

Letter of the alphabet for 'the' invented

11th July, 2013



An Australian businessman has invented a new, 27th, letter for the English alphabet. It is a symbol to replace the word "the". It looks like a combination of a capital "T" and a lower case "h" (Th). However, the "new"

letter looks the same as a letter from the Serbian language. Paul Mathis believes many people will like his idea. It is already available for download on Apple's iTunes. Mathis is hoping mobile phone, tablet and computer makers will add the letter to their keyboards. He invested \$35,000 in his app, but so far Apple has shown little interest. He told the "Sydney Morning Herald": "Is this going to change the world? Not really. But is it something that might be useful for people? I think so."

Mr Mathis believes the new character is useful because it replaces the most common word in the English language - "the". He said it will save people time when they type because they only need to use one key instead of the three needed for each letter of the word "the". He argued that other words have their own character. He pointed out that the word "and" has its own symbol - the ampersand (&) and that is only the fifth most common word. Mathis also says his new symbol will help "in the texting space" such as Twitter or texts where there is a limited number of characters. Not everyone agrees with Mathis. Computer experts don't think manufacturers will change their keyboards or operating systems.

Sources: Sydney Morning Herald / Herald Sun

Writing

Adding the letter "Th" to the English alphabet is a great idea. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

businessman / letter / alphabet / download / iTunes / invested / keyboards / useful / common words / language / symbol / the word "and" / Twitter / operating systems

True / False

- The English alphabet now has 27 letters. T / F
- The new letter looks like no other letter or symbol ever created before. T / F
- You can download the new letter on the Apple iTunes store. T / F
- The inventor said the new letter was not going to change the world. T / F
- The inventor said his idea would save people a lot of money. T / F
- The guy said "the" needs a special character because "and" has one. T / F
- The new character will not be very useful on Twitter. T / F
- It is unlikely that computer makers will add the letter to their software. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. invented | a. tight |
| 2. symbol | b. on sale |
| 3. combination | c. button |
| 4. available | d. letter |
| 5. invested | e. showed |
| 6. replaces | f. put money into |
| 7. key | g. developed |
| 8. pointed out | h. makers |
| 9. limited | i. mixture |
| 10. manufacturers | j. exchanges |

Discussion – Student A

- Do you have any problems with the word "the"?
- Is the word "the" totally necessary?
- What changes would you like to make to your alphabet?
- Is Mr Mathis right that "the" should have a special letter because "and" has one?
- Where on the keyboard would you put a new "Th" character?
- How helpful would "Th" be for texting or on Twitter?
- Would changing keyboards and operating systems be a problem?
- What questions would you like to ask Mr Mathis?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. a new, 27th, letter for | a. for download |
| 2. It is a symbol to replace | b. number of characters |
| 3. It is already available | c. little interest |
| 4. He invested | d. word in the English language |
| 5. Apple has shown | e. the word "the" |
| 6. the most common | f. - the ampersand (&) |
| 7. other words have | g. \$35,000 in his app |
| 8. "and" has its own symbol | h. operating systems |
| 9. there is a limited | i. their own character |
| 10. change their keyboards or | j. the English alphabet |

Discussion – Student B

- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'alphabet'?
- Are 26 letters in English enough?
- Are there any letters in English you love or hate?
- What do you think of Mr Mathis' "T" symbol?
- What are the differences between your alphabet and the English one?
- Do you have any problems with the English alphabet?
- Why do you think Apple isn't so interested in the app?
- Should Serbians be angry Mr Mathis has used a letter similar to a letter of their alphabet?

Spelling

- a slomby to replace the word "the"
- It looks like a ninocobmtia
- a capital "T" and a orwle case "h"
- already lliebvaaa for download
- He ienevtsd \$35,000 in his app
- Apple has shown little itenters
- the new acearcthr is useful
- the most onocmm word
- the English aegunalg
- there is a itidlme number
- stucarnfuaemr will change
- keyboards or tigneoarp systems

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. f
6. j	7. c	8. e	9. a	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Inventor

You think your idea is great. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell anyone who disagrees that new technology like texting means we need new letters. Tell them it is time the English alphabet changed and became more 21st-century.

Role B – Computer maker boss

You think the idea of a 27th letter of the English alphabet is a bad one. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell the others the new letter would save almost no time. Tell them the inventor is just trying to be a little famous. The English alphabet is hundreds of years old. It does not need to change.

Role C – Texter

You love the idea of "the" becoming a letter of the alphabet. Tell the others three reasons why. You know it will save you a lot of time. You always make mistakes typing "the" so the new letter will be great. You also tweet a lot and need the extra space.

Role D – Serbia government

You are angry someone wants to use the "T" symbol from your language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell the inventor (s)he needs to make an original letter and not steal from the Serbian language. You will sue the inventor if (s)he continues saying (s)he invented the letter " T".

Speaking - Words

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------|-----------------|
| • the | • useful |
| • new | • common |
| • symbol | • texts |
| • idea | • manufacturers |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.