

What year did Turks change from Arabic to a modified Latin alphabet

Turkey officially changed from the Arabic script to a modified Latin alphabet in **1928**.

The Transition Details

- **The Law:** The [Turkish Parliament](#) passed Law No. 1353 on **November 1, 1928**, which adopted the new Latin-based alphabet.
- **Implementation:** The reform went into effect immediately in November 1928, and the new alphabet became compulsory for all public communications and print by **January 1, 1929**.
- **The Reason:** Led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the change aimed to modernize the country and raise low literacy rates. The Arabic alphabet had only three short and three long vowels, which poorly represented Turkish's eight distinct vowel sounds, whereas the modified 29-letter Latin alphabet was completely phonetic.

Would you like to know more about **how the transition was enforced** across newspapers and schools, or details on the **specific modified letters** used in the alphabet?

Yes

The transition to the new 29-letter phonetic Turkish alphabet was swift, highly organized, and personally spearheaded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

How the Transition Was Enforced

To ensure the country adapted overnight, the government used a mix of intensive public education, strict deadlines, and nationwide media mandates:

- **Atatürk's Public Campaigns:** Atatürk traveled across Turkey with a portable blackboard and chalk, personally teaching citizens the new letters in public squares, parks, and cafes.
- **National Schools (*Millet Mektepleri*):** The government established special mandatory night classes for citizens aged 16 to 45. Over one million people learned to read and write using the new script through these schools within the first year.
- **Strict Media Deadlines:** Newspapers were given a very short grace period. By **December 1, 1928**, every newspaper, advertisement, and public sign had to be printed exclusively in the new Latin alphabet.
- **Public Services Ban:** By **January 1, 1929**, the use of the Arabic script was completely banned in government administrative offices, courts, books, and banks.

The Modified Letters of the Turkish Alphabet

The creators of the new alphabet completely dropped the letters **Q**, **W**, and **X** because they were redundant for Turkish phonetics. Instead, they adapted existing Latin characters with diacritics (like dots and cedillas) to perfectly match the eight vowel and 21 consonant sounds of the Turkish language.

The specific modified letters added to the alphabet include:

Letter	Pronunciation & Description
Ç / ç	Pronounced like the "ch" in "chair".
Ş / ş	Pronounced like the "sh" in "shoes".
Ğ / ğ	Known as the "soft G" (<i>yumuşak ge</i>). It is silent and never starts a word; it simply lengthens the vowel before it (e.g., <i>dağ</i> is pronounced "dah").
İ / i	The standard dotted letter. Unlike English, it retains its dot when capitalised (e.g., <i>İstanbul</i>). It is pronounced like the "ee" in "meet".
I / ı	The dotless I . It is lowercased without a dot. It represents a close back unrounded vowel, similar to the "e" in "the" or the "u" in "stadium".
Ö / ö	Pronounced like the "u" in "fur" (similar to the German <i>Ö</i>).
Ü / ü	Pronounced like the "u" in the French word "tu" (similar to the German <i>Ü</i>).

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