

Europeana Learning Scenario

(Non-formal educators)

Title

What's in an A? Alphabetic diversity throughout Europe.

Author(s)

Kyra Nijenhuis, Willemijn Zwart

Abstract

This learning scenario makes primary school children (age 10-12 years old) familiar with different alphabets that are used throughout Europe.

Using several digital heritage sources from the Europeana platform, they become familiar with the Greek, Latin, Cyrillic and Hungarian alphabets. They will learn the difference between the alphabets by recognizing, matching and writing (calligraphing) the letters.

Hereby, cognitive (recognizing, matching) skills are combined with creativity (calligraphy and water coloring), to develop a positive attitude towards multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe.

Because digital heritage sources from Europeana are used in recognizing and 'translating' the letters from different alphabets, the participants become familiar with using quality sources from Europeana.

Keywords

Alphabet, multilingualism, Greek, Cyrillic, Hungarian.

Table of summary

<i>Table of summary</i>	
Subject	History, Language, Art
Topic	The existence of different alphabets used in Europe
Age of participants	10-12 years old, Primary school pre-prep.
Suitable setting for implementation	This learning scenario can be implemented both in a non-formal context (within the museum) and in the classroom.
Activity time	90 minutes
Online educational material	Bibliography (online or in print) Print file puzzle game (in print) Step-by-step plan (online or in print)



	Image on https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrillisch_schrift
Offline educational material	Print file puzzle game (in print) Step-by-step plan (in print) Bibliography (online or in print) Paper sheets A3 Watercolor paint Paintbrushes Indian ink Dip pen (crowning pen, for writing with Indian ink) iPads or laptops (not necessary)
Europeana resources used	Fotografie Reproduktion: Entstehung der Schrift - KIM.bl, CC BY-SA 4.0. Το ελληνικό αλφάβητο. – Ίδρυμα Αικατερίνης Λασκαρίδη, CC BY-NC 4.0 Τα γράμματα του παλαιού ουγγρικού αλφαβήτου. - Ίδρυμα Αικατερίνης Λασκαρίδη, CC BY-NC 4.0 'Alphabet' letter in de vorm van mensfiguren - Deventer Museums, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Licenses

Attribution CC BY. This license lets others distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. This is the most accommodating of licenses offered. Recommended for maximum dissemination and use of licensed materials.

Integration into the curriculum

The current primary school curriculum (age 4-12) in the Netherlands ([Kerndoelen](#)) contains key learning goal “Knowledge of the aim and use of written language”. For age group 10-12 a comparative approach of linguistic appearance here is suitable, according to the learning track for linguistic knowledge ([Leerlijn Taal](#)).

At the moment, a new primary school curriculum (age 4-12) is being developed, called [Curriculum.nu](#). Here, comparative linguistic knowledge and multilingualism gets even more attention, in key tasks number 2 (language awareness) and 3 (multilingualism) within the key learning area [Language](#).

Aim of the educational activity

The children become familiar with the development of different alphabets in Europe. They can compare, recognize and match letters from four different alphabets and choose their favorite letter for a creative task.

Outcome of the educational activity

The outcome will be a wall full of letters from different alphabets in the classroom. Every pupil has their own letter calligraphed and made into a work of art.

Key competences

Literacy competence:

- Knowledge: Students develop knowledge of different alphabetical systems throughout time in Europe. They get familiar with some letters from Greek, Hungarian, Latin and Cyrillic alphabets. Students know different alphabets use different letters for the same sounds (phonemes).
- Skills: Individuals develop writing skills in one or more letters in other alphabets than the alphabet of their home country. Individuals develop the skill to use heritage sources to look up letters and compare these letters in different writings.
- Attitudes: Individuals develop a positive attitude towards different alphabets and a growth mindset in recognising and writing these letters: they can learn new letters with ease and joy!

Multilingual competence:

- Knowledge: Individuals develop knowledge of the fact that different alphabets are used throughout Europe and that different languages use different letters (alphabets).
- Skills: individuals develop the skill to recognise texts in different languages in the most essential building block: the individual letter. They can recognise several languages based on the letters used (Greek, Hungarian).
- Attitude: A positive attitude towards diversity in alphabets used, curiosity towards new, unknown letters.

Cultural Awareness and expression competence:

- Knowledge: Individuals gain knowledge of the different alphabetic cultures throughout Europe and regional differences in which alphabets connect or divide populations across national borders.
- Skills: Individuals develop the skill to make their own creative expression based upon one of the letters they come across in the lesson.
- Attitude: a positive attitude towards their own creativity and the ability to express their own opinion through an artistic product.

Activities

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
Introduction	The educator introduces the development of writing throughout Europe, starting with the old runes, by showing the following source:	5-10 minutes

	<p>Fotografie Reproduktion: Entstehung der Schrift - KIM.bl, CC BY-SA 4.0.</p> <p>With this source one can tell the participants about the old runes and how the alphabet evolves from counting and making numeric notes, to small drawings that develop from concrete symbols (symbolizing a certain animal, for example an ox) to more abstract symbols, symbolizing a syllable or phoneme.</p>	
<p>Activity 1</p>	<p>After the introduction the participants will move on with a puzzle game.</p> <p>Print file puzzle game (in print)</p> <p>The educator needs to cut out the puzzle cards before playing.</p> <p>There are 10 letters from 4 different kinds of alphabets made in a puzzle. The alphabets that are in the puzzle are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greek - Latin - Hungarian (past) - Cyrillic <p>The task for the participants is to compare and match the letters from the different alphabets, using the digital heritage sources from Europeana. The participants can find these sources by using the Bibliography (online or in print), which refers to the following sources (by QR-code and URL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greek (Το ελληνικό αλφάβητο. – Ίδρυμα Αικατερίνης Λασκαρίδη, CC BY-NC 4.0), - Latin ('Alphabet' letter in de vorm van mensfiguren - Deventer Museums, CC BY-SA 3.0.) - Hungarian (Τα γράμματα του παλαιού ουγγρικού αλφαβήτου. - Ίδρυμα Αικατερίνης Λασκαρίδη, CC BY-NC 4.0) - Cyrillic (https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrillisch_schrift). <p>Side note: The Hungarian alphabet isn't the current alphabet in Hungary. It was used before the alphabet that is common in Hungary nowadays.</p> <p>The guest educator shows these sources as well to discuss the outcome of the puzzle with the entire group (or in smaller groups).</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>

Activity 2	<p>Now the participants have learned other alphabets are used in other parts of Europe, in which different symbols (letters) respond the same sounds (phonemes).</p> <p>To visualize the different letters and the correspondent phonemes, every participant chooses their favorite letter from any of the alphabets introduced and develops their own work of art with this letter, by using a combination of techniques:</p> <p>First, they write (calligraph) the letter using Indian ink. This is water resistant ink, so once the ink is dry, one can use water color paint without ruining the letter.</p> <p>Next, they'll think of one or more objects that start with the chosen phoneme (the sound the letter symbolizes). Using water color paint, this object is painted 'behind' the letter in black ink.</p> <p>To explain this process to the participants, this visual Step-by-step plan (online or in print) can become helpful.</p> <p>Participants present their letter and painting to the other participants at the end of the lesson. All the works of art are presented and put on the wall, so participants have a visual memory of the different letters throughout Europe.</p>	60 minutes

Participants' feedback

The presentation of the works of art by the participants at the end of activity 2 is a way of formative testing: do the participants explain the letters and represented phonemes (sounds) accordingly? Do they understand different letters from different alphabets can represent (symbolize) the same sounds?

A future development of this learning scenario could be a formative quiz and/or a feedback form to gather participants' learning outcomes and participants' feedback.

Educator's remarks

The learning scenario is implemented in a class of 14 pupils age 10-12, by a guest educator. This lesson took place at March 22 '22, at primary school St. Bonifacius in the Dutch village St. Isidorushoeve. The teacher of the class had very useful feedback to improve the learning scenario. The puzzle game was quite complex, with 16 letters per alphabet. We chose to make the puzzle a little easier by selecting 10 very common letters from each of the alphabets.

Also, the introduction of the topic in class turned out to be rather complex. Therefore, we chose to make a more straightforward introduction based upon runes, counting and the development from concrete symbols (symbolizing objects) towards more abstract symbols (symbolizing sounds, a.k.a. phonemes).

A third change is to use the digital heritage sources from Europeana in solving the puzzle, not only afterwards, so the participants become more familiar with digital heritage sources along the way and actually need to use the sources themselves to solve the puzzle.

About the Europeana DSI-4 project

[Europeana](#) is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

[European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 32 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet's task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.

