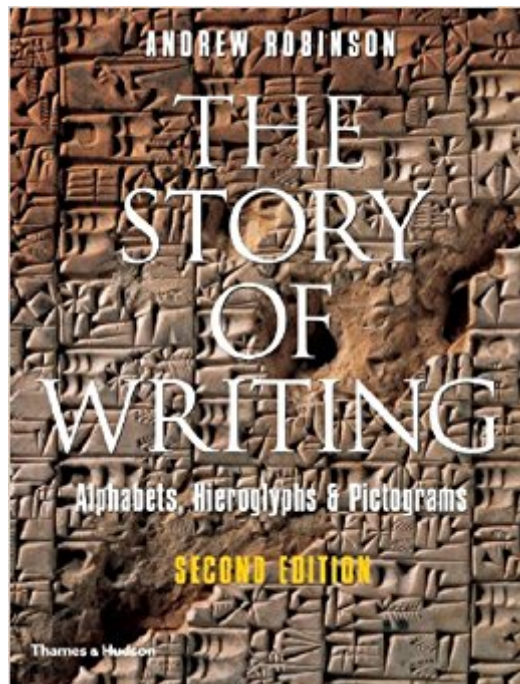




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# The Story Of Writing: Alphabets, Hieroglyphs & Pictograms



## Synopsis

A survey of the world's major scripts, studied through sight, sound and symbol Andrew Robinson explains the interconnection between sound, symbol, and script in a succinct and absorbing text. He discusses each of the major writing systems in turn, from cuneiform and Egyptian and Mayan hieroglyphs to alphabets and the scripts of China and Japan, as well as topics such as the Cherokee "alphabet" and the writing of runes. Full coverage is given to the history of decipherment, and a provocative chapter devoted to undeciphered scripts challenges the reader: can these codes ever be broken? In this revised edition, the author reveals the latest discoveries to have an impact on our knowledge of the history of writing, including the Tabula Cortonensis showing Etruscan symbols and a third millennium BC seal from Turkmenistan that could solve the mystery of how Chinese writing evolved. He also discusses how the digital revolution has not, despite gloomy predictions, spelled doom for the printed book. In addition, the table of Maya glyphs has been revised so that they are up-to-date with current research.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Writing is among the greatest inventions in human history, perhaps the greatest invention, since it made history possible." Thus Robinson, literary editor of the (London) Times Higher Education Supplement, introduces his scholarly and fascinating study of alphabets, hieroglyphics and pictograms. He says he is not presenting the full history of writing, focusing instead on "an account of the scripts used in the major civilizations of the ancient world, of the major scripts we use today, and of the underlying principles that unite the two." But a great deal of the history is here, together

with more than 350 splendidly helpful (and viewable) illustrations: cuneiform, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Mayan glyphs, Chinese and Japanese writing, and scripts based on alphabets. Robinson is also interested in the current movement toward increased communication through logograms, or pictographic symbols. Could they be expanded into a universal writing system that would transcend language differences? Robinson thinks not, asserting that whereas logograms can be helpful, "full writing is based on speech." The book is a paperback edition of a hardback published in 1995.

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Delightful to read...difficult to put down once started. -- Communication Arts  
Rich in images...well-informed and assured. -- Scientific American

While Andrew Robinson's THE STORY OF WRITING may be beneath scholars and serious students of scripts and writing systems, for the rest of us it is a fine introduction. Following an excellent introductory overview of writing in general, there are thirteen chapters. Representative ones are "Reading the Rosetta Stone

It happens on many levels and in language you will get over-lap and redundancy. How anyone can slight the conclusions of informed students like the writer after reading the same exact history of the shunning of hobbyists for the "learned professors" only approach detailed here is nuts. It is readily apparent that cultures in contact with one another exchanged ideas on everything which is why these "keys" or translation guides exist in the first place that have allowed us to reconstruct dead languages and writing systems. To say such ingenious systems were only logograms or only syllabic or pictograms seems quite ridiculous given the vast array of cultural similarities in archaeology. This book is awesome. I am using it to further my understanding of ancient mythology and thought it would be dull and centered largely on language itself but to the contrary it gives an excellent historical perspective that has allowed me to confirm L.A. Waddell's findings on the connection between Thor, Induru and the Turans which he states directly without providing a reference to what he was looking at or how he drew that conclusion! Hittite "Tarhun" for instance as their "storm god" is identical to Turan, Duran, Induru, Tor, Thor (Sumerian Dur-An) "heavenly god" giving you perspective on the Trojans as Hittites which when coupled with the Linear B translation chart on pg. 118 then compared with the Hittite cuneiform block back on pg 91 shows you that Hittite logogrammic cuneiform is actually rudimentary Minoan Linear B, the Linear B being a hieratic (in cursive) form of Hittite. Now I got that from reading this book and never would have made this

connection without Mr. Robinson's easy-to-understand explanations. Sure enough a quick internet search just now on this shows that current scholastic study on the subject is proving my "leaping" judgment true. These leaps of inspiration are why we are able to figure out dead languages and ancient history in the first place. This book is a fantastic primer for beginners.

This book gives the basic history of the deciphering of a number of ancient scripts. It has some nice photos and illustrations. It is not a dictionary or an encyclopedia by any means. It covered the mainstream ancient scripts such as Cuneform and Egyptian, but barely touched on the more ancient, esoteric and mysterious scripts such as ,Neolithic pictographic, Sumerian pictographic, ancient Greek linear A, and the Indus valley scripts. I would have enjoyed it more if it push the envelope a little more.

Very well written book and has lots of graphics to show what the text is talking about. Great book!  
Would highly recommend!

I really like this book. The first chapters were very good. Unfortunately, the last chapters on Chinese and Japanese writing where written hastily, I think they could have elaborated more on Spencerian or cursive lettering from the 19th and 20th century. This is non-existing and disappointing.

Beautiful book. I first saw it at the Metropolitan museum and bought it as a gift then I ordered it for myself.

very popular in our school

I have always been fascinated with writing systems. This led me to learn to read 8 different languages before I realized it was the writing that interested me much more than the languages themselves. That is why I am split in my perception of this book. It does an outstanding job of introducing many concepts in a good manner and provides wonderful examples but it is very shallow. That means, I suppose, that it is likely to appeal to more people who want just an "executive summary" instead of being faced with the prospect of actually learning the scripts. In providing the introduction, this book does a magnificent job and whets the appetite for more.

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