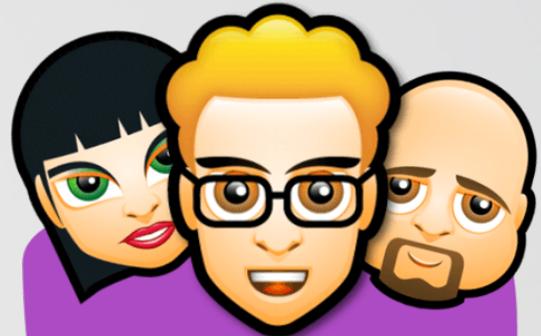
We are also significantly underfunded, so we struggle with what we have financially to create and maintain this magazine. At the same time, we are beyond amazed by all of you who do help to support TVPMag financially, especially when we have no special rewards to offer to those of you who do, or use any 'tricks' to convince you to support us, so your support is 100% for the magazine itself.

As things are getting better for both of our situations, we are pushing ourselves to get back to our 'regular' workflow for the magazine. We've already managed to complete the development of the TVP quiz that we've been working on for so long (in case you didn't notice). The quiz has been available for several months now and many are already playing it, which is great. It covers five categories, with many questions within each of them (hundreds of questions in total), and we will continue adding more and more questions from each new TVPM issue we produce.

We got great help from Ziad, a fellow TVP supporter who volunteered to make the quiz work flawlessly so that it remembers what quizzes you have played to allow you to always receive new ones. But no more talk about this. You can see it in action here.



The Venus
Project



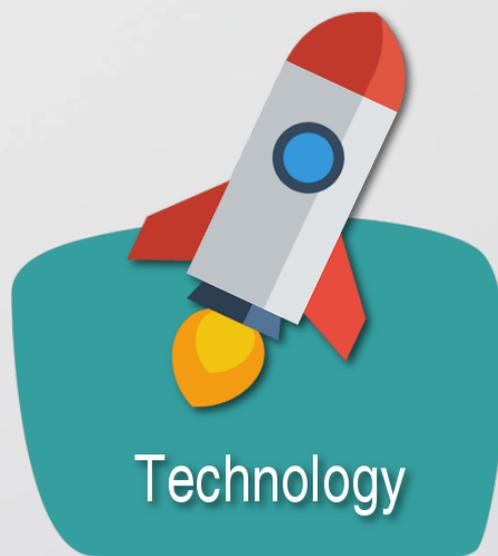
Human
Behavior



Monetary
System



Science



Technology

Another update is about our automated News and Curated Videos module on the website, which I've been working on to make it better and better in terms of sources. It is extremely hard to get good scientific news nowadays, mainly because there is a huge incentive for people to post news articles that are not properly researched (if at all), while simultaneously painting them with clickbait (sensationalized) titles and content just to attract views and money. To help neutralize this issue, I've added several new sources that focus on analyzing important news stories that generate noise on social media and media in general, and then break down these news posts to show you the reality behind them. So, now there are even more reasons to take advantage of our curated news and videos section, as it provides a more scientific approach toward keeping up on today's important sci-tech news.

PS: It can be really hard to do the work that we do, trying to present well-sourced articles with highly relevant information, design and promote a magazine across multiple formats, manage an interactive website, create tools like the quizzes and the sci-tech news and videos section, develop hundreds of themed images for each issue to help new people learn of this direction, etc.. It is a massive amount of work for mainly two people, especially in a world that is so heavily focused on distracting people's attention for various monetary and other dumb reasons. Most of the time, I personally feel like I'm on a highway, but driving in the opposite direction, while others are eager to tell me that I am heading the wrong way. But I think the reality is the opposite of that; that even though those others seem to be in the vast majority, they are actually the ones 'driving' backward. It's just that they have been doing it so long that it feels 'natural' to them. So we will continue to push the envelope with TVP Magazine, videoneat, and science in general, as much as we can, because maybe, slow but steady, we can gradually cut through the crap of this world and help foster interesting and scientific minds that can carry this work further. TVP needs scientific minds more than anything else, because IT is much more about a change of human values than a change of infrastructure, although both need to be entangled for such a big advancement like TVP to happen.

If you cannot help by writing articles for the magazine (something anyone can do), or by promoting the magazine and/or TVP in general, then maybe you can help support this massive effort financially. You can even donate just \$1 a month and, if there are one thousand people like you, a small proportion of TVPMag's readers, then we could push this project forward in a much less painful manner.

[HELP US ON PATREON](#)

MAGAZINE SUMMARY:

In this issue, we present the fantastic journey of Luke Wonderly, who walked across part of the US promoting and talking about The Venus Project. Pulling a rather heavy cart the entire way, he covered 1600 km through 76 different cities. You will get to know what he learned from this experience, including how you could approach very different people when presenting an idea like TVP. You will get to see some of the people he met, how he approached them, and how these people responded to an idea like TVP.

We are also starting our journey of understanding 'language' in this issue, with a big, fluffy article on how writing styles emerged and how they work today. We will look at how languages around the world define both actions and 'stuff', how they build sentences, what verbs and nouns and other such 'spicy' things really are, and overall, how written language is widely different from how we talk. This massive article will be the bedrock for those to follow in this series, because understanding how today's written languages work (from English to Chinese or Romanian), we will be able to consider better ways of improving communication. Mind you, language is what you use to describe yourself, and the world. So understanding "it" may very well allow you to better understand yourself and the world around you.

TVP Activism - Overcoming religious and military objections.

by Luke Wonderly

My name is Luke Wonderly, and I support The Venus Project and its Resource-Based Economy. I wanted to help spread awareness about this direction and to introduce and invite as many others as I could to join and participate in our global movement. So, in early spring of 2014, I set out on a Peace Walk that would take me over 1,000 miles (1600 km) through 76 different cities, meeting and interacting with thousands of different people.





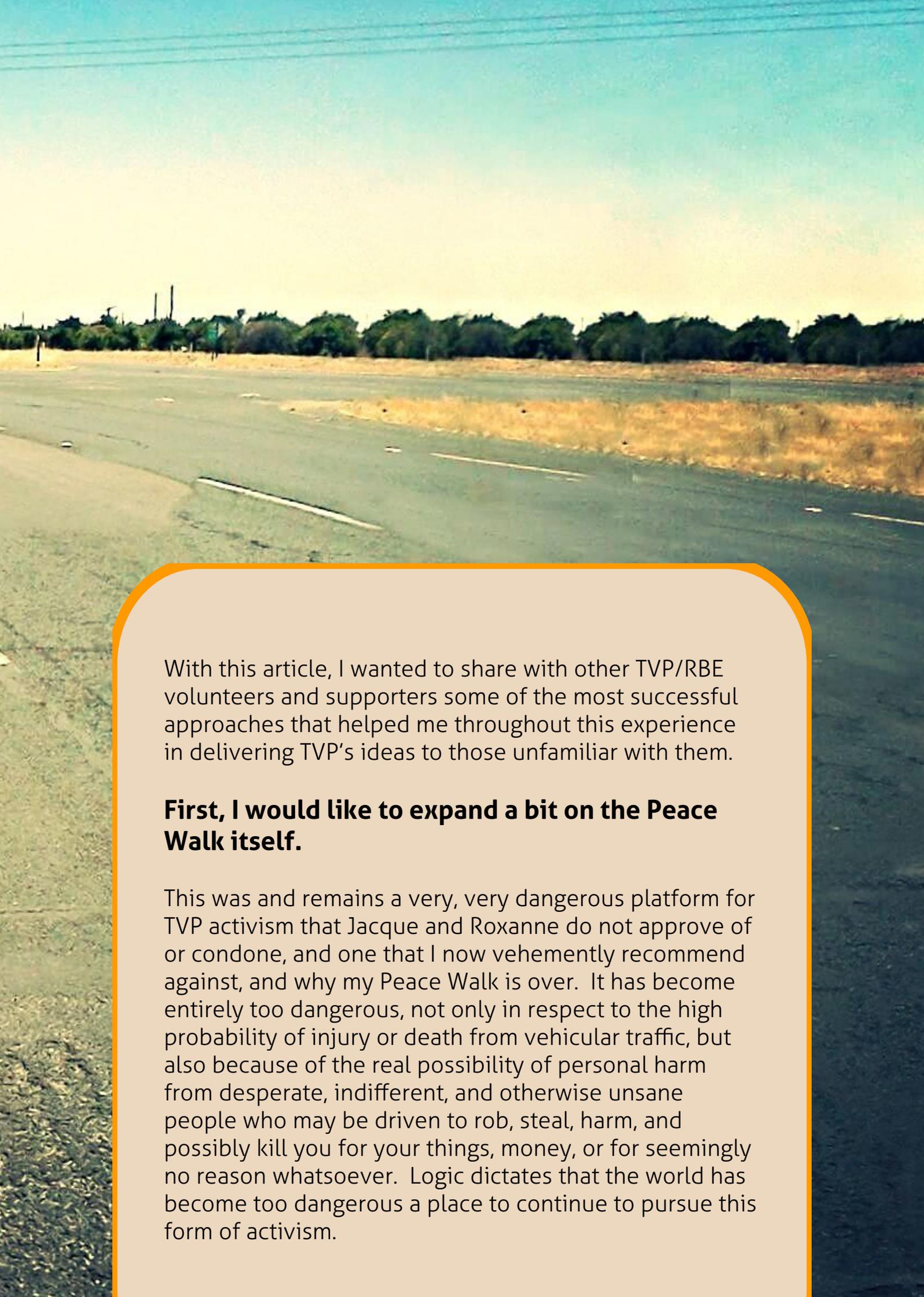
PEACE WALK
PLAN FOR WORLD PEACE
FOLLOW ME ON  /PEACE WALK
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With this article, I wanted to share with other TVP/RBE volunteers and supporters some of the most successful approaches that helped me throughout this experience in delivering TVP's ideas to those unfamiliar with them.

First, I would like to expand a bit on the Peace Walk itself.

This was and remains a very, very dangerous platform for TVP activism that Jacque and Roxanne do not approve of or condone, and one that I now vehemently recommend against, and why my Peace Walk is over. It has become entirely too dangerous, not only in respect to the high probability of injury or death from vehicular traffic, but also because of the real possibility of personal harm from desperate, indifferent, and otherwise insane people who may be driven to rob, steal, harm, and possibly kill you for your things, money, or for seemingly no reason whatsoever. Logic dictates that the world has become too dangerous a place to continue to pursue this form of activism.

Before we begin, it's important to clarify and review 3 things:



1) TALKING TO PEOPLE:

Out on the road and in public, I am NOT allowed to just walk up to someone and start telling them all about the Peace Walk, TVP/RBE, or anything else. That is called "Solicitation". It's considered intrusive and is unlawful in most American cities. I could never initially say anything more than good morning, good afternoon, or good evening - which of course I did (with a big, sincere smile) to virtually every person I saw or happened upon.

The only time I could 'legally' talk with people is when they initiated the conversation with me. They had to make the first move. They had to have enough drive or curiosity to inquire, demonstrating a significant and definite interest in what I had to say. So, if I was talking with anyone, it's because they came up and started that interaction.



2) UNDERSTAND WHERE THE PERSON IS COMING FROM, AND TALK TO THEM IN THEIR LANGUAGE:

To fully understand & remember - that people reflect and emanate their culture. Their viewpoints, positions, their beliefs, their values, and their behavior ALL reflect and extend from the way they were raised, the values they were indoctrinated to accept, and other influences they've so far experienced.

So, when some man is ranting and raving at the top of his lungs at me (Alex Jones style) that I'm un-American or that I'm a "goddamn communist", I understand (and remember) that his behavior is simply a reflection and extension of his understandings, values & beliefs. In other words, I RECOGNIZE where he's coming from. From his reasoning & viewpoint, he's trying to be the best, upright patriotic American that he can be, speaking up and defending the principles and freedoms of America, simply because this TVP stuff sounds a bit like communism to him, and every single American should fight against the evils of communism!

Do you get it?

This guy is just trying to be a good American based upon what he's been taught and what he believes to be true, honest, and right. THAT'S really where he's coming from. He wants and makes serious effort to be and to do good based upon what he knows.

When we can perceive and understand where a person is coming from — what their values and understandings really are — we can communicate to them, in their language, and reach them in a way that they can readily understand.

This is Erin Cuarenta, a darling woman who stopped her car and wanted to know ALL about the Peace Walk. She invited me to sit in her car (I had been literally DRAGGING the cart for MILES because of the broken front retaining brace) and we talked for over 20 minutes. She asked VERY good questions which I did my best to answer. She said she would look further into TVP/RBE, and I believe she will!



3) 10 YEAR PROJECTS:

As many activists are quick to discover, their own excitement, enthusiasm, and strong belief in the TVP RBE direction is not always matched or well received by every single person they explain it to. We become a little confused or bewildered as to why or how others can't agree with or understand TVP since it seems so clear and easy to see for us.

We know it's highly improbable that just talking with someone for a few minutes - is going to change their values, and not everyone we talk with is going to easily understand, align with, or support this new concept and direction, especially those who have a vested interest in keeping things just the way they are. Values and beliefs built, founded, and forged through generations of indoctrination are so deeply entrenched into social, political, economic and religious myths, traditions and institutions that it is difficult for many to be able to see past them.

As Jacque illustrates with his "One Punch Malone" example, some people can be recognized as a "10 Year Project", meaning that some people are so deeply indoctrinated that it could take about 10 years of constant dedication and perseverance to help change and turn their values and beliefs around. So, as Jacque also points out, don't waste your time with such cases. Recognize the situation, thank them for their time, and move on to the next opportunity to introduce TVP/RBE to someone more ready for it.

There are just far too many other people, desperate and eager to find solutions, who will much more easily understand the logic and benevolent principles of TVP/RBE that could be reached within those 10 years of your life.

My point is this: I couldn't reach everyone I talked with during my Peace Walk, and in some cases I never even made the effort to do so. In my travels, I encountered lots of pro-war, "kill-all-muslims" young men (I call them "Army T-Shirts" because that's what a lot of them wore). I knew and understood that all of their hard-core, combative comments simply reflected how they were raised and the values they've adopted, but I also recognized that it would have been futile to try to reason with them through all the yelling and screaming. To put it simply, they were unreasonable. I felt I couldn't reason with them, so I just continued down the road, searching for more of those who could be reasoned with.





There is one more thing that I would like to address and clarify; during the Peace Walk, I considered myself nothing more than a messenger. That was my prime directive. I wasn't there to fight for, defend, or to try to convince, but simply to bring forth and deliver this vitally important message and direction to any and all of those who were interested and would listen.

I strove to never enter, involve myself, or get sucked into debates, arguments, mean-spirited discussions or conjecture about the ancient past, mysteries, stories, fables, myths or legends, middle Earth, UFO's, or about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. I wasn't interested in, nor dealt with, any of that. I was there for but one purpose - one objective: to deliver the message of theVenusproject.com Resource-Based Economy, to invite people to join and participate in the global movement, and to answer as many questions as best I could. (Every person was also given a postcard with web addresses providing more information.)

**PEACE
WALK**

FOR WORLD PEACE

/PEACE WALK

/VENUSPROJECT.COM

On a slightly, more humorous side of things, whenever a conversation started getting tense or someone started raising their voice, I would quietly explain, "I'm Just The Messenger", and most people instantly backed down, almost apologetically, realizing that they had been directing all their hostility at me personally, and heck, I'm just the messenger. It worked humorously well, often preempting and getting me out of what might have ended up being trouble if the intensity of the conversation escalated further.

Over the course of a year on my Peace Walk, I encountered almost every kind of response, statement, and question you can imagine, from the most sincere, loving, and appreciative people to the most extreme, argumentative, and combative. Some of the most common oppositions, considerations, and initial disagreements that I encountered extended from 2 basic viewpoints / positions:



A man wearing a black baseball cap with a white logo and the word "ARMY" in yellow, sunglasses, a maroon t-shirt, and a black jacket is standing outdoors. He is looking to the left. In the background, there is a traffic light on a pole, a paved road, a sidewalk, and some greenery. The sky is clear and blue. An orange text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**RELIGIOUS AND
MILITARY VIEWPOINTS.**



I would like to begin first with the religious viewpoints and positions, and some of the bridges or approaches I discovered and employed that really helped me in getting the right message across to others.

I met and spoke with thousands of people from all kinds of different religious backgrounds and varied beliefs, but regardless of what particular faith or denomination resonated with each individual, everyone thought and believed that Peace is a “good thing” and that we should have it here on Earth. THIS is where they were really coming from.

From the religious standpoint, there were basically three (3) responses:

- 1). Thanks, acknowledgement, and support**
- 2). Genuine interest and questions**
- 3). Strong rebuke or condemnation**



Let's start with responses 1 and 2.

Of those who stopped and approached me, most were very genuine and sincere. They were humble, very kind, and loving people. They recognized and valued what I was trying to accomplish, and were appreciative, shaking my hand and offering support and encouragement. They didn't know exactly what the "message" was, but they understood that it had something to do with peace and were supportive of that.

***That's where they were coming from -
they really WANTED & SUPPORTED PEACE.***

Whenever someone would stop and come up to me, I always did the same introduction and description automatically. I would introduce myself (personally shaking their hand), hand them a postcard (with web addresses), explain briefly about the Peace Walk, and then begin speaking about the global movement, the moneyless Resource-Based Economy, and the evolution of human values associated with it.

I could usually get a lot of information out there before the person I was speaking with would begin sharing back their ideas and understandings with me (usually on how or why TVP/RBE wouldn't work), and I would let them go on with what they had to say, all the while listening and trying to determine where they were coming from, what they meant, at what level and depth their understandings were, and what tools I had to work with so that I could communicate and connect with them more effectively.

This was very, very important. I wanted to be sure to talk with each person in their language, using words and presenting concepts that they could understand and relate to, taking care to not belittle, offend, distance, or otherwise alienate them from the conversation, and thus, from learning more.

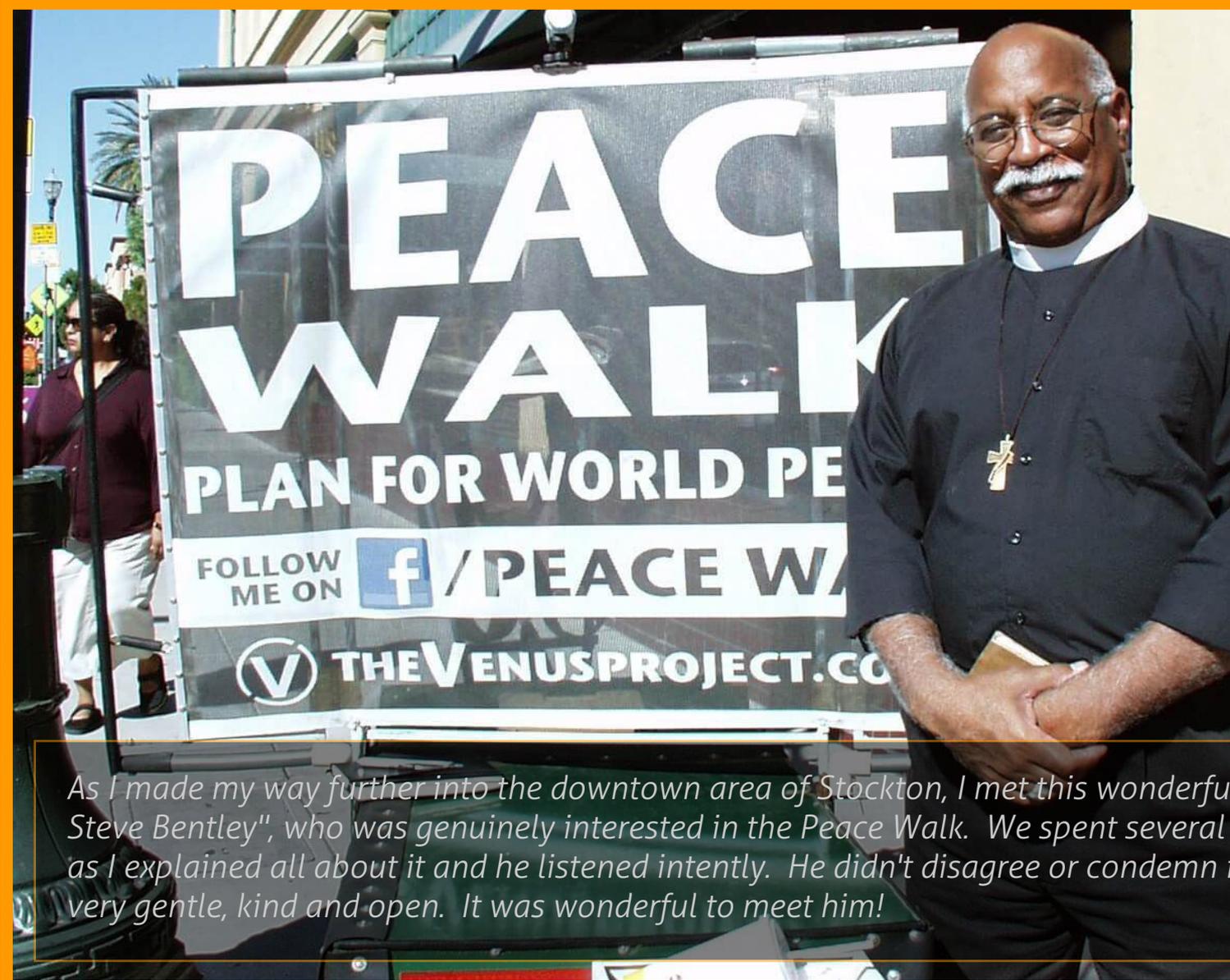
Very often with the religious viewpoint, the major consideration seemed to be very similar. I kept hearing the same reasoning, the same predisposition, and the same old statements over and over and over again: without God, or Jesus, or some other Deity, peace could not and will not happen... ever! That's what they believe, and have literally resigned their lives to.

VIDEO



It was as though the religion itself precluded them from considering or employing any other ways or methods. It tended to automatically exclude, dismiss, and denounce anything but itself. It made people feel that they were somehow exempt from responsibility, care, or concern, and that as good, faithful believers, they were inherently required to obey and support the doctrines and beliefs of their religion and turn all of their problems over to their God, relinquishing their own will and responsibilities.





As I made my way further into the downtown area of Stockton, I met this wonderful man, "Steve Bentley", who was genuinely interested in the Peace Walk. We spent several minutes talking as I explained all about it and he listened intently. He didn't disagree or condemn me, he was very gentle, kind and open. It was wonderful to meet him!

And in an attempt to be good, upright, faithful believers (which is, after all, where they're coming from - making the effort to be 'good'), they would inadvertently and completely dismiss the entirety of TVP/RBE by repeating the same final, matter-of-fact, end of conversation statements that I heard so often:

***THERE WILL NEVER BE PEACE ON EARTH UNTIL JESUS RETURNS
THERE WILL NEVER BE PEACE ON EARTH; ONLY IN HEAVEN
PEACE IS A NICE IDEA, BUT IT CAN'T HAPPEN TIL JESUS COMES BACK***

Whoa! What do you do with that? These are pretty heavy-duty statements! How do you go up against God or Jesus???? You can't! That's a position that indoctrination trains people to use.



*l man, "Father
minutes together
in any way. He was*

But I discovered **five simple, yet powerfully effective words** that not only help in bridging and getting past this difference, it helped to exemplify and reinforce the principles of the very religion they believe in and profess. Five simple words in the form of a question, delivered in a language they understood and, MOST importantly, asking in a very serious and most sincere way while looking directly in their eyes: **AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO TRY?** ... silence and INSTANTLY, without any hesitation whatsoever - they quickly nodded their heads vigorously - "Yes, Yes" we are.

INCREDIBLE!!!!!!!

Virtually every single one of them, instantly and enthusiastically, nodded YES!!!! This absolute, split-second change of understanding evaporated any unintended opposition, along with igniting their recognition of The Venus Project's alignment with the core teachings and doctrines of their own religious beliefs. It was wonderful! These five simple words enabled and even encouraged them to now more readily consider and listen more closely to these new concepts of TVP/RBE! It was absolutely fantastic!!! Out on the road and dealing with this all the time, this was breakthrough material* for me.

It became easy to communicate with this approach because it's something that everyone agreed with. Wherever I went, it was a fundamental basis that virtually all of them agreed with and recognized that YES, we are supposed to, and need to, try. It created a foundation of shared understanding and trust that ENABLED each person to be more receptive, and for the conversation to continue.

****It's interesting to note just how I came up with and discovered these five little words and the powerful effect that they have.*** *Early in the Peace Walk, I was headed North outside of Visalia, CA through miles and miles of farmland, and I kept running into this situation time and time again. It seemed like every farmer and family I came across always ended up saying the same thing: Peace will never happen til Jesus or God comes back. At first, I tried to reason with them on several different issues and levels. But there just seemed to be no way of getting past, or going up against this "When God or Jesus comes back" finality, no matter what approach or angle I tried. It proved to be a very, very difficult consideration to overcome indeed.*

Well, after a very long exhausting day of pulling the Peace Cart uphill, and against the wind for miles, it was getting dark - and I had to again - struggle to find a place to camp for the night (I always got permission, or made every effort to do so - before I could legally camp or sleep on someone's property - and this also proved to be very difficult each day too). Stopping here & there along the way - asking folks for permission on where I could camp for the night - and on, and on I went - constantly getting a repeated "No" from everyone I asked - and by now it's almost completely dark (which precludes you from knocking on peoples door at night) I'm totally worn out and a little beside myself - I came upon a man's house close to the road - and again - inquired about just being able to set up my tent in the field that was next to his property.

He came out, listened to my introduction, asked a few questions, and again - matter-of-factly stated that same dismissive line: "Peace will NEVER happen, until Jesus comes back" ... Completely exhausted, and at the end of my wits trying to overcome this darn opposition - I just blurted out (in almost utter frustration) well "Aren't we supposed to try?" ... And BAM! It was unbelievable! A wave kind of washed over him! I could see it! Those five little words struck a deep chord of understanding within him that absolutely, completely changed his entire sense of position.



We just stood there looking at each other for a few moments... and then he said in a soft voice, almost holding his head down, "Yes, we should". He became very humble after this incredible shift of realization for him. He then pointed and invited me to go ahead and camp on the cement driveway in front of his garage, shook my hand, thanked me, and then left. I instantly scurried over and began setting up camp, stunned from what had just happened; not only that I wasn't turned away again, but of the sudden transformation that I had just witnessed, and was part of. I thought about what happened all during that night, amazed at the power and influence of those five little words.

Virtual = "In essence, but not in fact"

As I said, this approach work very well; perhaps 98% of the time. But then every once in awhile, there was: "**GOD HAS A PLAN.**" This was the other major consideration that I encountered with religious viewpoints and positions. It again implied absolute finality that it was the ultimate & final word. I'd like to share an example from an early experience I had, before the Peace walk, of what worked and what didn't work, in helping me get past this strong objection, and ultimately in getting the Peace Walk message delivered.



I was camping along the banks of the Kern river outside of Bakersfield CA., talking to a small group of young men and a couple of older adults. I was explaining about the completely inexcusable deaths of over 60 thousand humans from starvation each day, and how through automation and robotics, outside of a for-profit system, we could produce and provide healthy, nutritious food for everyone on Earth. I then said that if these starving people were outside on our lawns, we, as sincere caring Americans, would immediately go out, lift their heads up and give them food and water, because we care..., at which point one of the older gentlemen loudly and forcibly said "I wouldn't". We all turned and looked at him, and I asked him why? Why wouldn't you help them?

He answered, "Because I believe God HAS a plan, and that all of this is part of his plan, and I'm going with HIS plan."

For a second I was kind of shocked. I had never encountered such an outright indifferent response before, and I replied in kind "If you truly believe that to be so, maybe you should stop giving your wife that cancer medication. Maybe it's part of God's plan that she die a horrible, agonizing death from cancer... or use electricity at home, or even have a home for that matter. After all, if God has a plan, wouldn't he provide a home for you? Why even create or develop cures, or invent anything, if God has a plan? I went off on him in front of everyone with that kind of talk.

Of course, these were the wrong things to say; the entirely wrong approach to use. It was demeaning and hurtful and only served to activate his defenses, alienate him even further away, and completely obliterate any possibility of getting this message through to him. I failed to remember the most important thing, which is to understand and recognize where he was coming from; trying to be obedient, living up to and by the word of his God, trying to be a GOOD believer based upon his indoctrination, his understandings, and his beliefs. That's where he was coming from.

Today, and along my Peace Walk, when even the most staunch, rigid and defensive person makes the bold statement of "God has a plan", I agree with them, and reply in their language:

Yes, many people also believe that God has provided everything we will EVER need right here on Earth, and has provided us with the abilities that with careful, responsible use and management of Earth's resources, combined with the good sense of stewardship bestowed upon us, we CAN, now more than ever before, begin providing for and helping all of Earth's people; that by devoting science & technology to HELP humankind, instead of profit, we can overcome greed, jealousy, envy, human suffering and war. That solutions and benevolence to humankind is inherent in the framework of God's plan and He expects us to try, using all of the tools and resources He has provided for us here on Earth.

I would then begin explaining about the plan, the TVP worldwide movement that people all over the Earth are working on together; a plan that embraces, and puts INTO PRACTICE all of these intentions and directives solely and exclusively for the benefit of all humankind - and so on. I found this to be a much better approach in overcoming this misinterpreted predisposition. It was more readily received, and provided an eye-to-eye level, a shared foundation of agreement and understanding that allowed the conversation, and ultimately the message, to have a higher possibility of being heard.

And yet, no matter how much time you spend, no matter how hard you try to explain, or of all the patience you may exert, there are still what Jacque refers to as **10 YEAR PROJECTS**.

I'll conclude this section on religious positions with the 3rd type of response I encountered: the 10 year project. These were the extremist, over the top, hellfire, brimstone and damnation fanatics who stopped and approached me for no other reason than to condemn, berate, and/or verbally assault me. They were not interested in the Peace Walk, or the plan. They simply wanted to communicate their negative viewpoint, or reasoning and, interesting to note, I encountered this type of person almost every day... (sigh)

There wasn't really a wide spectrum of these negative responses. It seemed to always extend from the misinterpreted doctrine of their religious beliefs. It was hardened condemnation of anything other than EXACTLY how they understood and saw things "by-the-book". There was absolutely no reasoning, talking to, or discussing things with them as more times than not, there was more yelling and screaming from them at me than actual talking.

Again, they were so deeply indoctrinated beyond communicating, listening to, or considering anything at all... but they didn't approach me to do that. That's not what they were there to do. People would stop and get out - and start yelling at me with statements like "The sign doesn't say 'Follow Jesus', it says follow you!" Or "Only through the word of God this" or "Through the blood of Jesus that". You couldn't talk to these people! I would still hear them yelling behind me, blocks away, as I just continued walking.

I learned to just ignore them; to just continue walking. Some of them were so combative that talking to them could quite possibly have resulted in violence or personal assault, like the one time when a man was right up in my face, yelling at me about God this and God that, and I made the MISTAKE of saying "Prove It"... ..and oh, boy, the guy BLEW HIS TOP. I mean he flipped out, and became violent! I quickly got the heck out of there! That was not the right thing to say!

*This kind gentlen
wanted to help m
and soft spoken,*



man is J.S. Sekhon, shopkeeper of the "\$1.00 only" store here in Lathrop, who
me on my Peace Walk by donating this nice shirt and a cold bottle of Pepsi! Gentle,
it was really nice to meet him and I thanked him for his wonderful donations!



I could give you all kinds of different examples of negative experiences I had, but the point is that I simply couldn't reach all of the people I talked to; that some people are just "10 year projects". Unfortunately, it's something that we have to come to accept - and I do. Out on the road, the religious viewpoint/position was one of the most frequent considerations that I had to deal with and overcome. These two basic approaches really made my job of delivering this message much, much easier and, I believe, more effective. So, the next time you encounter this type of religious disagreement or consideration when you're explaining the TVP message, try using one of these approaches and see if it helps.



In addition to the Religious viewpoint/positions that I experienced, the second strongest opposition I encountered was the Military viewpoint/position. It was by far the most difficult and challenging opposition I would face. ***There were basically 2 different types of military-focused responses:***

a) Reasonable, and b) Unreasonable.

10 year projects: I'm going to begin with the unreasonable 10 year projects, just to get them out of the way. I'm sure it's not too hard for any of us to imagine 10 year projects associated with military viewpoints. Deeply indoctrinated on so many different levels, they were combative, hostile and argumentative. They were most often loud, extreme and animated, waving their hands and arms around wildly. I can't tell you the number of times that I had people literally coming up yelling things at me like "All muslims should be killed. We need to completely bomb their country, seal off the borders...", all kinds of idiotic, over-the-top statements. I couldn't reason with them; they were too unreasonable. I still always offered them a postcard about Peace, as I just continued walking on past them.



This is an INCREDIBLE gentleman. We talked for over an hour, all about TVP/ RBE. He served in Vietnam and shared some absolutely fascinating stories & experiences. I thanked him profusely, over and over, for sharing with me, and we actually cried together on some of the heart-wrenching experiences he had been through.



Ok, so let's get to the "Reasonable" responses and interactions.

My definition of reasonable are those people who, although may already possess a strong predisposition inclined toward war and killing as the means to solution, they were still inquisitive, open and willing to listen to and interact with me in a calm, reasonable manner. I met and spoke with servicemen and women from virtually every agency of defense; Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marine, Air-Force and Intelligence, in both active and inactive retired status categories. There were also a number of people who exerted a military viewpoint/position who were never active or ever served in the military, but whose initial rejection or considerations stemmed from their embracing and espousing the American ideology of Patriotism, misguided loyalties and blind allegiance to the country and it's strong armed forces.



I came to realize that a majority of those retired or inactive servicemen and women who approached me did so because they had personally witnessed or experienced the corrupt, deceptive and outright dishonesty of the very war effort itself, and that of whichever particular branch of defense they served in. They recognized and understood that it was wrong and were curious or genuinely interested in how it might be done differently. So I heard things like "What was this Peace Walk 'Plan' for world peace about?"

You also have to understand just how exceptional and extraordinary it is for them, not only to consider a different path (or plan), but to have actually made the extra effort of stopping what they were doing to come over and stand with me. To understand that a soldier is made; the result of some of the most intense, extreme training and brainwashing that openly exists today. They endure extensive training specific in the ways of war and the tactics of assassination; reprogramed and instilled with values that not only support & reinforce the killing of others, but which provides validity, incentive and reward to do so.

Trained to remain unremorseful, stone cold and calculating, devoid, unfeeling and unsympathetic, they cannot entertain or have thoughts of morality. They are trained to override and disregard questions about whether or not what they're doing is right or wrong, good or bad, or to consider implications of biblical verse or supreme commandments unto man; training that is so extensive that there isn't a corporation, college or university today that even begins to compare to the type of training and preparedness a soldier will receive during a short 10 week stint at boot camp.

Peace is just simply not part of what being a soldier is. In fact, the concept of peace is completely opposite of a soldier's very function. A soldier is enlisted, trained and reconditioned into but one thing, an eager and willing combat killing machine, one who follows orders unquestioningly.

That is what I understand a soldier to be, and the values they may possess. Yet, when we stop to recognize, and begin to understand the man or woman behind the soldier, when we can perceive why and where they're really coming from, the meanings and drive of their intent, why they are a soldier, and why they believe in and support what they do...

It becomes clear...

They are born, raised and enveloped in the violent fabric of society today, growing up and introduced early on to satisfying violence through popular video games, where they can shoot and kill innocent bystanders, pedestrians and women, and be rewarded and admired by friends for their high scores in kills and levels attained. They are encouraged to play with decks of playing cards featuring photos of suspected terrorists in a game of kill them all. And every year, swarms of army recruiters (who receive pay and bonuses for new recruits) go to high schools to approach and entice students to "Enlist and Join Up" with exotic tales of travel, promises of salaries, advancement, education, job placement and medical benefits.



In America, an entire industry and complete lifestyle revolves around a myth, in an organization that starts with the myth of the Devil's own name ("Devil Pups" - an extension of the Army's "Hounds from Hell" myth), where joining begins at conception with a woman dressed in a negligee and panties emblazoned with the devil pups logo, the baby raised in a devil pups jumper, cuddling a devil pup teddy bear, and from an age as young as 14 are enrolled and ushered into the children's devil pups combat training programs, where awards, ribbons, and medals are awarded.



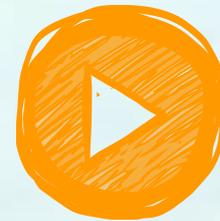
Popular television and blockbuster movies romanticize and glorify war, while a constant, never-ending barrage of spectacular tv and internet commercials with high-end graphics, computer animation, and intense music to lure young men (and now young women) to join the army, navy and marines with the promise that they can become the best they can be, repeated every hour of every day, every month of every year, year after year after year.



We are surrounded by war libraries, war memorials and tributes, defense agency flags and statues, coerced into participating and supporting war efforts through patriotism and manufactured consent in the news, media and sporting events. And how following several generations of family relatives who all served in the military before them, necessitates the current generation to enlist in order to carry on the proud family tradition of service and honor to this country, or face a life-time of unforgiven shame for not doing so.

The magnitude of this indoctrination is absolutely overwhelming!

VIDEO



You just have to ask yourself, with such extreme indoctrination and brainwashing, how on Earth can you ever hope to reach them? How can you help turn them and their values around? What language do you use; where do you even begin? For me, the answer always seems to be the same: Understand who they are, where they're really coming from, what their meanings are, and lock your delivery and language to their frame of reference, their value system and beliefs. Again, people's values, beliefs, mannerisms, behavior, language ALL extend from and reflect their upbringing, their influences, indoctrinations, their culture. It's what they know and believe to be true, to be right, to be a good person, a good patriotic American, a good upright religious believer, the most loyal and obedient soldier, or worker, or family man, or whatever. They're operating with what they know, using the tools & understandings that they possess at the time.

When we see the man or woman behind the soldier, we can recognize that this person is just trying to be the best upright, patriotic American that they can be, so much so that they're even willing to sacrifice their own lives trying to defend and protect the liberties and freedoms of this great country that we all have today. Do you get that? This is all that they've been taught, all of the reasoning and logic that exists all around them since they were born, and all that they sincerely believe to be true and good. THIS is where they're really coming from; trying to be a good, upright person.

I understand all this, so the first thing I do is to acknowledge and thank them. I'm aware and deeply appreciative of the tremendous effort that they made, and the intent that they have. These people are actually DOING SOMETHING. They're not just sitting around complaining about things. They're activists in their own right, going through tremendous physical and mental endurance training and tasks unlike anything else, a total personal sacrifice, even to the point that they're ready to give their life for the cause, all because, BASED ON WHAT THEY'VE BEEN TAUGHT, they're doing THE RIGHT THING, being "all that they can be", "the proud, the few, the chosen", America's good against evil, and on, and on, and on...

I discovered that simply acknowledging that person for the good that they want to do had a very powerful, and pivotal effect. To help illustrate this, I would like to describe a conversation that I had with a young Marine who had been deployed overseas and served multiple tours. I'll call him John.

Standing next to the Peace cart sign, in the small town of Elk Grove, CA, I was talking with one of the local residents I had just met, a young man named Nick, when a man who was walking to his car ventured over to the Peace cart. I immediately offered him a postcard about Peace. He looked at me, and with a genuine, friendly smile said "No I wouldn't read it. I'm a marine. I've been in combat, I've shot people in service.", and then went on saying something about why we have to have armies.

I REACHED OUT MY HAND AND THANKED HIM.



"Thank you for your service. Thank you for all the sacrifices you've personally made, and for stepping up and being the best American that you know how to be. You left your home, your family, your friends, your job, your entire way of life, your own home land, left it all behind to come to the call and serve this great country, with the pledge and willingness to even give up your own life, and to honor every American who's given their lives in battle, to defend & protect the liberties and freedoms that we all have and enjoy today. Thank you, John." This was delivered with honest, genuine sincerity, in a language he understood, and aligned with his set of values.

And more times than not, this simple acknowledgement had tremendous effect, almost instantly relaxing their disposition to become more receptive, and my conversation with John continued. He thanked me for my acknowledgement, humbly, and went on to explain that he had served overseas, had fought in battle, had at times killed children, and during some battles, had even enjoyed it.

I said that I understood that, but in all, no one really wants to die in war. That if he had children, he wouldn't want to see them killed, at which he replied that he had two sons, both of whom were currently active in two different branches of defense.

I said I understood that, but he still wouldn't want to see them die, their bodies blown up, bones and skull tissue burned and charred, because you love them, you care about them. He sighed and quickly nodded his head yes, yes, he did love his children very much (of course he wouldn't want to see them die). This connected with him personally. The true earnest and love that he has for his children, those values aligned. I said softly, no one on Earth wants that for their children, or themselves, not even the 16 servicemen who will try to commit suicide today.

I went on, and didn't stop:

When today, we now know and understand why war exists, when we begin to realize that the largest ROI (Return on investment), the most profitable industry there is on Earth, is in war, and no other industry yields such incredible, obscene amounts of profits, in an industry that grows by trillions of dollars each year, and with no end in sight.

I continued -

If the owners and manufactures of all the apache helicopters, all the battleships, all the jet fighters, rockets, and munitions, if all the C.E.O.'s of those companies made the same amount of money EACH WEEK that a soldier who puts his life on the line MAKES, that \$375.00 dollars a week, there wouldn't be any war. (they would often be nodding their heads in agreement)

There isn't a C.E.O. around that would even show up to work for \$375.00 a week. But more importantly, we all have to ask ourselves how on Earth it ever become moral, right or just to make any money or profits from the killing of other human beings.

There was a time in America that when a person or company made money from war, they were scorned as "War Profiteers". They were outcast by their friends, despised by society. Yet today, companies and corporations boast of the record profits they're generating, with Americans clamoring on board to buy stocks to get in on the money.

War is BIG business. It has become the most profitable and deadly industry on the planet today, and when people become aware of this fact, they're shocked, and ashamed.

When we realize that virtually every single human being on Earth wants to live a long life, they don't want to die, that they all want a world that's beautiful, to experience the joy of being with family, friends and those who they love and care about, that they don't want bombs or bloodshed, that the people of this Earth don't want war, they don't support it, it's obvious that they want it to end. They just don't know how.

Every person that I've ever talked to wants war to end.

And that's what The Venus Project's Resource-Based Economy is all about. It's a movement of people just like you and me, from all over the world, working together, using the understandings that we now know today. The best defense we have as a nation is in bridging the differences between peoples and nations, understanding and recognizing the factors and conditions that create war... and on and on I went, explaining the Resource-Based Economy concepts, and about the movement to bring it about.

By the time we were done talking (a good 30 to 40 minutes later) and he began to get ready to leave, he became still and then actually thanked me for what I was doing, and he meant it. THAT was a huge breakthrough for him. I moved to hug him - but instead got a warm, lasting handshake. It may have been the first time IN YEARS that he had even heard of, said the word, or at all entertained the concept of Peace, and yet on that one day, he did, and possibly may again in the future.

And that's a very good thing!

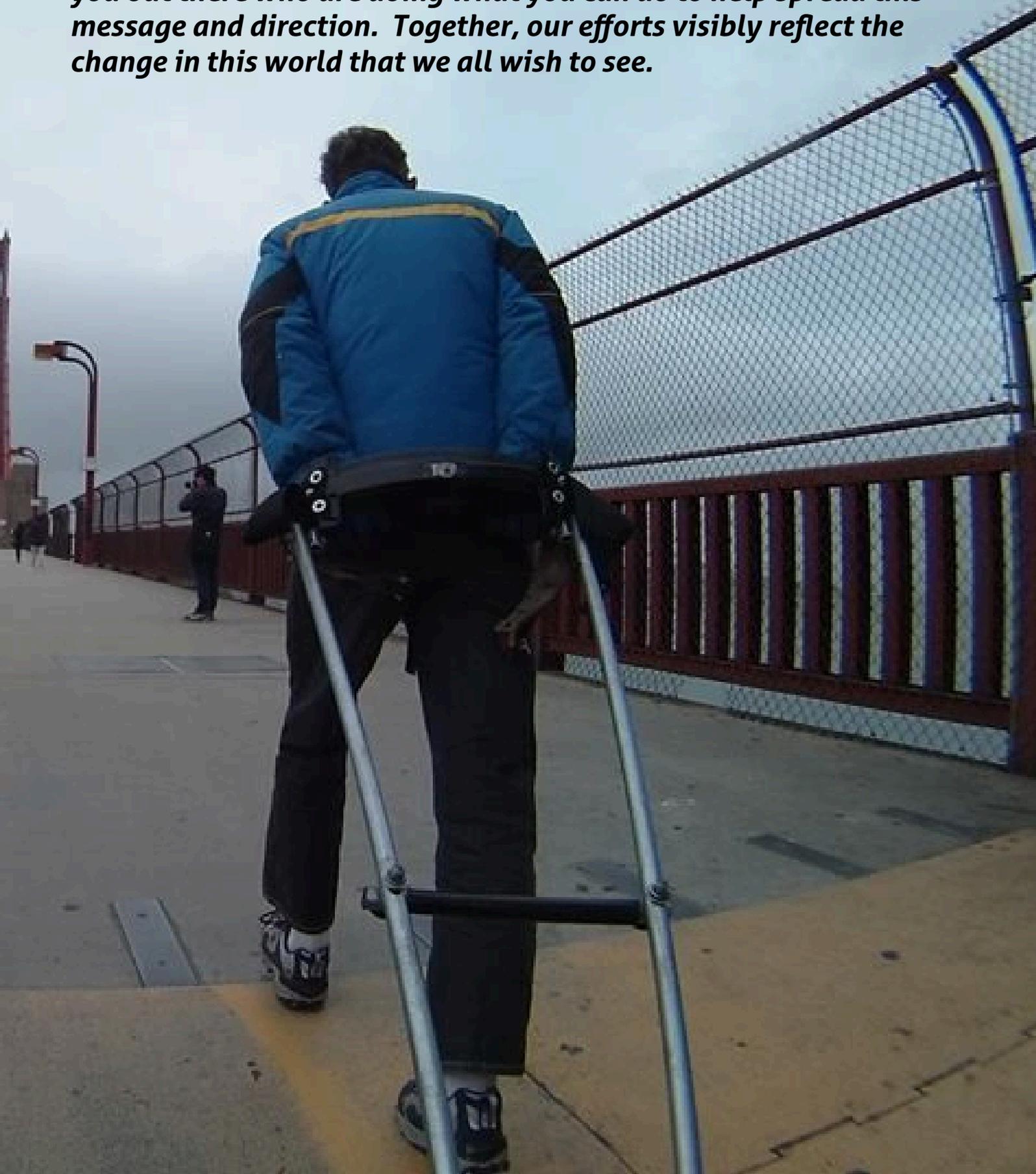
I found that this simple acknowledgment and thanks to be a very good approach, and it's the very first thing that I do when I meet an active or retired soldier. It creates a more relaxed and receptive demeanor, enabling the soldier to more objectively listen to and consider this message.

It's not easy to reach people who have a military viewpoint, and it was my experience that there aren't very many that you can reach. But I can also tell you that there are some out there. Don't automatically rule out a soldier, don't rule out a policeman, don't rule out anyone. If ANYONE shows ANY interest, if they can listen and interact in a reasonable manner, make an effort the best that you can. We just never know who may be the next powerful activist that this world so desperately needs.



I hope that these methods and approaches I employed and outlined here may be of some help, assisting you in your efforts to reach new people and deliver the message and solutions of TheVenusproject.com/Resource-Based Economy.

I also applaud and want to personally thank each and every one of you out there who are doing what you can do to help spread this message and direction. Together, our efforts visibly reflect the change in this world that we all wish to see.







PEACE WALL

PLAN FOR WORLD P

FOLLOW
ME ON



/PEACE W



THE VENUS PROJECT

This is Jeff Bayne and his daughter Lilly, who invited me to set up my tent for the night in their side yard in Lodi CA when I had nowhere else to sleep. Jeff and I talked for over an hour about the root causes of humankind's suffering, and all the advantages of The Venus Project's Resource-Based Economy. He was already very aware and familiar with much of what I explained, and agreed with the advantages that a Resource-Based Economy would provide.



This wonderful family (George Serrano on the right, Peter Serrano, and the two children Layla & Matthew) stopped, donated several bottles of water, and listened intently about my Peace Walk. Both men totally understood the The Venus Project direction and promised to learn more, follow me on Facebook, and write to me while I was on the road.



PEACE WALK

MAN FOR WORLD PEACE

HOW
ON



/PEACE WALK

THEVENUSPROJECT.COM



This is most of the staff, writers and employees of the Turlock Journal Newspaper. They were so fantastic to me and insisted on taking photos of me for an article on the Peace Walk, and then agreed to let me take theirs! Aren't they the BEST EVER!!!! Thank you, each and every one of you, for delivering this important message to all of the residents of Turlock California! LINK



138

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JECT



This is Tony Mariscal, who stopped once, listened for a bit, and then had to leave to go back to work. He later CAME BACK and spent quite awhile with me discussing the problems and SOLUTIONS that are now available to us ALL. He is extremely smart and readily recognized the validity and potential of a Resource-Based Economy.



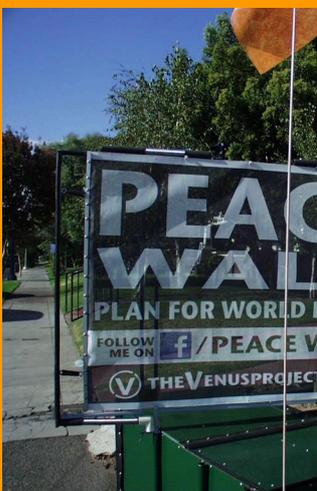


FACE
WALK
DM



Look at this incredible group of people! I met these folks at a bus stop on Olive Ave. on my way to Van Ness Ave. I greeted them, as I do most groups (and I'm a little loud anyway), with "Hi Everybody!", and asked them if they would like a postcard about Peace coming to our Earth, and how millions and millions of people from all over the Earth are working together to bring long-term, sustainable world Peace. I started handing them out and we all talked together for about 20 minutes. Now realize that there were only a couple together, as most were sitting quietly alone. The gentlemen on the left was out standing well away from the bench, but joined us early in our discussion, and all them got close together for this shot. It was wonderful!





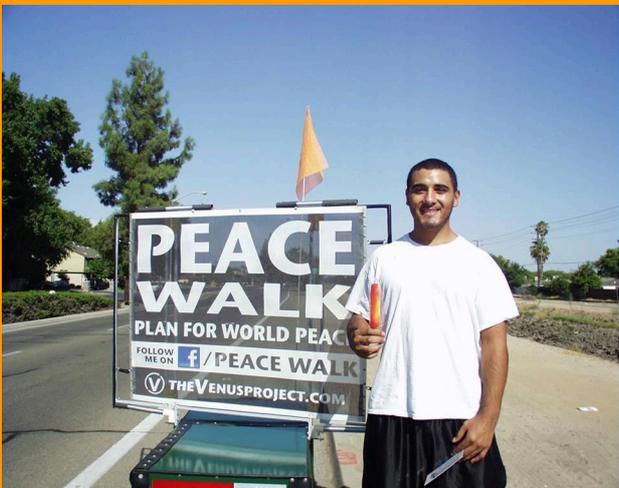
Luke Wonderly is a long-time supporter of TVP/RBE and is constantly working on and developing new tools and materials for communicating and sharing the TVP/RBE message. He is currently working on a song album to help the fundraising efforts toward TVP's major motion picture.

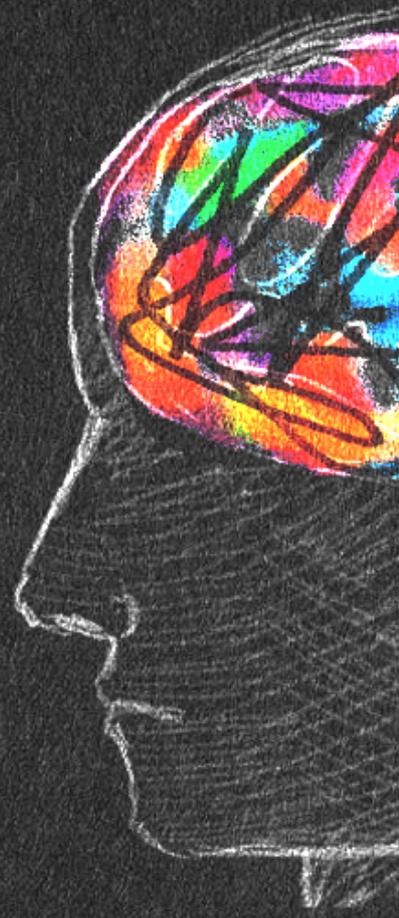
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LUKE'S WORK:

- *Luke's Facebook Profile*
- *lukewonderly@yahoo.com*
- *The Peace Walk Facebook page*
- *Time Lapse movies from the Peace Walk*

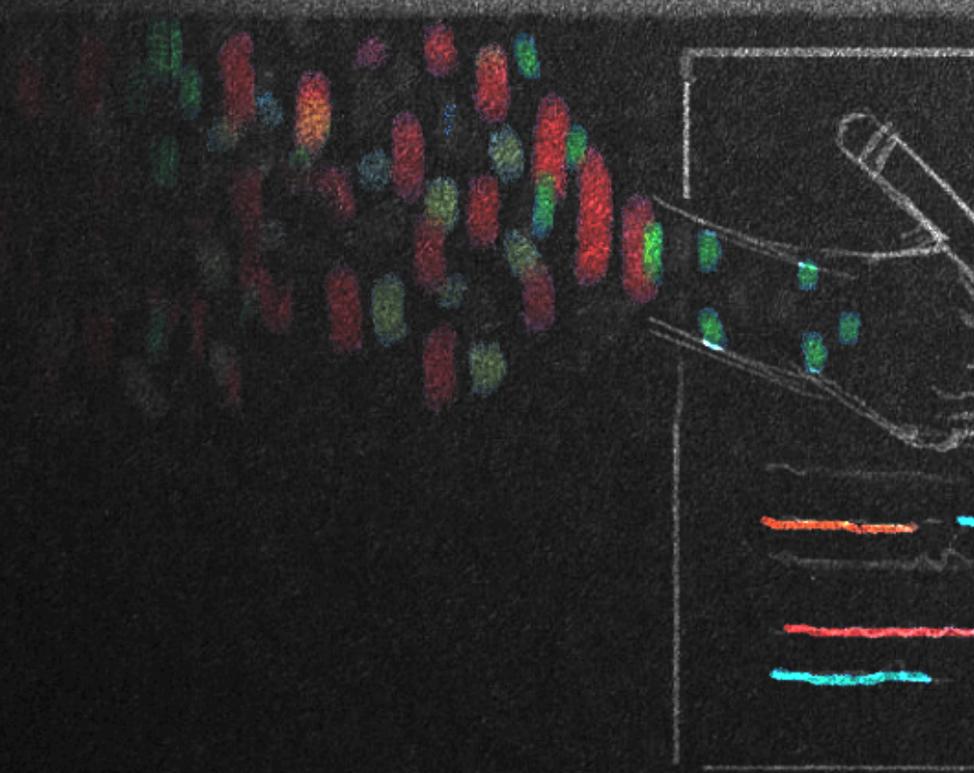


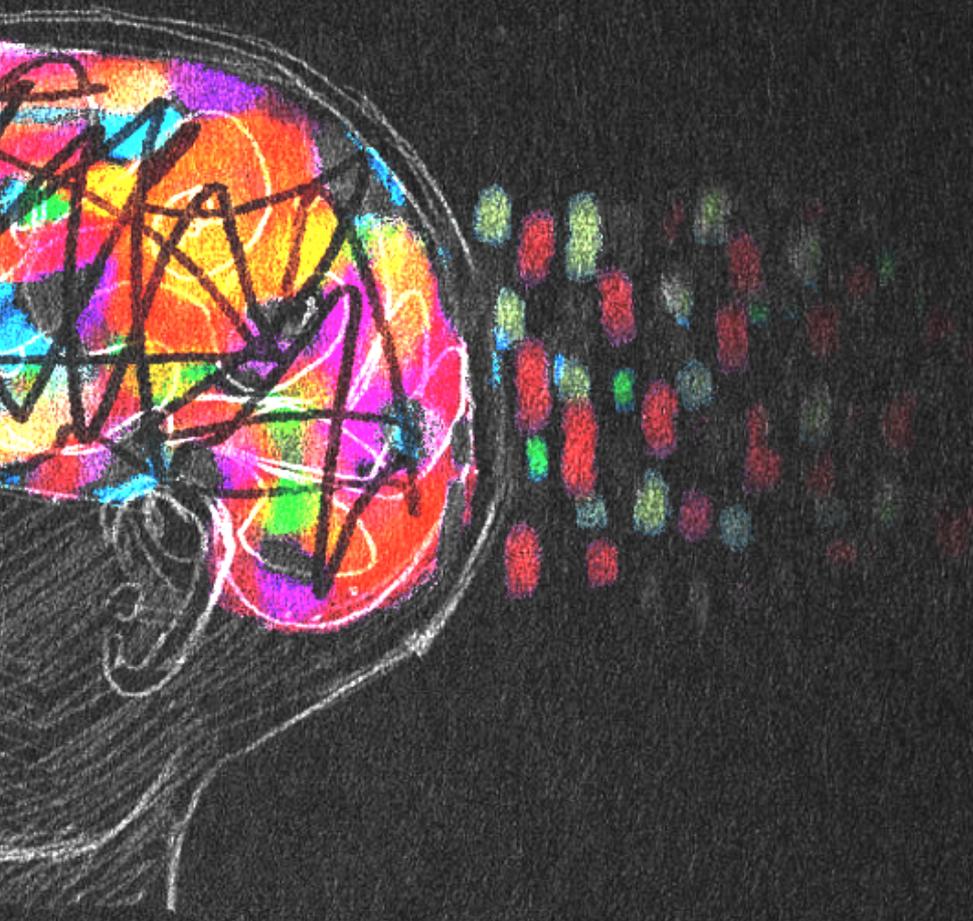
Some of the people I met - along the way.





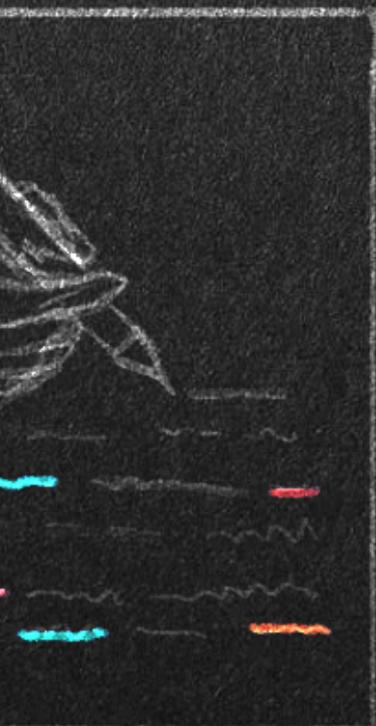
LANGUAGE





E-WRITING

by Tio



WHAT YOU WILL GET FROM THIS PART OF OUR ONGOING BOOK ON LANGUAGE:

- ▶ How writing started: how letters and logograms (signs representing things) were invented, and how they evolved into the written languages that we recognize today, including this one.
- ▶ How present day writing systems work: analyzing grammar across multiple languages (English, Romanian, Korean, Chinese and several more). What are words and sentences, verbs and nouns, and the relation between them (syntax) - how languages around the world try to define the world: from the “many” and the “kinds”, to action and events.
- ▶ You will learn how different, yet alike, the world’s languages are; different in the ways that they are built, but alike in their inefficiency and inconsistency.
- ▶ You may be surprised to find out that written language runs somewhat parallel with the way we talk; meaning that the way we write is not at all representative of the way we talk (not representative of the sounds that we make or the ways that we express ourselves).

- ▶ Analyzing several different languages and their grammar in detail, you will understand that context is the most important aspect of language, because regardless of syntax, verbs, nouns, words, or sentences, people understand the world in similar ways, not because of their writing style, but because of the context (culture). A Chinese and an American will see the world in similar ways if they are subjected to similar environments, regardless of whether they speak very different languages with widely different grammars.
- ▶ You will also realize that language may not change the way that people think; meaning that a more complex language does not mean a more complex mind, or the other way around.
- ▶ These last 2 points (context and ‘language and thought’) will be more thoroughly detailed in our next part on Language), but the bedrock for understanding them is provided in this one.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT LANGUAGE IS?

And by language, we're not just talking about what you are reading right now or the language that you speak. We're talking about language as a general concept ranging across mathematics, sign language, body language, biology, odors, touch, grammar, animals that seem to communicate, programming languages, and so on. As wide, complex, eccentric and unreachable as it might seem, we are now going to deeply explore this subject.

The prospect of this journey has deep implications for anyone: blind, deaf, 'normal', from Tibet to Japan, and regardless of whether living on a tall mountain or near the sea, because we all use language, both with others, and with ourselves. We talk inside our heads and outside of them, employing language as a mental map of the world, and of ourselves. Indeed, the only way you can define yourself is to interpret the information you know about you: tall or short, your relationships, age, name, the stuff you own, the clothes you wear, what you see in the mirror and outside it. Therefore, understanding language may very well change the way you understand the world, and for sure, your own self.

But the paradox of all this is that we have to use one type of language to define all of the other types. This is almost like trying to chew your own teeth. However, being aware of this handicap, we must start by understanding what is this language that I am using right now, so we can better measure its limitations, as it will be our only map for this entire book.

Most of this part of the TVPM Language series is based on two courses on the History of Language () and Linguistics () by professor John McWhorter. Both courses are very fun to watch and extremely detailed, so if you want to learn more than what is presented in this TVPM series, I recommend that you watch both of them. On top of that, we also add a lot more in this series that you won't find in those two courses, and I really mean A LOT.

WHEN DID LANGUAGE START?

Before we discuss written language, we have to mention that no one knows how or when this mumbling we speak every day started, and it's not as easy as defining the sounds that we make as language since, as we will discuss later on, language is far more than that. For example, a handprint on a wall is a form of language. All kinds of jewelry, sculptures, and songs are forms of language as well, and more importantly, gestures, facial expressions, and 'attitudes' are all forms of communication.

If you observe young children, they make sounds from the moment they are born. Even deaf and blind children make all sorts of noises and signs and it is thought that all of these 'expressions' of our bodies, from lungs and mouths to faces and limbs, develop into a way of communication over time via interpretation. You can see such rudimentary forms of 'communication' in all animals. We will get more into that later on, but for now, let's try to understand what's up with these 'ugly' signs you see now.

LET'S DIVIDE THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE INTO 3 COLORS:

FROM
SOUNDS
TO SIGNS

THE BEGINNING

THE SCIENTIFIC ATTEMPT
AT MAPPING SOUNDS

ON THE LIPS VS. ON
THE PAPER

FROM
SIGNS TO
WORDS

WORD VS SENTENCE

THE ORIGIN OF WORDS

WORD POLICE AND
WORLD WORLDS



FROM WORDS TO SENTENCES

DEFINING THE “MANY”
AND THE “KINDS”

DEFINING ACTION
AND SYNTAX



USEFUL NOTATIONS:

Light Blue - *Drawings/signs*

Yellow - *Letters or Words*

Orange - *Pronunciation*

Purple - *Sentence*

Red - *Grammatical Particles*

*Other colors are not representative
of anything special :)*

FROM
SOUNDS
TO SIGNS

THE BEGINNING

Gary, come here!

Yes Sir.

MANY YEARS
AGO:



Take a piece of chalk and write down what I say: bat, dog, woman, flower, cat, rock, eyes, poo-poo, donkey.

*How do that sir?
I know not to write.*

Invent some signs for fucks sake, Garry! We need to categorize the world with signs!

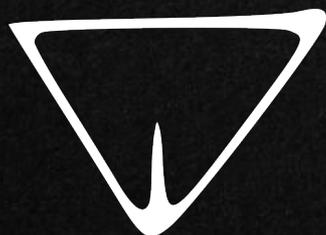


If that's how you pictured written language being invented, then you are not so far off. Yet the story is much more interesting and Garry's invented signs made a huge dent in the world, but they also have since mutated so much that it can compete with the evolution of biological creatures in terms of diversity. The fact that you can now look at these signs and make sense of them would be a major source of wonder to Garry or Sir. If the entirety of human history was represented by a 24-hour day, written language came into play at around 11:30 pm. That's how new of an invention it is, even though 5,500 years in the making (the passage of time since the first written language was invented) feels more like a huge amount of time to us humans.

The early written systems were basically represented by signs of known objects: man, dog, fire, mountain, spear, etc., made in clay. You need to keep in mind that these people were talking :). They had a voice and a vocabulary, they had ideas, and they communicated. It may be extremely hard for us to imagine that some people could communicate just fine without imagining words, without imagining a sentence, structure, verbs and nouns. But that was the norm for all human history.

LET'S SEE HOW THEY MANAGED TO MAP SOUNDS AND CREATE A WRITTEN LANGUAGE. HERE ARE ONE OF THE FIRST SUCH SIGNS:

THIS IS THE SIGN FOR FEMALE



(quite obvious I suppose)

THE SIGN FOR MALE?



obvious again (unless that's a rocket)

HERE ARE MORE:

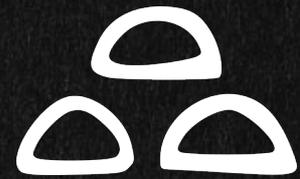
GOD OR
HEAVEN



HEAD



MOUNTAINS
OR LAND



EARTH



MOUTH



BREAD



As you can see, it is pretty simple to understand these signs, and combining them provides additional meaning. For example,   meant female slave - a woman working the land. Or you could signify eating bread (or being hungry) like this:  . *You had to be careful though because one line in the bread made a hell of a difference :).*

Peculiar things happened to these signs once 'evolution', meaning changes over time, started to literally make its mark on them. As children, we are taught to write carefully one way, but then are later taught to mess up those neat letters in a way that makes it harder to decipher later on.

FOR EXAMPLE,
“SOMETHING LIKE THIS”
BECOMES

Something like this

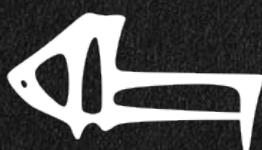
We might be tempted to view the difference as fairly insignificant, but when we recognize that these kinds of changes happened over thousands of years, all over the globe, and without any regulatory system to prevent these changes from running wild, you gain a much stronger understanding of how it was possible for each writing system to morph and transform so much. Imagine teaching your kids how to write based on your own handwriting style, and then them doing the same for their kids based on the handwriting style that they derived from you, and so on, over thousands of years. It's impossible to imagine what would result after thousands of years, but it would be radically different than the handwriting system that started it all.

HERE'S HOW THOSE FIRST SIGNS EVOLVED:

					GOD OR HEAVEN
					EARTH
					MALE
					FEMALE
					MOUNTAINS OR LAND
					FEMALE SLAVE
					HEAD
					MOUTH
					BREAD

But not only the signs changed, on the evolutionary path their meanings changed or expanded as well. For instance "head" also became used for 'front', and "hand" took meanings of "work" and "power".

HEAD



HEAD/FRONT

HAND



WORK



POWER

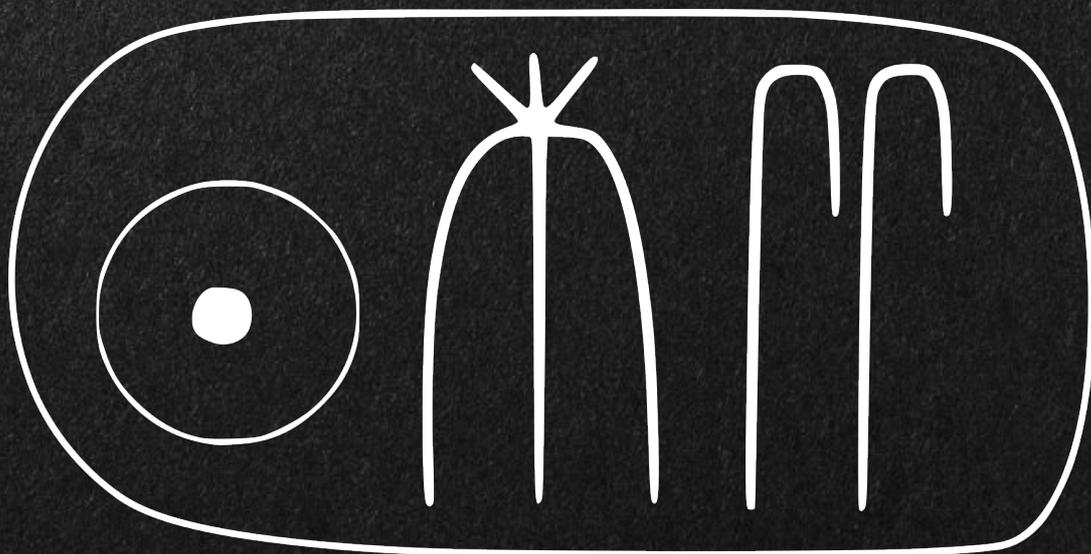


Although some of these changes are quite predictable and easy to understand, other kinds of changes happened that are far more interesting and less predictable. As an example, the sign for "arrow" at one point was -  and was pronounced [S I]. It looks like a bow and arrow, but it just so happened that they also pronounced "life" in a similar [S I] way, but had no sign for life, so the sign for arrow also became associated with "life".  was now the written form for both "arrow" and "life", and this is how many signs became associated with all sorts of things, many of which had no physical representation (they became signs for abstract notions).

By chance, another fantastic advancement happened that made humans not only map sounds for 'things' (dog, woman, mountain, etc.) with signs, but also parts of these sounds, or what we refer to today as 'letters'. Of course, we cannot say that they mapped the sound for [R] with a sign because there was no "R" back then. So let's take the name "Rameses", pronounced as [RAMSS]. Pronounce it in your head. Can you see how the [RA] stands out? [RA-M-SS]. Well [RA], or [R] as we may say (because there is no true "R" sound but variations of it) became important for them for various reasons. The same observation was used with the rest of the sounds from [RA-M-SS]. They didn't actually sit down and say "the sound [RA] must be written this way, [M] that way, and [SS] like this". By a kind of chance, in the same language, "mouth" (an object) was pronounced as [RO] (similar to [RA]) and already had this sign for it .

So guess what happened next? Similar to the sign for "arrow" and "life" - the sign for mouth became associated with the sound [RA], so now we know that the name [RA-M-SS] starts with the symbol , or at least that's how it ended up.

THE REST OF THE LETTERS FOLLOWED A SIMILAR PATH AND [RAMSS] BECAME THIS (FROM SOUNDS TO 'LETTERS'):



After a while of this, some folks did indeed sit down and say “*Man, that’s a rad way of mapping some of the sounds we speak! Let’s try to map all of them with this rule!*”. So they took known sounds for popular objects and mapped their first sounds with the signs they already had for these objects (like they did for [RA]).

SO, “HOUSE” WAS
REPRESENTED BY
THE SIGN:



AND
PRONOUNCED AS

[bēt]

They then used that sign, not for “house” [bēt], but for the sound [bē] (first sound), or [b] for us.



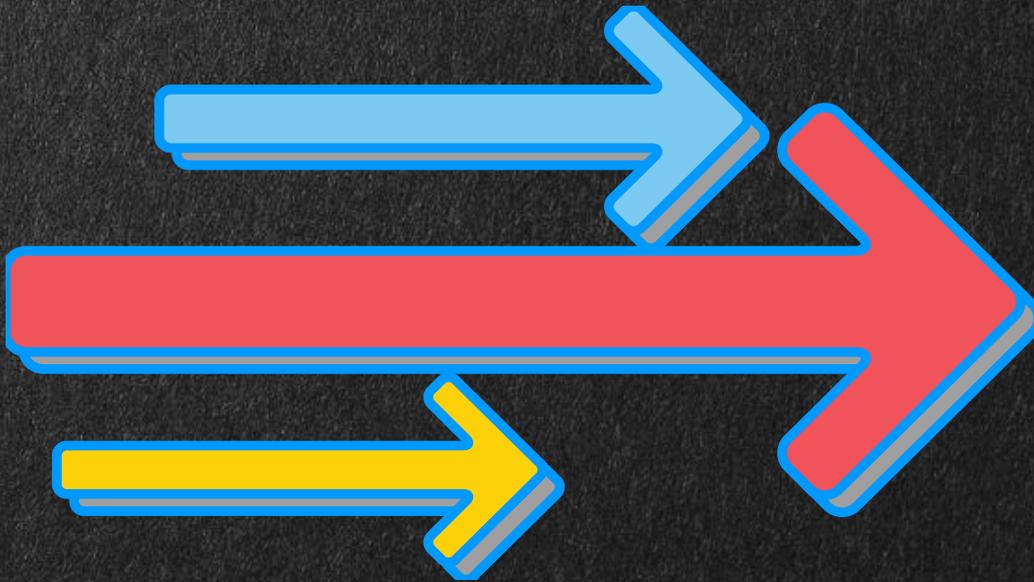
BECAME

[b]

and it wasn’t going to represent a house anymore, but a sound.

HERE'S HOW THEY EVOLVED THE OTHER LETTERS:

(all of the drawings for objects became letters) (*source*)



This part of the article will explain the entire alphabet history and will take many pages (mostly image based, so you can understand the evolution properly). If you want to skip this part, you can jump to page 118.

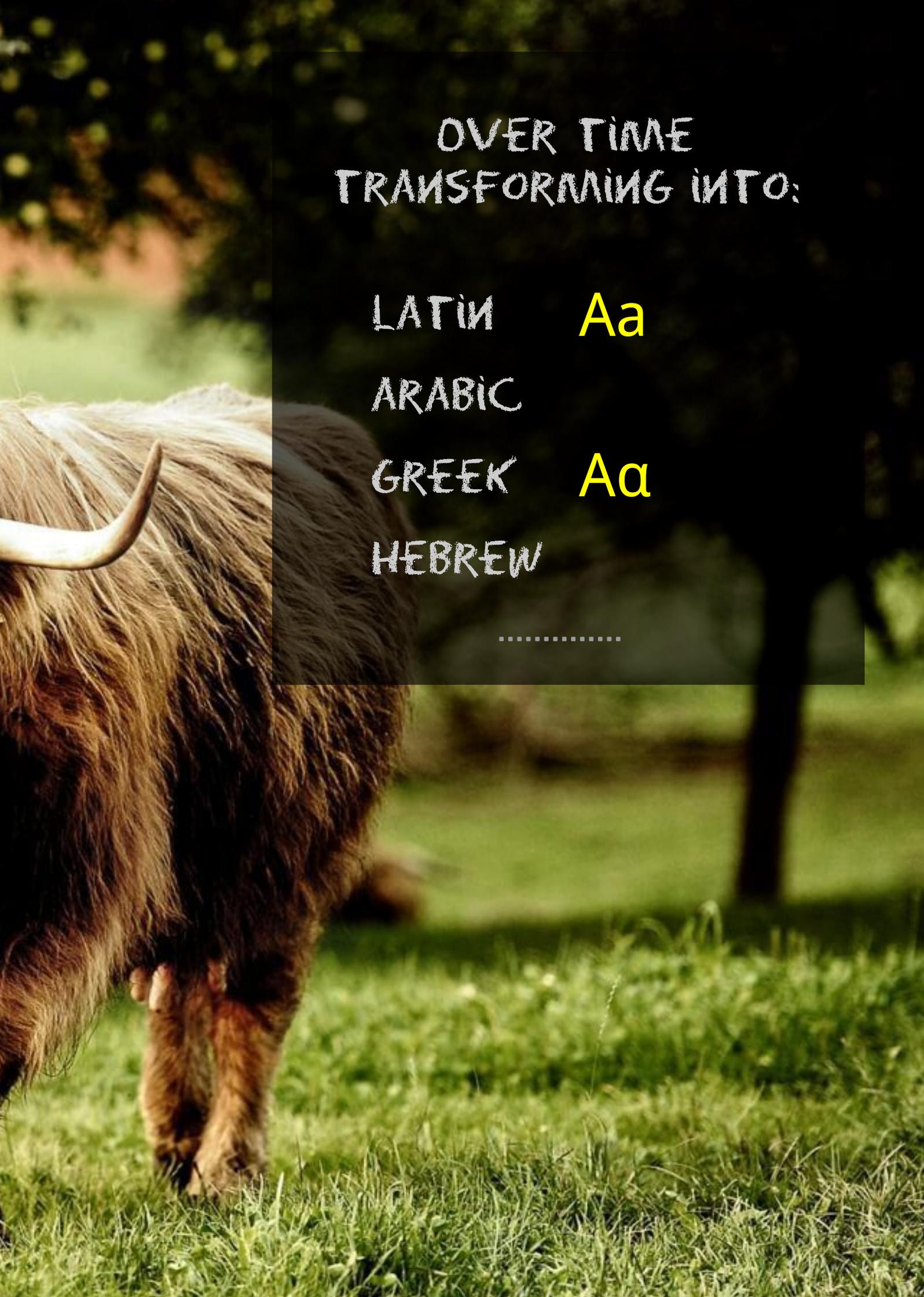


*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: OX

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [ālep]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [ā]

A Highland cow with long, shaggy brown fur and a single curved horn is grazing in a lush green field. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white and yellow text.

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN Aa

ARABIC

GREEK Aα

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: HOUSE

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [bēt]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [bē]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Bb

ARABIC

GREEK

β

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: CAMEL

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [giml]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [gī]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Cc, Gg

ARABIC

GREEK

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: DOOR

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [dālet]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [dā]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Dd**

ARABIC

GREEK **Δ**

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: WINDOW

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [hē]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [hē]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Ee**

ARABIC

GREEK

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: HOOK

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [wāw]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [wā]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN Ff, Uu, Vv, Yy, Ww

ARABIC

GREEK ,

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: WALL/COURTYARD

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [**ēt**]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [**ē**]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Hh**

ARABIC **ح**

GREEK

HEBREW

.....





*representation of the
object using drawings*



OBJECT: HAND

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [yōd]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [yō]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **li,Jj**

ARABIC **,**

GREEK

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*



OBJECT: PALM (OF THE HAND)

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [kāp]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [kā]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Kk**

ARABIC

GREEK

HEBREW

.....



ل



*representation of the
object using drawings*



OBJECT: GOAD FOR LIVESTOCK

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [lāmed]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [lā]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN LL

ARABIC

GREEK

HEBREW

.....





*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: WATER

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [mēm]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [mē]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN Mm

ARABIC

GREEK μ

HEBREW

.....

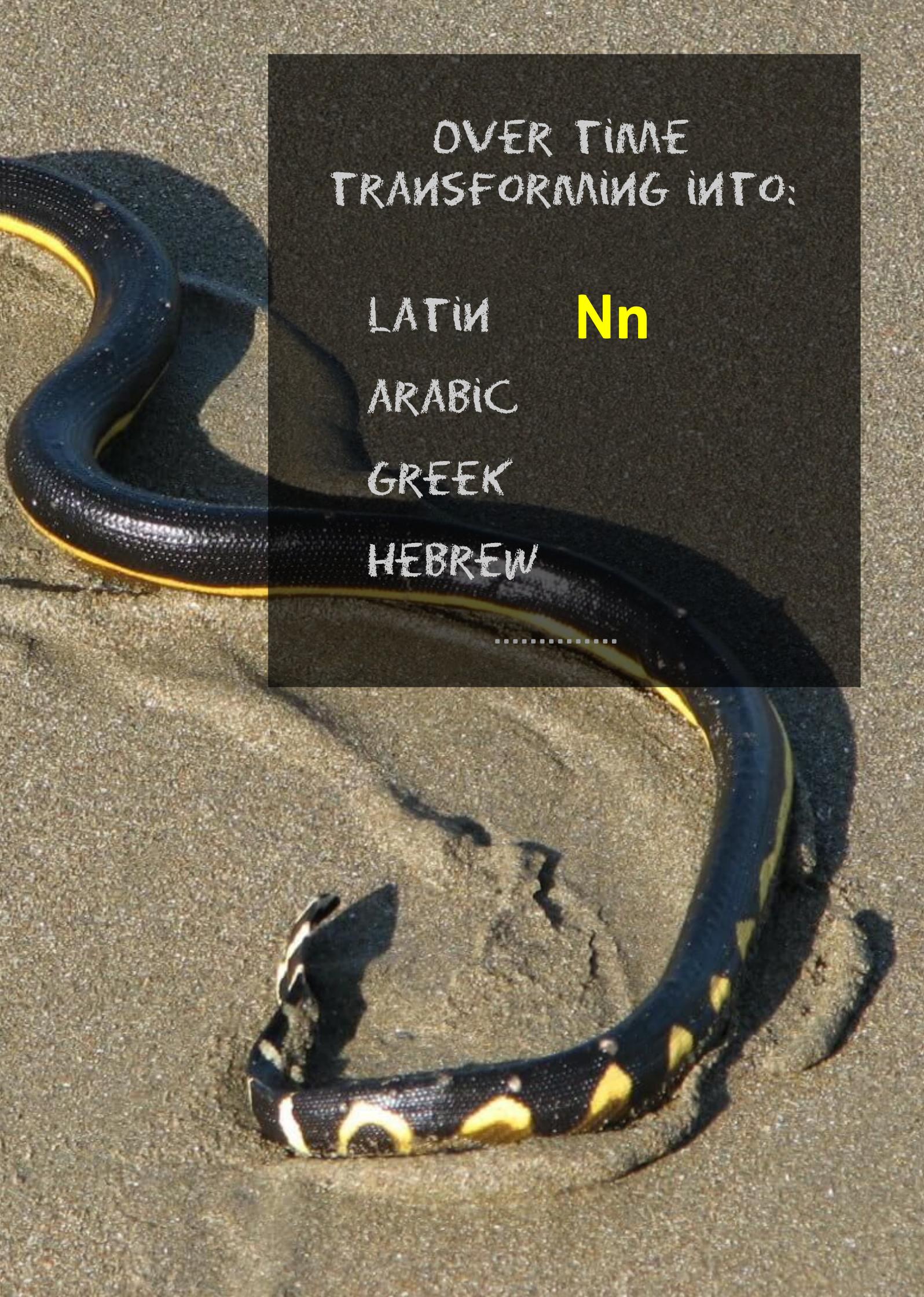


*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: SNAKE

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [nūn]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [nū]

A black and yellow snake is coiled on a sandy surface. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper half of the image, containing white text. The text reads: "OVER TIME TRANSFORMING INTO:" followed by "LATIN Nn", "ARABIC", "GREEK", and "HEBREW". A dotted line is located below the word "HEBREW".

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Nn**

ARABIC

GREEK

HEBREW

.....

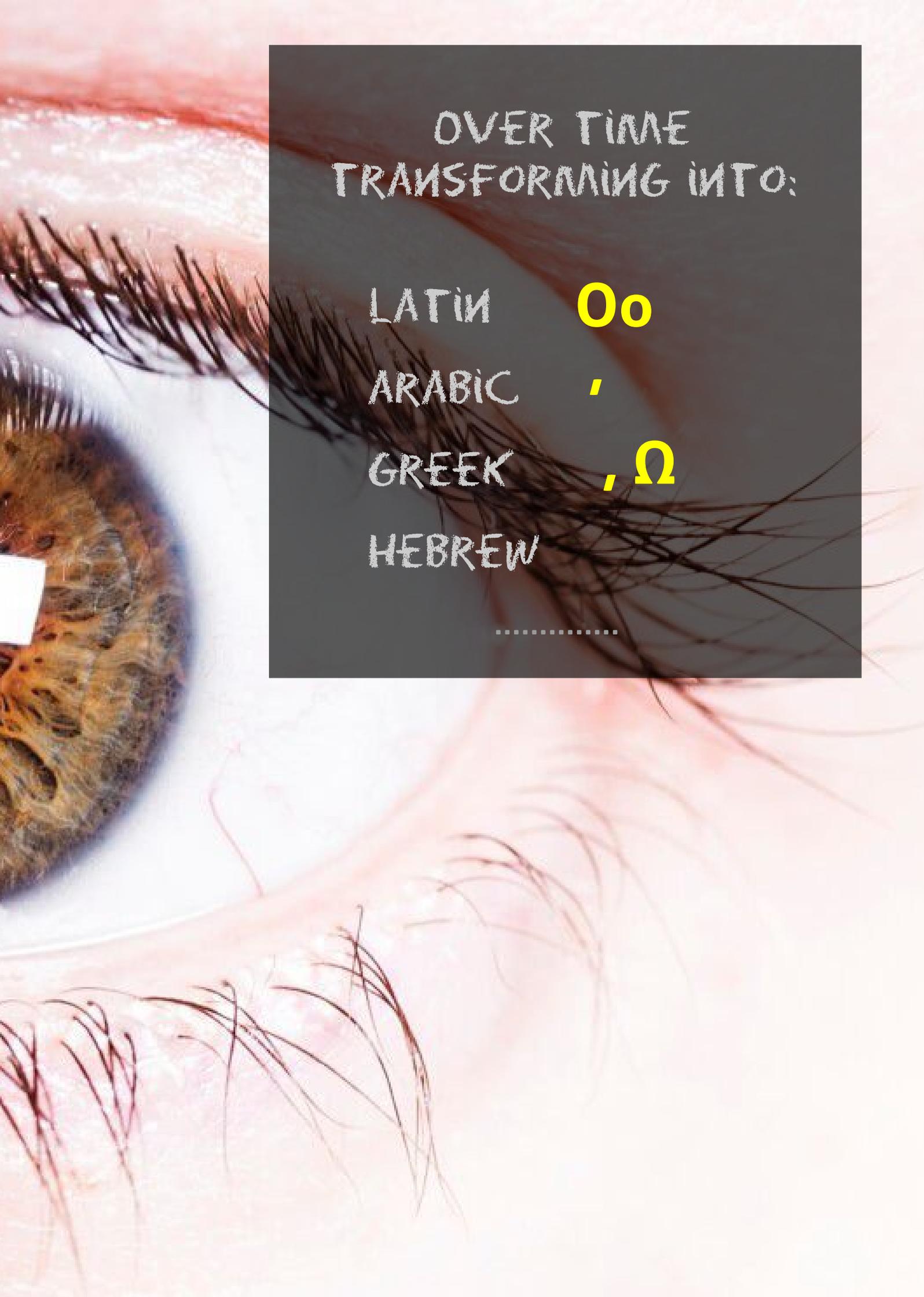


*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: EYE

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [ayin]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [a]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Oo

ARABIC

,

GREEK

, Ω

HEBREW

.....

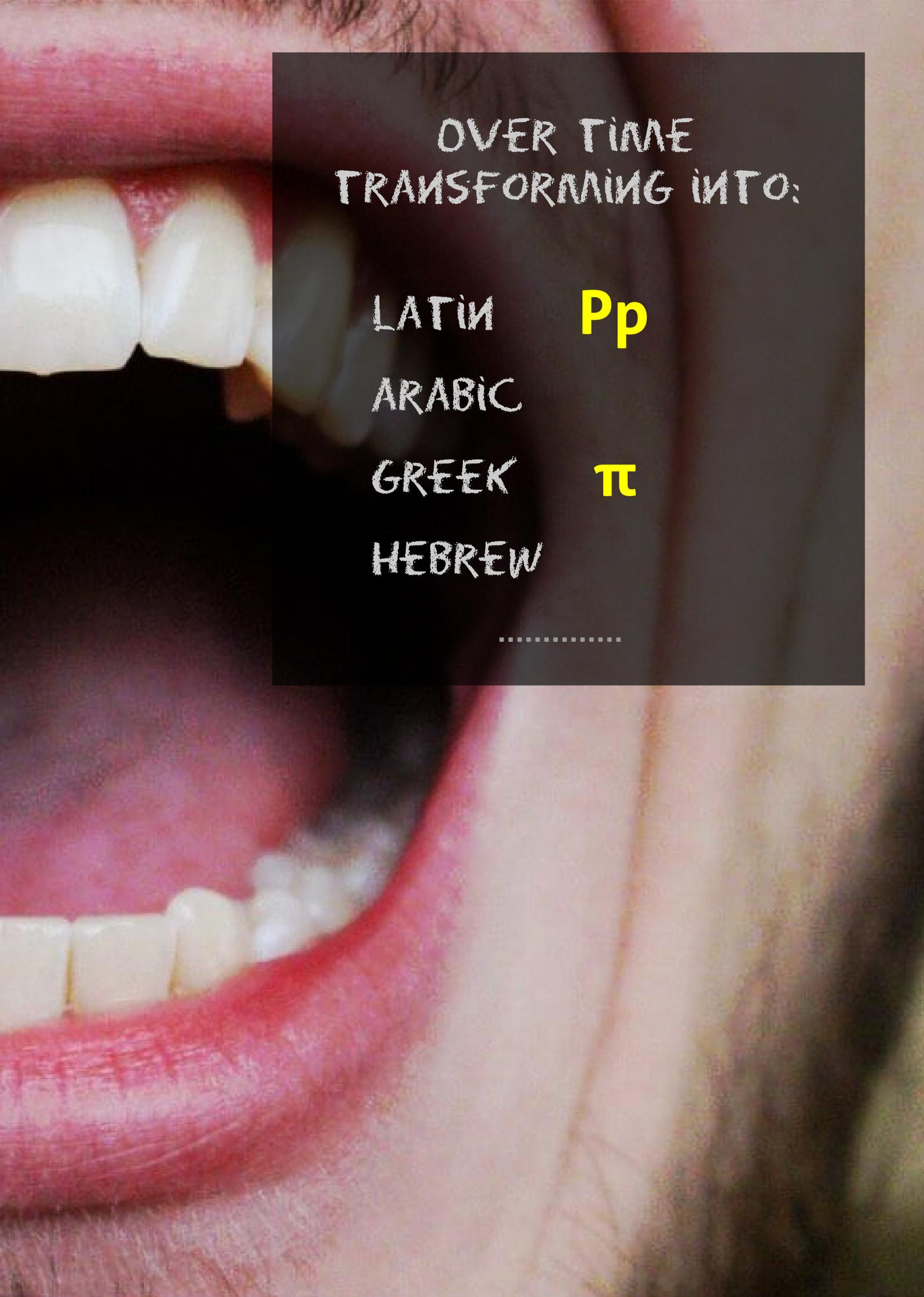


*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: MOUTH

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [pē]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [pē]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Pp

ARABIC

GREEK

π

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: NEEDLE HEAD

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [qōp]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [qō]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Qq

ARABIC

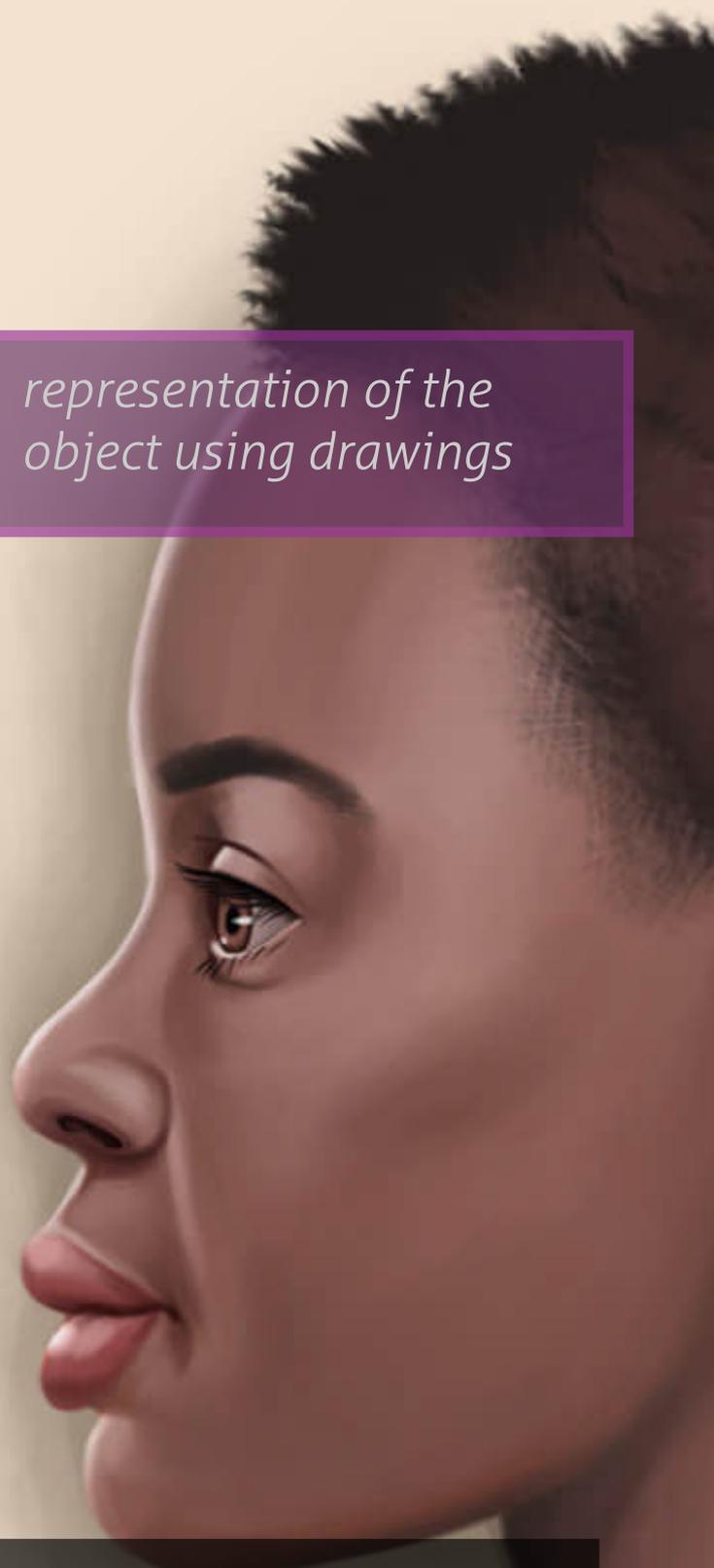
GREEK

HEBREW

.....



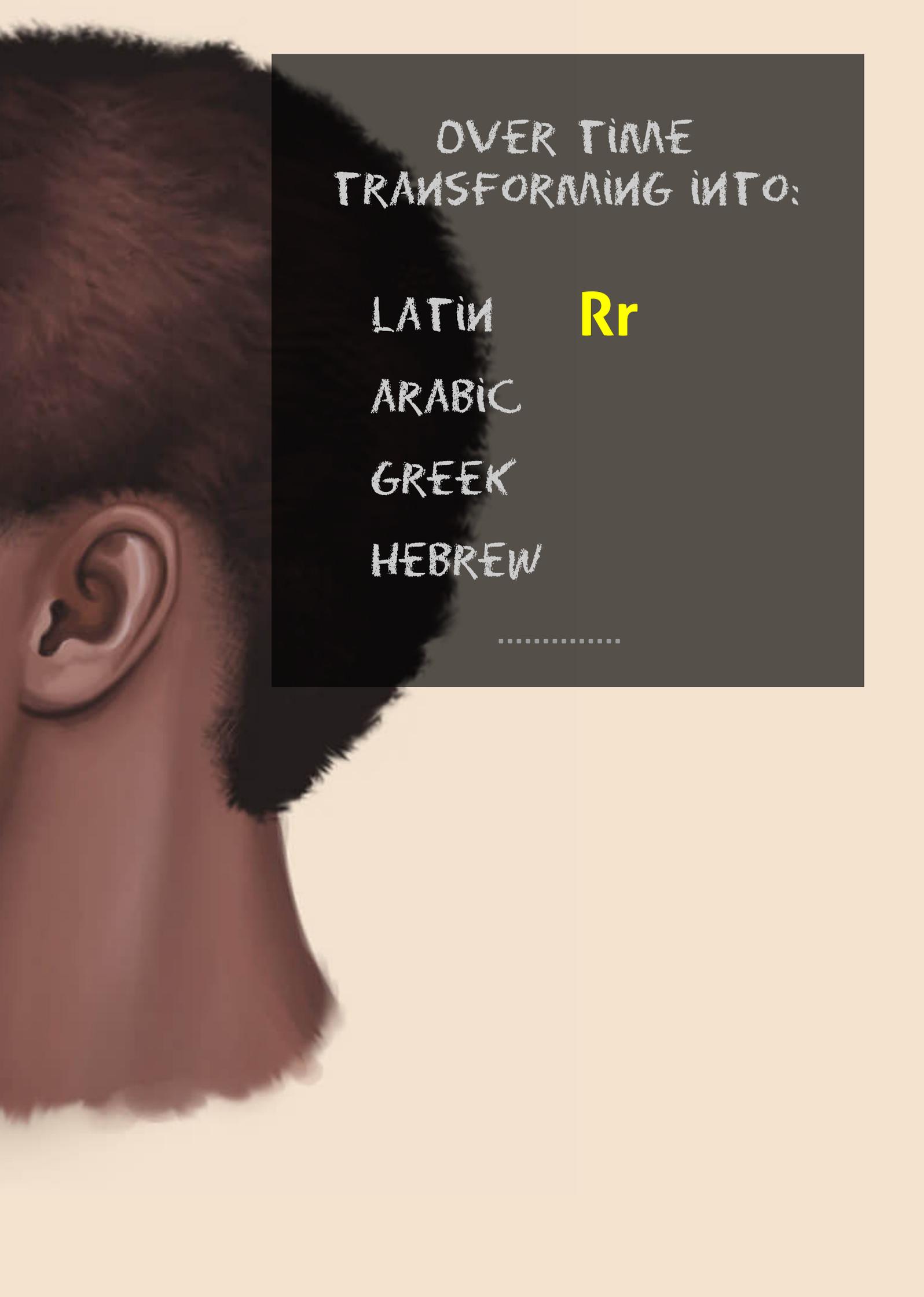
*representation of the
object using drawings*



OBJECT: HEAD

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [rēš]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [rē]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Rr

ARABIC

GREEK

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: TEETH

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [šīn]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [šī]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Ss**

ARABIC **,**

GREEK

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: MARK

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [tāw]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [tā]

OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Tt

ARABIC

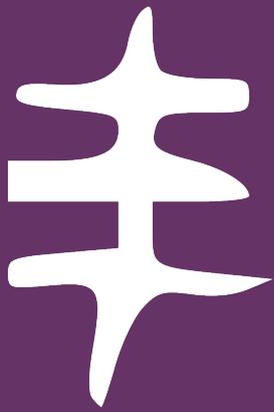
,

GREEK

Ττ

HEBREW

.....



*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: SUPPORT

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [**āmek**]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [**ā**]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN

Xx

ARABIC

GREEK

Ξξ

HEBREW

.....



ז

*representation of the
object using drawings*

OBJECT: WEAPON

OBJECT PRONUNCIATION: [zayin]

LETTER PRONUNCIATION: [za]



OVER TIME
TRANSFORMING INTO:

LATIN **Zz**

ARABIC **ﺯ**

GREEK **Ζζ**

HEBREW

.....

SO, THE EVOLUTION OF THE ALPHABET
EMERGED OUT OF THESE SIGNS:



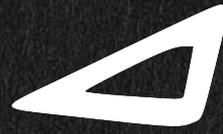
Aa



Bb



Cc, Gg



Dd



Ee



Ff, Uu, Vv,
Yy, Ww



Hh



Ii, Jj



Kk



Ll



Mm



Nn



Oo



Pp



Qq



Rr



Ss



Tt



Xx



Zz

IMPORTANT!

At the beginning of this series, I mentioned that explaining language with language is almost like trying to chew your own teeth. We're now at such a point, because I need you to understand that when I write how they pronounce certain words, like [bēt] for "house", or [gīml] for "camel", it may be extremely hard to understand that [bēt] or [gīml] do not exist as written words, only as sounds. Don't let the notation of these sounds get in the way of your understanding. It is just a placeholder representation since I cannot better represent these sounds with sounds in a way that you can easily understand how letters came out of them, so we have to do that with letters.

To understand this, please bark like a dog now. Honestly, do it! Now try to do it in a very natural way, not thinking of letters or a word for it. Try it again! Now think of the first sound you made, the shortest one. So, you take that sound and mark it as a drawing of a dog. You just did the same as those people did way back when. You just invented a marker (a letter) for a sound (the first sound of your barking). I hope that's understandable for everyone.

From now on, whenever you see [], understand that what is inside those brackets is just a sound, do not think of the letters you see there. It may be hard, but try it.

So, what once represented a "house", written as  and pronounced as [bēt], now became written as:   [bē - t]. Where [bē]  and [t]  were now letters mapped with signs. Remember the sign for "camel"  ([gīml] in pronunciation) became a 'letter', but again not because of the entire [gīml] sound, only because of the [gī] sound.

THIS IS WHY WRITING "CAMEL" [G ML] BECAME:



[gī - m - l]

"HOUSE"  BECAME  

"CAMEL"  BECAME   

IN OTHER WRITING SYSTEMS DERIVED FROM THIS ONE
AND BASED ON SOUNDS, IT BECOMES:

ḡx

ORIGINAL
WRITING

ʌḡl

B

LATIN

GML

ARABIC

BT

GREEK

HEBREW

“Camel’s house” may have translated into: ʌḡlḡx , instead of the ʌḡ as before. You might think that this system is more cumbersome, because now all of their words are a huge pile of ‘letters’. Isn’t it better to represent a camel with ʌ instead of ʌḡl?

Actually it’s much more flexible, because you can now map all sounds from all language. If someone pronounced “camel” as [tyngum], you could represent all of those sounds that s/he made with a single written language.

THEREFORE, THERE ARE TWO
BASIC SYSTEMS OF WRITING:

SIGNS REPRESENTING 'THINGS':



head, mountains, and so on...

SIGNS REPRESENTING SOUNDS
MADE BY MOUTHS:



[mē], [bē], and so on...

Both the drawings (signs for objects) and the alphabet (the letters) survived and evolved. That's how, through evolution, mutations, and chance, the mapping of sounds became a thing.

Watch this wonderful video to get a glimpse of how these signs mutated over time:

3000 BC 2000 BC 1000 BC 0

THE AMERICAS

EAST ASIA

SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA

MIDDLE EAST

SUMERIAN PICTOGRAPHIC

ELAMITE

INDUS VALLEY PICTOGRAPHIC

CUNEIFORM

BUSINESS INSIDER SCIENCE

FIRST WRITING SYSTEMS

It is indeed extremely hard, if not impossible, to imagine how these signs ended up as the ones I'm using right now, and this is why we should look more closely at our signs today to make sure we understand their meaning. There are over 5,000 living (active) languages in the world right now, yet only 200 or so have a written form. As much as 97% of the world's human population speaks one of the top 20 most spoken languages: Chinese, English, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Portuguese, Japanese, German, French, Punjabi, Javanese, Bihari, Italian, Korean, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Vietnamese. It is predicted that by 2100, we will only have 10% of the languages we have today. That means that we forever lose an average of around 50 languages every year.

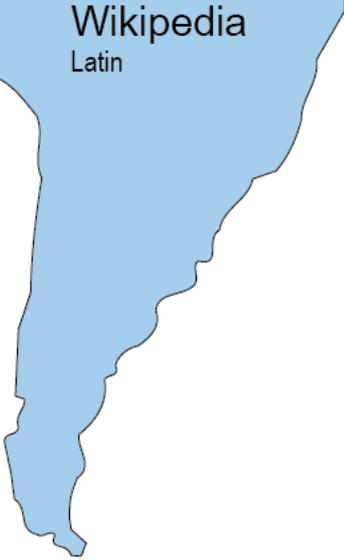


Writing Systems of the World

- Wikipedia Latin
- ويكيبيديا Arabic
- 维基百科 Chinese
- Википедия Cyrillic
- other writing systems

Names of writing systems which are written from left to right are left-aligned and scripts written from right to left are right-aligned to the script example.

Chinese, Japanese and Korean may be written from top to bottom and the resulting columns are written from right to left. Mongolian is written in columns too, but these columns are written from left to right.





Википедия
Cyrillic

ئۇيغۇرچە
Uyghur

ᠮᠣᠩᠭᠤᠯᠢᠨ
Mongolian

ウィキペディア
Japanese

위키백과
Korean

维基百科
Chinese

ويكيبيديا
Arabic

ويكيبيديا
Arabic

ᠶᠢ
Yi

ဝိကီပိဒိယ
Burmese → Bu

ວິກິແລທິປຣ
Lao → L

วิกิพีเดีย
Thai → Th

វិគីភីឌា
Khmer → Kh

ጥንቲዲያ
Thaana

ዊኪፒዲያ
Ge'ez

විකිපීඩියා
Sinhala

ᠨᠣᠮᠲᠤᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ
Batak

ᠪᠤᠭᠢᠨᠰᠤ
Buginese

ᠠᠶᠤᠨᠶ᠋ᠠᠨᠤᠰᠤ
Javanese

མིག་ཡི་རྟེན
Tibetan → Ti

ଓରିଆ
Oriya → O

ਗੁਰਮੁੱਖੀ
Gurmukhi → Gm

ಕನ್ನಡ
Kannada → K

विकिपीडिया
Devanagari → D

తెలుగు
Telugu → Te

વિકિપીડિયા
Gujarati → Gj

മലയാളം
Malayalam → M

উইকিপিডিয়া
Bengal → Be

தமிழ்
Tamil → Ta

Wikipedia
Latin





The multitude of written languages that we have today, even if they pale in comparison with the non-written ones, are widely used and can be classified in the same two systems that first started this entire journey of signs: one system uses signs to map the short sounds that we make with our mouths (we call that the alphabet - *a, b, c, d...*) and these short sounds can be put together to form words (*h-o-r-s-e*); while the other system uses signs to define 'things' - like using a drawing of a horse to define a horse, instead of writing out *horse* with an alphabet.

For example, we can write out the following: *person, sun, tree*. These are 'words' made up of 'letters', belonging to a system of mapping sounds. We map them with: *p, e, r, s, o, n, u, t*. But in the Chinese language, they 'draw' these same 'things' as: 人, 日, 木. One sign for each one thing.

So one is about letters and words, while the other is about drawings. You cannot call 人 a letter, as it is not.



HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW THE CHINESE WRITING SYSTEM EVOLVED OVER TIME:

HORSE

𠂇 𠂈 馬 𠂉 𠂊 馬

SUN

日 日 日 日 日 日

MOON

月 月 月 月 月 月

MOUNTAIN

山 山 山 山 山 山

WATER

水 水 水 水 水 水

RAIN

雨 雨 雨 雨 雨 雨

IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE, CHINESE IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE THAT USES 'DRAWINGS' INSTEAD OF LETTERS/WORDS:

CHINESE	ENGLISH	RUSSIAN
人		
日		
木		

Even if some of the other languages in this table appear to be drawings to some of us who are not familiar with them, they are not. They have letters as the other ones you see here.

So as it happened that the original sign for 'hand' became 'work' or 'power' over time, the same kind of thing happened with the Chinese language, so most of the 'signs' they use today represent 'things' that are quite different from their original meaning ('drawing'). For example, 自 meant "nose" but now means "oneself", or how 萬 meant "scorpion" but now means "ten thousand".

SINHALA

GERMAN

HINDI

පුද්ගලයා

व्यक्ति

නිරූ

सूरज

ගස්

पेड़

There are some big, and I mean BIG, issues with both of these writing systems in terms of what they represent, how they work, and how they are used. So let's pull on our best raincoat and head into the storm of written languages. The storm will be a bit rough at times, but the details presented here will help you understand not only what language is, but how you have been guided by it to see the world, and how we may go about inventing a new kind of language, a much more relevant one.

WITHOUT THESE DETAILS, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHERE WE GO FROM HERE, AS THIS ENTIRE SECTION ON WRITTEN LANGUAGE FORMS THE BEDROCK FOR WHAT WILL FOLLOW IN THIS MASSIVE SERIES.

Say “OIL” backwards. Don’t mess around - just say it! :) Thinking of the letters in reverse, you will pronounce it [lio]. But if you were to record yourself saying “OIL” and then run the audio backwards, would it still be [lio]?

If letters were truly representative of sounds, that should be the case, but then feel free to be amazed by this recording:

This happens because the system of letters that we have in place is not at all great at representing the actual sounds we make, but is rather a chaotic and emergent system. When those folks sat down some thousands of years ago to map out these sounds, of course they came up with a rudimentary system because is bloody hard to do that, if not impossible. So we got stuck with it pretty much in the same state. a, b, c, d, and the rest of the alphabet we are used to, do not map all of the sounds we make. Not by a long shot.

Try to pronounce the following set of letters: "inger". Now pronounce singer and finger. Note how you pronounce the same set of letters differently!? Not convinced? Here's another example: "ough". Now pronounce cough, tough, bought, through, though. The reason that the same bunch of letters are pronounced so differently is not a well-designed, intentional rule. It is just a flaw that you will find within all languages.

The spelling, where you try to say a word by letters, is the perfect proof of how nonsensical the alphabet really is. First, ask a friend to spell the word YES. Then spell for him/her this one: E-Y-E-S and ask him/her what word you just spelled. Many cannot figure it out that the word is "eyes", simply because the individual letters from "eyes" are voiced differently than how they pronounce in the spelling of the word. Check out this funny video on it:



THE BEGINNING

FROM SOUNDS TO SIGNS

THE SCIENTIFIC ATTEMPT AT MAPPING SOUNDS

What if I tell you that there are 26 letters in the English alphabet, but 44 distinctly different sounds made by English speakers? What? :)

If you take a human and squeeze 'it', or whatever you need to do to the creature to get it to make some noises, could you map what noises the creature can make? For sure we can't accurately bark like dogs, roar like lions, make whale sounds or other animal sounds (we can try to imitate some, but we can't do it like the real thing), and that's because of our biology. We have a limited range of sounds that we can make (limited by our mouths, lungs, and muscles overall), and some people tried to map them again, but this time in a more careful and scientific manner. It's called The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and is based on the sounds we make, rather than the arbitrary signs that we call letters that only seem to define some of those sounds.

HERE'S HOW THE PREVIOUS WORDS LOOK WHEN
WRITTEN WITH THE IPA SYSTEM:

singer

finger

cough

tough

s ɪ ŋ r

f ɪ ŋ g r

k f

t f

Notice how some of the letters in the IPA system are different than those you may have seen before. Those 'special' letters stand for the 'exact' sounds that you can make with your mouth, and since we all have the same physiology [f z i l d i], it can be applied to any language. No matter whether you speak in English, Chinese, or Russian, it can be transcribed in the IPA regardless. I highly recommend that you pause this article and have a look at this interactive IPA dictionary (click any letter to hear the sound that it represents - this way you will better understand the rest of this section). You listening to them is the only way to explain what sounds the IPA letters are mapping.

Using the IPA system, you cannot confuse the "c" in "cat" with the "c" in "nice", as they are widely different in the way they are pronounced. So in IPA, the "c" from "cat" is written as [k], while the "c" from "nice" becomes [s]. So they become [kæt] and [naɪs] in IPA. We can also look at "symbol" and "cymbal" - where they have different meanings and are written differently, but are pronounced exactly the same (confusing, right?) Why are you pronouncing something in the same way when it is clearly written differently!? In IPA, both are [sɪmbəl]. See how beautiful that is?

Since it's impossible to explain this further in 'English' writing, I recommend that you watch this 8 minute video explaining the IPA system (it may be necessary to understand this very neat idea). You can watch the entire video series here if you are interested in learning much more about the IPA system. Also, if you want to play around with an IPA translator and understand how many English words are so differently written from the way they are pronounced, then use this English IPA translator (for other languages use this, and this).

The IPA system has 107 letters and 31 diacritics (small signs to alter these letters by adding a flavor to them: like [t] may become [t̥] if it is pronounced a bit differently).

bought

through

though

b t

θru

ðo

English is not the only language where letters went wild, making little sense toward mapping actual sounds. As a more distant example, take Korea. If you ask a Korean for their equivalent for the English letters "R" and "L", they would not know what to say. In their language, they have a sign that maps a sound that is somewhat in between them, depending where it stands in a word, and it is written as **ㄹ**. So **ㄹ** can be [] or [L], in much the same way that **C** in English can become [k] in "Cat" or [s] in "Nice".

To get this, consider how you would pronounce **ㄹ**. How do you make a sound in between the English [] and [L] sounds? Well, listen to how it is pronounced in Korean:

To understand how they change that sound depending on what other sounds it comes in contact with, check out this short video:



Quite odd for those of us who are not used to hearing Korean, but English is just as odd for Koreans who are not used to hearing English, where the letter "c" pronunciation is so unpredictable. In Korean, the same goes for [g] and [k] as they map it with ㄱ. The sounds [d] or [t] are marked with ㄷ, [b] or [p] with ㅂ, or even [g] or [ch] with ㅈ. With English, most, if not all, individual letters are pronounced differently than they are when used inside a word. "A" [e] is not pronounced the same in "family" ['fæm li] as it is in "American" ['m r k n], or in other words compared to how it is pronounced individually. Think about "W" [d b lju], and how you'll never ever pronounce it that way as part of a word [w rd]. So, the Korean language's 'weirdness' may not be so weird after all.

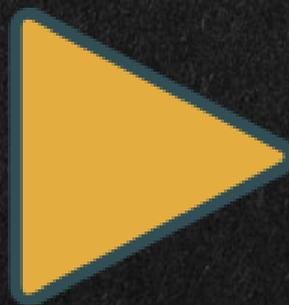
HERE'S HOW THE ENGLISH ALPHABET IS PRONOUNCED

(IMAGINE HOW DIFFERENTLY YOU PRONOUNCE THESE SAME LETTERS WHEN THEY ARE PART OF A WORD):

A [e]	H [e]	O [o]	V [vi]
B [bi]	I [a]	P [pi]	W ['d b lju]
C [si]	J [e]	Q [kju]	X [ks]
D [di]	K [ke]	R [r]	Y [wa]
E [i]	L [l]	S [s]	Z [zi]
F [f]	M [m]	T [ti]	
G [i]	N [n]	U [ju]	

IPA ELIMINATES THESE INCONSISTENCIES.

WHY
ENGLISH IS
DUMB



In Korean, the difference between "fire" [p^hul] 불 and "grass" [pul] 풀 is very slight in both pronunciation and writing, even if their meanings are so different. For Koreans, the [p^h] ㅍ and [p] ㅃ are different enough to have their own signs, so they are picky about this P thing. Yet, when it comes to "ㄹ", they leave it as is and say that sometimes we pronounce it [], and sometimes [l]. What!?

Anyways, what may seem like a single letter for a single sound (P) for many of us, are two sounds and two letters for others. We also should point out that these Korean 'signs' are not like the Chinese drawings earlier. They are actually letters stacked and squeezed on top of each other thusly:



Please don't get lost here. I am providing you with these examples just to help you understand that there are different kinds of alphabets out there, mapping different kinds of slight variations in sounds. And what some languages don't see as different in pronunciation, others do and mark them with different 'letter'. Then, even when some see differences in pronunciation, that may not be enough for them to invent a different letter for that, so they just run with these inconsistencies. So the whole concept of written language tends to work in a rather chaotic way. As you can see, the only constant in all of these examples is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) system, and to put all of this into perspective for the last time, let's look at the word "cat" [kæt] in various languages and how the IPA system makes it all much simpler.

RUSSIAN	SPANISH	KOREAN
КОТ	gato	고양이
k'ot	'gato	koyani

If you get to know the IPA letters and pronunciations (the interactive alphabet I had you look at earlier), you will be able to very properly pronounce and read “cat” in all of these languages (or any other word or sentence). Also, notice how “cat” is written the same way in both Chinese and Japanese (猫), but is pronounced differently? You could not know that just by looking at the signs, which is partly why the IPA is neat. In Chinese, it is sometimes the other way around, with similar pronunciations but different signs. For example: 妈, 麻, 马, 骂. While they look very different and indeed mean very different things (mother, hemp, horse, scold), these four symbols are pronounced almost identically. Listen:

Since I can't really tell any significant difference between those sounds, I would likely call my mother “a horse” or “hemp” more often than not.

Here are more examples in Japanese:

CHINESE

猫

māo

FRENCH

a

JAPANESE

猫

neko

ENGLISH IS NOT PERFECT, BUT
IT CANNOT PERFECT THAT
EASILY. Got it? :)

Of course, that is just an *example, and not an egg sample*. *Rose* (a flower) and *rose* (past tense of "rise") are written and pronounced the same, yet both have different meanings. Then those written differently, such as *carat, caret, and carrot*, or *to, two, and too*, are written differently, but pronounced the same. *I scream* for an *ice cream*, and *some others* want *some mothers*; but you have to *realize* that I have *real eyes*, and these are just *real lies*. And so on....

All of these examples are merely showcasing how languages around the world have a perfectly imperfect system of mapping sounds with letters or drawings (like Chinese), since they pronounce some words almost the same and write them differently, or the other way around by writing words exactly the same but pronouncing them differently.

Still, we can only call the IPA system “beautiful”, “neat”, and “more scientific”, rather than “scientific”. It is not a perfect or highly scientific system, since it is very hard to define what sounds people make when they talk and then try to map them with sign. In the Tzas language, they have a single word for “to be afraid” and it goes something like this:

See how many ‘weird’ sounds are in there? There are also languages that use various ‘clicks’ when they talk. Some use over 48 different types of clicks, where the meaning of a word or sentence changes with any such click or combinations of them.



THE BEGINNING

THE SCIENTIFIC ATTEMPT
AT MAPPING SOUNDS

FROM SOUNDS TO SIGNS

ON THE LIPS VS. ON THE PAPER

Sounds also change words. As an example, the English word “**impossible**” comes from “**in+possibilis**” but in time it transformed because of the way that English-speaking people pronounced it. The way people talk (accents) changed the way they later wrote the words. The same happened in English with “**necessaire**” becoming “**necessary**”, “**intellecte**” as “**intellect**”, “**recipere**” as “**recipe**”, and so on.

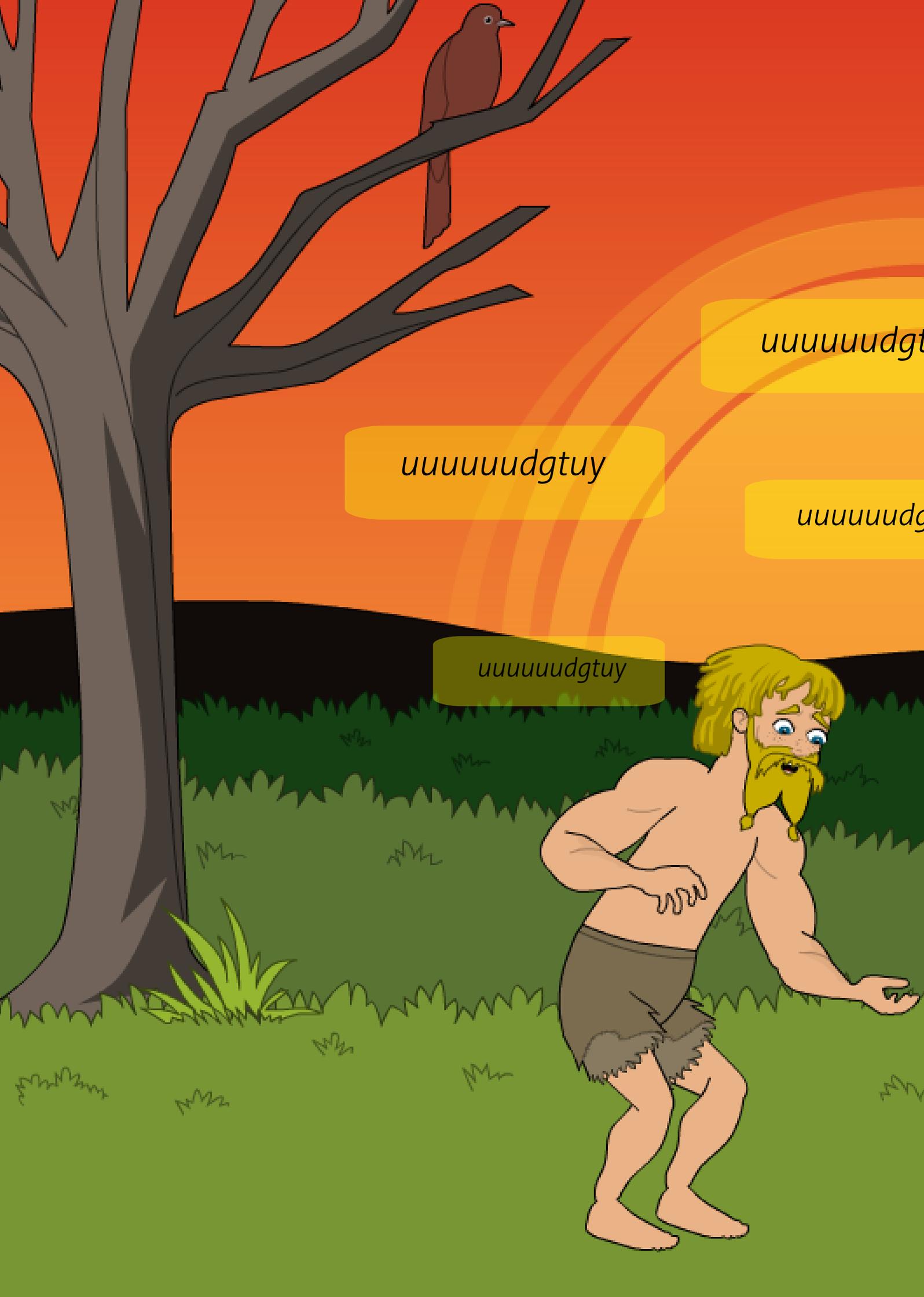
As a different example, “**food**” was not pronounced [**fud**] (as it is right now) when the word originally became ‘popular’, but was pronounced as [**fod**], explaining why it was spelled “**food**”. Compared to how it is pronounced, the way it is written makes no freaking sense (two O’s equals U?), but it stuck like that over time. Pronunciations change (as with all words), but sometimes a word doesn’t follow the change for some arbitrary reasons, causing significant differences between the way we write and the way we speak them. The same goes for “**feed**”, which is pronounced [**fid**] instead of [**fed**]. So imagine the sound you make for the first “**e**” in the word “**Elephant**”, and use it in the middle of “**feed**”. That’s how it was originally pronounced. Over time, it became pronounced as [**fid**], yet the written form remained unadjusted as “**feed**”. It’s similar to writing the word “**inpossibilis**”, but pronouncing it as “**impossible**” [**m’p s b l**], all the time wondering what cruel grammatical rule is at work there.

So keep in mind that pronunciations change over time, and from region to region, and then that the writing style sometimes follows the change, but sometimes does not. In any of these cases, the gap between the spoken and written language becomes weird and nonsensical.

The bottom line here is that letters are not representative of sounds.

That's an illusion!

So we don't lose track of what we are trying to describe here, let's think again how these signs, with some of them mapping various sounds we make with our mouths (like letters) and some of them mapping objects and other things (like a symbol for "dog" representing a dog), are really just 'unnatural' transcriptions of human communication attempts. Now imagine someone who never had any representation for "dog". S/he knows of that animal, and s/he can choose a sound like [uuuuudgtuy] to mentally associate with it, but s/he has no way to picture how in the world anyone could map (write down) the animal with either a sign or the sound s/he makes for the dog. It may be very hard for us to imagine this, since we are so used to writing things down. When I tell you to think of a dog, you either picture the animal, or the letters D-O-G, or both.



uuuuuudgtuy

uuuuuudgtuy

uuuuuudgtuy

uuuuuudgtuy



tuy

tuy

But can you read something without hearing your inner voice reading it?

That's impossible, of course because that wouldn't be 'reading'.

So look at these: . Did you experience silence in your head?

If that was the case, the only reason is because you are unable to associate those signs with any sound. The same thing holds true of anyone who is not familiar with either the signs I am using right now, or with any such pile of signs that we call a written language. Anyone looking at those signs above who understands Hebrew will recognize that it represents "dog". So now recognize that someone who speaks Hebrew will have (pronounced [keh'-leb]) in his/her head when you tell them to think of a dog, in the same way that you would have "DOG" in your English-speaking head (or perhaps something else if your native language is neither English or Hebrew). You may be tempted to think that they have a lot of odd noises in their brain :), plus all sorts of 'weird' signs to remember, but that's no different from what they think of us and our writing system. It's very hard for most of us to put ourselves into other people's shoes when it comes to stuff like this, but I hope this example provided you with at least a sample of that perspective.

And while we're on the topic of talking about speaking without having a clue about written language, consider how this was actually the norm for all humans for a very, very long time, since "written language" is a very new invention. And there are still many people around the world who just live, make noises for a while, and die; never imagining "words". Quite an interesting thought, huh?

It's important to recognize that written language is wildly different from our spoken communications.

If you record yourself and some friends talking in a casual way, say on a sunny day at the beach or whatever, and then transcribe that (write down all of the sounds you aimed at each other), you will see just how huge of a difference there is between the way people talk and the way people write.

You will rarely find a reason to add a "period" (.) in such a conversation. You will also see how people need to stop to take a breath now and then, so you will rarely see someone talking in 'paragraphs' or very long sentences.

EXAMPLE (H = HUMAN):

H1: *I was talking about...hm...the thing, you know, the guys from NASA want to send to Europa...*

H2: *the rocket? Europa you mean the moon?*

H1: *yeah...with a probe*

H2: *yeah I remember*

H1: *they want to drill into the ice for some reason*

H2: *aliens? haha ..*

H1: *maybe :)*

H2: *when?*

H1: *don't know....2020 I guess!?"*

That's more or less how a conversation goes; how humans tend to talk with lots of interruptions, breathing, facial expressions, talking faster or slower depending on what they are trying to express, and very rarely "starting" or "ending" the conversation the way it usually is when represented in writing. This also explains why some movies feel rather 'fake', as the actors have to read 'written' scripts that sometimes feel quite unnatural when 'spoken'. Combine that with the fact that letters, as we have shown so far, are far from representative of the sounds that people make (so the way I wrote that conversation is even farther from 'reality'). By now, you might better understand how 'alien' human writing systems are from the way people actually talk. We may be used to using a writing system, but it is widely different from how we really talk.

THE IPA SYSTEM WOULD PROVIDE US WITH A MORE CORRECT REPRESENTATION OF THAT CASUAL TALK. LET'S SEE WHAT THAT WOULD LOOK LIKE (SEE IF YOU CAN MAKE SENSE OF IT :)):

H1: *a w z 't k ŋ 'ba t...//hm//...ð ŋ, ju no , ð ga z fr m 'næs w nt tu s nd n j 'ro p ...*

H2: *ð 'r k t? j 'ro p ju min ð mun?*

H1: *jæ...w ð pro b*

H2: *jæ a r 'm mb r*

H1: *ðe w nt tu dr l 'ntu ði a s fr s m 'riz n*

H2: *'e li nz? //haha// ..*

H1: *'me bi //:)//*

H2: *w n?*

H1: *do nt no'tw nti 'tw nti a g s?*

While it's more precise, even that transcript is far from representing the talk (consider facial expressions, vocal pitch, laughing, wondering, and all kinds of unwritten sounds and gestures that people make).

We can certainly read the writings of Aristotle, Galileo, and many others who lived in eras when there were no audio recording devices, and we may think that we have a fair idea of how these people talked, but that's not true at all. We can only gain a representation of some of their ideas, transcribed into a writing system. Really, think about the fact that we will never know how Galileo, Copernicus, or Newton sounded, or more generally, the way they talked, because they sure didn't talk the way they wrote.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO KEEP ON MIND FROM THIS PART (FROM SOUNDS TO SIGNS) IS THAT HUMANS HAVE TRIED TO MAP THE SOUNDS THEY MAKE, WITH ALL KINDS OF SIGNS AND SYSTEMS. THIS PROCESS WAS AN EMERGENT ONE, NOT WELL THOUGHT OUT OR ORGANIZED, BUT MORE CHAOTIC, WHERE RULES WERE OFTEN AGREED UPON RATHER THAN INVENTED.

Consider something like this:

Guy: We say [fud] but we seem to be writing it as 'food'.... Wait, it makes sense because 'room' is [rum], 'loose' is [lus], even 'google' is ['gug l]. So I suppose 'oo' is pronounced as [u].

'nother guy: Well, what about 'book' [b k], 'cook' [k k], 'good' [g d], 'door' [d r], 'floor' [fl r] ... ?

Guy: Umm, let's call them exceptions!

That's pretty much what happened within all languages out there.

Now have a look at the following video of people from around the world trying to imitate animal sounds, to see how the written language changes the way you map a sound, even if that sound is the same for everyone:



People say "How are you?" as much
as dogs say "Woof Woof". ;)

FROM
SIGNS TO
WORDS

WORD VS SENTENCE

SOME YEARS
AGO



Garry, what in the world are you drawing there?

Not a drawing Sir. A word. Means "Dog jumps on table."



*For fuck sakes
Garry, that's not a
word, that's an
entire sentence!*

WHAT IS A WORD? HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED?

IS A WORD “THIS” OR “THAT”, “CAT” OR “DOG”?
PERHAPS WE CAN DEFINE A “WORD” AS SOMETHING
THAT HAS A MEANING, BUT WHO DECIDES THAT?
What is a 'meaning'?

Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo
buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo.

I didn't just randomly copy/paste "buffalo" multiple times there. It's a perfectly correct English sentence, because "buffalo" can be a City, an animal (both singular and plural), and is also used as a verb meaning "to bully, confuse, deceive, or intimidate". The meaning of the sentence might expand into something like this: *Bison from Buffalo, New York, who are intimidated by other bison in their community, also happen to intimidate other bison in their community.*

If all of this seems a bit confusing, it's not something that's wrong with you, or with English, but rather with all languages out there.

In Chinese, "sun" or "day" are represented by the drawing 日 and when you put it alongside the sign for "moon" 月, it can mean "light". The sign for "woman" is "女" and if you put two of them side by side, it can represent "quarrel" (an angry dispute; an altercation). So is 日月 a word, or does only "light" qualify as a word? They both represent the same thing, "light", yet one is composed of two signs with their own separate meanings, while the other looks like a 'true' word. But then remember the "in+possibilis" word that evolved into "impossible" in English. That is a combination of the meaning for "not" as "in" or "im" and "possible", i. e. not-possible. In Chinese, if you use the sign for "sun" 日 and add 生 in front of it, like you do with "im" in English, it becomes "birthday" 生日. Interestingly, "birthday" is just a letter-based word made up of two words: "birth" and "day". In that sense, English is not that different from Chinese, or any other language, as they all have "words" made up of other words.

In Chinook language, they say "I came to give it to her" as "Inialudam". "Konohsowa:neh" means "She has a big house" in Cayuga. Other languages define what we might think of as a "sentence" with just one word. In fact, we might think that these words are made up of tiny bits (or from other words, as described above), for example, we say: "mother-in-law", but that's not really the case for Chinook or Cayuga (and other similar languages). Even if that was the case, consider the following: imagine someone getting into a car and driving away. Why do we have a word for "driving" but not one for the action of getting into the car? "Driving" is a complex action (*using the pedals, shifting gears, steering, paying attention to the signs on the road, avoiding obstacles, etc.*), yet we can define all of that with a small group of letters. Yet we have no word for "getting into the car", so we have to use a bunch of words (a sentence) to describe an action that is far simpler than 'driving'. The result is two cases in English that describe complex processes, where one is defined by a single word, while another requires a sentence.

We say "raining" rather than "water falling from the sky", but some of us say "throwing garbage into the bin" instead of using a simple, single word for an action that takes place every single day. We have other related words like "dumping", but that one strongly suggests something

The bicycle was invented in 1817, but it had no official name until 1847, when a paper in France described it as “**an unidentified two-wheeled vehicle, possibly a carriage.**”. So, two French ‘words’ were used to describe it there: “**bi**”, from Latin that means “two”; and “**kyklos**”, from Greek (or “cycle” in french) meaning “circle” or “wheel”.

So “**two-wheels**” became the word “**bicycle**”, which was later borrowed by the English language (“bicycle”). As a new word, it was able to keep its form, but its pronunciation varies significantly between the two languages.

French: bicycle [bisikl]

English: bicycle ['ba s k l]



What is even more interesting is that it also evolved into “**bike**” and “**biking**” in English, meaning all kinds of things. “Bike” can refer to a bicycle or a motorbike (or whatever kind of two-wheeled thing you can find), or it can be a wasps' or bees' nest. “Biking” is now a verb describing “riding a bicycle”.

Why not have a word for “Riding a bike without pants”, or “Riding a bike without a seat”? There are many people who do both, especially the last one. Interestingly, there is no specific word for riding a horse other than...well, “horse-riding”, yet the word for riding a horse without a saddle (a leather seat strapped to a horse’s back while you ride it) is “**bareback**”, as in “bareback riding”. So why one and not the other? This makes no sense at all.



You can go surfing, snowboarding, skating, but you cannot 'telescoping', as in watching the stars through a telescope. When you put clothes on your body, we call it "dressing", but when you put clothes in the washing machine or in the closet, what do we call that?

We have to "turn on/off the lights" and "open/close the door", yet we can only "swipe" on a touchscreen. You can "raise your voice" using the word "shout", but we can't "raise awareness" with a single word. You can "mock" someone, but you can only "offer support and compassion" to another. You can slap, kiss, poke, fistbump, handshake, or hug someone, but you can only "pat their back" or "kick their butt". You can scratch, sneeze, fart, and masturbate, but you are forced to "brush your teeth", "comb your hair", "plug your ears", and "pop a pimple".

You don't "put paint on the walls", you much more simply "paint the walls". Why is there no single English word for the entire thing? In Romanian, there is a single word for that, as well as for riding a horse.

TAKE THE NEXT PARAGRAPH:

I bought a new phone the day before yesterday. I tried to fix it because was a bit broken and I ended up breaking it completely. I was so sad that I put some music on from my laptop and started to sing, even if I didn't know the lyrics, but that was suddenly interrupted by a friend who came by and started to tell me a long, meaningless story, about her miserable life, as if that's what I needed then. I wanted to pretend that I was doing something very important so that she could leave me alone, even though I was too lazy to try and fix the phone, but I could not do that because that 'friend' was actually my wife. And the phone...was actually an apology gift for her since I usually stay up late with the boys and ignore her.

All of the highlighted sentences could easily be replaced with the following words from other languages:

ALALT IERI *The day before yesterday ("poimâine" is the day after tomorrow). In Romanian, there is a word even for the day after the day after tomorrow (răspoimaine) :).*

FARPOTSHKET *Something that was a little bit broken ... until you tried to fix it. Now it's totally screwed.*

YAOURT *To sing along in nonsensical noises that vaguely resemble the lyrics of a song.*

ATTACCABOTTONI *A person who corners you to tell you long, meaningless stories, usually about his/her oh-so-miserable life.*

EPIBREREN *Pretending that you're doing something super important, while in reality you're being super lazy.*

DRACHENFUTTER *A gift that a man gives to his wife to apologize when he's done something stupid (typically staying out way too late).*

So: I bought my new phone **alaltăieri** and **farpotshket!** I was so sad that I started to **yaourt**, but I was suddenly interrupted by an **attaccabottoni**, as if that's what I needed then. I **epibreren** to fix the phone, but I could not do that because that 'friend' was actually my wife. And the phone...was actually a **drachenfutter**.

There are a ton of such examples. Just search online and you will see how some languages have a simple word for what others can only represent with a complex sentence.

Do you understand? Well, then what are you standing under!?

Even a word like "alone" is formed from "all in one". "God be with you" shrunk into "goodbye", and now many just use "bye". A sentence, collapsed into a word.

In that same way, many Americans have a verbal tick today by saying "Do you know what I'm saying?" at the end of their descriptive sentences. For instance, "This world should get rid of trade to create saner behaviors. Do you know what I'm saying?" What's really interesting here is that most of them don't pronounce it as it's written. Instead, they make a quicker sound like [nmsyn], and in the future it's very likely to become a "thing", a word. More than likely, "gonna", "wanna" and "shoul-da" will become 'accepted' words as well. "often" will become "offen", and "clothes" will become "kloz". "Mine Elly" was a normal way to call your 'dear' Elly, but in time it became "mi-n-elly", then "Nelly", because of English pronunciation. The same happened to poor Ed, as he became "mi-n-ed" Ned. That's the evolution of nicknames.

So words or sentences can describe the same thing, depending on how 'randomly' this evolved for the many languages out there.

WORD VS SENTENCE

FROM
SIGNS TO
WORDS

THE ORIGIN OF WORDS

What's the name of our moon? The Moon. Then is "moon" a word to describe a name or is it to describe a category of space rocks orbiting bigger rocks? Well, both. It's like naming all the mountains you find as "Everest". But that's the story of most words. In old english writings, especially religious ones, you will find the word "silly" used as in "The silly Mother Mary". But they meant a completely different thing than what is understood by "silly" today. Those people in the past weren't calling Mother Mary foolish. Back then, the word meant "blessed", and was associated with "innocence". Over time, "innocence" became increasingly associated with being "weak", and then migrated further to "foolish". That's pretty much the journey of all words, as they take on various forms and meanings along the way.

People's names became words, nouns became verbs, and vice-versa, verbal ticks gave birth to parts of grammar, and so on. This is why you can *present* a *present* in the *present*, or be a *patient patient*, or *object* to an *object*. You can "friend" someone today, as a verb, but in the past, you could only have one as a noun. "leaves" can be a verb: "Someone leaves", as well as part of a plant: "someone's leaves". There is no egg in eggplant, or ham in hamburger, and neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England, nor French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. Boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither a pig or from Guinea. Seems a bit confusing, huh?

This July, while jaywalking and eating a meat sandwich, I saw a cesarean performed by a barbarian in a jacuzzi. The girl was wearing a bikini, but the guy tried to use some velcro to close the wound (why not band-aids!? or a zipper!?). Maybe he had Alzheimer's or was high on heroin.

CRAZY STORY, YA MIGHT SAY? WELL, LET'S CONSIDER HOW CRAZY THE STORIES OF THE INVENTION OF THOSE WORDS ARE:

jaywalk - a term coined and promoted by the automotive industry in the 1920s (jay-walk) to basically refer to those who walked where cars should ride. "jay" was a synonym for "rube" (an unsophisticated country person), assumed by many urbanites to be stupid, slightly unintelligent, or perhaps simply naïve.

meat - meant food in general, but not so long ago began to be associated only with animal flesh.

sandwich - in 18th century Britain, a well-known figure named John Montagu (the 4th Earl of Sandwich), used to play cards for so long that he didn't leave himself much time for eating. Not wanting to grease the cards, he usually took two slices of bread and added a slice of meat in between to make a quick 'snack' that he could eat while playing cards. Over time, that kind of 'snack' became associated with his name, as "Lord Sandwich" became the generic name for the "sandwiches" that we eat today.

cesarean - is a word derived from the name of Julius Caesar, since he was a popular guy some 2,000 years ago, and the 'gossip' at that time was that he was born/delivered surgically. So they named the procedure after him. The guy was so popular that they even named a month after his other name - Julius July.

barbarian - Some 2,000 years ago, the Greeks thought of themselves as very advanced and intelligent. Anyone who came in or around their tribe speaking a different language was mocked by calling them "bar-bar-bar-bar", referring to the way the strangers were talking. It's rather similar to today's English use of "bla-bla-bla".

jacuzzi -A hot tub with underwater jets that massage the body. It's the invention of a guy named Roy Jacuzzi. Guess where the name "jacuzzi" came from?

bikini - This is by far the best one, as it refers to a "low-waisted two-piece women's bathing suit", a 1948 'invention'. The guy who 'invented' this 'revolutionary' piece of clothing thought that the reaction men have to a woman wearing such clothing was 'explosive'. He was also aware of a place called "Bikini Atoll", where atomic bombs were tested. You make the connection now.

Velcro, band-aid, and zipper are all company or product names that became associated with the product they sold, and now we consider them as 'normal' words, similar to how "google" has recently become commonly used to refer to internet searches.

Alzheimer's - was coined after Alois Alzheimer, the guy who discovered the disease. And in 1895, the German drug company Bayer marketed diacetylmorphine as an over-the-counter drug under the trademark name **Heroin**, from "hero" because of its perceived "heroic" effects upon a user.

Other kinds of words that seem to have 'logic', but don't, are those composed of particular particles. For instance, the suffix "dom" was used to give importance to words like: king-dom, free-dom, and so on. But then it was also used for wis-dom, leaving us to wonder what is "wis". The same goes for "less" in shame-less and fear-less, but then you come across ruth-less and wonder what does ma'am Ruth have to do with the word today?

Even in Chinese, 休 means "rest" and is formed from two words: "person" 人 and "tree" 木. Why did they not use "chair" and "person", or just a single, separate symbol for "rest"? 好 means "good", and again, is somewhat arbitrarily formed from the words "woman" 女 and "child" 子, as if all woman-child combinations are good :). To get a brief understanding of how Chinese builds up words for stuff, check this short video.

It's not just that words seem to evolve from this arbitrary composition and mix of meanings. There is also an underlying game going on, stealing (but called 'borrowing') words from other languages. If all words had been copyrighted by their country of origin, then everyone on the planet would be in jail.

Here's a quote from a 'smart' dude, an English scholar of the 15th century, complaining about English being mixed with other languages and people writing things that were not 'real' English words:

*Our own tung shold be written cleane
and pure, vnmixt and vnmangeled
with borrowing of other tunges...*

He also said that we should not say "lunatic", as that's latin, instead saying "mooned". Because languages change all the time, you can see that he used many words that are 'not words' today. But the real irony is that the guy didn't realize that many of the words he used, like "pure", "vnmixed", and "vnmangeled", were actually direct borrowings from French. Quite ironic, right!?...Complaining with stolen words how others "doesn't" know how to "speech English".



TAKE A LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING TEXT AND NOTICE THAT THE WORDS IN PINK ARE WORDS BORROWED FROM OTHER LANGUAGES:

Yet the vast majority of our vocabulary originated in foreign languages, including not merely the obvious "Latinate" items, like adjacent, but common, mundane forms not processed by us as "continental" in the slightest.

Up to 99% of English words are 'borrowed' from other languages.

62% of the words that English people use are these kinds of borrowed words, with the rest surviving from "Old English". Interestingly enough, Old English is a branch of yet another kind of language (source).

ENGLISH 'STOLEN' FROM FRENCH:

air, blue, cry, stomach, bar, coast, clear, move, fool, jail, debt, easy, push, music, tax, face, large, save, park, fry, flower, mean, trip, beef, joy, nice, wait, stew, people, poor, chair, toast, river, carry, lamp, spy, sign, change, pain, faith...

ENGLISH 'STOLEN' FROM LATIN:

client, interest, legal, scene, intellect, recipe, pulpit, exclude, necessary, tolerance, video...

JAPANESE 'STOLEN' FROM ENGLISH:

beisuboru - baseball, T-shatsu - T-shirt, bouifurendo - boyfriend, fakkusu - fax... About half of Japanese words are from Chinese

ROMANIAN 'STOLEN' FROM ENGLISH:

marketing, website, laptop, smartphone, stock market...

AND SO ON, AND SO ON, FOR ALL LANGUAGES OUT THERE.

So how did they 'steal' these words? In some languages that developed in the North, one example that linguists found was that when people migrated to the South, they borrowed words like "palm trees" from other languages, since they had no such names (there are no palm trees in the North). It's like English 'borrowing' the word "taco", because no "taco" existed until Mexicans 'cooked it up'. More recently, it's been a matter of adopting popular words like "website" or "marketing" via the internet.

Another way has to do with invasions: bad guys conquering some tribe and bringing their own language with them. But since schools were not a thing back then, and the new rulers were in lower numbers than the citizens of the tribe they conquered, they couldn't teach them all their language. So parts of the new language got mixed in with the local language. When Vikings invaded Britain, they brought new words with them, such as: both, same, again, get, give, are, sky, skin. The English language had the word "shirt" for example, but Vikings were more into "skirts" (the Viking word) :, and the two words now coexist referring to two different kinds of clothing.

Then take the word "herba", which means "grass" in Latin. Latin is a very old language and the people who spoke it were living all over Europe, but then they grouped in four distinct tribes at one point: Spain, France, Portugal, and Romania. Because of the separation, over the years the word "herba" mutated into:

herba - Latin

LISTEN TO THEM IN ORDER:

hierba - Spanish

herbe - French

erva - Portuguese

iarbă - Portuguese

THE SAME WORD ORIGIN, SPOKEN OVER MANY YEARS IN
DIFFERENT PLACES, TRANSFORMED IT INTO WHAT IT IS TODAY.

FROM SIGNS TO WORDS

WORD VS SENTENCE

THE ORIGIN OF WORDS

WORD POLICE AND WORLD WORLDS

Today, because tribes have become so perceived as 'real' and many people take written language too seriously, tribes employ people as words' police, the people who officially decide if and when a word becomes real. If you and I and everyone you know uses the words: **IMO, AMA, ELI5, hyperloop, overchoice, supertasker, askhole, bedgasm, textpectation, cellfish, youniverse**, and so on, then they are not 'real' until they get into the language's official dictionary. Until then, those words are called "slang".

But why should that be the case? The 'word police' are actually overwhelmed trying to keep up with adding new words, because the way they add them is..., well, a subjective approach based on the popularity of the words in question. However, words get invented and reinvented every single day, so there is no way to keep up. They didn't accept the words listed above, yet they recently 'accepted': **LOL, hangry, awesomesauce, pwnage, butt-dial, or snackable**, which shows just how random this process can be.

Another thing to consider are the definitions that they add in the dictionary. As you may have already noticed, definitions change all the time. For instance, "lit" has new meanings today beyond the old past tense of "light" in "He lit the candle". It has also come to mean "stoned, drunk", or it can be used to describe when something is 'turned up' or 'popping', like saying a party is *lit*. Even if it is used often and well understood today, this new meaning has yet to find its way into the dictionary.

If you want more information on this topic, you can watch this TED talk by someone who 'approves' words as 'official'.

Next time you go out, I encourage you to pay closer attention to the world around you: people talking to each other, the leaves of a tree gently moved by the wind, dogs at play and how they play, kids that are happy or upset in so many ways, all kinds of objects put in all kinds of ways. Do we have words to describe all of these situations, objects, events? Just as we don't have a word for "getting into the car" or "dumping trash into the trash bin", you'll discover that we really don't have words for almost anything. Yes, biology and chemistry can help a bit here since, from individual atoms to molecules, proteins, cells, types of tissue, creatures and so on, there are "words" to define them. But that doesn't cover the entire world of need for descriptive words. Not even close!

After frying various kinds of foods in oil, you end up with some 'leftovers' in the oil. These are simply chunks of 'burned' food. Well, back when I was in college, someone told me to remove the "urjume" (a Romanian word - my main language) before cooking again with that pan. I said "urjume"? What in the world is that!? She was very surprised to learn that I had no clue those things had a name in the Romanian language. It's a non-official name (slang), but one that was as normal to her as the word "crumbs" was for me. Those oily leftovers, which I had been aware of most of my life, did not have any word other than "oil leftovers", but they sure did for others.

In the same way, we do not have words for most events or things out there: a chair that is not properly arranged at the table, someone who likes to watch cooking videos, different kinds of dressing styles, hairstyles, ways of walking or talking, the shape of many shapes, colors of different mixtures, and the list goes on and on and on.

THIS IS
CALLED
"TWERKING"

(and it is in the dictionary
with the definition: "dance
to popular music in a
sexually provocative
manner involving thrusting
hip movements and a low,
squatting stance")

BUT THIS IS
JUST
CALLED A
"WEIRD
DANCE"

I hope you clearly 'get the picture' that we only have words for a very limited amount of 'things' and events. For most of what we describe, we use sentences made of a few common words that we temporarily put together to 'kinda' resemble what we want to define, much like naming the second dance above as "weird dance", since there is no single word in English (and no popular 'borrowed' word from another language) to define it more exactly.

Going from signs to words is a process of constant mutation of meanings. The 'visual' of a word (letters or drawings), from USA to China and all tribes in between, has little to nothing to do with what they are intended to represent. It's no different than 'randomly' pressing some keys on your keyboard (tvh5f'[l&*)erb4) and announcing that from now on, these signs you just made are how we will all represent whatever you choose them to mean (*a dog, a rat, a deep feeling of loneliness, someone's house that is burning, and so on - and so on :)*). Basically if "tvh5f'[l&*)erb4" has a meaning for you, then it certainly qualifies as a word.

ON A RELATED NOTE, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORDS AND SENTENCES IS NON-EXISTENT.

A word and a sentence can easily define the same thing, depending on how it evolved for the many languages out there. Having said that, the structure of a sentence can tell us yet another story of how rules between words form and are used in day to day life.

FROM WORDS TO SENTENCES

DEFINING THE “MANY”
AND THE “KINDS”

SOME
YEARS AGO:

*Sir, I just caught
two geese and
thought of
cooking them for
your majesty :D.*

*You mean two
“geese”, Garry!
Not “gooses”.*



Oh, ok sir. So you prefer to cook for you the geese and not the meese?

What "meese" Garry!?

The ones from hunting sir. We shot one moose in the forest and hit another moose with the truck when driving back home. Two meese.



Jesus Christ, Garry. You mean "moose"!

I am confused, Sir. Why is there goose and geese, but not moose and messe?

We've showcased earlier how words and sentences are basically the same 'creature', depending on the language, but what I am trying to describe here is 'grammar': how words are related to each other in how they are used to form sentences. So for verbs, nouns, plurals, tones, syntaxes..., how do words have sex?

The only way to get a real clue about how that happens is to look at many, many examples of grammar in action, from all over the world. That's what we're going to do, so buckle up, as this may be a long 'voyage'.

There are a great many 'things' in the universe: cows and cars, laptops and ideas, emotions and galaxies, animals and guns, and so on. But how are languages all over the world defining these things? How are they categorizing them using language? The story is extremely weird and confusing.

When I learned English in school as my second language, the English teacher taught us that in English, the plural is marked with an "s". So car cars, door doors, goat goats, dog dogs, and so on. But then I realized that "bacterium" isn't "bacteriums", "sheep" isn't "sheeps", "fish" isn't "fishs", "tooth" isn't "tooths", "foot" isn't "foots", "fruit" isn't "fruits", "kiss" isn't "kiss", "child" isn't "childs", neither "man" or "woman" are "mans" and "womans". So how come "bacterium" transforms into "bacteria", "tooth" becomes "teeth", "foot" into "feet", "kiss" into "kisses", "child" into "children", "man" into "men", "woman" into "women" and, even worse, "fish" and "fruit" only transform into "fishes" and "fruits" at arbitrary times?

The sentences: "The store sells many different kinds of fruits. There are ten species of fishes in the aquarium." are as correct as: "The store sells many different kinds of fruit. There are ten species of fish in the aquarium." So which one should you choose? Well, you choose. Oddly, "sheep" has no freaking plural form, just like "furniture, information, knowledge, education, luck" and so many others! So what's the 'rule' supposed to be!? The reality is that there is no exact rule, nor is it that anyone sat down and invented the plural, or words, or grammar in general.

As we've shown so far, words and the rules that make up the words are, for the most part, arbitrary. For instance, when Vikings invaded Britain many years ago, speaking a different kind of language than the old English the 'brits' were speaking, they found themselves confused by the English rules of grammar, especially the plural forms of words, which was even more complicated than today. In the old English, the plurals went something like this: **book - beek**, **goat - gat**, **lamb - lambru**, **egg - eggru**, **bread - breadru**, **tongue - toungen**, **name - namen**, **eye - eyen**, **door - doora**, **hand - handa**, **house - house** and **sheep - sheep** (so no plural for these again), and so on. On top of that, they also had the same rule with "s" for some words.

So the Vikings were like "In the name of Thor, this makes no sense at all! We are just going to use that bloody 's' for all words, so go fuck yourself!" :) So in time, the plural of "book" became "books", "goat" "goats", "eye" "eyes", and so on. All promoted by the conquerors who could not speak 'proper' English. All promoted by conquerors who could not speak 'proper' English. Some very commonly used words like "children" or "sheep", and a few others remained the same because they were too popular, and thus harder to change (source).

But it gets even more nonsensical. We can wear a t-shirt, a jacket, and a pair of pants. Why is it a "pair" of pants? As we have two legs, we also have two arms, so why isn't it a "pair of jackets", and "a pair of t-shirts"? Or they should all be more simply: a t-shirt, a jacket, and a pant? Why is there a "pair of headphones", but not necessarily a "pair of earplugs"? It's easy to understand "a piece of cake", but why is an "apple" only considered a piece of fruit? A pair of shoes is made up of two similar, but separate shoes to be worn together on both feet - you can lose a shoe and no longer have a pair of them - but a pair of pants can only be a pair (you can't lose one of it). An orange and a banana are two pieces of fruit, but why not "two fruit"? On the same note, a carrot and a cucumber can be "two veggies". So "pieces" (a marker of quantity) applies to fruits but not vegetables? And is there a word for when there are 3 similar things, or 4, that make an entire thing? Can the 4 wheels of a car be described with a word similar to how "pair" works for 2 such things? Mnot.

So, the way the plural is formed in English is arbitrary, for the most part. And various "kinds" of things can be described with "pairs", "pieces", and other means, but in the same arbitrary fashion.

In Chinese, the way they form plurals gets weird in another way. In their language, they don't really mark the singular or the plural. Think about the English phrasing of "two horses". That makes as much sense as saying "two horse", or even "many horse", since it's already suggesting that we are talking about more than one horse. So adding a plural particle (like the "s") is redundant. Chinese is like that in many ways. In Chinese, "horse" is "马" while "horses" is also "马". This is why context is so essential in Chinese. The only written plural form for "horse" is when you add quantity like "two" (两个) or "many" (很多), making it 两个马 (two horses - or more literally "two horse"), or simply "many horses" as 很多马 (or literally "very many horse").

cat 猫 - very many cat 很多猫
dog 狗 - very many dog 很多狗
bird 鸟 - very many bird 很多鸟
and so on...

But then they use 'special' markers for plurals regarding humans. 们 allows them to form the following:

he 他 - they/them 他们
she 她 - they/them 她们
I 我 - we/us 我们

The same particle applies to words that describe human roles (teacher, friend, daughter, etc.) to create their plural forms:

Teacher 老师 - Teachers 老师们
Friend 朋友 - Friends 朋友们
Daughter 女儿 - Daughters 女儿们
and so on...

So they have different kinds of plural particles in use for humans versus non-human things. Note that these plural particles are not used when the context already implies it. So there's no need to add 们 for "teacher" when you are obviously talking about two of them, or a group, and so on.

But here's where it gets more interesting.

In Chinese, you can't just say "two horse", "two teacher", "two hat", "two table", and so on. You must add a 'classifier', meaning a word to describe the thing you're talking about. So, "**horses**" can be classified with "units" 匹, "**teachers**" with "individual things, people" 个, "**tables**" with "flat" 张, and "**hats**" with "objects with protruding top" 顶 (yes, seriously!). So for them, it becomes "two **unit horse**", "two **individual things teacher**", "two **objects with protruding top hat**", "two **flat table**".

They have classifier markers for nearly everything. There are hundreds of them, including: *volume, time, opportunities, linear projections, meals, flowers, military projectiles, wheeled vehicles, honorable and persons with perceived higher social rank, buildings whose purposes are explicitly stated (e.g. hospitals), general items of differing attributes; plus heavy, thin, slender, pole, fairly long stick-like objects;* and so much more (here's a list).

So basically, every time you define things in Chinese, you also need to include **a quantifier** (*one, two, many, group, etc.*) + **a classifier** (*highlighting if an object is round, sharp, thin - or you are talking about vehicles, military objects, or whatever*).

You will need to memorize these things if you want to speak and write understandable Chinese.

You might wonder what you would add for words like "**shit**", "**clouds**", "**penis**", "**idea**", and so on, but you'll also find classifiers that go along with these. If you can't figure out which one to use, they also have a 'general' one ↑ that can be used in such cases. This entire thing may not be so strange if you recognize that you can find similar rules in English when you say "**a bunch of flowers**", "**a herd of sheep**", and "**a school of fish**". The difference is that in Chinese, they kinda go nuts with it.

In Dutch, they have to specify if an object stands, lays, or hangs. So a bed "stands" (it has tiny 'legs'), a plate on a table still "stands" because it has little protrusion-like legs (a ring). A book on a table "lays", same as a carpet, although a painting "hangs". A person can do all of them, depending on how s/he is positioned. If s/he stands on two legs, but is bent down a bit, s/he isn't "standing" anymore. It may be normal for a Dutch to ask you what "stands" in your house, meaning "what furniture do you have", because that's supposedly what the furniture does :).

If you feel a bit confused, I am likely going to confuse you even more here, because I am about to describe one more language in regards to defining these notions of “many” and “kinds”. The ones presented so far are actually less confusing and more ‘relevant’ than what it will follow. Imagine that!

In the Romanian language, plurals get so complicated that I am afraid it is impossible to properly explain, but I will certainly try. First off, Romanian, like many other languages out there, have genders for words. A table is feminine, a shoe is masculine, and a chair is neutral. Yeah, I know... Here’s more:

FEMININE: *cat, giraffe, car, kitchen, moon, tit, bottle, couche, clothes, connection, book, dick, news, idea, eclipse*

MASCULINE: *dog, breast, guest, shark, human, asteroid, vampire, friend, twin, tree, criminal, hero, mountain, brain*

NEUTRAL: *browser, airplane, penis, nose, telescope, finger, laptop, newspaper, word, sock, city, foot, egg, animal*

So the word “**animals**” is neutral, but “**dogs**” is masculine and “**cats**” is feminine!? **Then on top of that, a “penis” is neutral?** I guess it is if you really think about it :). Yet “dick”, a slang ‘name’ for the same ‘thing’, is feminine. Well...can you spot the ‘encryption’? No worries, I can’t either, even though Romanian is my first language. I speak it every single day and I can’t figure these things out.

In Romanian, you also need to transform the plural to reflect the gender. In English, those weird plural ‘particles’ at the end of words, like the “**s, ren, ru**”, and so on, transform into gender specific information. Don’t try to understand the words - just look at the red particles to see if you can spot

SO (FROM SINGULAR TO PLURAL):

FEMININE

mașină - mașini
masă - mese
bucătărie - bucătării
canapea - canapele
carte - cărți
stea - stele
mâncare - mâncări
oaie - oi

MASCULINE

om - oameni
păun - păuni
câine - câini
asteroid - asteroizi
geamăn - gemeni
tată - tați
castravete - castraveți
cercel - cercei

NEUTRAL

scaun - scaune
nas - nasuri
cuvânt - cuvinte
picior - picioare
creion - creioane
ou - ouă
meci - meciuri
portmoneu - portmonee

Ok, so were you able to spot the 'encryption' there? No worries, me neither :). There are no rules whatsoever as to what particles get replaced with what other particles. To speak proper Romanian, you completely need to memorize them. If you were to feed this to a machine learning algorithm, it would not be able to make any sense of it either. In Romanian, you cannot say "two horses". Since "horse" is masculine, you need to also transform the word "two" into its masculine form (yeah, I know, it's crazy).

"două" is the feminine "two", while "doi" is the masculine "two". Since the horse (cal) is 'masculine', it has to be said as "doi cai" (both the number and the particle from the word must represent the gender and the plural in the same time), and cannot be "două cai" because "două" is feminine. Since you already marked the number with gender (două/doi), why on earth do you also have to mark the word itself with either gender or plural!?

The funny bit is that you need to put gender on numbers only for the first two numbers (one - unu/una - and two - doi/două), as the rest do not 'convert' to any gender. So "three/four/five horses" translates into "trei/patru/cinci cai", regardless of whether the base word is feminine, masculine, or neutral.

It's as nonsensical as English where there is: **one first, two second, three third**, and then you get to simply add "th" to mark the others (plus some exceptions - as always): **four fourth, five fifth**, and so on, again for no discernable reason. For the same structure (one first) in Romanian, you only change the first number into a 'unique' word, and then the rest use the same particles. That's the norm in most languages, so English turns out to be the 'weird' one when it comes to this.

ENGLISH

one - first
two - second
three - third
four - fourth
five - fifth
six - sixth

ROMANIAN

unu - primul
doi - al doilea
trei - al treilea
patru - al patrulea
cinci - al cincilea
șase - al șaselea

You see how the Romanian language has so many markers? And like other languages, these markers are not exact at all. We are taught to add "i" for plural in Romanian, just like the "s" in English, but a ton of Romanian words do not have their plural ending in "i", as you saw. So, why do we need a marker for "boys" (**băieți**) to say that it is masculine when it's a "boy" that you're talking about, which already defines it as masculine!?

Here's one more Romanian example of how the gender changes an entire sentence. Take this sentence in English: "Two beautiful blue sandals." Since "sandal" is feminine in RO (**sanda**), the entire sentence changes to the feminine form: "Două sandale albastre frumoase." If you were to replace "sandal" with a masculine word like "shoe" (**papuc**), everything changes to: "Doi papuci albaștrii frumoși." See how the same sentence has completely different markers for a nonsensical rule like gender, even when we are talking about the same kind of 'things'?

It is not as simple as it is in English to take the "sandals" out and add "shoes" in, like "Two beautiful blue shoes."

DOI = TWO;

FRUMOS = BEAUTIFUL;

ALBASTRU = BLUE;

Two beautiful blue *sandals*.

Două sandale albastre frumoase.

Two beautiful blue *shoes*.

Doi papuci albaștrii frumoși.

See how the red particles change just because one is masculine and one feminine? You don't have to understand the language just to see how "redish" and significantly different the adjustments are for such a small and completely meaningless thing: the 'gender' of non-living things. And this is happening between two words that basically mean the same things (*sandals* and *shoes* = footwear). These words are often used interchangeably, yet they have different genders. Just for fun, another super weird thing is that the name of the colors red, blue, yellow, and others all have different masculine and feminine particles to match the sentence (like in the previous example for *blue - albastre* and *albaștrii*), but that's not true for green and pink (and perhaps a few others), for no reason at all.



IF **ENGLISH** IS A

COMPLETE NONSENSE

CHINESE

A WONDERFUL MESS

THEN **ROMANIAN**

IS A COMPLETE NIGHTMARE:

(gender and plural particles only make sense if you memorize them, plurals can have two forms, and everything must be either feminine, masculine, or neutral). Spanish, French, German, and many other languages have similar genders applied to words, and in varying ways, but some other languages have particles for masculine and animals (as one), feminine, non-flesh foods, or miscellaneous. Try to figure that out :). Really, go here... Like modern Romanian (and others), Old English also used to have genders for all objects. In contrast, some languages only have words for the numbers "one" and "two", calling the rest as "many". Some languages have no distinct word for "mother" or "father", relying on "parent" instead. Some don't even have words for colors, only using "dark" and "light". As a result, it's quite accurate to say that some modern day languages don't bother with all of these categorizations.

SO, WHERE SOME LANGUAGES GO NUTS TRYING TO DEFINE GENDERS AND THE SHAPE/FORM OF A THING, SOME DON'T DO THAT AT ALL.

In the vast majority of languages, there are not even words for “a” and “the”. In English, for instance, “A phone” is different from “The phone”, in the sense that the first refers to any kind of phone and the second to a specific phone.

BUT AS CHINESE HAS PROVEN, THE CONTEXT CAN TAKE CARE OF SUCH PICKY THINGS.

On a side note, the English use of “the” comes from an Old English habit of saying things like “I meant THAT kid.”, “Call them from THAT phone.” Over time, as happens with most words, “that” transformed into “the”.

SIX CRAZY GUYS ENTER A BAR:

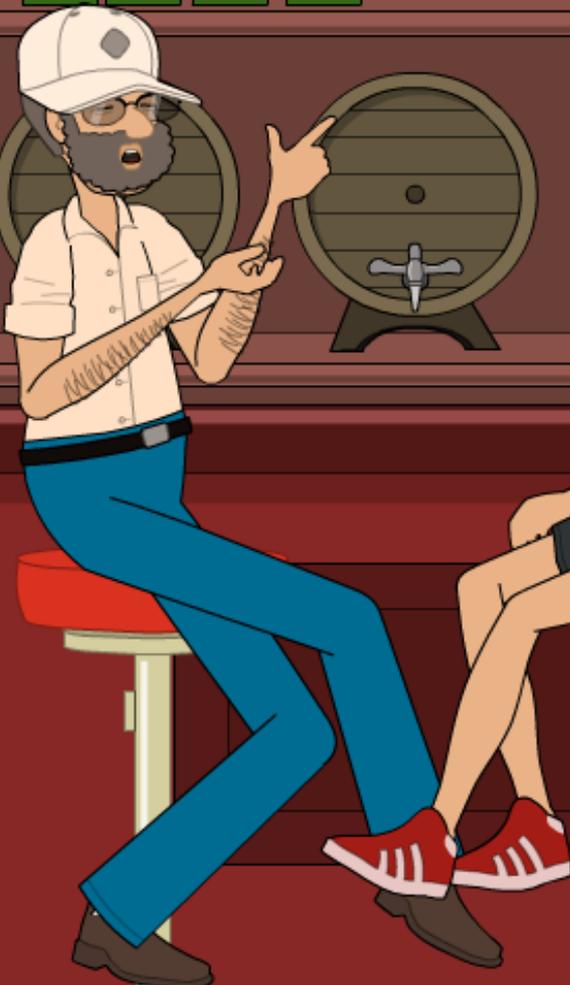
Two beers please!

Don't you mean "a glass OF bear"?

I want a glass beer.

Nope. That's redundant!

No no
when
the fir
say: "t



AMERICAN



GERMAN



CHINESE

no! Redundant is you say "beers" in st place!? Can't you wo beer please"?

For fuck sake guys! Don't you know that the beer is feminine!? Articulate it! Sorry... articulate "her"...

I think the correct way is "a glass beer's"!?

Be specific: "Beer two cylindrical-things"!



JAPANESE



RUSSIAN



ROMANIAN

AT THE OTHER CORNER OF THE BAR:

BRITISH

Mates, I drank eighty-four beers this week!

FRENCH

Wow! Four-twenty-four (quatre-vingt-quatre). That's alot!

DUTCH

He means foureighty (vierentachtig)

Huh!?



ZULU

You mean tens-of-eight-four (amashumi ayisishiyagalombili nane)?

PIRAHÃ

They mean many!

MANY!

How many?

ALIEN

D'afuk is this bar!?



I picked these languages because they are quite different from each other, and while other languages in the world are in one way or another similar to one or more of them, these particular languages readily highlight how the craziness goes through the roof for each of them. The way each language defines “many” and “kinds” varies greatly, and even if they refer to the same things, like seeing the same visual cue, we humans have a multitude of ways of describing what we see, with many of these approaches being redundant, and many more seemingly ‘random’ and, thus, nonsensical.

The way that numbers are described in written form (with letters) can also vary greatly, with some having unique names for the first 10 digits, followed by a combination of them, while others are unique for the first 30, and yet others combining them in weird ways to form big numbers (like French using $4 \times 20 + 4$ to say 84 - *quatre-vingt-quatre*). Interestingly, cultures like Pirahã have no numbers at all.

THIS MESS IS YET ANOTHER PROOF OF HOW THE LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD ARE ARBITRARY WHEN IT COMES TO DEFINING THE CONCEPTS OF “MANY” AND “KINDS”.

Still, no discussion of this phenomenon would be complete without talking a bit about "kinds of humans", i.e. girls and boys, and how these distinctions are managed by various languages.



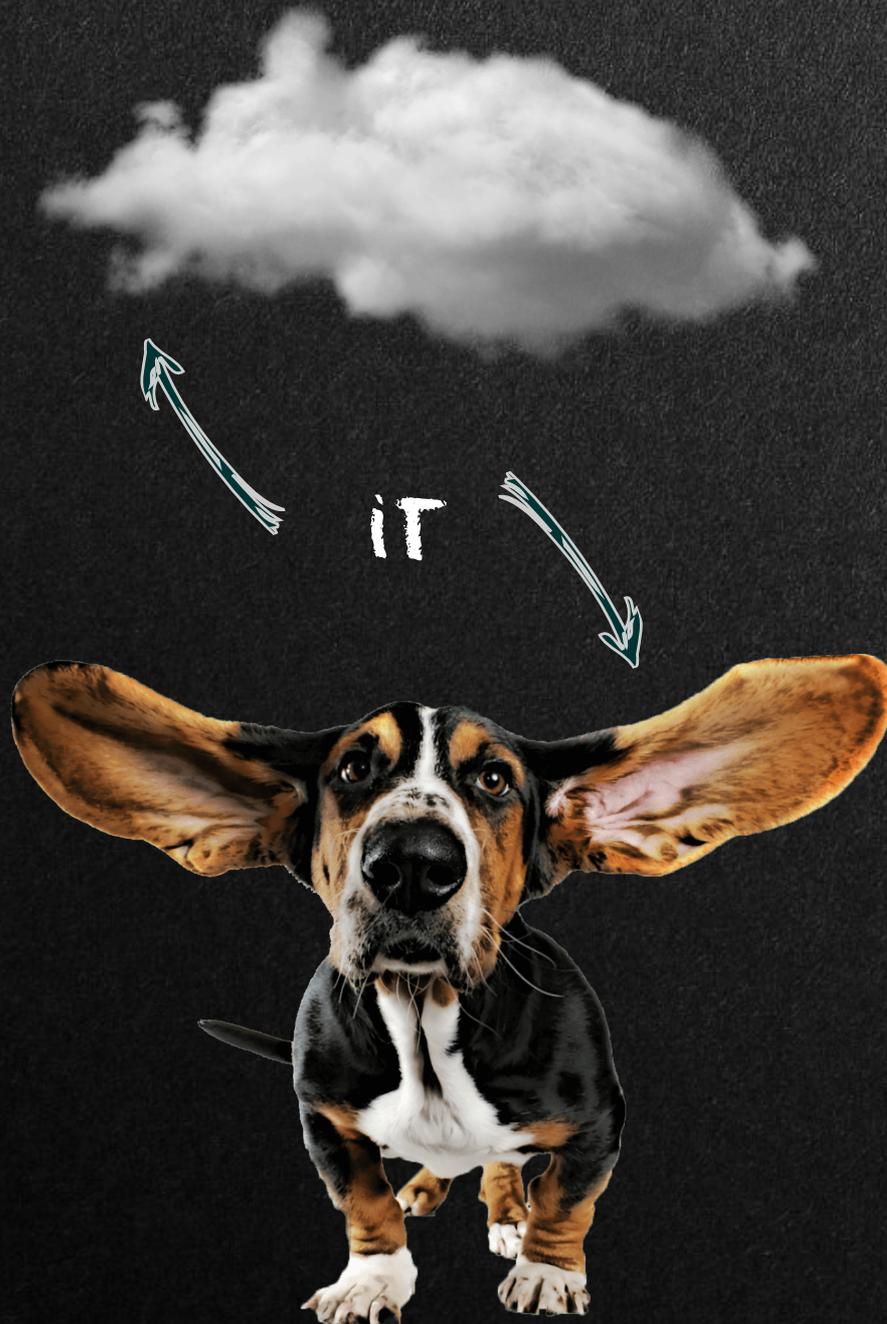
HE
←

SHE
→



When I first learned English, I came across something so frustrating that I can't explain. The "it".

Although Romanian demands genders for everything, it only has two for use with people. I could not find any word/meaning to explain the English "it" in Romanian. If you say in English: "We just bought a puppy. It is so fluffy and smelly." In Romanian, it is redundant to mention the "creature" again via another word, so the statement becomes something like: "We just bought a puppy. Is so fluffy and smelly." I always make this mistake when I write in English, forgetting to add the "it" because I am not used to even considering "it" (*Side note from the Editor: I readily confirm this! ;)*). For example, saying "Is raining" sounds perfectly fine to me instead of "It is raining", because "what it?" What is this "IT" that is raining? Seriously!?



I also find it cumbersome to say: "A human's life is extremely precious because he/she only lives such a short life." I find it very strange to mention both the masculine and feminine forms again when we clearly defined the "human" as a "human" (no gender). In Romanian, it's quite common to never even mention the "I, she/he, they". It is perfectly normal to say things like "Am sad", "Are happy", "Is a jackass", etc..

If Romanian seems more 'logical' and less cumbersome when it comes to this, just hold on a minute, as Romanian is still truly mutilated in other ways. Even if it simplifies things in the "it" area, we need to use plural forms when referring to, wait for it..., "high-class people", and "older people". And then, of course, there is this 'gem': you can say "you" ("tu" in romanian) to your mother, but not to someone else's mother. For that "lady", you need to address her as "yourmajesty" (dumeavoastra). So we go from a little word like "tu" to "dumneavoastra", just because of that funky rule. And as mentioned above, all of the verbs change to their plural form when talking with or about these "older and respected people", as if you were talking to/about more than one of them. It is a form of respect that everyone in Romania respects.

Now, in Cantonese (another kind of Chinese), they don't really have a word for she/he or I/my, as it's all about the context. So "He is my classmate" becomes (English transcription):

Keuih ngoh tuhngghohk leihga

he/she/it

I/my

classmate



doesn't actually translate, it only gives a hint, something like when we say "you-know" as an expression at the end of a sentence.

In Japanese, "I" is "watashi" for woman and "washi" for men, rather than a universal "I". Yet they don't have a "he"; there is only a "she" that refers to both genders. The same goes for Finnish. Even in English, "she" wasn't a 'thing' until some years ago. "he" was used to refer to both vagina and penis-equipped creatures. The opposite thing happened to "you", which used to be "thou" for singular and "you" for plural until some years ago. Now "you" is used for both forms. The Old English religious commandment "Thou shall not kill" means "You will not kill" in today's phrasing.

Using this "you" as an example, I hope you understand how Chinese and Japanese (and other more simple languages) work with context, since "you" do not seem to become confused when using the same word to refer to a single being or many beings while also relying on context.

So let's move onto another spectrum (one that complicates things). In the Ghari language, they have words for the following:

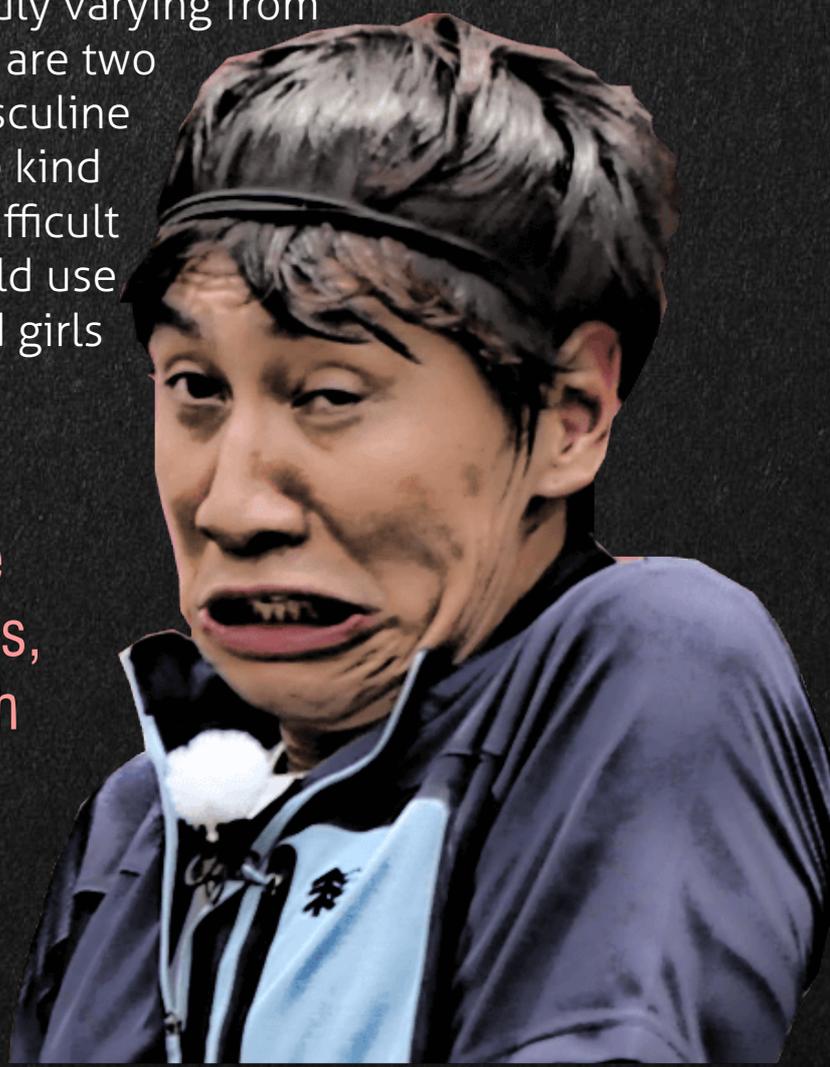
you and me - KOGITA
me and him - KOGAMI
me and you two - LUGITA
me and them two - LUGAMI
me and all of you - GITA
me and all of them - GAMI

All of these examples make it clear that different languages define humans in different ways. Some languages believe that it makes sense to differentiate creatures with penises or vaginas using two distinct words, while others do not view that as necessary; some think we should have a separate word for living creatures that are not human; some think that “you and me” or “me and you two” need to be defined as a single ‘entity’; and so on.

However, science now recognizes that there are people in the world who cannot be classified as either male or female from a biological perspective (source), or in terms of gender (a cultural non-sex based thing). Depending on the culture, many genders can exist.

So at its core, trying to find/invent words for different “kinds” of people is also arbitrary and wildly varying from one language to another (there are two ‘main’ genders in America - masculine and feminine - so why only one kind of “I”?); and even if we find it difficult to understand how anyone could use a single word for both boys and girls (as Japanese does), many other cultures do just fine with that.

It never happened that, due to interesting grammar rules, a guy from Japan slept with another human being only to find out later that “she” was a “he” :).



FROM WORDS TO SENTENCES

DEFINING THE "MANY"
AND THE "KINDS"

DEFINING ACTION
AND SYNTAX

This last part regarding grammar is about how languages try to define movement/action and how it affects the structure of sentences.

The reason I have offered so many detailed examples on how so many languages define the concepts of "many" and "kind" was to help you more fully understand how great the differences can be, and how many aspects of language are quite redundant. Those examples are also needed for defining "action" and "quality". Only several examples should be needed, and without going into too much detail, but you need to understand that it follows the same path, where you will also find HUGE differences between languages. As before, you might expect that if we see the same thing/event (a car accident, a baby being born, someone eating), or just common things that we all do (running, thinking, writing, etc.), shouldn't all languages define that event in very similar ways?

In English, there are many kinds of verbs describing actions that occurred in the past, others describing actions that will happen in the future, and others that are specialized for actions that are happening right now (in the present); plus there are others that are so detailed that they try to describe actions that happened in the past but have consequences in the present (or the future); and all of these have various flavors and interpretations that follow them. But for every English example we could possibly produce here, there are many examples from other languages showing how other rules, quite different from those in English, make just as much sense, thereby mutually excluding each other as "the rule".

So, in English, "I have been walking for the past five hours" means that you are currently walking AND that you have been doing that for the past five hours (although it is sometimes used very soon after you stop walking). In Romanian, it would be something like "I walk for five hours", which implies the exact same thing. There is no need for any particles to lead the verb to the same action being described. Another example is that English needs yet another particle to describe when you are walking in this moment, like "I am walking", while in Romanian, no such modifier is needed because "I walk" can mean the exact same thing. In English, you use "walk" to describe "walking right now", or "walking in general" - in Romanian, you rarely need any particle because the context takes care of making the situation clear.

To make this more odd, there are some verbs in Romanian that have the same form but describe actions happening: 1. *in the near past (a few days in the past)*, 2. *earlier today (can be a second ago, a minute, or hours)*, 3. *something that happens while you speak*, or 4. *something that will happen in the near future (up to a few days in the future)* - quite complex for a single verb form. So there are two kinds of past, a present, and a future, all described with the same exact verb (how nuts is that!?). "plouă" (raining) is one such verb, and with a little accent injection for two of the forms, it can be used to mean all of that. Listen to me saying the word, describing these actions in the order above (see if you can tell them apart):

Alicia **has** shot herself

OR

Alicia shot herself?

The word “**has**” implies an echo into the present, like the action happened in the past but somehow has implications in the present. It is a very picky thing in the English language, and is hard for foreigners to understand, since most languages do not have this.



Some languages, like Tuyuca, also provide us with similar subtle rules, yet are quite different in what they describe. For instance, saying "I see a car accident." sounds very weird in English. If the accident is not happening at the time you say that, people will think that you're crazy. But if you happened to see the accident a few hours or minutes ago, then you need to mark the verbs with a spicy thing to indicate that, as in "I saw a car accident.". It seems perfectly normal to English speaking people and those whose language is formed with similar grammar, but in general, that is not a normal or popular way of marking events, or managing grammar. Not only is it that many languages do not have such markings and are still able to communicate these things via context (*If you "see" the car accident, but I can't "see" it right away, then it must have happened in the past - so no markings are needed to make it more obvious*), but some languages have markings for..., well it's hard to explain, but if you saw the accident, you need to mark the sentence so that it resembles 'seeing'. The same goes for 'hearing', or even 'gossip'. That's how the Tuyuca language evolved. If you say in their language "He's chopping trees.", it makes little sense to them, about as much sense as "I see a car accident" does in English. So you need to mark it with "I saw it" or "I heard it" to make it relevant.

So, in Tuyuca, if they want to describe someone chopping trees, they need to specify if they heard it, saw it, or only heard some gossip about it. "Kiti-gi tii-gi" is the phrase they use, with the "gi" implying that he "heard" someone chopping down trees. Using "i" instead of "gi" means that the action was "seen", and if you're not sure which one it should be, then the ending would be "hoi", implying "apparently". The statement would now make sense for them, but not translated into "I heard him chopping trees.", as it has no such translation. That would be similar to trying to translate the "ed" separately from "work" in the word "worked", or any other English verb describing a past event. The Tuyuca approach marks for something more subtle, similar to that "has" from "Alicia has shot herself". Tricky, huh?

In the Kurux language, they add particles at the end of verbs to indicate when a man speaks to a woman, when a woman speaks to a woman, or when anyone speaks to a man.

The way the languages of the world mark the past, present, and future can differ greatly, as much as in how they define and mark the "many" and the "kinds". The rules of particles or how verbs should be written also follows a similar path. The "ed", marking the past in English verbs, is just as relevant and 'not-applicable' as using an "s" to mark English plurals. Considering **come came, buy bought, build built, choose chose, break broke, do did, eat ate, say said**, and so on, there's no encryption here either!

I walk, you walk, he/she walks, we walk, you walk, they walk,... Wait a minute - why is it "**he walks**"?!? Why add an 's' for he or she? Are either of them plural :)? Almost no language has a single verb ending only for the third person singular form. "**I am a man. Aren't I a man?**" Wait a minute (again) - shouldn't this be "**Amn't I a man?**" Plus, "**am**" is also redundant. If you say "**I am your father**", then what "**am**"? "**I your father**" is enough. It's self-explanatory and is the approach that most languages use.

"**Do you understand?**" Well (again), what **do** you? Pretty much no language other than English has this concept of "**do**". The rule makes absolutely no sense.

Like all languages, English is extremely pretentious with some things, yet hardly at all with others, as we showed so far. Here are some more fun verb examples: in English, there is no rule difference between saying "**I have a mother**" and "**I have a car**", even though other languages provide a clear distinction between these, since you own one and are in a relationship with the other.

The confusion continues where the same verb is used to describe very different actions: **When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, we can't see them.** In Romanian, you can use the same verb (**a aprinde**) to turn on the lights, the TV, or a fire. In English, you would either say "**Turn on the fire/light/tv**" or "**Light the fire/light/tv**". How odd! How can you "light the tv" or "turn on the fire"? But even when it seems to make more sense in English to "turn on" the lights, TV, laptop, or the car than it does in Romanian, it's still nonsensical because these actions are widely different. Across these examples, the verb "**to turn on**" doesn't describe the same action at all. You can press a button to turn on the lights or the TV, but you might only need to lift the Laptop's monitor to turn that thing on, or double tap on your phone screen, or insert the right key into the ignition, depress and release the gas pedal, and then rotate the ignition key to turn on the car. In a way, "to turn on" is an "activation" verb, but what and how you activate it varies significantly. If you had an electric bed that folds up when you are not sleeping, would you then turn on the bed at night, as in "activate it"?

An alien came to Earth, curious about how stuff works here. At one point, he sees a bird for the first time and asks: “Oh, what’s that?”. “That is a bird flying”, you say. “We are so advanced that we have made machines that fly”. Immediately, the alien would likely imagine this:

How can the verb “to fly” be used for two activities (an airplane vs a bird) that are so different!? It’s similar to saying cars “walk”. But then again, a squid **propels** through water, a jelly fish may just **move**, dolphins **swim**, and what do crabs do? Movement through water, like movement through air, is defined in multiple and confusing ways.

I could continue for another 5902 pages or so, but making hundreds of punchlines can get rather painful after a while.

TO HELP SUMMARIZE HOW LANGUAGES AROUND THE WORLD DEFINE ACTION, IMAGINE STARTING WITH THE VERB "TO SEX". NOW LET'S INVENT SOME RULES AND SAY:

sexen - *when you had sex in the past.*

sexon - *you had sex in the past but has implications in the future.*

sexinger - *you had sex but didn't enjoy it.*

sexpay - *you had paid sex.*

sexomanger - *you had sex but the partener(s) didn't enjoy.*

sexing - *you are having sex.*

sexem - *you had sex with two people.*

sexher - *you had sex with the intention of having a baby (to leave someone pregnant).*

sexish - *to make yourself sexy in preparation of sex.*

So these would be the only forms of the verb "to sex" available for use in your official language. These forms describe actions that may happen to/for some and not to/for others. They only describe those kinds of actions shallowly (e.g. what does it mean to make yourself sexy?). There are, of course, many "to sex" 'events' that could occur that are not described by any of these forms of the verb (you might try to have sex with a table or whatever - so why is there not a verb for that?). Why is there only a form of the verb to describe having sex with two other people (sexem), but not a form of the verb to describe having sex with three, or seventeen? Why is there not a verb for when you've had sex with someone but don't intend to date that person, or even more specifically, to marry them? Why is there no verb form for having sex with a mule? And so on.

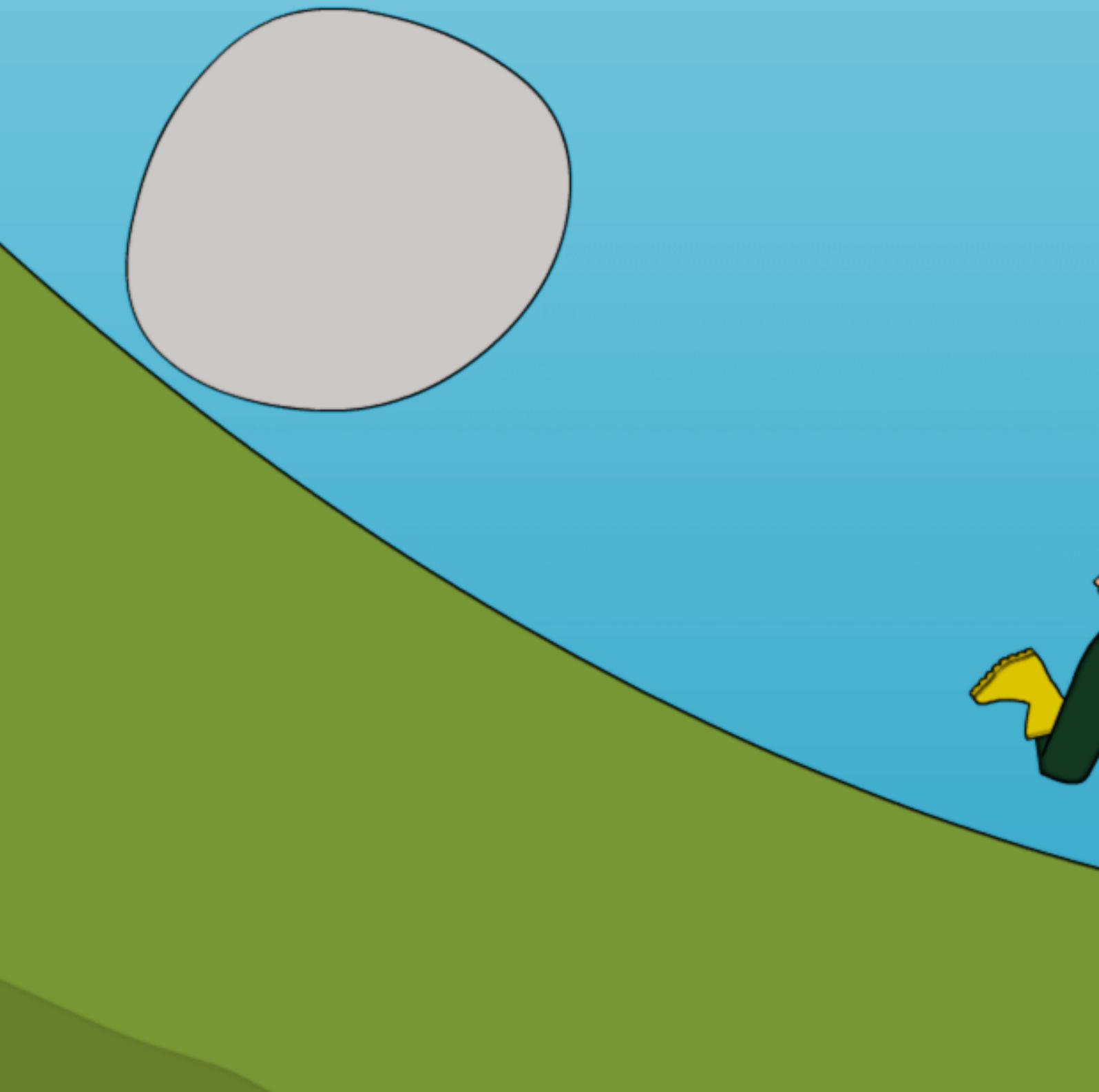
This exercise PERFECTLY describes the state of “verbs” across all languages that try to describe ‘the action’: arbitrary, very shallow, subject to interpretation, with grammar rules that are not rules at all, but just a bunch of ‘illogical’ patterns here and there, with more and more exceptions the deeper you look into them (just like I invented the above particles for “sex”).

THERE IS EVEN MORE FLAVOR TO THIS MESS:

- there are some languages out there that only have three verbs (for parts of australia: **do**, **go**, and **come** - **go a dive**, **do a sleep**, etc.)
- some that do not have anything to mark future tense, some that mark the past or other forms in widely different ways, and so much more.
- Chinese, for example, only has nouns and verbs, and their value can be interchanged. For instance, “**sun**” can be both a noun and a verb. English has that too, as we can consider: **eye**, **key**, **truck**, **palm**, **coin**, **phrase**, **question**. What are these words representing? You might be inclined to say “things”, but they can also represent actions (become verbs), as in:

Eye a **key**. **Key** a **truck** parked in your driveway. **Truck** a load of cactuses and **palms**. **Palm** a **coin**. **Coin** a **phrase**. **Phrase** a **question**. **Question** someone's right to do something.

This leads us to “syntax”. Syntax refers to the way a sentence is constructed. Looking at this image, we may be inclined to define the action from left to right: **a rock is rolling down a hill towards a running man.**



But we may also say: a man is running from a rock rolling down a hill. “The rock ‘chases’ a man” can also be correct for some.

But what about: “downhill rolling man rock running”? That’s a bit too strange for describing the action, right? Well, not for some.

There are languages where the structure of sentences can either be widely different from how they are built in languages like English, or they can have absolutely no structure at all, where the order or words (nouns, article, verbs) can be picked at will - that describes the Warlpiri language.



TO HELP ENSURE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THIS
POINT, LET'S ANALYZE ANOTHER SCENE:

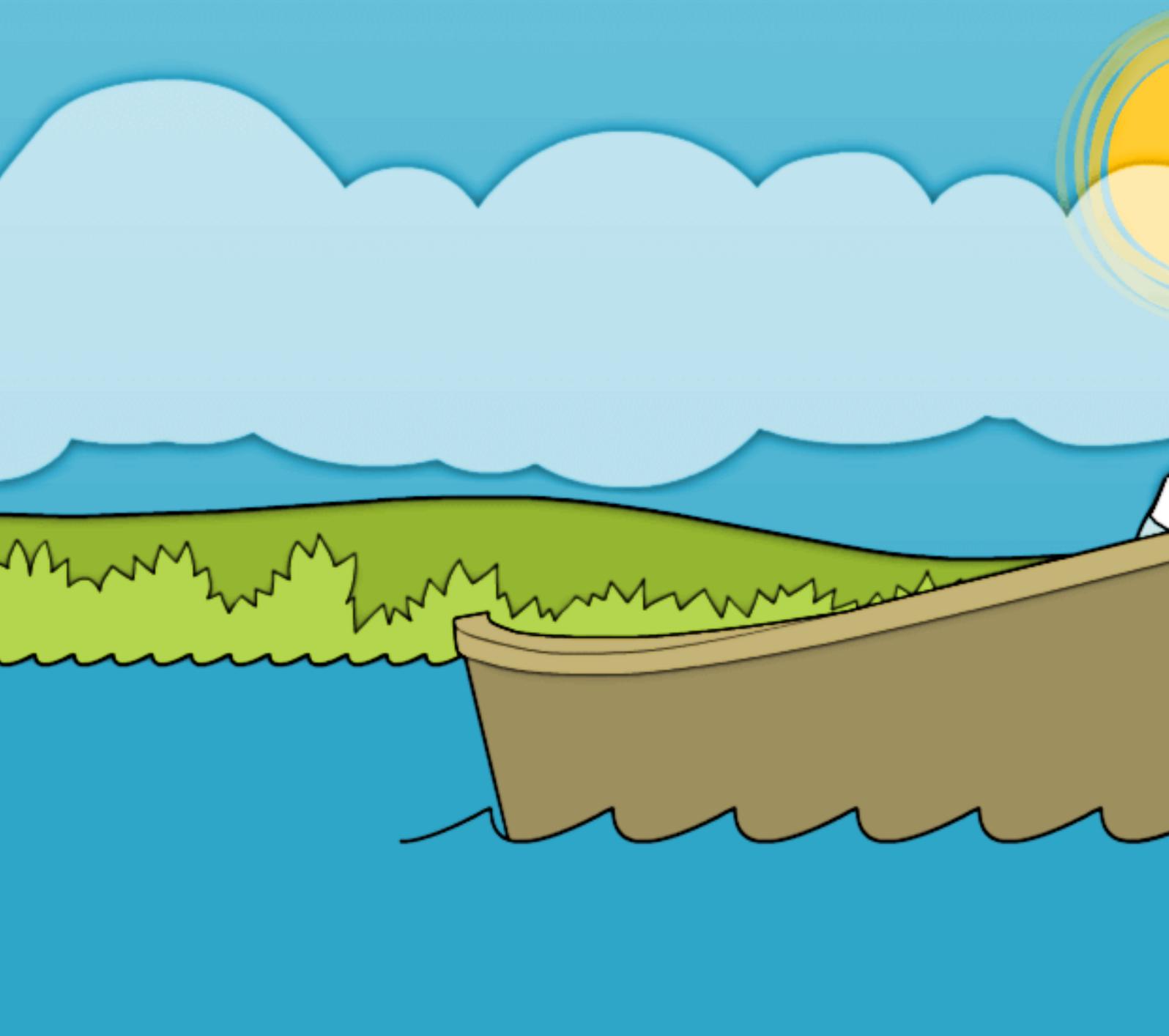
The man caught a fish.

THAT ACTION TRANSLATES INTO:

Japanese: Boy fish catch

Welsh: Caught the boy a fish

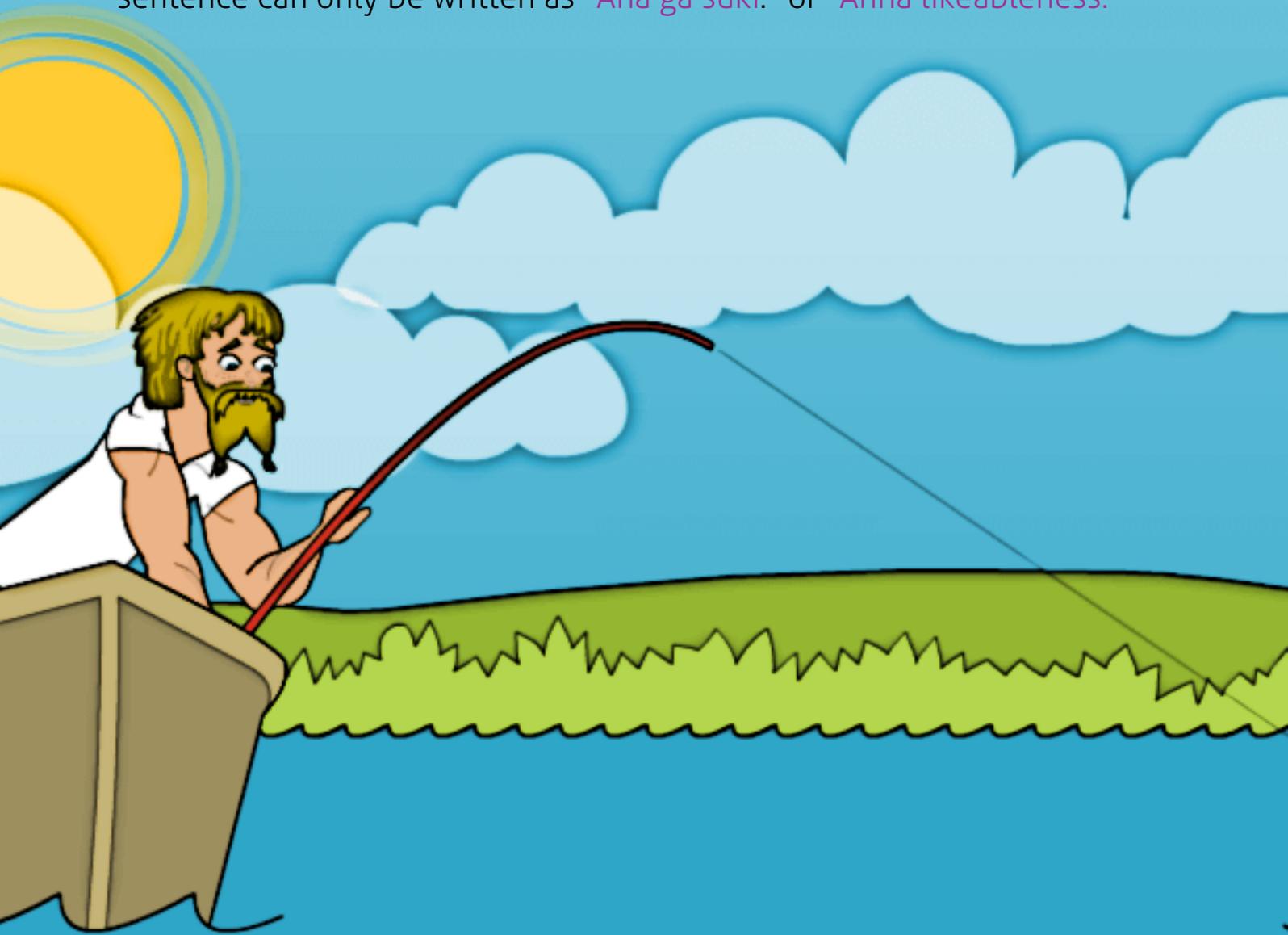
Hixkaryana: Fish caught boy



In Romanian many forms can be correct:

The boy caught a fish.
Caught a fish the boy.
Caught the boy a fish.
The boy a fish caught.

That illustrates how much it can differ between some languages. And as you already know, the defining of an action can be interpreted even within the same language: In English, "Anna was bitten by the dog" is the same as "The dog bit Anna". "I like Anna" could also be said as "Anna is liked by me". In Japanese, only the second form is the norm, so the sentence can only be written as "Ana ga suki." or "Anna likeableness."



I have to briefly mention that there are some linguists (like Noam Chomsky) who propose that humans are born with a specific ability to memorize language in a specific way, so all languages in the world have a similar syntax. This is only a hypothesis, with perhaps more criticism than support (read more here). Beyond all that we have presented here so far (that there are no truly 'universal' grammatical rules), there are many studies and real life examples showing how children mostly learn language rules by repeating what they hear from their parents.

For example, they seem unaffected by the inconsistencies of language when they are very young (saying "went" rather than "goed"), but when they grow up more and learn the established rules (like adding "ed" to verbs to describe the past) they often begin making mistakes by erroneously applying rules to other verbs like "come - comed". It's only through 'mistakes' and corrections that they eventually learn 'the correct rules'. This research suggests that children learn the rules of grammar through repetition and correction, no matter what those rules are.



LET'S LOOK ONE LAST TIME AT CHINESE AND JAPANESE, WITH A FOCUS ON SYNTAX.

In Chinese, 心 means "heart" and 口 means "mouth". For those unfamiliar with Chinese, combining the two could mean many things: *the heart speaks, you speak from the heart, you eat a heart, your heart is in your throat*, and so on. For Chinese speakers, it means "what one thinks and says". So while we could come up with many interpretations, that interpretation is the one that Chinese speakers understand. This highlights how subjective and 'random' the structure is in this small and simple case.

Moving onto another one, 来 means "to come" and 客 means "guest". Again, combining them can mean many things, but the official interpretation is "visitor" or "to have visitors". The last one is 时 (time) and 裡 (sacrifice). This time, it's the Chinese who can interpret their combination in many ways, as such: *time to sacrifice, seasons and sacrifice, to sacrifice at correct times, to make sacrifices timely*, and so on. If the context does not imply which of these interpretations is being used, Chinese uses special markers, such as 以 which means "with / according to / by / in order to / because". Thus the marker 以 and "time" + "sacrifice" 时裡 means "to sacrifice at correct times" 以时裡.

To construct a sentence out of all these 'signs' that says something like "I think that guests should be sacrificed at correct times" :) you have to know the subjective relation of these signs with each other, the context, and the rules within a sentence - essentially, all of the Chinese rules (source). So the syntax in Chinese depends on a great many variables that are quite different from what we (most non-Chinese) are used to. The same applies to nearly all languages out there.

The Japanese writing system was influenced by the one used for Chinese, but then took on a life of its own. Chinese does not have markers for words like the English "ed", "s", and so on (they don't alter words/signs at all), but Japanese has some, plus they also use "drawings" (recall the signs for dog, horse, and so on that began this article). On top of that they have a sort of alphabet that maps sounds like "i, e, ke, ko,..." but these are only used for foreign words. As a result, they have three distinct grammars in one. Basically, their writing system is a glorious disaster, but this 'disaster' helps us see the systems of letters, drawings, and particles in action within a single language. Here is a phrase in Japanese where all three systems come into play:

Kellogg's Breakfast

ケロッグの朝食

Since this is a 'foreign' word, they use a letter-based system - signs to map sounds

This is a grammar of particles (like "ed" in English)

These are two signs (drawings): the first means "morning" 朝 and the second means "eat" 食

As you can see, a language like Japanese took some grammar from one language, invented another, merged them with yet another set of rules, and became this monster. But again, the same kind of situation applies to all languages out there.

When it comes to grammar: syntax, verbs, nouns, and so on, you have no choice but to memorize all the rules in order to understand a language. They are all, however, full of inconsistencies that make the process of learning another language very difficult, or almost impossible. This is why translators (automated, human, or any 'other' kind) cannot achieve 100% accuracy, and why translated messages can be interpreted in so many different ways.

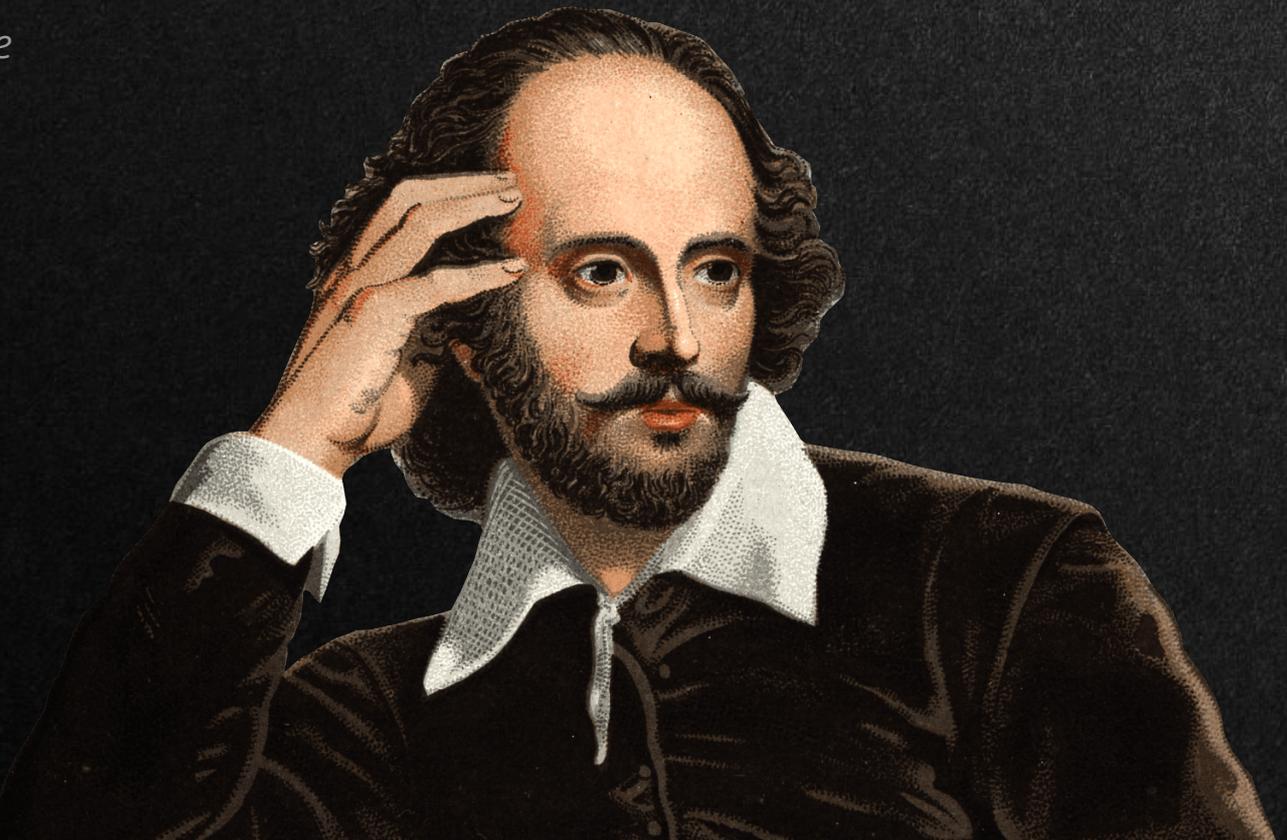
On one hand, we can each observe or hear the same thing, and even if we describe it in many different ways (from syntax to word choices and sentence forms), we may lead each other to more or less come to the same understanding. So we might all recognize that the other person saw a lion defecating, regardless of whether we build the descriptive sentence with the verb first, subject last, as a single word, or as a long sentence. On the other hand, since we evolved these separate languages in so many different ways, it is very hard to translate what was meant by a phrase into another language. I struggle to write in English, because many sentences are written backwards compared to my main language, Romanian. Many times, I miss the "it" in "it is", I don't always properly mark verbs (the past, future, present tense and many forms in between), etc.. Of course, if it weren't for all of our TVPMag articles being proofread by a native English speaker (*Note from Ray: Hi Folks! :D*), these kinds of 'translation' issues would seriously screw up the messages I am trying to share. We humans are in a constant struggle with communication, handicapped by a plethora of rules that make little sense, rules that many people respect as though they are the "word of God".

So far, we've covered the evolution of using all kinds of signs to map the world (stuff/events) and the numerous sounds that humans make, along with how these signs/marks, when placed side by side (or on top of each other), form what we now refer to as words or sentences. But we've also seen how these rules greatly differ from one language to another, even when they describe/define the exact same thing/event. Despite of all this, we are taught "language" in a way that makes it seem quite solid in its rules, very meaningful in its function, and highly efficient in its use.

TRY TO READ THIS AT YOUR NORMAL READING PACE AND STILL UNDERSTAND ALL THAT IT SAYS:

*Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.*

source



Many people study Shakespeare (the English dude who wrote that piece some 500 years ago) as a way of learning/studying the 'beauty' of English. But carefully translating his writings into other languages may be more relevant than understanding Shakespeare in English, where we only need to learn how the "Old English" that he used had significantly different meanings and interpretations than today's English. Translators, on the other hand, are forced to use their present day grammar rules and meanings in trying to 'accurately' translate Shakespeare's work.

For example, Shakespeare had no idea about one of the modern uses of the verb 'going'. So if you said to him: "Ok dude, I am going to read your stuff.", he would think that you are physically going somewhere to read his stuff. He wouldn't recognize that you "will read his stuff in the near future", as it can imply today. This is similar to you looking at that text of his above and not understanding much of it. Then again, Shakespeare would find the Old English from 500 years before his time just as incomprehensible as an English person today finds German. The evolutionary linguistic differences that occurred over the 500 years between the Old English language 1000 years ago and Shakespeare's life is much greater than the difference in understanding English between Shakespeare and you. That's because, for the past 500 years or so, something happened to language that caused it to nearly stagnate; the reinforcement of writing styles via schools, books, kingdoms, TV, music, etc..

So the entire concept of language (not only English, and not only written forms) has changed much more slowly over the last 500 years than previous to that period. And since we are faced with essentially the same influencers today, we must understand their influence.

In TVP Mag's next Language installment, we will discuss that aspect in detail, and will also uncover some highly misunderstood aspects of language, such as the fact that there really is no "English", "Chinese", "Romanian" and so on languages; and the fact that language is all about context. Note that the various examples provided in this issue were not brought together to bash languages, but rather to help you better recognize why context is the most important aspect of any language. Of course, to properly understand all of that, you'll need "it" presented in proper context, so IT will be the next focus of this series.

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