In this practical guide Michael D. Coe and Mark Van Stone have made the difficult, often mysterious Maya script accessible to the nonspecialist. They decipher real Maya texts, and the transcriptions include a picture of the glyph, the pronunciation, the Maya words in Roman type, and the translation into English. The book includes illustrations of historic texts, a syllabary, a lexicon, and translation exercises.

For the second edition the authors have added glyphs, updated captions, and reinterpreted or expanded upon earlier decipherments.