

(J) Marshallese Phonoloji (1/3) [15 Points]

Marshallese is an Austronesian language spoken by over 50,000 people, primarily in the Marshall Islands, where it is the official language alongside English. One notable feature of Marshallese is its vowels: It seems to have many different vowel sounds, but linguists have argued that all of these vowels can be analyzed as variants of just 4 vowels. One linguist, Mark Hale, chose to use emojis rather than more conventional symbols to represent these vowels, as they behave differently from vowels in most languages.

On the next page is a table with some Marshallese words written in standard Marshallese spelling, followed by underlying forms that have been hypothesized by linguists, as well as the words' pronunciations and English translations. (An *underlying form* is how a word is stored in a speaker's mind. This form is then modified to yield the pronunciation.) Study this table and then answer the questions below.

J1. Fill in the blank cells in the table below. If you don't want to draw the emojis, you can use **S** instead of the soccer ball (⚽), **C** instead of the coffee mug (☕), **Y** instead of the yin-yang symbol (☯), and **P** instead of the phone (☎). If you do choose to draw the emojis, make sure it's totally clear which one you're drawing!

Spelling	Underlying Form	Pronunciation	English translation
bar	/p ^ɣ ⚽r ^ɣ /	(a)	'rock (object)'
lābōl	(b)	[l ^ɣ ɑæb ^ɣ l ^ɣ]	'level (tool)'
jook	(c)	[t ^ɔ :k]	'shy'
kewa	/k☯jw⚽w/	(d)	'peer'
eor	/j☎r ^w /	(e)	'bleached'

Pronunciation and spelling notes:

- In the spellings, note that l and l are different letters (the second has a small hook under it).
- In the underlying forms and pronunciations, note that [ɯ] and [u] are different symbols.
- [ŋ] is pronounced like the *ng* in *sing*. [j] is pronounced like the *y* in *yellow*. [ɯ] is pronounced somewhat like the *y* in *yellow*, but it is formed farther back in the mouth.
- A superscript [i] means that the preceding sound is pronounced with the tongue raised toward the roof of the mouth (palatalized). A superscript [ɣ] means that the preceding sound is pronounced with the back of the tongue raised (velarized). A superscript [w] means that the preceding sound is pronounced with the lips rounded (labialized).
- [ɒ, ɑ, ɤ, æ, ɯ, ʌ, ɛ] are all vowel sounds. The symbol [:] after a vowel indicates that the vowel is long.
- We will not tell you how the emojis are pronounced, nor how the letters in Marshallese spelling are pronounced—that is for you to figure out!



(J) Marshallese Phonoloji (2/3)

Marshallese examples:

Spelling	Underlying Form	Pronunciation	English translation
doñ	/rʲ ɲʷ/	[rʲeɔŋʷ]	'hip'
kwarkor	/kʷ rʲkʷ ɲʲrʲ/	[kʷɔarʲgʷoʲrʲ]	'to bandage'
make	/mʲ kʲ ɲʲj/	[mʲæagʲe]	'alone'
nuknuk	/nʲ kʲnʲ kʲʷ/	[nʲiugʷnʲiukʷ]	'clothing'
ɭor	/lʲ rʷ/	[lʲaɔrʷ]	'black sea anemone'
kutak	/kʷ tʲk/	[kʷuɔdʲak]	'to scratch'
kuuj	/k w tʲ/	[ku:tʲ]	'cat'
mō	/mʲ ɔ/	[mʲɛɬ]	'stretchy'
eakeak	/j kʲkʲ/	[jæagʲæak]	'ghost'
raj	/rʲ tʲ/	[rʲaætʲ]	'whale'
keek	/k ɲʲk/	[ke:k]	'cake'
tōmmeɭok	/tʲ mʲmʲ lʲ kʷ/	[tʲʌemʲmʲɛɬʲaɔkʷ]	'to smack one's lips'
piq	/pʲ j w/	[pʲiæɔ]	'chilly'
rom	/rʷ mʲ/	[rʷoemʲ]	'wink'
bɔjet	/pʲ w tʲ tʲ/	[pʲaɔzʲɛɬʲ]	'faucet'
toɭ	/tʲ lʷ/	[tʲʌɔlʷ]	'mountain'
Majeɭ	/mʲ ɔ tʲ lʲ/	[mʲaʲzʲɛɬʲ]	'Marshall Islands'
pānuk	/pʲ nʲ kʲʷ/	[pʲænʲiukʷ]	'to pile up'
pilim	/pʲ lʲ mʲ/	[pʲilʲiɔmʲ]	'film'
puwaɭ	/pʲ w lʲ/	[pʲiuwɔɬʲ]	'coward'
wa	/w ɔ/	[wɔa]	'canoe'
peɭɭok	/pʲ lʲ kʲʷ/	[pʲɛɬʲʲaɔkʷ]	'ajar'
jouj	/tʲ w tʲ/	[tʲeouitʲ]	'kindhearted'
Qkwōj	/w kʲ tʲ/	[ɔgʷɔɛtʲ]	'August'
bokɭap	/pʲ kʲʲ pʲ/	[pʲʲogʷlʲaæpʲ]	'smallpox'
nebar	/nʲ pʲ rʲ/	[nʲɛɬʲarʲ]	'praise'
eɔtōk	/j w tʲ k/	[jæɔzʲɛɬʲk]	'shipwrecked'
naaj	/nʲ ɔ tʲ/	[nʲa:tʲ]	'will be'



(J) Marshallese Phonoloji (3/3)

J2. Explain how the pronunciation of a Marshallese word can be determined from its spelling and/or underlying form.

J3. The sound /ɯ/ is never pronounced in any Marshallese word. Therefore, it might seem strange that this sound is included in descriptions of the language (such as in the underlying forms on the previous pages). Explain why linguists believe that /ɯ/ is present in the language even though it is never directly observed.

