

ALPHABET CHART

1. Modern		2. Fraktur		3. Sütterlin		4. Kurrent		5. Old Handwriting Styles	
A	a	A	a	A	a	A	a	A A d	u a
B	b	B	b	B	b	B	b	B B B	b b
C	c	C	c	C	c	C	c	C C C	c c c
D	d	D	d	D	d	D	d	D D	d d d
E	e	E	e	E	e	E	e	E E E	e e e
F	f	F	f	F	f	F	f	F F	f f f f
G	g	G	g	G	g	G	g	G G G	g g
H	h	H	h	H	h	H	h	H H H H	h h h
I	i	I	i	I	i	I	i	I I	i i
J	j	J	j	J	j	J	j	J J	j j j
K	k	K	k	K	k	K	k	K K K R	k k k
L	l	L	l	L	l	L	l	L L	l l
M	m	M	m	M	m	M	m	M M M	m m
N	n	N	n	N	n	N	n	N N N	n n
O	o	O	o	O	o	O	o	O	o o
P	p	P	p	P	p	P	p	P P P	p p p
Q	q	Q	q	Q	q	Q	q	Q Q Q Q	q q q
R	r	R	r	R	r	R	r	R R R R	r r r r
S	s	S	s	S	s	S	s	S S S	s s s s
T	t	T	t	T	t	T	t	T T T	t t t
U	u	U	u	U	u	U	u	U U	u u
V	v	V	v	V	v	V	v	V V V	v v v
W	w	W	w	W	w	W	w	W W W	w w w
X	x	X	x	X	x	X	x	X X X X	x x x
Y	y	Y	y	Y	y	Y	y	Y Y	y y y
Z	z	Z	z	Z	z	Z	z	Z Z Z	z z z z
Ä	ä	Ä	ä	Ä	ä	Ä	ä	Ä Ä Ä Ä	ä ä ä ä
Ö	ö	Ö	ö	Ö	ö	Ö	ö	Ö Ö Ö Ö	ö ö ö ö
Ü	ü	Ü	ü	Ü	ü	Ü	ü	Ü Ü Ü Ü	ü ü ü ü

K R*K R***Uppercase K and R**

The letters *K* and *R* make up one of the hardest pairs to distinguish, especially if they are not well formed. Note that the *K* starts at the top from the upper right, the *R* starts from the upper left.

B C L*B C L***Uppercase B, C, and L**

The *B* and the *L* are identical except for the loop at the bottom of the *B*. The letter *C* is not as elaborate as the *L*, but an individual's handwriting can cause a problem, so make sure you compare your record with other samples of the person's handwriting. For instance, if there is a record for a person named Barbara, that word will tell you what the writer's upper- and lowercase *B*s look like.

O S*O S***Uppercase O and S**

To best distinguish between uppercase *O* and *S*, look at the curl on the top of the *O* and the "ears" on the top of the *S*.

A U*A U***Uppercase A and U**

Note the curlicue on the upper left of uppercase *U*, which is normally absent on uppercase *A*.

I J T*I J T***Uppercase I, J, and T**

The uppercase *J* is a longer form of the *I*. However, in early records, these two are identical. See how far the writer's letter extends below the line and compare to other possible *J*s and *I*s of the writer for a match. The *T* is crossed at the bottom.

Ä ä Ö ö Ü ü*Ä ä Ö ö Ü ü***The Ubiquitous Umlaut**

The letters *a*, *A*, *o*, *O*, *u*, and *U* with two dots over them are called umlauts. The dots, also called umlauts, indicate that the sound of that vowel is changed, with

\d h m n p q r s t u v b

Definitions

the spelling translated into English as *ae*, *oe*, and *ue*. You may rarely find two dots over a *y*, as in the German word *beÿ*, which is an old spelling for *bei*.

Refer to Reading the Old German (Kurrent) Script (below) for a complete review at a glance of all the uppercase and lowercase letters.

READING THE OLD GERMAN (KURRENT) SCRIPT

This chart illustrates the entire German alphabet and subsets for closer study. The first line of each set is modern (Roman) type, the second line is early twentieth-century German script (Sütterlin), and the third is the older German script (Kurrent).

The German Alphabet

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ä ö ü ß
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s s t u v w x y z ä ö ü ß
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s s t u v w x y z ä ö ü ß

Below the line	Tall letters	Short letters
f g h j p q s x y z	b d f h k l t	a c e i m n o r s
f g h j p q s x y z	b d f h k l t	a c e i m n o r s
f g h j p q s x y z	b d f h k l t	a c e i m n o r s
g p q s f h	l b c i	m n u e r
g p q s f h	l b c i	m n u e r
g p q s f h	l b c i	m n u e r
	v w y z	
	v w y z	
	v w y z	

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ Ä Ö Ü
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Ä Ö Ü
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Ä Ö Ü

K R	C L B	O S	M N St
K R	C L B	O S	M N St
K R	C L B	O S	M N St
A U	V W	T F I	
A U	V W	T F I	
A U	V W	T F I	

Numbers

Numerals are quite similar to English-style numerals, except that the 7 has a European-style line through it to distinguish it from a 1. Ordinal numerals, such as first, second, and third, have a suffix that is normally shown in smaller letters in superscript, sometimes also underlined.

1 7 1sten 2ten

1 7 1sten 2ten

1 7 first second

Gothic Records

Reading the old German writing—whether it be the older Kurrent script or the modern Sütterlin script, which was introduced in Prussia in 1915 and all of Germany by 1934, or the older Schwabacher, Fraktur, or Gotisch Old German Gothic typeface styles that were standard until the twentieth century—can be assisted by comparing the writing with the Alphabet Chart on page 74 and transcribing letter by letter.

If you want to become proficient at reading the writing, you should learn by practicing writing. If you have examples of actual genealogical documents, try copying them. Learn how to write the names of your ancestors, their places of

READING THE OLD GERMAN (FRAKTUR, SCHWABACHER) TYPEFACE

This chart illustrates the entire German alphabet and subsets for closer study. The first line of each set is modern (Roman) type, the second line is the German Gothic style (Fraktur), and the third is the German Gothic style (Schwabacher).

The German Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s s t u v w x y z	ä ö ü ß
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ο π ρ ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω	ä ö ü ß
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z	ä ö ü ß

Below the line	Tall letters	Short letters
f g h i j p q s x y z ß	b d f h k l s t ß	a c e i m n o r s u v w
f g h i j p q r s t u v w x y z ß	b d f h k l s t ß	a c e i m n o r s u v w
f g h i j p q r s t u v w x y z ß	b d f h k l s t ß	a c e i m n o r s u v w

Below the line	Wide letters	Crescents	"Hats"	Rounded
F H I P Y Z	M W	C E G S	F I J	D O Q
f h i p y z	m w	c e g s	f i j	d o q
f h i p y z	m w	c e g s	f i j	d o q

Two posts 	Riding a wave ~	Others
N R U	B L T V	A K X
n r u	b l t v	a k x
n r u	b l t v	a k x