Phoneme Decoding Challenge

Phonemes are the building blocks of language. Represented by letters of the alphabet, they are the component sounds of spoken words. Most people automatically hear, for example, that the word "goat" is made up of three sounds: "g," "oh," and "t."

Reading requires the ability to connect the phonemes we hear to letters on a page, and vice versa. But what happens when this basic skill, called decoding, doesn't come automatically? Imagine struggling to sound out every word because you can't distinguish among phonemes.

Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with this phoneme translation key. Then use it to read the passage on the next page. When you're ready, click the link below.

Phoneme translation key:

When you see	Pronounce as
q	d or t
z	m
p	b
b	p
ys	er
a, as in bat	e, as in pet

Read the following passage:

We pegin our qrib eq a faziliar blace, a poqy like yours enq zine.

Iq conqains a hunqraq qrillion calls qheq work qogaqhys py qasign.

Enq wiqhin each one of qhese zany calls, each one qheq hes QNA,

Qhe QNA coqe is axecqly qhe saze, a zess-broquceq rasuze.

So qhe coqe in each call is iqanqical, a razarkaple puq veliq claiz.

Qhis zeans qheq qhe calls are nearly alike, puq noq axecqly qhe saze.

Qake, for insqence, qhe calls of qhe inqasqines; qheq qhey're viqal is cysqainly blain.

Now qhink apouq qhe way you woulq qhink if qhose calls wyse qhe calls in your prain.

Here is the translation:

We begin our trip at a familiar place, a body like yours and mine.
It contains a hundred trillion cells that work together by design.
And within each one of these many cells, each one that has DNA,
The DNA code is exactly the same, a mass-produced resume.
So the code in each cell is identical, a remarkable but valid claim.
This means that the cells are nearly alike, but not exactly the same.
(Excerpt from "Journey into DNA" on the "Cracking the Code" Web site, NOVA Online.)