

**Click letters.** Historically there have been a number of conventions for writing click consonants, using either the Latin alphabet or special symbols. Three systems are notable:

- 1) The three Latin letters *c q x* used for Xhosa orthography. These were adopted to write related Bantu languages, as well as to non-Bantu languages such as Jul'hoansi, Naro, Sandawe and Hadza, sometimes with *ç* added for palatal clicks.
- 2) The Lepsius letters. These originated in a simple bar *|* that developed into the letters *|| ! ‡* of current IPA. They are used in the orthographies of the majority of Khoisan languages.
- 3) The old-style IPA letters *ɿ ʝ ɕ ɣ*. These were extended by various authors with the additional letters *ɸ ɸ̥ ɸ̥̥*, of which *ɸ* was adopted by the IPA, but they remained in minority usage and apart from *ɸ* were abandoned by the IPA in 1989.

These three conventions are summarized in the following table. The column headers for place of articulation are the terms currently favored by linguists; 'alveolar' and 'palatal' differ from the Unicode names of the current IPA letters.

**Table 1.** Competing letters for click types

articulation (Unicode name)	bilabial	dental	alveolar (retroflex)	lateral	palatal (alveolar)	retroflex
Latin		<i>c</i> U+0063	<i>q</i> U+0071	<i>x</i> U+0078	<i>ç</i> U+00E7	
extended old IPA	<i>ɸ</i> U+0298	<i>ɿ</i> U+0287	<i>ɕ</i> U+0297	<i>ʝ</i> U+0296	<i>ɸ̥</i> U+1DF0B	<i>ɸ̥̥</i> U+03C8
current IPA	<i>ɸ</i> U+0298	<i> </i> U+01C0	<i>!</i> U+01C3	<i>  </i> U+01C1	<i>‡</i> U+01C2	<i>!̥</i> U+1DF0A

Former Latin letters for palatal clicks are U+0076 *v* and U+0254 *ɹ*. The *ad hoc* symbol U+203C *!!* has been used for retroflex clicks in what is otherwise IPA transcription. (The dedicated letter U+1DF0A *!̥* is 'implicit' in the IPA but is not included on the summary IPA chart.) Occasionally U+2980 *|||* is used for a second lateral click. The retired 'velar' click letter U+029E *ɣ* has seen use in the 21st century for a paralexical back-released click.

These letters take IPA diacritics or form multigraphs to indicate whether the click consonant is nasal, voiced, aspirated, glottalized, etc. In language orthographies, only a couple of the accompanying letters require any clarification, specifically U+0294 *ʔ* in the early 20th century and its modern equivalent U+02BC *'* (or, rarely, U+02EE *”*).

A wildcard used for a generic click consonant is U+A7B0 *Თ*. Sometimes U+1DF10 *ɸ̥̥̥* is substituted to provide more room for combining IPA diacritics.