

**Reading guide:**  
**Kenstowicz & Kisseberth (1979:Ch 2, pp 25-33 only),**  
**“Phonological Rules and Representations”**

### **Background**

This reading dates from 1979, and much has changed in phonology since that time. However, most of the basic ideas and questions raised in this reading are still fundamental aspects of phonological theory today.

### **Discussion questions**

- What do K&K consider to be “the fundamental question of phonology”? In other words, what do they see as the ultimate goal of phonological theory?
  
- What is the “Null Hypothesis” that K&K set up but reject?
  
- On what grounds do they reject the Null Hypothesis?
  
- K&K argue that there is an important distinction to be made between systematic or predictable and idiosyncratic or unpredictable aspects of the phonology of a language.
  - What evidence supports the claim that some information is systematic/predictable?
  - Do you agree with all of their arguments?
  - Can you think of any additional arguments for (or against) this distinction?
  
- K&K argue that the “Null Hypothesis” fails to make the distinction between predictable and unpredictable information. In what way does it fail to distinguish these—does it treat all phonological information as predictable, or as unpredictable?
  
- How are predictable and unpredictable information formally represented in the framework that K&K are assuming?
  - We will handle unpredictable information in essentially the same way that K&K do, but we will take a different approach to predictable information.