



## Learn the NATO Phonetic Alphabet



Imagine that you are a radio operator working in poor reception conditions, or in a noisy environment. Some words may not be clear, so you might ask for them to be spelled out a letter at a time. Even so, some spoken letters, such as B or P, N or M and C or V, may not be very distinct either.

A phonetic alphabet overcomes this by using distinctive words to stand for each letter.

<b>A - Alpha</b>	<b>J - Juliet</b>	<b>S - Sierra</b>
<b>B - Bravo</b>	<b>K - Kilo</b>	<b>T - Tango</b>
<b>C - Charlie</b>	<b>L - Lima</b>	<b>U - Uniform</b>
<b>D - Delta</b>	<b>M - Mike</b>	<b>V - Victor</b>
<b>E - Echo</b>	<b>N - November</b>	<b>W - Whiskey</b>
<b>F - Foxtrot</b>	<b>O - Oscar</b>	<b>X - X-Ray</b>
<b>G - Golf</b>	<b>P - Papa</b>	<b>Y - Yankee</b>
<b>H - Hotel</b>	<b>Q - Quebec</b>	<b>Z - Zulu</b>
<b>I - India</b>	<b>R - Romeo</b>	

During the First World War, the Royal Navy used an alphabet that began Apples, Butter and Charlie, while British infantrymen in the trenches had their own version, which started Ack, Beer and Charlie.

The current alphabet was officially introduced in 1956 and was adopted by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). It was created as a standardised way for aircrews around the world to make themselves recognised and understood. The military and other organisations such as the police use it to spell out words when communications are difficult or when they are difficult to pronounce or understand.

Try saying 'Otorhinolaryngologist' (ear, nose and throat doctor).

Some frequently used phrases are regularly abbreviated to a few letters which can be transmitted using the code where necessary. Some of these abbreviations have found their way into everyday language.

#### **Common Abbreviations**

NTR	-	Nothing to Report
DZ	-	Drop Zone
ETA	-	Estimated Time of Arrival
QRF	-	Quick Reaction Force
NCO	-	Non Commissioned Officer
FOB	-	Forward Operating Base
HQ	-	Headquarters
CAVAC	-	Casualty Evacuation
IED	-	Improvised Explosive Device