

How to write a Linear B tablet

The Linear B writing system includes two kinds of signs: syllabograms (signs standing for syllables, used to spell out words) and ideogram (signs representing objects or goods being counted).

Syllabograms

a	𐀀	e	𐀁	i	𐀂	o	𐀃	u	𐀄	a ₂	𐀅 (ha)	a ₃	𐀆 (ai)	au	𐀇
da	𐀈	de	𐀉	di	𐀊	do	𐀋	du	𐀌	dwe	𐀍	dwo	𐀎		
ja	𐀏	je	𐀐			jo	𐀑								
ka	𐀒	ke	𐀓	ki	𐀔	ko	𐀕	ku	𐀖						
ma	𐀗	me	𐀘	mi	𐀙	mo	𐀚	mu	𐀛						
na	𐀜	ne	𐀝	ni	𐀞	no	𐀟	nu	𐀠	nwa	𐀡				
pa	𐀣	pe	𐀤	pi	𐀥	po	𐀦	pu	𐀧	pu ₂	𐀨 (p ^h u)	pte	𐀩		
qa	𐀪	qe	𐀫	qi	𐀬	qo	𐀭								
ra	𐀮	re	𐀯	ri	𐀰	ro	𐀱	ru	𐀲	ra ₂	𐀳 (rya, lya)	ro ₂	𐀴 (ryo, lyo)	ra ₃	𐀵 (rai, lai)
sa	𐀷	se	𐀸	si	𐀹	so	𐀺	su	𐀻						
ta	𐀿	te	𐁀	ti	𐁁	to	𐁂	tu	𐁃	ta ₂	𐁄 (tya)	twe	𐁅	two	𐁆
wa	𐁇	we	𐁈	wi	𐁉	wo	𐁊								
za	𐁋	ze	𐁌			zo	𐁍								

Undeciphered signs

*18	𐀫	*19	𐀰	*22	𐀱	*34	𐀴	*47	𐀸	*49	𐀹	*56	𐁀
*63	𐁁	*64	𐁂	*65	𐁃	*79	𐁄	*82	𐁅	*83	𐁆	*86	𐁇

NB: lots of these signs stand for more than one sound-value!

j = *y*; *k* = *k*, *kh*, *g*; *p* = *p*, *ph*, *b*; *q* = *kw*, *kwh*, *gw*; *r* = *r*, *l*; *t* = *t*, *th*

In spelling words, final consonants are not written; two adjacent consonants are either written with a 'dummy' vowel or the first one is not written; *-i* after another vowel is not always written; *h* is not usually written.

E.g. *ti-ri-po-de* = *tripodes* 'tripods'; *da-da-re-jo-de* = *Daidaleyonde* 'to the sanctuary of Daedalus'; *pu₂-ke-qi-ri* = *Phugegwri* (name of an official at Pylos)

Try writing your name in Linear B! If you can't find a sign corresponding to a particular sound in your name, choose one that sounds similar in some way (e.g. there are no signs for *f*, so use *p*- = *ph*).

Selected ideograms

♀ = woman

♂ = man

🐑 = sheep

🐎 = horse

🫒 = olive oil

🌾 = wheat

🧵 = textile

🏺 = oil jar

🛡 = bronze

🗡 = sword

🛡🐎 = chariot

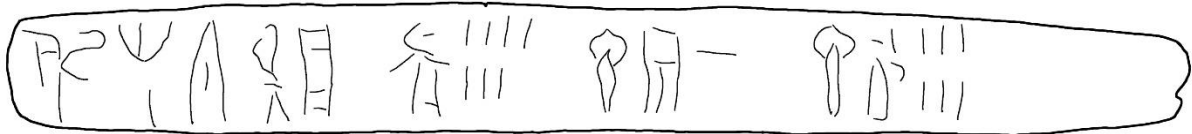
Numerals

1 = 1 10 = 10 100 = 100 1000 = 1000 e.g. 1000 100 10 = 1358

Try writing an entry with your name and a number of whatever objects you like. A lot of ideograms originated as pictures of objects, while others are much more abstract. How would you create a new ideogram for a modern object that you own?

Selected tablets to copy

Pylos Aa 62: work-group of women and children



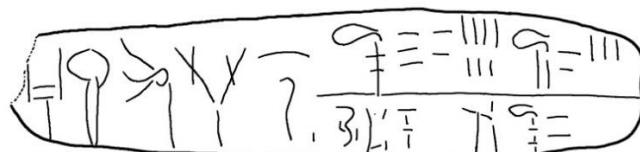
me-re-ti-ri-ja WOMAN 7 ko-wa 10 ko-wo 6
 'flour-grinders: 7 women, 10 girls, 6 boys'

Knossos Sc 230: issue of armour and a chariot



o-pi-ri-mi-ni-jo ARMOUR 1 CHARIOT 1 HORSE ZE 1
 'Opilimnios (has received) 1 suit of armour, 1 chariot, and 1 pair of horses'

Knossos De 1112: a flock of sheep



.A SHEEP^m 57 SHEEP^f 23

.B a-ko-mo-ni-jo , ku-ta-to o SHEEP^m 20

'Akmonios at *ku-ta-to* (has) 57 male sheep and 23 female sheep. Missing: 20 male sheep'