



# INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS Section No.

## DEVELOPMENT OF LETTER FORMS 211

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									A	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤀	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	𐌆	𐌆	𐌆	𐌆	ɑ	ɑ	ɑ		

The first letter of the English alphabet developed from Greek *alpha* ( $\alpha$ , A) through *Etruscan* and *Latin*. The capital (A) goes back to *North Semitic* *aleph*, which acquired its modern form in Greek and was retained in the Latin monumental script. The miniscule (a) derives from Latin cursive a, a variant form of A, through Carolingian and Florentine influence to yield both italic and roman forms.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									B	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤁	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	𐌇	𐌇	𐌇	𐌇	b	b	b		

The second letter of the English alphabet developed from North Semitic *beth* through Greek beta ( $\beta$ , B). The capital (B) goes back to North Semitic *beth* and particularly to Greek B, retained in the Latin monumental script. The miniscule (b) derives from the cursive B, formed by eliminating the upper loop.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									C	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤂	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	𐌈	𐌈	𐌈	𐌈	c	c	c		

The third letter developed from North Semitic *ghimel* and Greek *gamma* through the Etruscians, who had no meaningful distinction between the *g-sound* and the *k-sound*, using C for both. In Latin, C, pronounced like English K, was used mainly before A and O, and retained this sound when introduced into Britain. The capital and miniscule assumed their present form in Latin, but were originally angular and faced to the left as in the North Semitic *ghimel* and early Greek gamma ( $\Gamma$ ).

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									D	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤃	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	𐌉	𐌉	𐌉	𐌉	d	d	d		

The fourth letter developed from North Semitic *daleth* and Greek *delta*. The capital (d) corresponds generally to the North Semitic *daleth* and Greek delta ( $\Delta$ ), arriving at its present form in Latin. The miniscule (d) corresponds closely to the Greek *delta* ( $\delta$ ), acquiring its present form from the Roman cursive *d*.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									E	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤄	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	𐌊	𐌊	𐌊	𐌊	e	e	e		

The fifth letter developed from North Semitic *he*. Originally a consonant with an *h-sound*, it was transformed into a vowel in Greek, although in Classical Greek and in certain local alphabets North Semitic *heth* (see H) was used to represent *eta* (long e). The miniscule (e) was derived from the capital (e) through the uncial form.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									F	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤅	Ϝ	Ϝ	Ϝ	Ϝ	Ϝ	Ϝ	𐌋	𐌋	𐌋	𐌋	f	f	f		

The sixth letter developed from the North Semitic *waw*, denoted by a symbol resembling Y. A variant (see U) was adopted by the Greeks as *digamma*, which had a *w-like* sound, but later dropped out of use as an alphabetic character, surviving only as a numeral. In early Latin, the *f-sound* was represented by *wh*; but the *h* was soon discontinued. The miniscule (f) is a scribal variant of the capital.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							G	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
SEE LETTER C			C	Ɑ	G	G	Ɔ	G	Œ	g	g	g	

The G developed from North Semitic *ghimel* and Greek gamma (see C). The Truscans, having no meaningful distinction between the *g*-sound and the *k*-sound in the language, used this symbol for both. When the distinction again had to be made in Latin, the small stroke was added to the lower curve of the C. The miniscule (g) is a scribal variant of the capital.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							H	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
𐤇	Ϟ	Ϟ	H	Ɑ	H	H	Ɑ	Ɑ	h	h	h	h	

H is traceable to North Semitic origins. In that early alphabet its pronunciation was similar to that of Scottish *ch*. In Greek, the symbol came to represent *eta* (written H). In English, this letter represents an aspirate sound, but in most Indo-European languages it has seldom been used in this way.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							I	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
𐤇	ι	ι	I	Ɑ	I	I	l	J	ı	i	i	i	

The ninth letter, I, developed from North Semitic consonant *yodh* (y) which become the Greek vowel *iota* (ι). Originally, it was much like a Z in form, acquiring its present shape in Greek. The miniscule (i) was first written with a dot in early Medieval Latin to distinguish it from the *n* (written η) and the *m* (written μ), and other letters written with similar vertical strokes.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							J	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
SEE LETTER I				Ɑ	J	J	SEE I	J	SEE I	ı	j	j	

The 10th letter developed as a variant form of I in Medieval Latin, and, except for the preference for the J as an initial letters, the two were used interchangeably, both serving to represent the vowel (i) and the consonant (y). Later, through specialization, it came to be distinguished as a separator sign, acquiring its present phonetic value under the influence of French.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							K	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
↓	κ	K	K	Ɑ	K	K	—	K	—	k	k	k	

K corresponds to the North Semitic *kalph* and Greek *kappa* (K). The Romans, adopting the alphabet from the Etruscans, at first had three symbols, C, K, and Q, for the *k*-sound. K fell into disuse. It did not appear in English until after the Norman conquest, when, under Norman French influence, it came into use in place of C to distinguish the pronunciation of words of native origin. Such words as *cying* became *king*; *cene*, *keen*; *synn*, *kin*; *snif*, *knife*; and *cnotta*, *knot*. Under other influences, often though loan words, the symbol entered into more general use.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							L	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
Ɑ	λ	λ	L	Ɑ	L	L	l	L	l	l	l	l	

Letter 12 of the alphabet derives from North Semitic *lamed*, with its shape exhibiting consistent development. It assumed its present form as a right angle (L) in Classical Latin. The miniscule (l) is a cursive variant of the capital.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE							M	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN				ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN		
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN
𐤍	μ	μ	M	Ɑ	M	M	~	Ɑ	m	m	m	m	

The M is the thirteenth letter of the alphabet and developed from North Semitic *mem*, its form changing little through Greek *mu* (μ) to modern capital and miniscule.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									N	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULE					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤍	ν	Ν	ν	Ɱ	N	N	Ɱ	N	n	n	n	n	n	n	

The N developed from the North Semitic *nun*, and has preserved its original form, with little change, through Greek *nu* (ν). It has usually followed M, and during most of its history, paralleling that letter, it retained its similarity to it.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									O	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤀	ο	ο	ο	Ɱ	O	O	Ɱ	O	o	o	o	o	o	o	

O descended from the Greek *omicron* (ο). In form, the letter was adopted in Greek from the North Semitic consonant ayin, North Semitic having no vowel symbols. Since its appearance in Greek, this sign has changed little throughout history.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									P	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤐	π	π	π	Ɱ	P	P	Ɱ	P	p	p	p	p	p	p	

From the North Semitic letter *pe*, which means “mouth”, its form has no obvious connection with its meaning. Its further history can be traced through Etruscan, Greek pi (π) and Latin but except in the case of the last, its present form bears little if any resemblance to its earlier forms. The miniscule (p) is derived from the capital by lengthening the descender.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									Q	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤒	ϰ	ϰ	ϰ	Ɱ	Q	Q	Ɱ	Q	q	q	q	q	q	q	

Developed in its present form from Latin, its equivalent in Greek was *kappa* (κ) which became obsolete except as a numeral. In North Semitic it was *goph*, a guttural k-like sound. When adopted from the Etruscans, the Latin alphabet contained three symbols for the k-sound (see C, K), and the use of Q was limited to representing the sound (k) when it followed in spelling by U, a practice maintained today with only rare exceptions. In Old English the Q does not appear, its sound being written CE or later KW.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									R	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤓	ρ	ρ	ρ	Ɱ	R	R	Ɱ	R	r	r	r	r	r	r	

The eighteenth letter developed from North Semitic. The Greek *rho* (ρ, Ρ) is a later version of the same symbol. Its form in Latin (R) derives from a variant used in a local Greek script which added the short stroke at the right.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									S	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤔	σ	σ	σ	Ɱ	S	S	Ɱ	S	s	s	s	s	s	s	

The nineteenth letter of the English alphabet developed from North Semitic where its form was similar to the modern W. Descending through Greek *sigma* (σ), which itself exhibited some variety of use (ς), it acquired its present form in Latin.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE									T	DEVELOPMENT OF MINUSCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE	ROMAN UNCIAL		CAROL. MIN.	MODERN				
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN		
𐤕	τ	τ	τ	Ɱ	T	T	Ɱ	T	t	t	t	t	t	t	

The twentieth letter of the English alphabet developed from the North Semitic *taw*. The symbol has hardly changed at all in its long history, and its miniscule (t) is only a slight variant of the capital.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE								U	DEVELOPMENT OF MINISCULE					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE		ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN			
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN	
𐤅	ϛ	Ϛ	V	V	U	U	U	U	u	u	u	u	u	u

U developed as a transformation of North Semitic *waw* into Greek *upsilon* (υ), (see F, W.) In Etruscan, the *u*-sound was signified by V, and Classical Latin monumental writing later used the V for both U and V. U and V were used interchangeably for both sounds in the early Middle Ages, with U appearing in the monumental writing and Ve in the manuscripts. Their separation did not crystallize until after the Middle Ages.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE								V	DEVELOPMENT OF MINISCULES					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE		ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN			
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN	
SEE LETTER U		V	V	V	Ɔ	V	V	—	Ɔ	—	Ɔ	v	v	v

The twenty-second letter of the English alphabet originated in Etruscan, where it signified the *u*-sound. The use of V for the *v*-sound dates from the end of the Middle Ages.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE								W	DEVELOPMENT OF MINISCULE					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE		ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN			
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN	
SEE LETTERS F AND U					Ɔ	W	W	—	Ɔ	—	Ɔ	w	w	w

The twenty-third letter of the English alphabet, called “double-u,” was created about the 11th century AD to distinguish the two U's from a U and a V. (See U, V.) The *w*-sound was represented in North Semitic by *waw*, which in the Greek alphabet became *digamma* and *upsilon* (υ), (see F.)

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE								X	DEVELOPMENT OF MINISCULE					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE		ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN			
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN	
—	—	—	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	x	x

X originated in form with North Semitic *taw*, where it signified the *t*-sound. It was adopted by Classical Greek for the *kh*-sound (as in Scottish *loch*) and in some local scripts for the *ks*-sound. IN the latter representation it passed from Latin into English and has been maintained, despite its redundancy, for the letter combination KS.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE								Y	DEVELOPMENT OF MINISCULE					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETRUS	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE		ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN			
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN	
SEE LETTER U			Y	Ɔ	Y	Y	Ɔ	Ɔ	—	Ɔ	y	y	y	y

Y, as a consonant, developed from the North Semitic *yodh*, whence it was adopted into Greek as a vowel (*iota*) and became English I. (See I.) The Y-form goes back to Greek Y, a variant of North Semitic *waw*. (See U, V, W.) After the conquest of Greece by the Romans in the 1st century BC, it was used in Latin for transliterating the Greek *y*-sound (as in French *pure*, German *uber*) in such words as *zephyros*.

DEVELOPMENT OF MAJUSCULE								Z	DEVELOPMENT OF MINISCULE					
NORTH SEMETIC	GREEK	ETR	LATIN	MODERN			ROMAN CURSIVE		ROMAN UNCIAL	CAROL. MIN.	MODERN			
				GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN					GOTHIC	ITALIC	ROMAN	
I	I	I	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	—	Ɔ	z	z	z	z

The twenty-sixth letter of the English alphabet developed from the seventh letter of the North Semitic alphabet, *zayin*. Adopted into Greek as *zewta* (ζ), it passed on to the Etruscans. It does not appear in Latin until after the conquest of Greece by the Romans in the 1st century BC, when it was used to transliterate the Greek *z*-sound in words like *zenith* and *zephyros*. Placed at the end of the alphabet together with Greek-derived Y, it passed to all West-European alphabets in this position.