

1st Annual Yokuts, Miwok, Mono Conference

Sounds & Writing handout

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A quick guide to some symbols used in the phoneme inventories:

Vowels are pronounced “like in Spanish/Italian”

a = “ah” like in father.

e = “ey” like in hey.

i = “ee” like in feed.

o = “oh” like in boat.

u = “ooh” like in food.

ə = “uh” like in banana.

If it’s written double, or has a colon after, the vowel is long.

oo, o:

A few consonants:

š = “sh” as in shape.

č = “ch” as in cheer.

c = “ts” as in cats.

ʈ = ‘t’ with the tongue curled back – Wukchumni ‘tr’

x = a louder, throatier ‘h’ sound. Like German Bach.

ŋ = “ng”, as in fishing

k, g = always ‘hard’, as in kit, gap

Other symbols:

ʔ = Glottal stop, like in “uh-oh”. (also written: ’)

t’ = An apostrophe means a sound is an ejective – popping or clicky.

ĩ = A tilde means a sound is nasal.

ï = Two dots on an ‘i’ is made with the tongue more central.

ü = Two dots on a ‘u’ is made with lips unrounded.

k^h = A little ‘h’ means there’s a puff of air after.

k^w = A little ‘w’ means a sound is rounded, like in quick.

Activity ideas for teaching sounds and writing

1. Game: Find the first letter
 - Get students to practice listening -- students hear a word in the language, and have to identify what letter it starts with.
 - They can do this by running up to the board to point at where all the letters are written, or holding up a card with the letter on it, or moving to one side of the room (designated as a specific sound).
 - The game can be made more challenging by making students write the letter themselves, or write the whole word they hear.

2. Game: Telephone
 - Get students to practice pronunciation by repeating a word to another student. They need to say it right for the other student to understand and pass it on correctly.

3. Game: Write English with your alphabet
 - Have the students practice thinking about sounds by asking them to write English words in the language.

4. Game: Readers and writers
 - Practice reading, speaking, listening, and writing all at once. Prepare a list of words or sentences and put them on a paper outside the classroom, or away from the students.
 - Students work in pairs: one reader and one writer.
 - The reader goes to the paper to read the words or sentences written there. They remember those and go back and tell them to the writer. The writer writes down what they hear. Whoever is first to have written down all the words or sentences correctly, is the winner. Switch roles.