

UNLWS is a non-linear written language which takes full advantage of a two-dimensional writing surface. Its words are glyphs which (basically) represent predicates, and texts are put together by combining glyphs to show which of the predicates' arguments have the same referent. For example, starting from the four glyphs

			
"A is me"	"B eats C"	"D is a fish"	"E is large"

putting A and B together, and C, D, and E together, assembles the text



The angle to which glyphs are rotated, and the length and disposition of the connecting lines, do not matter. Two connecting lines may cross; this is also not significant (though we try to avoid it).

Any of the arguments of a glyph may be left unmentioned, as well:



Bear in mind these ways in which UNLWS is unlike a typical linear language:

- An UNLWS text has no defined reading order; you can start anywhere and proceed in any fashion about it. However, written texts may contain indications of their writing order: see note 5 regarding "group".
- Relatedly, UNLWS does without definite noun phrases, because it can usually just directly connect an argument of "this clause" to an argument of a "previous clause", and where that's too ugly it can use pronouns: see note 3.
- UNLWS has a bit of the oligosynthetic about it. It prefers to keep its lexicon small and build various senses compositionally which other languages might have underived words for. A couple of cases are pointed out in our attached lexicon.

There is no bright line between morphosyntax and lexicon in UNLWS, so we've just dumped all the elements that appear in this text into the "Lexicon and grammar" page. Here are a few extra notes on some of the items.

1. Cartouches enclose parts of the text; they are the mechanism which are used to delimit the extents of quotations, etc. Normally, though, the full cartouche boundary isn't drawn,

but only as little as one can get away with. (Cartouches are never mandatory.)

2. An isolated piece of text attached to the *inside* boundary of R should be read as if it were connected to a cartouche enclosing all of R.
3. UNLWS allows an infinite number of (third-person) pronouns; a triangle with any (or no) filling makes a pronoun. These pronouns should be thought of as just another way to equate arguments of predicates, an alternative to connecting them with lines.
4. Time pronouns are used together with aspect markers. The lines in the aspect markers should be seen as little timelines, with the horizontal segment referring to the extent of the event in question; the positioning of the time pronouns is interpreted with respect to the same timeline. This text uses only one time pronoun, referring to the same interval of time in all instances, but it uses it in two variations: the left (the V-like form) is used with aspects where the interval is seen perfectly, the right (the basin-like form) where it is seen as having internal structure.
5. The second form of the “group” glyph, the one which looks like]_ rather than]-, is a variant (used principally in conversation) for when the original writer didn’t anticipate the use for a “group” glyph there and it was added later.
6. The hook that can appear on irrealis or negative markers is a scoping device: it indicates that everything on the side which the hook is not pointing to is irrealis or negative, respectively. (Use common sense regarding where “everything” ends.)
7. This glyph functions a lot like quote marks (as does the one above). For this glyph, the form being quoted can be text in any writing system, a diagram, a color, ...
8. Articles are usually unspecified; an unspecified article can be anything.
9. The form of the “think” glyph incorporates an irrealis marker between A and B. Irrealis is considered less marked than realis, so “think” can be used in many cases to cover “know”.
10. “(if P, then) X must happen” is construed as “if it’s good (that P), then X happens”.