

Communications at Sea

Phonetic Alphabet



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The NATO phonetic alphabet is a way of using words to replace letters. The first letter of the word is the letter the word stands for. It is used to clearly say letters out loud when they might be hard to hear such as over the VHF radio on a ship, to ensure important messages are given accurately.

Numbers are also in the phonetic alphabet. The number 4 is pronounced 'fow-er' to avoid confusion with the word 'for'. The number 9 is pronounced 'niner' to avoid confusion with the German word 'Nein' ('No').

- A **Alfa**
- B **Bravo**
- C **Charlie**
- D **Delta**
- E **Echo**
- F **Foxtrot**
- G **Golf**
- H **Hotel**
- I **India**
- J **Juliett**
- K **Kilo**
- L **Lima**
- M **Mike**
- N **November**
- O **Oscar**
- P **Papa**
- Q **Quebec**
- R **Romeo**
- S **Sierra**
- T **Tango**
- U **Uniform**
- V **Victor**
- W **Whiskey**
- X **X-ray**
- Y **Yankee**
- Z **Zulul**

- 0 **Zero**
- 1 **Wun**
- 2 **Too**
- 3 **Tree**
- 4 **Fow-er**
- 5 **Fife**
- 6 **Six**
- 7 **Sev-en**
- 8 **Ait**
- 9 **Niner**

Write your full name using the phonetic alphabet:

Can you memorise it? *Tip: to help remember it you can try creating a story mnemonic (associating each item in a list with elements of a story).*

Can you think of a situation at sea when it would be useful to use the phonetic alphabet?

