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# Review questions

- Give examples to show the following features that make human language different from animal communication system:
  - 1. Arbitrariness
  - 2. Productivity
  - 3. Duality
  - 4. Displacement
  - 5. Cultural transmission

# Difference between Speech & Writing

# Who studies speech sounds?

- **Phoneticians:**
  - What distinctive sounds do particular languages have?
  - How are they produced?
- **Phonologists:**
  - What is the underlying theory of speech sound?
  - What explains how particular sounds vary in context?
- **Acoustic phoneticians, speech engineers, speech pathologists, lexicographers, singers,...**

# How do we represent speech sounds?

- Regular orthography
- Special-purpose symbol sets
- Abstract sound classes based upon sound similarities
  - What sounds are *shared* by languages X and Y?
  - What sounds are unique to particular languages?  
Or at least rare?
  - E.g. for language identification

# Limits of Orthography

- **A single letter may have many different acoustic realizations, e.g., in English**
  - o comb, tomb, bomb
  - c court, center, cheese
  - oo blood, food, good
  - s reason, surreal, shy
- **A single sound may have different orthographic correspondences**
  - [i] sea, see, scene, receive, thief
  - [u] true, few, choose, lieu, do
  - [s] cereal, same, miss
  - [ay] prime, buy, rhyme, lie
- **Orthography *not* a good choice**

# Phonetic Symbol Sets

- **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**
  - Single character for each sound
  - Represents all sounds of the world's languages
- **ARPAbet, TIMIT, ...**
  - Multiple characters for sounds but ASCII
  - English specific, so new symbol sets for each new language to be represented
- **IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet):**

A standardized and internationally accepted system of phonetic transcription. The present one mainly derives from one developed in the 1920s by the British phonetician, Daniel Jones (1881-1967), revised in 1993, corrected (updated) in 1996.

# Questions

## 1. What's the phonic medium of language?

The phonic medium of language refers to the limited range of sounds which are meaningful in human communication.

## 2. What are speech sounds?

Speech sounds refers to the individual sounds which the phonic medium of language.

## 3. What's phonetics?

Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that studies speech sounds with regard to their articulation, physical properties, and perception.



## Branches of phonetics



A three-step process of speech sounds

**Articulatory phonetics:** the study of the production of speech sounds

**Acoustic phonetics:** the study of the physical properties of the sounds produced in speech

**Auditory phonetics:** the study of the perception of speech sounds