

LLAMA_E v3.0 Sounds and Symbols The Manual

LLAMA_E v3.0 Sounds and Symbols

LLAMA_E is a test of your ability to make a connection between sounds that you are familiar with and a new writing system that will not be familiar to you. The rationale for this test is that lots of learners find it difficult to realise that letters do not always stand in for the sounds that you use in your first language. For instance, a C in Spanish can sometimes represent the sound that would normally be spelled TH in English, and OO in Dutch usually represents the sound that would be spelled OA in English. Part of developing a good accent in your foreign language is learning to recognise differences of this sort.

The opening page of the LLAMA_E program looks like this.

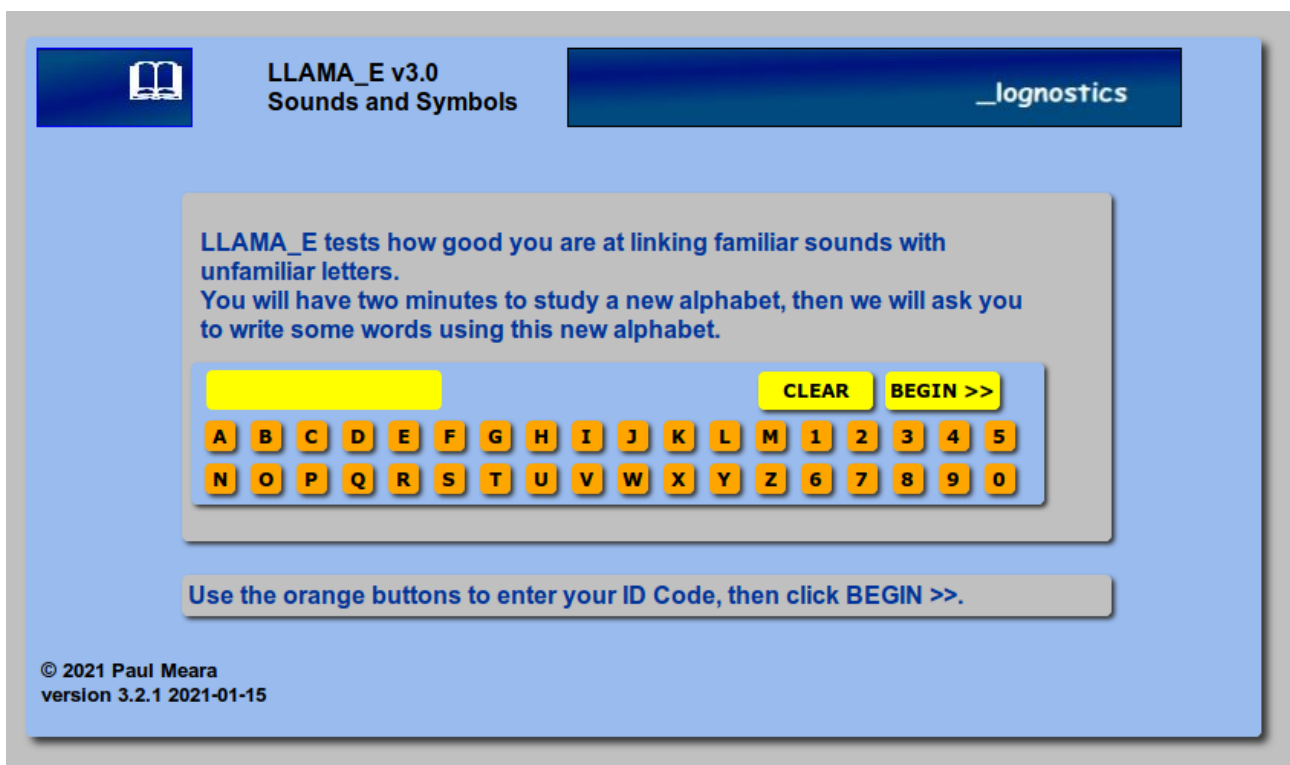


Figure 1: The LLAMA_E ID page

First enter your personal identification code by clicking on the orange buttons, This code will normally be a sequence of eight letters or numbers, for example SWA00234 or CZQ33321. The code should be unique to you, and not likely to be used by anybody else.

Next click the **BEGIN>>** button. This will take you to the display page, which is shown in Figure 2 below.

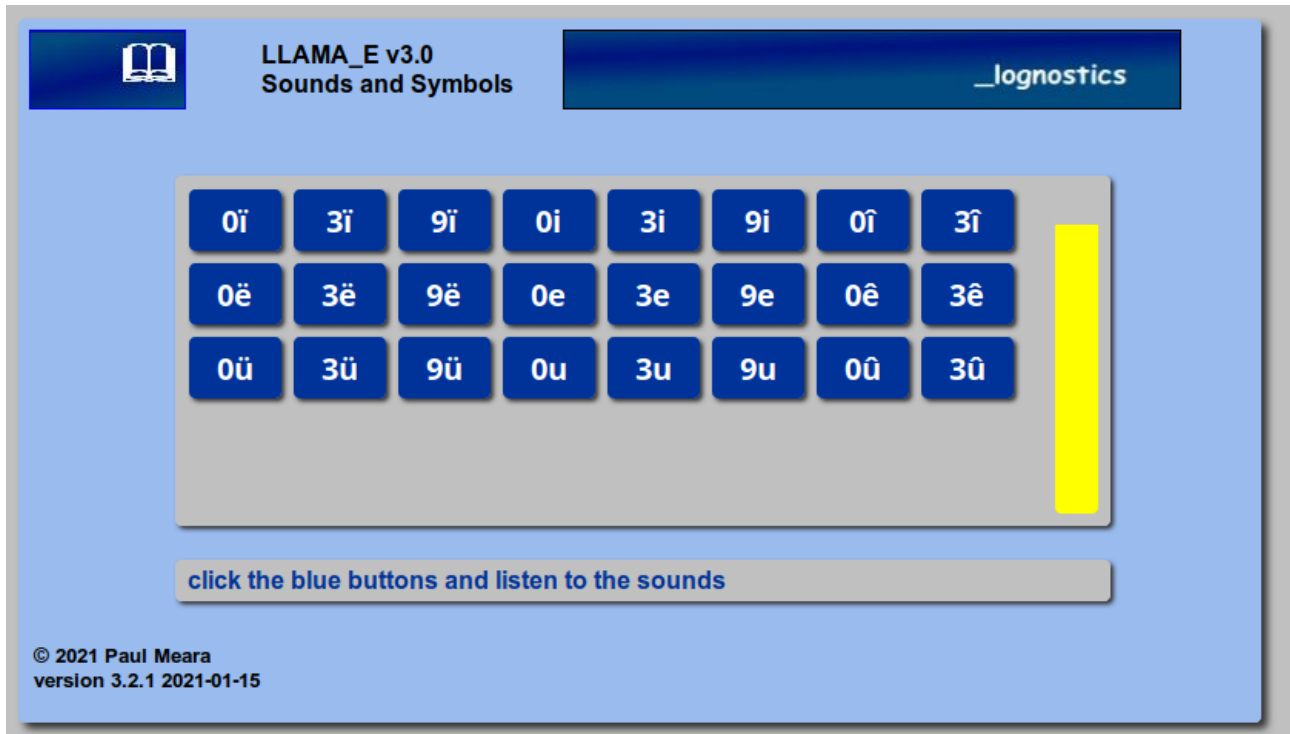


Figure 2: The LLAMA_E learning page

This screen contains a set of 24 blue buttons. Each button carries two letters in an unfamiliar alphabet. If you click on one of the buttons, then the program will play the sound that is displayed on the button. The program allows you just two minutes to explore this soundscape. You can click as many buttons as you like, in any order that you like, and you can take any notes that you need to help you work out how this alphabet represents sounds. The yellow bar to the right of the screen tells you how much time you have left. After two minutes of exploration time, the program will automatically move on to test how much you have learned.

The LLAMA_E testing page is shown in Figure 3. It is a good idea to spend some time studying this window before you start the testing session.

Figure 3 contains a new set of blue buttons – twenty in all. Each of these buttons names a two syllable word, so the buttons are more complicated than the buttons you have worked with so far. When you are ready to start the testing, click the yellow **NEXT** button. This will make the program play a two syllable word. Decide which of the twenty blue buttons spells out this word and click it. If you aren't sure, then you can guess, or you can click the button labelled '???'

There are twenty test items in all. Your progress through the test is shown by the bars at the bottom of the page. When the program has tested all twenty items, it will instruct you to click the yellow **FINISH** button. The program will then calculate your score and show you how your score compares with the scores of other people who have taken the test. A typical report is shown in Figure 4. Here the report indicates that Paulus15 scored 13 points on this test. Compared with the other 67 people who had taken the test at this time, this is an exceptionally high score – only four people in this test group have scored as highly as this.

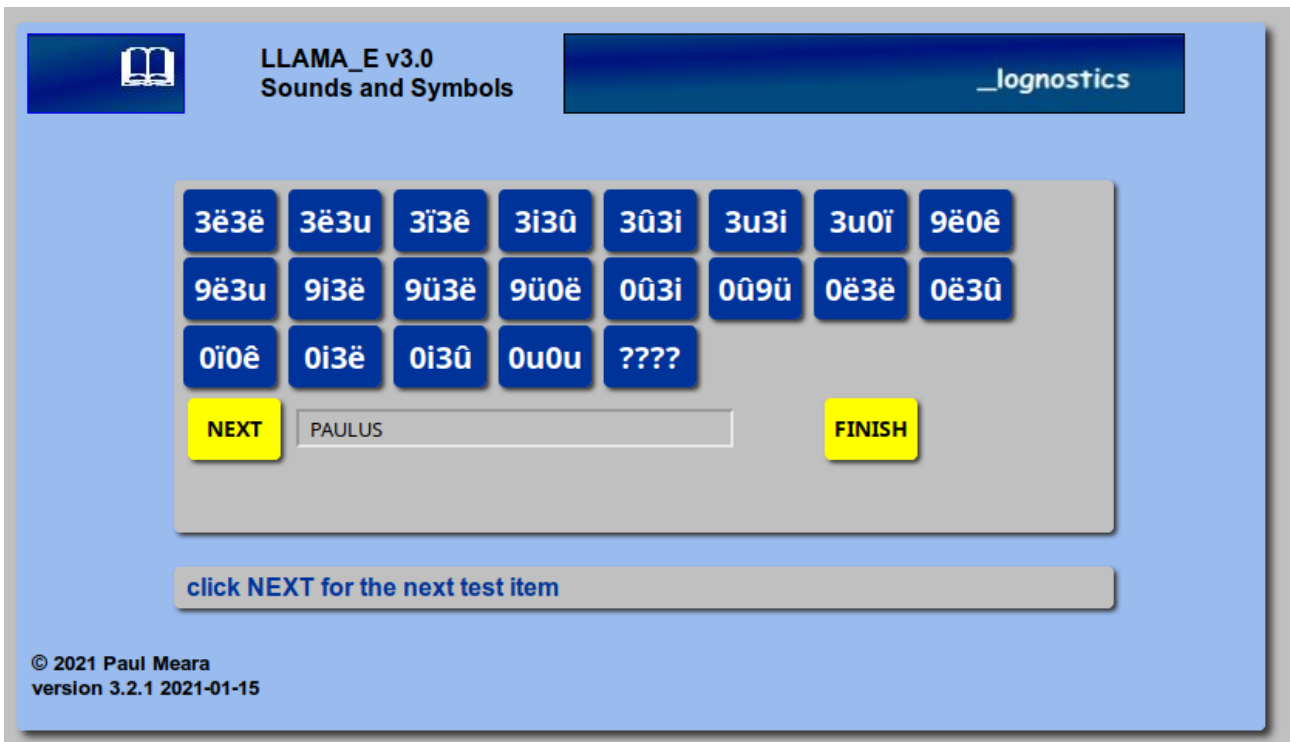


Figure 3: The LLAMA_E test page

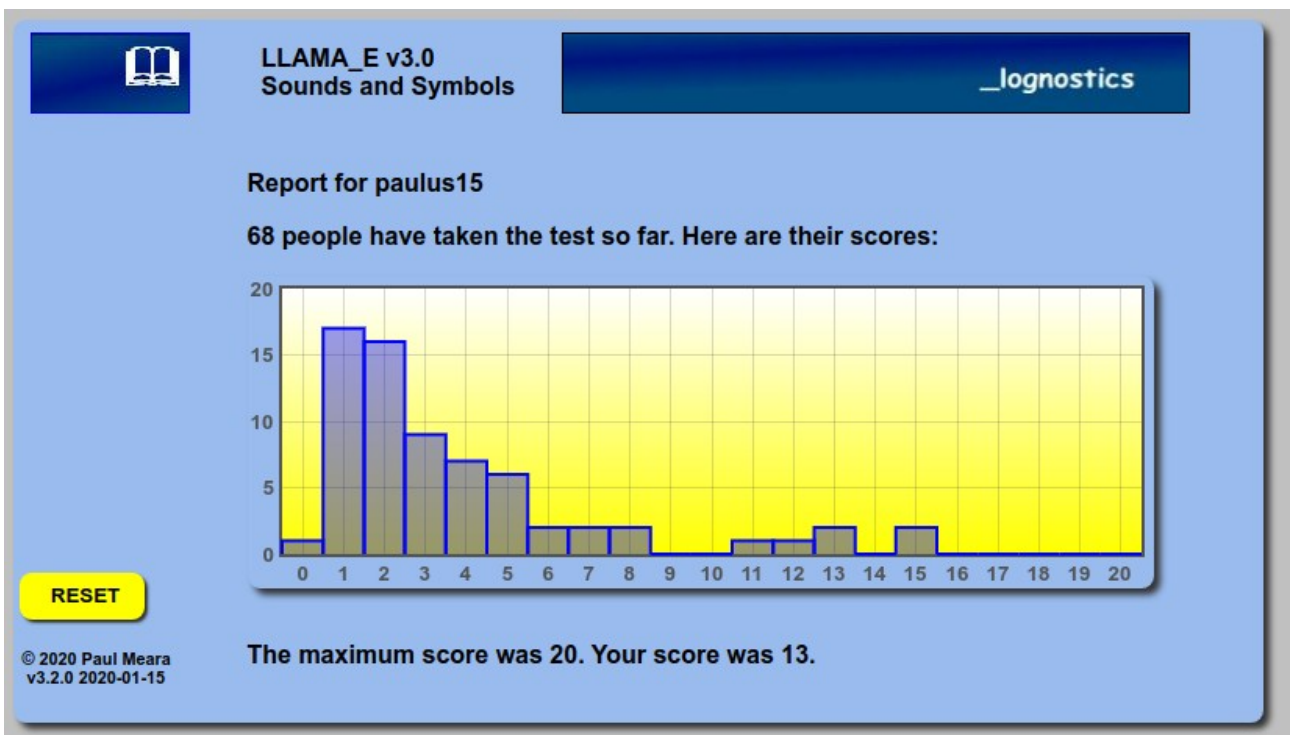


Figure 4: The LLAMA_E report page.

LLAMA_E3 Version 3.2

Notes for administrators

LLAMA_E3 is designed to run over the internet. It works best when used with the Chrome browser. It also runs reliably when used with the Firefox browser. Other browsers may work, but the program has not been extensively tested in these other environments. If you encounter problems with other browsers, please let us know, and we will try to fix them.

The program will work on small hand-held devices that run the Android operating system. However, devices with small screens will probably not work effectively.

The program is designed for use with adult language learners. It will probably work with young adults, say, 14+, but it almost certainly won't work with test takers who are younger than this. Test takers will need to be able to read and understand the on-line instructions

You will need to provide for your test takers an ID code and a set of instructions in their L1. The ID code will normally be a 8 character string consisting of letters and numbers. This string should uniquely identify each test taker. We recommend that you use a codes that all begin with the same alphabetic sequence, as this makes it easier for us to extract your data (see below). For example, if your test takers are all students based at Swansea University, then a code such as SWANxxxx, where xxxx identifies the individual test takers, would be effective.

Test-takers do not need to enter a code to take the test, but we cannot recover any data for students who don't provide an ID code.

The instructions for test takers should look something like this.

LLAMA_E tests how well you can learn a new writing system. It will take about 10 minutes to complete.

Step 1: enter your ID on the screen. This will usually be eight characters, e.g. ABCD1234. Use the id provided, or invent a sequence that identifies you uniquely, and isn't likely to be used by another test-taker. Click the **BEGIN>>** button to start the test.

Step 2: click on the blue buttons and listen to the sounds that the program plays for you. You have two minutes for this part of the test.

Step 3: click the NEXT button, listen to the sound that the program plays, and click the blue button that identifies that sound. There are 20 test questions.

Step 4: after the last question, click the FINISH button. The program will report your score.

If your test takers are not adult native speakers of English, then you will need to translate these instructions and make sure that each test taker understands what they need to do before they start the test.

If you do translate the instructions, we would like you to send us a copy, so that we can make a collection of instructions in many different languages. This saves other users a lot of work, and also ensures some uniformity in the administration.

The test takes about 10 minutes to complete. Phase 1, the learning phase, takes two minutes. Phase 2, the testing phase takes about eight minutes to complete.

When the test is completed, the program saves two data lines for each test taker, a score line and a raw data line. The score line looks like this:

CFPU0139,15

It indicates that test taker CFPU0139 scored 15 points.

The raw data line is more complete. It looks like this:

**CF0139,15~CF0139:dinu:panu:bubu:kadu:panu:tadu:binu:mudi:dupi:????:????:kama:????
:kuta:tata:pima:pata:gita:bita:kuta 2020/01/17**

This line indicates that test taker CFPU0139 took the test on 17th January 2020 and scored 15 points. All of the test-taker's responses to the test questions are listed. This is the only data that is stored by the program. We do this to make the program compliant with the European data protection legislation.

We recommend that you should normally record your test-takers' results from the report screen. If this is not possible, then you can request a download of your data. At the moment, this has to be done by hand, and may take some time. A way of downloading a specific set of data lines automatically will be implemented in due course.

Due to the very large number of people using this test, the data files can become very large, and this causes problems when many people are using the test simultaneously. In order to reduce this problem, we purge the data files from time to time. This means that the number of people who appear to have taken the test will vary from one administration to another. Data that is purged for this reason will be archived, but it won't appear in the report page. This means that the reported number of test-users will from time to time go down as well as up.

Requests for data downloads Send an email to p.m.meara@gmail.com with the following information:

- the code you used to identify your test-takers;
- the date(s) when they took the test;
- the number of data lines that you expect to receive;

e.g. *225 test-takers whose codes begin with ULIS, taking the test on 25th December 2021.*

We will normally turn round a request of this sort in a couple of days, but longer delays might occur at times.

It helps us evaluate the tests if you can send us some background information on the test-takers: what country the test-takers are based in, what their first language is, what age they are, why they are doing the test, and so on. This information should be generic, not specific to the individual test takers.

Bug reports and other malfunctions can also be reported to p.m.meara@gmail.com.

Please make your report explicit, and include a screen shot and a clear statement of what you think the problem is. We will make every effort to correct programming errors as quickly as possible, but not all problems can be resolved immediately, and some big problem will need to wait till the next update. We do our best to fix things quickly, but Lognostics has limited technical resources which are only available from time to time.

How to cite LLAMA_E
Meara, PM and VE Rogers (2020)
LLAMA_E v3.2. Cardiff: Lognostics.

Please let us know if you use the program in your research. We try to keep an up to date register of people who are using the LLAMA tests. You can find the current list on our web-site:

https://www.lognostics.co.uk/tools/LLAMA_3/LLAMA_Research.htm

If your work isn't listed here, then it's because we don't know about it.

The team is always glad to hear from people who have had a good experience using the LLAMA tests. If the tests work for you, please let us know and say thank you.

We will update the program from time to time as necessary. You can get information about these updates by following our Facebook page. This page also reports known bugs.

The small print

LLAMA_E v 3.2 is made freely available to researchers in exchange for critical evaluations of the test. This means that you should contact us if you are using the test, and tell us what you are using it for. We also ask that you send us a short summary of any findings when your research is complete.

There is no charge for the software. You should not charge test-takers for using it.

LLAMA_E v3.2 is an experimental research tool, and we do not know how well it works. This means that the test should **NOT** be used in high stakes situations where the outcome of the test impacts significantly on test-takers' lives. For example, you should not use this test to decide whether a test-taker should be admitted to a course, or as part of a formal assessment.

The authors do not accept any liability arising from irresponsible or ill-advised use of the tests.