Contents

List of illustrations

	Acknowledgements xvii	
	A note on fonts xviii	
	List of abbreviations and conventions xix	
1	What is writing?	1
2	The basic options: meaning and sound	18
3	Signs of words	38
4	Signs of syllables	62
5	Signs of segments	89
6	Consonants and vowels	109
7	Vowel incorporation	131
8	Analysis and interpretation	151
9	Mixed systems	168
0	History of writing	190
1	Psycholinguistics of writing	210
2	Sociolinguistics of writing	223

Appendix: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 1

242

Bibliography 247
Index of names 259
Index of subjects 263