

PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING

These pages aim to **answer all the commonest and most important questions** about the spelling systems proposed for Quechua and Aymara, especially about the pan-Andean alphabet and the official ‘unified’ spelling.

We look at these question as organised into **four main sections**, which are all brought together in this printable version of our pages.

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Spelling: Sounds and Letters

There has been a great deal of confusion about how best to spell Quechua and Aymara. There are two main reasons for this, because there are two big and popular confusions about what spelling a language is really about.

The very first and most important thing to realise about writing a language is simple: **a letter is not a sound**. People constantly say things like “a language should be written how it sounds”, or “Spanish is pronounced as it is spelt”. These are very common beliefs, but taken literally, they are actually completely wrong. As we shall soon see, no language in the world is written *exactly* how it sounds; in fact trying to do this is *never* practical or helpful.

So, a letter is not a sound. Don't believe us? Well try listening to this letter: *c*... Try again: *c*...

Well, did you hear anything? Of course not. Because like any letter, *c* is simply a symbol, a ‘drawing’, it is not a sound. Now you may have imagined or ‘read’ a sound in your head, but in fact different readers will have thought of different sounds: some of you will have thought of the [s] sound, the first one in *centre*; others will have thought of the [k] sound, the first one in *car*. But whichever you might have ‘thought’ you heard, in fact you actually *heard* nothing. All you did was interpret a symbol, and this one same symbol can be interpreted as more than one different sound. This is the key to what spelling and reading are: interpreting symbols as representing sounds.

So let's get this one thing straight right from the start: **letters and spelling are not sounds**. Spelling is actually about representing sounds **indirectly**. It is really about everyone just agreeing on certain **rules** for how to read, rules that tell you which symbols (‘letters’) are read or pronounced as which sounds. You know plenty of rules for Spanish, like the reading rule that same letter <ç> or <ç> represents different sounds depending on the other letters around it, and also depending on the region you come from. We'll see more about what these rules are like a little later.

Spelling, Regional Differences, and Solidarity

So the second big confusion to avoid is this: **spelling a language is not about exact pronunciation**. It simply cannot be, because people from different regions have slightly *different pronunciations*, but they all *spell the same*. Think about it with Spanish. If all people who spoke Spanish around the world tried to spell “exactly how they pronounce”, we would end up with a complete mess. Some people would write things like *yámame*, *llámame*, *shámame*, *dyámame*, and so on, depending on where they came from. And if many people wrote exactly how they pronounced, they would not write *cinco cervezas*. Why not *sinko serbesas*? But no, if we all do this and try to “spell exactly how we pronounce” in our own region, then the only result is that everybody, in all regions, loses out. Spelling chaos for everyone. This is

why everybody across the world makes an effort to learn to spell Spanish almost identically wherever they come from, and however they pronounce it. The same goes for English all across the world. And it should be true as far as possible in Quechua and Aymara too.

As you will already be realising then, spelling is not simply about “spelling every sound with the same letter all the time”. In fact spelling is *never* like this, because that approach is actually far too simplistic and it just doesn’t work well at all.

For any language, spelling needs to be cleverer than that, and it needs some rules. Above all, these rules have to be faithful to the specific, individual nature of each single language. The spelling and reading rules that work for one language will *not* necessarily work well for a different language, especially if those languages have sound systems that are very different to each other: like Spanish and Quechua (or Aymara).

What spelling is really about, then, is finding a spelling system that is at least *fairly close* to the pronunciation, close enough to be easy to use. But importantly it also has to be a unified system, *i.e.* one that has been deliberately designed bearing in mind the different pronunciations that are used in many different regions, in order to find the spelling system that provides the best compromise for people from all regions, so that they can all be **consistent** with each other in always spelling the same word the same way, even if they pronounce it slightly differently depending on where exactly they come from.

[Spelling Quechua and Aymara: What Went Wrong?](#)

Everyone knows that there have been big problems in working out a spelling system that everyone agrees on for the Andean languages. There are two main reasons. First, most people in the Andes have learnt to read and write Spanish first, and don’t realise that if we are to respect Quechua and Aymara as so different to Spanish, then they need a completely different spelling system of their own. So please, forget your Spanish habits, and don’t immediately ‘complain’ that it’s ‘too complicated’ if for Quechua or Aymara you’re asked to consider a different spelling rule to the one you learned in school for *Spanish*. Quechua or Aymara are different languages, so of course they *need* different spelling rules; so please be ready and open to new spelling rules if that is what your native language calls for!

The second main problem has been regionalism and a lack of solidarity. Many people have either not realised that others who speak their language in different areas do not always pronounce words the same, or they have just insisted that ‘only’ their own region pronounces all words ‘properly’. As we have seen clearly on our [Origins and Diversity of Quechua](#) page, though, no region can claim that they alone speak the uniquely ‘correct’ Quechua, it’s simply wrong and arrogant to think so. So to start with, the first important thing is for people to realise how pronunciations differ from region to region. We hope that *Sounds of the Andean Languages* will help in precisely this.

What has happened up to now is that sadly, in most areas people insist that they only accept to spell Quechua or Aymara as *they* want to, according exactly to the local pronunciations in their region only. The inevitable result has been incoherence and a big, big mess that has held back the Andean languages for decades.

The only solution is for people to understand and respect the differences, and come to some **agreement** on the best common way of spelling, so that everyone can spell words in the same way, whatever their regional pronunciations. **And yes, this means you too, whatever region you come from! You are asked to be ready to make some little sacrifices to achieve the solution and the spelling that works best for the largest number of people, for the sake of solidarity in Quechua and Aymara.** To find out exactly how you can help in this – which is very easy! – read on...

Sounds and Symbols

Back to the sounds *vs.* letters problem. There's actually no particularly simple way, then, to represent *sounds* on *paper*. To help in this, though, specialists in linguistics have devised some extra symbols like č, ê, š, í, λ, χ, and so on, which you may have already seen in our word comparison tables. Here we write these special sound symbols ('phonetic symbols') always [**like this**], inside [brackets] and in **green ink**. If you want to hear recordings of exactly which sound each symbol represents, we have a useful table of them all if you [click here](#) – but then please be patient for a minute while the sound files load in your computer.

Those symbols are for *sounds*, then. When writing, though, in practice there's actually no point even trying to write all the different sounds that you get in different regional accents. When you write Spanish you always spell <cerveza> and <llámame>, wherever you come from, and whatever exact sounds you pronounce in your particular region. So special phonetic symbols are not to be used for everyday practical spelling, but *only* if for some special purposes we want to show more exactly how a word is pronounced in one particular region, so [serbesa] and [λ ámame] for the pronunciation in Cuzco, for example, but [θ erbeθ a] or [yámame] for most of Spain.

Notice this important difference then: spellings are not sounds, so we use normal **purple** letters inside <little arrows> for <spellings>, and **green** symbols inside brackets [] only for very precise [**pronunciations**].

About the Alphabet

The alphabet used by most languages in the world was originally designed for Latin, a language spoken two thousand years by the Romans. What this means is that this alphabet was actually first designed for the *sound system* of Latin – *i.e.* for the particular sounds that Latin used to make differences

in meaning. Things have changed so much in two thousand years and in different languages that this old Latin alphabet is not actually perfect for other, modern languages, such as Spanish or English. This is why there are now complications in Spanish spellings, like all of these:

- You spell <j> in <jerga> but <g> in <gemelos>, different symbols when the sound is exactly the same.
- Sometimes it's the other way around, the same letter for two different sounds. The letter <c>, for example, is used twice in the word <cocer>, but for two completely different sounds, first [k] and then [s], *i.e.* [koser]. (In fact in Spain it's different again, [k] and then [θ].)
- You spell <cervezas> with three different letters <c>, <z> and <s>, all for the same [s] sound in most accents in Latin America (but not in Spain, of course).
- You use two different letters and <v> in <botar> and <votar>, but most people now pronounce these with the same sound.

And so on. This is why some people have problems in spelling Spanish according to the accepted norms, because they many not match pronunciations in their particular region, but of course everyone still tries to learn those norms, because everyone everywhere else is using them. In any case, for spelling Quechua or Aymara it is best to avoid these problems altogether, by following these much simpler rules instead:

- Never use the letter <c> on its own at all, nor the complicated <qui> and <que>. Just use <k> and <s> as appropriate. Only ever use <c> within the sequence <ch>.
- It's much better also to abandon the strange Spanish spellings <hu> and <gu>, as in <huaca> or <guaca>, and use just <w> like most other languages: <waka>.

Every Language Needs Its Own Spelling System

As you'll be realising by now, **every language has its own, different sound system**. It is because the Spanish sound system is now so different to the Latin one that the original Latin letters are not necessarily well suited to Spanish any more. The Quechua and Aymara sound systems are much more different still, different from both Latin *and* Spanish. So neither the Latin alphabet, nor the Spanish way of using it, are very suitable for the Andean languages.

This is why Quechua and Aymara need a different way of writing, and different reading rules, from Spanish: there is simply no way to find a useful, practical alphabet for the Andean languages if we do not respect that these languages are different, and so for some sounds and letters we will have to use spelling rules that are very different from the ones you may be used to for Spanish. At first sight it might look simplest to write them like Spanish, but in practice it **never** works well.

Just think about it: *every* language in the world uses its *own* spelling system, designed for that language. If you've ever tried learning any other language, like English, French, German, Italian, or any other, one of the first things you have to learn is that each of them use letters differently, and many letters stand for completely different sounds to the ones you're used to in Spanish. The same letter <j> is pronounced [χ] in Spain, [h] in Latin America, [ž] in French (*je*), [dž] in English (*jet*), and [y] in German (*ja*)!

Just like those languages, Quechua and Aymara too need their own spelling systems. If you really want to respect Quechua and Aymara, this means accepting that just because you may have learnt and practiced a lot in writing and reading 'the language of the conquistadors', the way that Spanish is written is **by no means** "the only way" to spell any language! You will need a little open-mindedness, and you should be ready to learn a new spelling system more appropriate for Quechua, for example, precisely because Quechua is not Spanish!

Take just one example. Aymara, and the Quechua of Cuzco, Puno and Bolivia, all have six sounds [k], [k^h], [k'], [q], [q^h] and [q'], and the differences between all of these are very important because they can make for different words with different meanings. Latin had only one of these six sounds ([k]), so Latin's alphabet simply does not have enough different letters for the Quechua and Aymara sounds. Spanish does not have these sounds either. This is why to spell Aymara, and the southern varieties of Quechua, of course you need to spell things **differently to Spanish**: in this case you need to use the symbols <h> and <'>, in combination with the letters [k] and [q].

So Quechua has its own sound system, with its own pronunciation rules, different to Spanish; so too does Aymara. This means that the best way to spell the Andean languages is not the same as the best way to spell Spanish! Of course, we can keep to the same letters and sounds wherever possible, such as with <m> or <l> or even <ll>. But we certainly can't do this in all cases, because the languages are just too different. Let's respect that, even if it means a different spelling system to Spanish.

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2: Three Vowels or Five?

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Spelling and Reading Rules

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Reading and Pronunciation Rules for Quechua <i> and <u>

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Doesn't Quechua Have [e] and [o] Sounds Too?

The biggest question of all is of course the one about whether Quechua and Aymara should be spelt either independently, with three vowels; or copying Spanish, with five vowels.

We've already seen that with consonants like <kh>, <k'>, <qh> and so on, it just doesn't work to write Quechua like Spanish. And while it may not be so obvious at first, exactly the same goes for vowels, as we'll soon see.

First though, let's get one thing straight. **Yes, most** (but not all!) **varieties of the Andean languages do have the *sounds* [e] and [o]**, the same ones that *in Spanish* would normally be spelt with the symbols <e> and <o>. Of course Quechua and Aymara have these sounds, there is no question about this. It is an absolute rule of these languages in most regions, not least Cuzco and Bolivia, that they *do* have these sounds in certain places in words, especially near a <q>. (Ecuador Quechua, in fact, is an exception because it no longer has the Original Quechua <q>, so it does not have [e] and [o] sounds either, in its own native words.)

Quechua *does* have the *sounds* [e] and [o], then. Everyone knows this, especially linguists, it's their job! They're not stupid, after all. So if they have proposed to spell with just three vowel *letters*, then it is precisely because there is actually a very good reason. Certainly, at first it can seem very odd to spell only with three vowel letters, but really it seems odd only if you're too used to spelling only in Spanish.

If you approach this question with an open mind, however, you will soon see and understand aspects about your Quechua or Aymara that you didn't even realise before. In fact for many people, when they finally understand about this, it is a bit like 'seeing the light' or being 'converted': many people switch from spelling with five vowels to three, and soon realise how well it works, and how many problems it solves at a stroke. And once they have, they never go back to spelling with five vowels! So if you're still in doubt, read on!

So, the question is not about whether the [e] and [o] *sounds* exist in Quechua, of course they do. It's a completely different issue. It's only about whether it is **practical or impractical** *in Quechua* to spell that sound difference with different letters.

Now of course *in Spanish* it is absolutely essential to use different letters for these different sounds. The reasons are simple:

- *In Spanish*, the difference between the sounds [e] and [i] is very important, because it **changes the meaning of a word** completely: <mesa> is not <misa>. You must write them with different letters, because if you didn't, nobody could tell which word you mean, <mesa> or <misa>.
- What's more, this means that *in Spanish* the use of <i> and <e> is **completely constant in different words**: <mesa> always has <e>, never <i>; while <misa> always has <i>, never <e>. There are certainly no regional accents in which some people pronounce <mesa> like <misa>, nor <misa> like <mesa>.
- This means that **everyone can agree** on how to spell each sound in every word, with either <i> or <e>, there is never any confusion and disagreement between people about this in Spanish.

[e] and [i] Sounds: How is Quechua Different to Spanish?

With Quechua and Aymara, though, things might seem a bit similar at first, but if you think about it you soon see that actually things are completely different. Quechua and Aymara do have the sounds [e] and [o], yes, but they *use them in very different ways* to Spanish.

We've just seen above three crucial things about these sounds in Spanish: **none** of these things apply to [e] and [o] in Quechua or Aymara. (From now on for simplicity we'll talk about Quechua only, though all of this applies to Aymara too.)

- *In Quechua*, the difference between the sounds [e] and [i] is **never really important**, because it **never changes the meaning of a word**. Some people pronounce a word more like [pur*iq*], some pronounce it more like [pur*eq*], but it's still the same word *traveller*, just spoken with slightly different accents. The difference between [e] and [i] just **does not matter so much** in Quechua. Yes, one of these pronunciations may sound a little strange to you, or from a different region, but whatever, it still cannot be any other word and meaning in Quechua than *traveller*.
- Because this difference between [e] and [i] is not important in Quechua, this also means that speakers do **not** have to be particularly **consistent** in exactly how they pronounce them. Some people can say [pur*iq*], others more [pur*eq*]. And some words that normally have an [i] sound sometimes change it into [e] in some cases. So you say [was*i*] with [i], but if you add <-qa> it can change to sound a bit more like [was*eqa*].
- What this means that **different speakers have different opinions** on which words to spell with <i> and which with <e>, and however much they try, they won't necessarily be able to agree.

[e] and [i] Sounds: Spanish Letters Cause Problems in Quechua!

So, these sounds are used in very different ways in Spanish and Quechua. What happens, then, if you try to spell Quechua or Aymara with the same five vowel letters as in Spanish? Well the result is that as soon as you try to, **big problems** very soon appear.

So while at first it might look easier to use both <e> and <i> letters in Quechua, it actually causes endless complications if you try. For a start, why write <was*i*> with <i> but ☒ <waseq*a*> with <e>, when it is **exactly the same word**, *house*? Why write <mich*i*ni> with <i> but ☒ <micheq*a* kani> with <e>?

When people try to spell Quechua words with both <e> and <i>, they always end up **disagreeing** about how to write the same word. In fact often the same person ends up confused and **writes the same word in different ways!** Even dictionaries do this if they try to use <e>!

- For the word *shepherd*, for example, some people want to write <mich*i*q>, others ☒ <micheq*a*>. But is the second vowel in this word an [i] sound, or an [e] sound? Well the problem is, **the sound is really somewhere between the two**, but we have no letter for this. And anyway, Quechua-speakers can say the word **both** ways, without any big problem.
- The same goes for [u] and [o] too. If we try to use both letters, we end up with an incoherent mess again. What about the word for *new*: some people want to write <musuq>, others ☒ <musoq>, others ☒ <mosoq>... Oh dear...

There is only one coherent solution that works: everybody sticks to just one letter, and always *writes* that. But in each different region you can all have **your own different reading and pronouncing rules**. So if your region's rule is to read and pronounce this as [musuq] or as [musoq] or as [mosoq], go ahead! But in writing, please, use only the *letters* <u> and <i>: <musuq>, and <michiq>. When you read them, of course, you pronounce them with whatever [i], [e], [u] and [o] *sounds* you want in your home region.

[e] and [i] Sounds: More Problems with Spanish Letters

There's yet another problem caused by trying to use the letters <e> and <o> in Quechua too. Now if you know Spanish, then at least *for you* it is easy to tell and make the difference between the [o] and [e] sounds, because this one is a very important difference in Spanish. You will have noticed, though, that people who speak Quechua as their mother tongue and who do *not* know much Spanish can have big problems using the [o] and [e] sounds like in Spanish. Why? It's all the same reason: precisely because the differences between [i] and [e], and between [u] and [o], **are not truly important** in the language they are most used to, Quechua.

This is even more proof that Quechua itself does not use these sounds like Spanish, and that the difference between them does not matter so much in Quechua. Obviously then, you **do not need** to

spell this difference in *Quechua*; indeed it actually makes it *harder* for these people to write their own native language with five vowel letters. Why? Just because Spanish happens to use them? That is not a good reason for deciding whether to use them in a very different language like Quechua...

If you're a Spanish-speaker, how would you feel if people tried to force you to spell your language using letters like English <th>, just because English uses them? English has the sound [d] in words like <day>, and the quite different sound [ð] in <they>, always pronounced differently. Spanish too uses these two different sounds – and they really are different, if you listen hard enough – [d] at the start and [ð] in the middle of a word like <dedo> *finger*. Both languages have both different sounds, but while in English this difference is very important and makes different words, in Spanish it is simply not very important. So with the same two sounds, in English you do spell them with different letters <d> and <th>, but in Spanish you do not, and just spell both different sounds as <d>. Obviously, because, nobody wants to force Spanish-speakers to use certain spellings just because English needs them.

It is just the same for Quechua and Spanish. We should not force Quechua, and particularly people who speak only Quechua, to use certain spellings just because Spanish uses them. Different language, different spelling! In Quechua, you do not need to use different letters for [i] and [e], even if Spanish does. And if you don't need to, it's always much better not to even try – this is the experience of spelling in all languages in the world. (It's what's called the 'phonological spelling' principle.) For Quechua this means that it is much better just to write <i> for both, and in any case you'll know automatically exactly how to pronounce them in any word.

But Don't All Languages Use Five Vowels?

Simple answer: no! The Greek alphabet, for example, needs six: $\alpha, \epsilon, \iota, \omicron, \upsilon, \omega$. Russian even has ten: $a, e, \text{з}, o, y, \text{ы}, \text{э}, \text{ю}, \text{я}$. Other languages use the five Latin letters, but then make more than five by adding other symbols too: German has the five Latin vowels plus also $\ddot{a}, \ddot{o}, \ddot{u}$, Swedish has \ddot{o} and \ddot{a} , Portuguese has \tilde{a}, \hat{e} , and so on. In fact very, very few languages have exactly five vowel symbols like Spanish and Latin!

But isn't it still really unusual to write a language with just three vowel letters? Well actually, again the answer is no. Quite on the contrary, three vowel letters only is not strange at all either! Hundreds of languages around the world need only three distinctive vowel letters, among them many native languages of North and South America. Indeed it is well known in linguistics that the most fundamental, 'purest' vowel system has just <i>, <u> and <a>.

Let's have a look at one very important language that has exactly the same situation as Quechua, not only with the vowels but also with [k] and [q]: Arabic. The Arabs themselves, in their own script, have always spelt the difference between [k] and [q], but not the difference between [i] and [e] sounds. The only people who cannot spell properly the Arabic difference between [k] and [q], and who do write the difference between [u] and [o] when they should not, are non-Arabs ... who try to write Arabic words

in their own, different alphabets inappropriate for Arabic. Think of the Muslim holy book: it is only non-Arabs like the Spanish or English who spell this *Corán*, with a <c> and an <o>. In their own script, the Arabs themselves use the *same* letter for both [u] and [o]. And when they do write in Latin letters, they spell this word <Qur'an> with <q> not <k>, and with <u> not <o>.

In Arabic, <qu> is always written <qu>, and pronounced [qo], exactly the same reading rule as Quechua needs. This is not because anyone wants to write Arabic like Quechua, or Quechua like Arabic! It just shows, though, that **it is not at all unusual** to write languages with just three vowel letters, even if they have five or more vowel *sounds*. Not only is it not unusual, it is actually often **the only good solution**, just as it is in Arabic.

It's important here not to get confused by examples like *singer* <takiq>, pronounced [takiq], as opposed to *collector/storer* <taqiq>, pronounced [taqeq]. In Quechua the important difference in sound between these words is *not* the one between the *vowels*. You can tell this because the second one in particular can be pronounced with various different sounds, slightly more like [i] or slightly more like [e], but whichever you use the word still means the same thing, and it is still different from the first one. In fact even if you pronounce the vowels almost the same in both words, there's still an important difference between them...

For Quechua the real important difference between these words is between the different *consonants*: <k> in *singer*, <takiq>, but <q> in *storer* <taqiq>. This difference is very important in Quechua because it makes for different words, as it does here. So it is always important to remember to spell <k> and <q> properly like this. So long as you do, though, it will always be perfectly clear which word is which, even if you always spell with <i>: <takiq> with <k> is a *singer*, but <taqiq> with <q> is a *collector*.

There are plenty of languages in the world, then, that have had similar questions to Quechua when people were trying to work out the best spelling system to use for that language. And in every case the best solution is very well known: all languages around the world use a type of spelling called 'phonemic spelling'. This means using spelling appropriate for the *sound system* (the 'phonemics') of that language, and not of any other language. Quechua should be spelt according to the sound system of Quechua, not that of Spanish. For Quechua, this means a written alphabet with three vowels, not five.

Here is not the place to go into the technical linguistic details, but one point is very important: **no language in the world spells all different sounds with different letters**. This may seem surprising at first, but in fact it is true, if you listen to sounds *exactly*. In all the world's languages, different sounds are spelt with different letters **only if the difference between them is important in that language for distinguishing different words**. Each language needs its own spelling rules.

Spelling and Reading Rules

So the best spelling system for Quechua is not necessarily the same as the best one for Spanish. Spanish does not need to distinguish in the spelling between [q] and [k], but it does need to spell the difference between [i] and [e]. Quechua is the reverse: it does need to spell the difference between [q] and [k], but not the difference between [i] and [e].

Spelling a language is *not* about the *exact* pronunciation, then. This is also because exact *pronunciations* are different from one region to another, as with our example word *llámame*. Nonetheless, even if people may pronounce a bit differently from one region to the next, it is clearly much better if everyone, whatever region they come from, at least spells the same word in the same way (just as everyone does for Spanish).

But how can it work to have a single spelling for everyone, if pronunciations are different from region to region? Well, it's simple. It works because all spelling systems are based on certain **rules for spelling and reading**. Here are two examples from Spanish.

- If you're from the Andes, when you see the spelling <ll> you know the rule that you, in your region, pronounce it as 'elle', symbolised [λ]. But if you're from Lima, you know the rule that that in your region you pronounce it just as [y]. And if you're from Buenos Aires, you know that in your region you pronounce it [š]. And so on.
- Another example. When you see the spelling <z>, in Latin America you know the reading rule in your region is that this is normally pronounced [s]. But if you're from Spain, you have a different rule that this is read as [θ]. This is why people in Latin America pronounce <casar> and <cazar> the same, but in Spain they pronounce them differently.

So even if the pronunciation is different in different regions, you don't use different spellings. It's simple: you all use the same spelling: what changes from region to region is not the letter, it's just the reading and pronunciation rules that are special to each region's own pronunciation.

As you can see for the two examples above, all regions in the world that speak Spanish use their own spelling and reading rules. It is this that makes it possible for all of them to use the same spellings, even though they respect and keep their own regional pronunciations. The unified spelling system for Quechua has been explicitly designed to make this possible for Quechua too.

Indeed this is how any unified spelling system works, for any language: **everyone uses the same spelling, but in different regions they use different reading and pronouncing rules**. You already accept this for Spanish. All that you are asked to do for Quechua is exactly the same. What it means to learn the unified spelling is to learn your region's reading and pronunciation rules. That's it! You've already done it for Spanish, and the Quechua ones are a lot simpler. So please try!

So What's the Spelling Rule for Quechua <i> and <u>?

So, there are certain **spelling and reading rules** in Quechua and Aymara that are different to the spelling and reading rules of Spanish. One of these is the famous one that in the Andean languages it is not necessary to use the *letters* <e> and <o>. So what is the rule exactly? Well, it is very, very simple:

- Never write ☒ <e>, always write <i> instead.
- Never write ☒ <o>, always write <u> instead.

Why this rule? Because it is the only simple system that can avoid people writing the same word in many different ways, even in the same region, and it also allows us to unify the spelling across all different regions. At a stroke this rule solves all the disagreements and hesitation about how to spell a word, <pur*i*q> or ☒ <pur*e*q>? The rule is simple: always spell it with <i>, so <pur*i*q>, just as you also spell <pur*i*ni> *I travel*.

Reading and Pronunciation Rules for Quechua <i> and <u>

There is one very important thing to remember about any spelling rule like this. The rule is only about the **spelling**, everyone continues to **pronounce** each word as they are used to in their own region! If you prefer to pronounce <pur*i*q> more like [i*q*] or more like [e*q*], just do! If you prefer [p*u*re*q*], then you have a *reading and pronunciation rule* in your region that says the spelling <i*q*> is actually pronounced more like [e*q*]. That's it. Very simple, all you have to do is to get used to the rule, and anyone who already uses three vowels for Quechua will tell you, it's actually pretty easy!

These spelling and reading rules for <i> and <u> work in **almost all Quechua regions**, including Ecuador, Bolivia, and most of Peru, including **Cuzco**, Puno, Ayacucho, and most Central and Northern areas. Only in some regions in Central Peru, especially parts of **Ancash**, is the rule a bit more complicated, because you should also spell <ay> instead of long <ee>, and <aw> instead of <oo>. This way you can write and read words like <kay> *this* exactly the same as in all other regions, even though in Ancash you may read and pronounce it [ke:]. And if you think this is a strange rule, think again: in English, the word <day> is spelt in this same way all over the world, even though most regions pronounce it [dey], some [de:], and only a few now still say [day].

What About Spelling Spanish Loanwords in Quechua?

These spelling and reading rules for <i> and <u> apply to all **native Quechua words**: never spell any of them with <e> or <o>. Only if a word has been **borrowed from Spanish** do you have the option to spell it with the original <e> and <o> letters. Alternatively, you can make it more like Quechua if you like, which is often better: Spanish <en *carro*> → Quechua <karr*u*pi>.

This choice is left a bit optional, because in any language there is always a bit of a question about how to spell borrowed words. Look at what Spanish itself does when it borrows words from other languages. If you want, you can spell borrowed words like in native Spanish spelling, like <quilómetro> with <qu>, or you can use the spelling of the original language that the word came from, and write <kilómetro> with <k>. In fact, with a word like <whisky> most people keep the foreign spelling, even if by Spanish native spelling rules you would have to spell it <huisqui> or <güisqui>...

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3: How Can You Learn Official Spelling?

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[Isn't It Strange to Write with Only Three Vowels?](#)

As we've seen, it's actually quite normal for many languages in the world to spell with only three vowels. Now of course it may still seem strange to you to do this, but really that is probably only because you're used to only ever writing and reading in Spanish, English, or other European languages.

What this means is that you can be sure of one thing if you try out the official three-vowel alphabet for Quechua. The more you use it and get used to it, the more you will realise just what your Quechua language is really like, when you look at it in its own, independent terms, not always through the distorting mirror of the Spanish spelling that you're used to. Everyone who changes to use the three-vowel alphabet fairly soon starts realising that it is this one that represents **the real nature of Quechua**. Eventually you will realise how well it works for Quechua. And in the end you will realise that you yourself only ever wanted to write Quechua with five vowels in the first place purely because of the influence of your Spanish.

Tip 1: How to Start Reading Texts in the Official Alphabet

But how to start using the official three-vowel alphabet? Well, just give it a try. To start off with, just try **reading** some texts written in just three vowels. Just try to **recognise** each of the words, and then once you've recognised which word it is, just **pronounce each word just as you always did**, even if the spelling looks a bit odd at first.

If you speak Southern Quechua, here are a few words to try. Here to help you we've put little dots under the <i> letters that you might pronounce more like [e], and under the <u> letters that you may pronounce as [o]: <pirqa>, <wasıqa>, <michıq>, <unquy>, <quri>. Remember, once you've recognised these words, just pronounce them as you always do.

You'll soon get completely used to this reflex: the letters <qu> are pronounced [qo], and <qi> is pronounced [qe]. That's it. We'll explain another easy way to practice below.

You will soon pick this up as an automatic reading reflex, just like the rules you learnt for reading Spanish at school. And eventually you will see how easy and right it feels to write Quechua this way, and not with the five vowels of Spanish. Give it a try and you won't regret it!

You will soon see how spellings like <pirqa>, <michıq> and <quri> can actually look absolutely normal, and indeed the only correct way to spell these word in true Quechua. It does not take long, and you soon see how much more practical this system is, much more true to Quechua, and much more free from confusing Spanish interference.

But What About Spellings Like <ırqi> or <Qusqu>?

Now of course **at first** the strangest thing is to see a word that you know is pronounced [erqe] spelt like <ırqi>. Similarly, think of the name of the famous city which in Spanish is spelt Cusco or Cuzco. In Quechua this is pronounced [qosqo], as everyone who lives there knows. But since [qo] is actually spelt <qu> in Quechua, it does work fine even to *spell* this word <Qusqu>. After all, nobody's going to pronounce it any other way than [qosqo]. If it helps you get used to it, think of it for now with our dots, as <Qusqu>, and the same for <ırqi>.

Indeed, let's get one thing straight once and for all: nobody, especially nobody who uses spelling with three vowels, is proposing that anyone should pronounce this city's name with [u] sounds. **Nobody is suggesting changing anyone's pronunciation, it's only about spelling!** Always pronounce words like you always did.

Yes, when you first look at it, spelling <ırqi> or <Qusqu> can look weird. But the only reason is because you're trying to read it as if it were Spanish, with your Spanish reading rules. The official three-vowel

Quechua alphabet **always** works with a **reading rule**, that <qu> is automatically sounds like [qo] in Quechua. Yes, in every word, including <Qusqu>, read as [qosqo].

Where Did the Quechua Spelling Rules Come From?

But where did this spelling rule come from? Isn't it a weird rule that some 'scientist linguist' invented?

No! In fact, no person 'invented' it at all. Quechua did. It is just a **natural sound rule of Quechua itself**. Don't believe us? Well just try saying all of the sounds below naturally, and you will see how in the last one you *automatically must* change the vowel to [o] if you want to pronounce it in natural Quechua.

<pu> <tu> <chu> <ku> <qu>

Now try the same with this sequence:

<pi> <ti> <chi> <ki> <qi>

Again, notice how automatically, because of the <q>, you have to change the pronunciation of the vowel in the last one. It is a sound law of Quechua that [qu] or [qi] is impossible in Quechua, it's automatically [qo] and [qe].

This was not invented by anyone, it's just natural for easier pronunciation. The same as in Spanish you 'naturally' find it easier to say the last sound in <sed>, for example, not as a 'proper' [d] sound, but more like a breathy [θ] sound.

Now Spanish doesn't have the Quechua sound rule about [q], because of course it doesn't have the sound [q] at all, only [k]. It's true that Spanish uses the letter <q>, but only in some complicated spellings where you use <que> and <qui> but <ca>, <co> and <cu>, though whatever the spelling, the sound is always the same [k] in every case.

To read Quechua you need to ignore your Spanish reading rules and reflexes about <q>, which simply do not work for Quechua. Instead all you have to do is get used to Quechua's single most important automatic reading and pronunciation rule:

- The spelling <qu> sounds like [qo]. Often, <uq> sounds like [oq] too.
- The spelling <qi> sounds like [qe]. Often, <iq> sounds like [eq] too.

(This Quechua reading rule, by the way, works for almost all regions, though Ecuador is an exception, because the letter <q> is not normally used there at all. People from Ecuador can ignore all of this, everything is much simpler for you and your Quechua!)

Tip 2: How to Get Used to Quechua Spelling Rules

So for Quechua, when you see <qu>, you ‘hear’ or ‘read’ [qo]. We know that this is a bit strange at first, because even people who use three vowels had to get used to this at first too, but they soon realise how much better it is for Quechua. This is why, to help you learn the rule, we recommend below a way to get used to spellings like this. For your first practice in Quechua spelling rules, just focus your eyes on the letters <qu> here, and while you stare at <qu>, say out loud to yourself a hundred times [qo]. Then stare at <qi> while you say [qe].

You’ll soon learn the rule. After all, it is no harder than rules in Spanish: you see <ca> and hear [ka], but you see <ce> and hear [se] (or [θ e] if you’re from Spain).

You can use the same trick to practise any spelling and reading rule that might seem strange at first because it’s not like Spanish. If anything ever seems strange, just stop for a while and focus on the word that seems spelt strangely. Stare at it, and while looking at it just pronounce it to yourself lots of times, until it is a reflex in your mind to see the spelling and hear your own normal pronunciation. Here are some more examples:

- People in southern Peru and Bolivia should look at <puriq>, even while they pronounce it [purex] with an [e] and then a rough sound at the end, not a ‘proper’ [q] as in Original Quechua.
- People in Ayacucho should look at a word like <qara> as they pronounce it, even if to them it sounds more like [χ ara], with a rough sound at the start.

Why should you have to bother with this? Well, because this is the only spelling system that really works well and consistently, and for the sake of the unity of Quechua (see more on this below!). As you can see in the two examples above, some regions have to learn some rules, other regions have to learn others. Nobody is specially favoured, and nobody is forcing anyone to use another region’s Quechua. You always pronounce as in your home region.

If you find it a bit of an effort, do remember that at school when you were a child it was only by lots of practice that you managed to learn Spanish reading reflexes, such as when you see <cocer> you should not ‘hear’ [koker] or [soser]. You just apply the normal reading rules, and pronounce it [koser]. What’s more, the Quechua rules are actually much easier and quicker to learn than the complicated Spanish ones!

Tip 3: How to Get Used to Spelling with Only Three Vowels

So much for reading with three vowels, how about writing with only three?

Now of course *in principle* in any case, it has to be much simpler to spell with only three vowels rather than five. Still, in practice it is understandable that some people can have a bit of difficulty getting used

to spelling Quechua and Aymara with only three vowels – though the first important step is to realise that this difficulty is really *only* because you are used to writing and reading only Spanish.

Again though, to help get used to the three-vowel system, here we'd like to recommend one way that might help you make this transition from writing Spanish, with its five vowels, to writing Quechua with just three. It's like this...

When you're writing Quechua, if you really feel you want to write an <e>, well please don't write that, but as a compromise you can if you want write <i> also with a little dot underneath it, so <ï>. This dot is not important or compulsory, but it may help you get used to seeing that this <ï> letter in Quechua can sometimes sound a bit different from just a normal <i>, and a bit more like what *in Spanish* you spell <e>.

So while you're learning to write with three vowels, you can – if you want – write <wasi>, but <wasïqa> with a dot; or <michini>, but <michïq> with a dot. This way you can get used to the spelling rule of Quechua that the letter <i> sounds a bit like [e] when it is near the letter <q>.

Now of course you don't *have* to use these dots, they are not necessary at all and they are not part of the official alphabet. We suggest you use them only as a temporary 'trick', to help you pick up the alphabet at the start. The more you get used to using the <i> letter, the more you can stop bothering with the little dots, and eventually you'll see that you won't need them at all.

Exactly the same goes for the letter <u>. If you're tempted to write <o>, please do resist the temptation and still write <u>. But if it makes you feel more comfortable with the alphabet, you can if you want put a little dot under the <u>, so you can write <musuq> or even <muşuq> if you want. And you can write <Qusqu>, knowing that for you the letter <u> with a dot is read and pronounced as [o]. And as ever, just keep reading and pronouncing all words just in the same way you always did in your own region. It's only the writing, the spelling, that needs a bit of care at the start.

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4: Official Spelling and Regional Variation

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Unifying Quechua Spelling: Progress So Far

Unifying Spelling, Not Pronunciation!

Even if the official spellings for Quechua or Aymara may look a bit unusual to you for a few words, here is one thing certainly not to worry about. You need never change your own natural pronunciation of your home region. Spelling is only about written symbols. **Nobody is proposing that any Quechua speaker from any region should change his or her pronunciation.** Of course not.

All of this is only about having some **standardisation in spelling only, not in pronunciation.** This is just like in any other language: Spanish, English, French, German, and so on. In each of these languages there are plenty of regional differences in pronunciation. The Americans certainly don't pronounce English like people from England itself, nor do people from Australia, India, Ireland, Scotland, and so on, who all have their different accents. But speakers from all countries and regions do all accept to follow a standardised spelling, even if it doesn't always seem to match their own regional pronunciations 'perfectly' for some words.

People from all regions accept that they should use these spellings in a spirit of compromise with people from other regions, to help everyone communicate more easily with everyone else. Everyone accepts this for any established written language: you do yourself for Spanish or English, otherwise you would not be able to read these pages, because my accent in both these languages is very probably quite different to yours.

Which Region's Spelling is the Unified Spelling?

Another question often asked is "which region's pronunciation is the unified spelling based on"? The answer to this is very simple: none. **The unified spelling is not the pronunciation of any one region.** It is not 'Cuzco spelling', it is not 'Ayacucho spelling', it is not 'Bolivian spelling', it is only **unified** spelling! To use it, *every* region has to learn a few small spelling and reading rules that might at first seem a little unusual.

Favouring any one region's Quechua above any other's is the very last thing that anyone who uses the official alphabet wants to do. If you listen to the regional pronunciations on our word comparison pages, you will soon see that the official spelling is *not* based on *any* particular region. Yes, some odd words in the official spelling are closer to the pronunciation in Ayacucho, for example; but there are plenty of other official spellings that are closer to the pronunciation in Cuzco instead.

Indeed other words are a mix of both. People in Cuzco and Bolivia often assume that a spelling is like ‘Ayacucho spelling’: the word <qam> *you*, for instance, may look to them like ‘Ayacucho spelling’ because it ends in <m>. But they’re wrong! To people in Ayacucho, <qam> looks like ‘Cuzco spelling’, because it starts in <q>, when they pronounce it more like [x am]! But as you can see, it is neither Cuzco nor Ayacucho spelling. The official spelling is just the best compromise spelling for *everyone* to use!

It is completely wrong to think that the official alphabet represents one particular region. It does not.

For linguists it is their job and their training to understand about the wealth of regional variation, and the very last thing that they would want to do is propose a particular spelling for any regionalist or nationalist reasons. Absolutely on the contrary, the official alphabet has been designed specifically in order to provide the spelling system that is most useful for enabling Quechua-speakers from all regions to write and read in a similar way, as far as it is possible and useful to do so. In other words, the official spelling is designed as **the best compromise between all the regions**.

It has to be like this, just like the spelling of any language, such as Spanish or English. Obviously, because speakers from all regions speak slightly differently, this inevitably means that everyone, in all regions, has to make some compromises, so that we can find the best way for Quechua-speakers from all regions to write and read in a similar way.

What is ‘Southern Quechua’ Spelling?

Now in some cases the differences between the Quechua in some regions are so big that it is not always possible to write *exactly* the same. The differences between the Quechua in Ancash and in Cuzco, for example, are so big that some different letters are needed in each area. Likewise for the difference between Central Aymara in Tupe, and Southern Aymara in the Altiplano. Nonetheless, it is still possible for people from different regions to write in **as similar a way as possible** to each other, so that it is as easy as possible for them to read and understand what people write in other regions.

This is the first thing that the unification in Quechua spelling is trying to achieve. It ensures that people even from these very different regions can understand at least as much as possible of each others’ Quechua. This, for example, is why people in Ancash are asked to write <kay>, because this is just how everyone everywhere else writes and pronounces it, even if in your Ancash region itself you may pronounce it more like [ke:].

The best news is that in any case there are some very big regions where it is possible for people to spell almost identically. One example is Ecuador, and this is why the new official spelling there may seem a little strange in your region, but it’s great that everyone in the whole country can use it, and in fact it is also much easier to read for Quechua-speaking people outside Ecuador too.

Another even bigger area where it is possible to unify spelling is for 'Southern Quechua', *i.e.* the Cuzco and Puno regions, and all of Bolivia, and in most things, the Ayacucho region too. (This is why we include the Southern Quechua spellings in our word comparison tables.) For a good dictionary of Southern Quechua, with the official spellings and with indications of the main regional differences in pronunciation, we recommend:

Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo (1994) Quechua sureño: diccionario unificado

Biblioteca Nacional del Perú: Lima, Peru

[Quechua Origins and Quechua Spelling](#)

Here's another common question: What has unified spelling got to do with Original Quechua? Well, as in the case of <kay>, and with <qam> too, it often turns out that it is the spelling that in practice works best in the largest number of regions is also the one that is closest to the Original pronunciation. This is not because anyone wants to return to speaking Original Quechua, or to make people spell like that. That would be crazy and unnecessary.

It is only logical, though, that a *common spelling* will often work best if it bears in mind the *common origin* of all the different modern regional varieties. And since they all came from the same source, Original Quechua, it's not surprising that the best common spellings often look a bit like Original Quechua, that's all. This, by the way, is another reason why it is interesting and helpful to know at least a little about Original Quechua and Original Aymara, which is we have included them in *Sounds of the Andean Languages*.

This is also why we recommend that you read our sections on [Origins and Diversity of Quechua](#) and [More About Quechua](#). Because once you know more about the diversity of Quechua, and about Original Quechua, you will be in a much better position to understand why the official pan-Andean alphabet and spelling system for Quechua in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador has been devised in the way that it has. You can also start seeing how and why the official spelling may indeed be best for *everyone overall*, even if it is different *in some cases* from the pronunciation you use in your home region.

[A Spirit of Compromise and Solidarity...](#)

Again, none of this is anything special, most of what we have said here is not unique to Quechua, it is about the universal principles of spelling. All other languages are just the same, including Spanish. Spanish spelling only works because it too calls on everyone everywhere to make some compromises.

- People in Latin America have to learn that some words are spelt with <c>, like <cocer> (*cook*), and others with <s>, like <coser> (*sew*). Why? Because even if many people in Latin America now

pronounce these the same, people in other areas, especially Spain, still pronounce them differently. The same goes for <z> in <cazar> (*hunt*) but <s> in <casar> (*marry*).

- On the other hand, people in Spain have to be careful and make a compromise too: they still have to spell <halla> and <haya> differently, even though most of them pronounce these words the same. Why? For the sake of people in the Andes, where – thanks to Quechua and Aymara <ll>! – they still pronounce these words very differently.

People in each region, then, have to make compromises sometimes, for the sake of unity with the other regions. In Spanish, and yes, in Quechua too.

So, the official spelling for Quechua is not about imposing one region's Quechua on anybody. It's not anybody's Quechua, it's everybody's! And it asks everyone alike, from all regions, to make some small compromises for the good of everyone. You already accept this for spelling Spanish; please join us and show solidarity and do the same for Quechua and Aymara. You'll soon see how easy it is!

So How Can You Help Quechua Unity?

All that you are being asked to do for Quechua and Aymara, then, is nothing more than you have already done for Spanish. Just learn a few spelling and pronunciation rules so that you can learn to *write* Quechua in a standard way like everyone else, even if you all come from different regions. You've already done it for Spanish, now it's time do it also for the sake of your real native tongue, the language of your Andean ancestors!

Learning a few easy rules is a very small effort that is asked of you for the sake of unity and identity. And everyone will benefit: you will be able to read the Quechua written by people from all over so many different regions of the Andes, and they will be able to read yours.

Above all, what this means is that when you read and write Quechua, please don't demand and expect to 'see' *exactly* what you 'hear' in your region. Just like <coce> is not exactly what you say in Spanish in your region. Some people in one region 'read' and pronounce it one way, others in other regions in a different way. *Only the spelling* is standardised.

The official spelling may not be exactly the easiest for your particular region, but overall it is the easiest for all regions. Please be generous and show solidarity with everyone, and make a little effort to get used to the simple rules.

Above all, everyone has to agree to write the same symbol, even if it represents different sounds in different regions. And sometimes for some regions the same letter can even represent slightly different sounds in different places in a word. Take the sounds at the start and end of the word <qatiq> *follower*, which were both the same sounds in Original Quechua, and remain the same in most regions; but for people in Bolivia, Cuzco and Puno, they are actually pronounced slightly differently in these different

places in the word. Again, though, for solidarity and for other very good reasons (which unfortunately we haven't got space to go into in detail here), in practice it's best to standardise spelling as <qatiq>, with <q> both at the start and at the end.

Let's repeat then: everyone has to agree to write the same symbol, even if it represents different sounds in different regions. Again, this is exactly like in any other language: you already do this yourself when you read and write Spanish. Everyone everywhere writes <me llamo> with the same symbol <ll>, for example (and not <me yamo> with <y>, nor <me shamo> with <sh>), even though people in Spain and Argentina do not pronounce this the same as in the Andes. People write the same, but only 'read' it differently and pronounce different sounds according to their home region. No big problem!

You do this for Spanish, so please do it for your Quechua or Aymara too. This is all that the official spelling asks you to do. Take a word like Quechua <qam> *you*. Of course, pronounce it how you want in your region; but if you at least write it <qam>, the same as everyone else, then we will all be able to understand each other better.

All you need to learn, then, are some simple spelling rules for Quechua, for your region. We've already seen the most important one, about the letter <q>. **Always write just with <i> and <u>.** But always pronounce how you like, how you always did. The other rules you will learn as you go along: all you need is an open mind and a spirit of solidarity with the rest of us, and you will find it easy!

Unifying Quechua Spelling: Progress So Far

To finish, some very good news. In recent years some very big steps have at last been taken towards solidarity and unity in Quechua spelling, as far as is possible.

- Most **new books** printed in Quechua are following more and more of the recommendations of the official alphabet, especially to spell Quechua with only its three distinctive vowels <a>, <i> and <u>, and to stop using the Spanish-influenced five-vowel alphabet.
- **Ecuador** has recently adopted the same spelling system that has already been used for decades in Peru and Bolivia. Ecuador used to use the very old and complicated way of spelling <c> in <ca> and <cu>, but <qu> in <qui>. This is only a complication of Spanish, and Quechua is a different language which does not need this complication! For decades, most people in Peru and Bolivia have spelt Quechua using the same letter <k> for all the sequences <ka>, <ki> and <ku>, and now in Ecuador people do too. Ecuador has also changed from using the old Spanish-style spelling <hu> and now use the simpler, single letter <w>, just like most people in Peru and Bolivia have used for a long time now. These are **big, important steps forward** to make Quechua spelling in Ecuador more logical and simpler, more independent from Spanish, and to unify it more with Quechua spelling in Peru and Bolivia. Congratulations Ecuador, and thank you!

- Of all countries, it is probably **Bolivia** that has made the most considerable progress and the greatest sense of solidarity in expanding the official alphabet through education. Congratulations Bolivia!
 - **Peru** too is making some progress: most people there, for example, have for decades now used the best <k> and <w> spellings that Ecuador has only introduced more recently. That said, to be honest, nowadays Peru seems to be falling a little behind the rapid progress recently in Ecuador and Bolivia. Let's all hope that more people in Peru too – the Quechua heartland, after all! – will now join in the movement towards greater solidarity and unity in writing Quechua. Come on Peru!
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This brings us to the end of our four main pages on pronunciation and spelling. There is, however, one other page that we very much recommend, because as many readers may have noticed, there is one more significant issue in unifying spelling that we have not yet covered here. So far we have discussed only the proposed unified spellings of **individual sounds** like [q] or [m], wherever they occur in a word. There is a quite separate issue where a unified spelling is proposed for certain **specific suffixes** in Southern Quechua, such as the one pronounced variously from region to region as [čka], [ska], [sha], [sa], and so on; or another suffix pronounced [pti], [qti] or [xti]. To find out more about this, we recommend that you now move on to by clicking on this link to our separate page on **five important suffixes**: [-mi/-m, -pa/-p, -pti-, -chka- and -chik.](#)

You may now also want to see our other page on [phonetic symbols](#): a table of all the symbols used here where you can hear exactly the sounds they represent

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Where to Find Out More...

If you want to find out more, there are more articles about Quechua spelling on [this webpage](#).

There are also a number of useful books:

- A dictionary with official spellings (and Original Quechua forms). In theory, every main library in Peru should have a copy.

Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo (1994) [Quechua sureño: diccionario unificado](#)

Biblioteca Nacional del Perú: Lima, Peru

- A recent Bolivian pamphlet guide (22 pages) to the official spelling:

Teófilo Laimé Ajacopa Qhichwata allinta qillqanapaq p'anqa: Manual de ortografía quechua

Centro de investigación y planificación lingüística, intercultural y multiétnica "Ceiplim"

Grupo Editorial Anthropos, La Paz, Bolivia

- Chapter 1, part 6 of this book (pages 48-53) is particularly useful for explaining the logic behind the official spelling, and certain other rules:

Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo (1995) Quechumara: estructuras paralelas

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