

NATO phonetic alphabet

The standard phonetic alphabet used in amateur radio, aviation, military, and maritime communications.

The international standard phonetic alphabet for clear voice communication over radio.

The alphabet

LETTER	NATO PHONETIC	PRONUNCIATION
A	Alfa	AL-FAH
B	Bravo	BRAH-VOH
C	Charlie	CHAR-LEE
D	Delta	DELL-TAH
E	Echo	ECK-OH
F	Foxtrot	FOKS-TROT
G	Golf	GOLF
H	Hotel	HOH-TEL
I	India	IN-DEE-AH
J	Juliett	JEW-LEE-ETT
K	Kilo	KEY-LOH
L	Lima	LEE-MAH
M	Mike	MIKE
N	November	NO-VEM-BER
O	Oscar	OSS-CAR
P	Papa	PAH-PAH
Q	Quebec	KEH-BECK
R	Romeo	ROW-ME-OH
S	Sierra	SEE-AIR-RAH
T	Tango	TANG-GO
U	Uniform	YOU-NEE-FORM
V	Victor	VIK-TAH
W	Whiskey	WISS-KEY
X	X-ray	ECKS-RAY
Y	Yankee	YANG-KEY
Z	Zulu	ZOO-LOO

Numbers

NUMBER	SPOKEN AS
0	ZE-RO
1	WUN
2	TOO
3	TREE
4	FOW-ER
5	FIFE
6	SIX
7	SEV-EN
8	AIT
9	NIN-ER

Why it matters

The NATO phonetic alphabet exists because letters sound similar over radio: B/D/E/G/P/T/V are easily confused, M/N are nearly identical on a noisy channel, and S/F are indistinguishable with static. Using the phonetic alphabet eliminates ambiguity.

Amateur radio operators use the phonetic alphabet for callsign exchanges, signal reports, and any information where letter accuracy matters. It is the same alphabet used by aviation, military, maritime, and emergency services worldwide.

Usage

- Callsigns:** "W1AW" is spoken "Whiskey One Alfa Whiskey"
- Signal reports:** "Your signal is five nine" means readability 5 (clear), strength 9 (very strong)
- Spell anything:** "Your name is spelled: Mike India Kilo Echo"