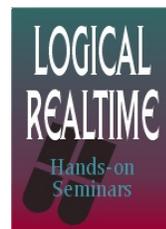


Attach those vowels

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What's the first thing you did to upgrade your writing skills for realtime? Differentiate between *no* and *know*? Most of us tackle homonyms because we treat them as the most visible component of non-realtime translations.

But wait. It's probably not the best place to start. Before you begin a grand-scale consideration of several thousand homonyms, you need to first make some simple choices on how to finger spell. Yes, you heard right.

If you're not already proficient at alphabets, then I'm not suggesting that it's the way to start your realtime writing quest. However, deciding how you'll attach

vowels before and after words is the same as finger spelling, and this is a highly important first decision. Why? It paves the road for you. It means you won't be forced into a hodge-podge of conflict resolutions that make realtime writing slow and memory intensive.

Consonants, too, need solutions, but for now, decide at least on a method for the vowels. It means that you no longer need to remember — or dictionary define — such words as *abloom* and over 400 other *a-* words with conflict potential. While this article couldn't begin to list all vowel-led words (*Fashionable Realtime* does), here are just a few in the front-attaching vowel group to illustrate the point:

<u>a~</u>	<u>e~</u>	<u>i~</u>	<u>o~</u>	<u>u~</u>	<u>y~</u>
aboil	educe	icon	obit	uni	yegg
alure	elude	ideal	omen	unite	Yvette
atoxic	eversion	ion	opal	util	Yvonne

I threw in the word *yegg*, meaning a safecracker, to demonstrate the versatility of a front-attaching *y-* stroke with the others. It's impossible to estimate how many words are implicated in this discussion, but let me guess that many, many of them are globalled incorrectly into CAT dictionaries around the world. And when you least expect it, they disappoint

you by translating something other than what you intended.

Now let's look at the end-attaching vowels. The technique of attaching a lone vowel as the final stroke of a word has become more widespread as writers shift away from including vowels with their prior consonants. This works so well for creating

perfectly spelled outlines and where it creates outlines that simply can't mistranslate (such as *grilla*, redefined as intended: *gorilla*). Depending on your theory, many words are okay with the included consonant, but all such words should be scrutinized for revision.

Wary writers realize that dictionaries have hundreds of these defined with inherent conflicts, especially for those who phrase *about a, are a, can a, did a, had a, have a, if a, in a, is a, will a*, and who also write TA, THA, and YA as briefs. Cultural briefs may exist for some writers, such as PA for Pennsylvania. *Pennsylvania Pennsylvania* might then be globally defined as *papa*. These work-arounds are unnecessary. In

<u>~a</u>	<u>~e(e)</u>	<u>~i</u>	<u>~o</u>	<u>~u</u>	<u>~y</u>
era	educatee	anti	chromo	fond<u>u</u>	baby
mena	oblige<u>e</u>	deli	fatso	impromptu	gory
tuba	vaccine<u>e</u>	rooti	pesto	in situ	rosy

The three *-e* words above were selected because they work perfectly with an attaching *-e* stroke, but in fact there are very few and not worth worrying about. Far more important is a distinctive *-ee* stroke for more than 600 words that do not build automatically with a lone *-e*, so while you're at it, devise an *~ee* stroke that isn't easily confused with your vowel spelling alphabets.

Just when you think you're having fun with this, it's important that you also consider how you'll deal with the *~ed*, *~ing*, and *~s* endings. Many people simply add them to the same outlines for each of the rear-attaching vowels.

One of the commonest questions from mature writers who are new to vowel attachment is: "Do I only attach vowels

fact PAP/-a (attached vowel) requires the same number of strokes and no dictionary entry. Words with these built-in conflicts should be sought out and eliminated when you feel ready to recognize them at speed. Any that don't auto-translate should be replaced with new outlines that include *-a*, especially those whose segments have no untranslates, such as *ban Dan in a* when you've innocently stroked *bandanna*.

Thousands of conflicts are curable by back-attaching vowels. For now, decide only on those important to you, but in time you'll likely attach the *-a* and the others to everything possible without a trace of hesitation.

when a perfectly spelled word is created?" The answer is simple: ABSOLUTELY NOT. Attach them anywhere and everywhere. Good software will correct most misspellings, and this is a feature you should be very clear about when negotiating the purchase of a software product. Thus *tubea* becomes *tuba* and *skinny* becomes *skinny*, but don't expect miracles with *canoe* or other anomalously spelled words you choose to write with attached vowels. These need to be globally defined as before, but their totality will never exceed the number of old globals now eligible for extermination.

So why learn attaching vowels before anything else? Because now you can resolve *yew~you~ewe* and other common homonyms without stealing from your future repertoire of matching strokes for

finger spelling. When you solve the dilemma of *he/e~/-e/-~ee* and others like it in the early stages of upgrading, you know that you'll never be returning to make changes when you eventually come head to head with alphabets.

The document "Choose your vowels" from *Fashionable Realtime for Steno Writers* suggests methods for encoding vowels or other characters for alphabetical attachment.

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