



Military English

Vocabulary Builder – The Phonetic Alphabet

TEACHER'S COPY

Overview:

This worksheet lists The (International) Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet, commonly known as the Phonetic Alphabet, NATO Phonetic Alphabet, ICAO Phonetic Alphabet, or ICAO Spelling Alphabet.

In this vocabulary builder, you will:

- ✓ practice pronunciation of the Phonetic Alphabet
- ✓ use the Phonetic Alphabet

1) Do you know the Phonetic Alphabet, or parts of it? Write what you know in the table below. *Ask the first question to the students BEFORE giving them the worksheet. Elicit any ideas from them. Then give the worksheet out and ask students to try to complete the table with whatever they know, without using a reference source – or turning to the next page. Answers on next page.*

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

2) Here is the complete alphabet, with the correct pronunciation.

a. Compare this table with your answers from exercise 1 – how many did you get correct?

b. Read each word aloud and try to decide where the stress (strong part) is. E.g. **Alpha**, **November**

Let students practise on their own. The aim of this task is to test their knowledge and make them think about the stressed syllable. You will get the chance to drill the students in the next task. Go around the classroom, monitor and correct any mispronunciations individually.

Letter	NATO word	Pronunciation
A	Alpha	/'ælfə/
B	Bravo	/'brɑ:vəʊ /
C	Charlie	/'tʃɑ:li/
D	Delta	/'deltə/
E	Echo	/'ekəʊ/
F	Foxtrot	/'fɒkstrɒt/
G	Golf	/gɒlf/
H	Hotel	/həʊ'tel/
I	India	/'ɪndiə/
J	Juliet	/'dʒu:liət/
K	Kilo	/'ki:ləʊ/
L	Lima	/'li:mə/
M	Mike	/maɪk/

Letter	NATO word	Pronunciation
N	November	/nəʊ'vembə/
O	Oscar	/'ɒskə/
P	Papa	/pə'pɑ:/
Q	Quebec	/kwɪ'bek/
R	Romeo	/'rəʊmiəʊ/
S	Sierra	/si'erə/
T	Tango	/'tæŋgəʊ/
U	Uniform	/'ju:nɪfɔ:m/
V	Victor	/'vɪktə/
W	Whiskey	/'wɪski/
X	X-ray	/'eks reɪ/
Y	Yankee	/'jæŋki/
Z	Zulu	/'zu:lʊ:/



- 3) Now let's practise saying the words. Pay attention to the stress (strong/weak parts). Listen and repeat.
- 4) With a partner, practise saying the words. Give your partner some feedback. Test each other.

For example:

A: What's the word for J?

B: It's Juliet.

A: That's right!

A: Do you know the word for Z?

B: Yes, it's Zebra.

A: This is not correct. It's Zulu.

- 5) Practice activities. Work with a partner. Ss work in pairs. **Ask the ss listening to write down what they hear. Then they check with their partner if the word is correctly spelled. For additional practice, see below.**

- a. Spell your name(s) using the NATO Alphabet.

E.g. "My name is Sam Jones. That's 'S' for Sierra, 'A' for Alpha, and 'M' for Mike. Next word: 'J' for Juliett, 'O' for Oscar, 'N' for November, 'E' for Echo, and 'S' for Sierra."

- b. Give your partner other words to spell using the alphabet.

E.g. "Spell table / chair / classroom / window / clock" etc...

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE – on pages 5, 6 there is a jigsaw-type task. Print copies for ss, so that half the class is Student A and half student B. Student A has information that student B is missing and vice versa. Students A and B take it in turns asking and answering questions in order to fill in the missing information in each page.

- 6) Extra information and practice

- Use this link to listen to the alphabet again. Type on YouTube [Phonetic Alphabet ~ The NATO Phonetic Alphabet For Teaching](#) or scan the QR code



- Use this link to the NATO website to test yourself on the alphabet.

[NATO - Declassified: The NATO phonetic alphabet – Alfa, Bravo, Charlie..., 20-Oct.-2016](#)



- Use this link to watch a video about the history of the Phonetic Alphabet. Type on YouTube [What is the NATO Phonetic Alphabet? Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta....](#) or scan the QR code



- This lesson links with → Vocabulary Builder: Military Time
Lesson: Radio Communications.

Teacher background information:

What is a spelling alphabet?

A special alphabet for spelling parts of a message containing letters and numbers, and to prevent confusion, because many letters sound similar. E.g. 'm' and 'n', 'f' and 's'.

What do you know about the Phonetic Alphabet (NATO Spelling Alphabet)?

It is the most widely used set of clear code words for communicating the letters of the Roman alphabet. Using words that match letters of the alphabet for official radio conversations started in the 1920s. As radio transmissions developed into a vital strategic form of communication, it became clear that miscommunications could happen when one letter could be mistaken for another, while some letters could be difficult to understand. Distortion, background noise, poor signal, and the accent of the speaker can all restrict the effectiveness of a radio message. The NATO phonetic alphabet is useful to prevent spelling mistakes or miscommunication, especially when people from different countries with different accents and pronunciations work together. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formally adopted the new alphabet on January 1, 1956, and, a few years later, turned it into the established universal phonetic alphabet for all military, civilian and amateur radio communications. It uses a word for each letter so that a letter's name begins with the letter itself. This alphabet allows people in the military, aeronautics, commercial airline and other similar industries to effectively communicate with each other, reducing the potential risk for terrible mistakes.

Exercise 3 Transcript:

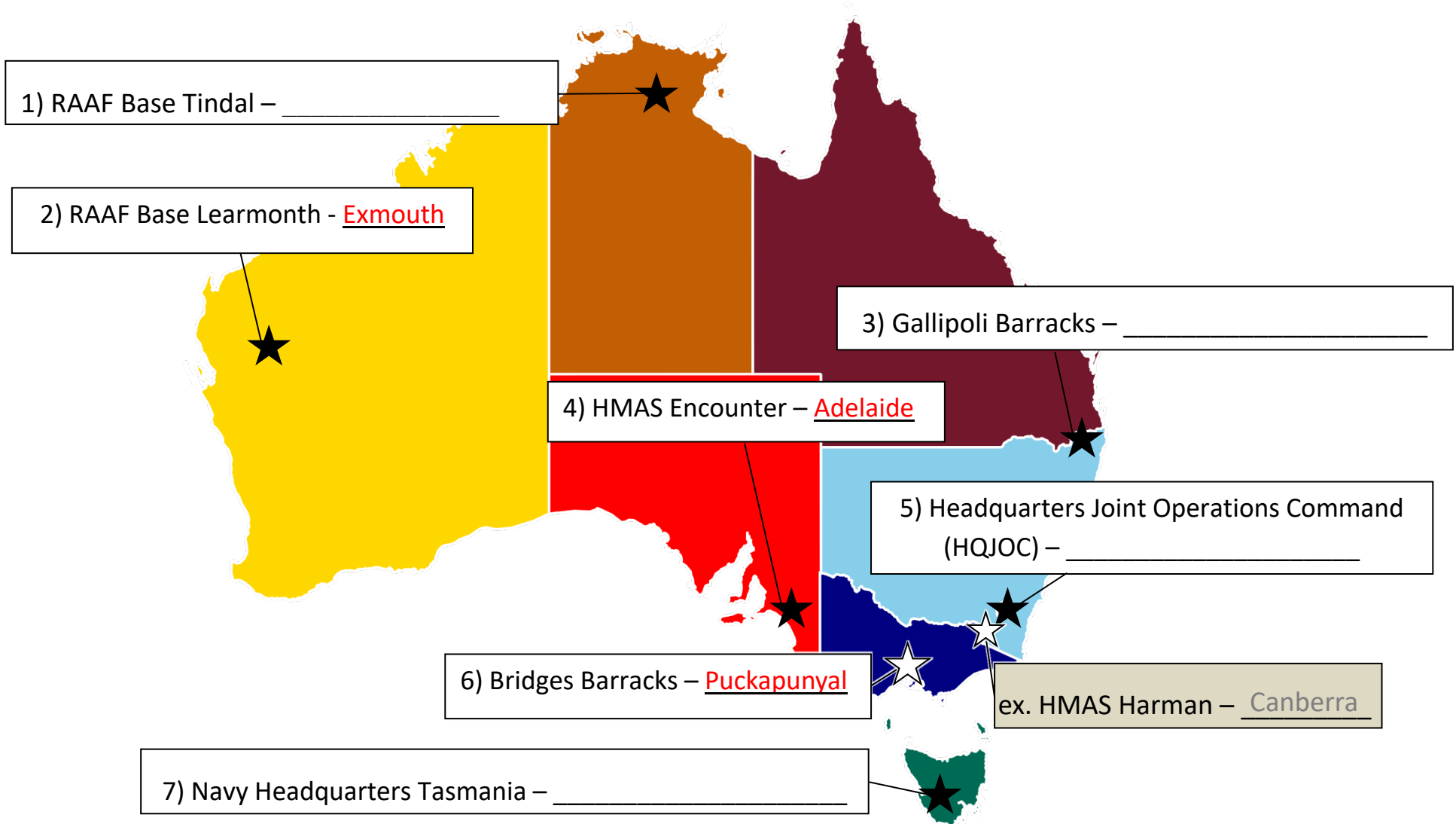
Now let's practise saying the words. Pay attention to the stress. Listen and repeat.

Alpha	Hotel	Oscar	Victor
Bravo	India	Papa	Whiskey
Charlie	Juliet	Quebec	X-ray
Delta	Kilo	Romeo	Yankee
Echo	Lima	Sierra	Zulu
Foxtrot	Mike	Tango	
Golf	November	Uniform	

Student A

Useful Language:

- A: Where's **HMAS Harman**?
- B: It's in **Canberra**.
- A: How do you spell that?
- B: That's '**C**' for **Charlie**, '**A**' for **Alpha**...



Student B

Useful Language:

- A: Where's **HMAS Harman**?
- B: It's in **Canberra**.
- A: How do you spell that?
- B: That's '**C**' for **Charlie**, '**A**' for **Alpha**...

1) RAAF Base Tindal – Katherine

2) RAAF Base Learmonth

3) Gallipoli Barracks – Enoggera

4) HMAS Encounter – _____

5) Headquarters Joint Operations
Command (HQJOC) – Bungendore

6) Bridges Barracks – _____

ex. HMAS Harman – Canberra

7) Navy Headquarters Tasmania – Hobart

