

Station 1 – Learning Cuneiform

TASK 1: Read the following background information about cuneiform and write down 3 key facts under the Task #1 column for Station 1.

Sumerian cuneiform, based off the spoken language of Sumerian, is the earliest known writing system. Its origins can be traced back to about 8,000 BC when these early peoples used pictographs (pictures) and other symbols to represent trade goods and livestock on clay tablets. Originally, the Sumerians made small tokens out of clay to represent the items. Over time they realized that the tokens were not needed as they could make the symbols in the clay. The name 'cuneiform' means 'wedge-shaped' and comes from the Latin word *cuneus* (wedge). It is based on the appearance of the strokes, which were made by pressing reed stylus (wooden stick) into clay. Each letter in cuneiform is made from wedge-shaped strokes (you will notice a lot of triangle-shaped strokes). These types of symbols emerged in 3,000 BC. This system of writing spread to other areas of Mesopotamia other than Sumer and eventually inspired other ancient civilizations to create their own writing systems.

TASK 2: Decode the sentence on the reverse side of this page. Write the decoded sentence in the Task #2 column on your organizer.

TASK 3: Choose five letters to practice writing in the Task #3 column.
If you have time! Write "Mesopotamia" in cuneiform!



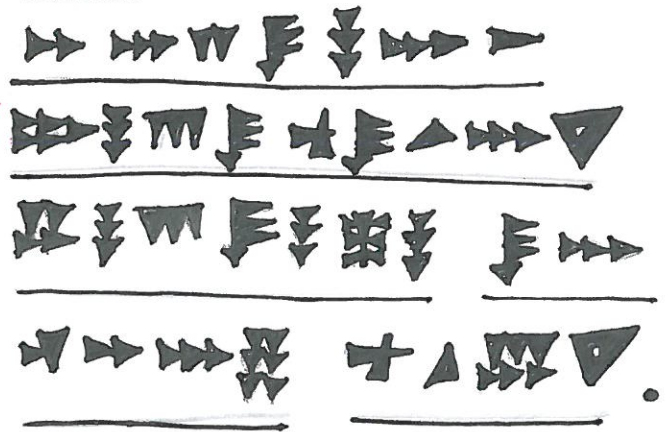
image(c)http://www.flickr.com/photos/jvdc/

Observe the triangle/wedge-shaped strokes involved in cuneiform writing.

Chart of Cuneiform Alphabet:

A Cuneiform "Alphabet"			
A	▶	N	▶▶
B	◀	O	▲
C	▼	P	◀▶
D	◀▶	Q	◀▶
E	▼	R	◀▶
F	◀▶	S	▼
G	▶	T	▶
H	◀▶	U	◀▶
I	◀▶	V	◀▶
J	▶	W	◀▶
K	▶	X	◀▶
L	◀▶	Y	◀▶
M	▶	Z	▼

Decode:



Station 2 - Cuneiform Writing

TASK 1: Read the following passage about cuneiform writing. Write down 3 key facts about cuneiform and what it was used for in Task #1 column for Station 2.

Sumerian cuneiform, based off the spoken language of Sumerian, is the earliest known writing system. Its origins can be traced back to about 8,000 BC when these early peoples used pictographs (pictures) and other symbols to represent trade goods and livestock on clay tablets. Many clay tablets and inscriptions have been found which reveal facts about the Sumerian government and religion, including the earliest known law code (the Code of Hammurabi). In Uruk, about one thousand clay tablets have been discovered which explain the development of Sumerian writing. Sumerians felt it was essential to have written records. They wrote various things such as accounts of legal disputes, lists of objects, economic activities, and temple records. Sumerians also kept records of much literature including hymns, epic tales, and myths. For instance, Sumerians wrote about a flood destroying the earth long before the story of Noah was written in the Bible. Sumerians also wrote the first epic (long) poem, the Epic of Gilgamesh, which enabled historians to learn about many aspects of Sumerian society.

TASK 2: Decode the question on the back of this page. Write the decoded question down in Task #2 column and answer it in the same column.

TASK 3: Write your name in cuneiform!

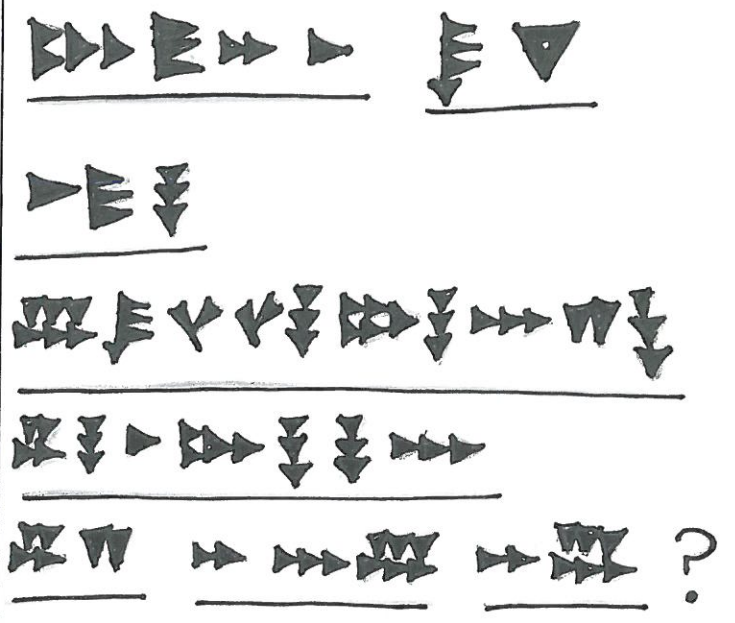


Example of what a cuneiform tablet would look like. Symbols to represent objects.

Chart of Cuneiform Alphabet

A Cuneiform "Alphabet"			
A	▶	N	▶▶
B	◀▶	O	▶
C	▶▶	P	▶▶
D	◀▶▶	Q	◀▶
E	▶▶▶	R	▶▶▶
F	▶▶▶▶	S	▶▶▶▶
G	▶▶▶▶▶	T	▶▶▶▶▶
H	▶▶▶▶▶▶	U	▶▶▶▶▶▶
I	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	V	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
J	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	W	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
K	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	X	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
L	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	Y	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
M	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	Z	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶

Decode:



Station 3 - Math & Cuneiform

TASK 1: Read the following background information about cuneiform and math. Write down 3 key facts in your Task #1 column for Station 3.

Cuneiform was the earliest system of writing of which we know. Because people in Mesopotamia engaged in a lot of trade, people wanted a way to keep records of trade that happened. Just like there is an alphabet for cuneiform, there is also a number system. Cuneiform numbers were written using a combination of just two signs: a vertical wedge for '1' and a corner wedge for '10'. Mathematics in Mesopotamia was, in many ways, more advanced than Egyptian math. They could extract square and cube roots, had knowledge of pi and could also deal with circular measurement. Babylonian mathematics was based much more on algebra and less on geometry.

TASK 2: Practice writing numbers 1-10 in cuneiform. Write these in the Task #2 column. Cuneiform numbers chart on the back of this page.

TASK 3: Solve the practice math problems on the reverse side of this page. Write your answers in cuneiform numbers AND English numbers.

Cuneiform Numbers Chart:

1		11		21		31		41		51	
2		12		22		32		42		52	
3		13		23		33		43		53	
4		14		24		34		44		54	
5		15		25		35		45		55	
6		16		26		36		46		56	
7		17		27		37		47		57	
8		18		28		38		48		58	
9		19		29		39		49		59	
10		20		30		40		50			

There are symbols for numbers 1-59. The numbers larger than these become more difficult to write. Below is the number 60.

60 (it is the same as the number 1)

Math Problems for TASK 3

1) + =

2) + =

3) - =

4) × =

Station 4 – Phoenician (fo-nee-shun) Alphabet

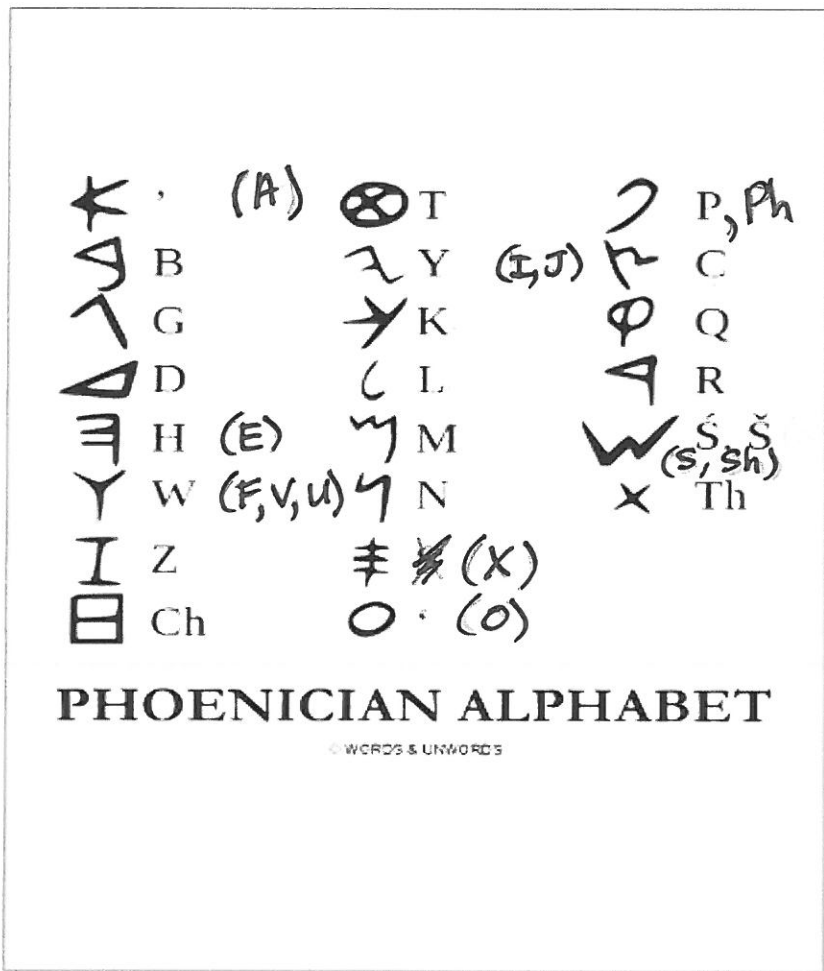
TASK 1: Read the following background information on the Phoenician alphabet. Write down 2 key facts about this writing system in the Task #1 column for Station 4.

In the northwestern part of the Fertile Crescent lay Phoenicia (fo-nee-sha). Phoenicia had little land to farm and few natural resources so they traded with many civilizations around them. The Phoenicians formed their civilization after those of the many different peoples with whom they traded. They borrowed ideas from the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and other trading partners. One idea that the Phoenicians borrowed was the alphabet, but they changed the writing systems they borrowed. They trimmed the alphabet to just 22 letters. Each letter stood for a single consonant sound. The Phoenicians used their improved alphabet in their businesses to record trade agreements and to write bills. The Phoenicians wrote from right to left. Some letters were used to represent more than one sound. They did not have the vowels in the same way that we do, but some letters were used to give the idea of the vowel sounds. Some of the letters have been changed slightly to match our current alphabet to help you understand the meaning. For our purposes, we will read and write the messages from left to right.

TASK 2: Decode the instructions on the reverse side of this page. Write the decoded instructions in the Task #2 column.

TASK 3: Complete the instructions from the Task #2 in the Task #3 column.

Take a few moments to look at the Phoenician Alphabet chart. Note the changes that have been included to show you which Phoenician characters match our current alphabet.



Decode the following Instructions (write in Task #2 column as you decode):

Y W E 2 0 7 7 2 7 2 7 7 7

⊗ ⊙ Y 4 2 ⊗ E 7 0 Y 4

7 7 7 7.

Complete the instructions in Task #3 column.

Station 5 – Understanding the Phoenician (fo-nee-shun) Alphabet

TASK #1: Read the following passage about the Phoenician Alphabet. Record 3 key facts about this writing system in the Task #1 column for Station 5.

The English alphabet was actually based on the Phoenician alphabet, which was formed sometime around 1200 B.C. It is said that the Phoenicians based their alphabet from the Mesopotamian cuneiform. By using the cuneiform as their guide, they were able to come up with their own characters. The Phoenician alphabet is composed of 22 characters, all of which are consonants. Early translators were baffled when they found out that there are no vowels in this particular way of writing but it was then assumed that the characters were formed by how it was spoken, and vowel sounds are automatically part of it. The Phoenician alphabet is written unlike our current alphabet. The Phoenicians would write from right to left when using it; therefore, it should also be read in the same direction. Aside from that, there are no spaces between words. Everything is inscribed as one long string of words. Eventually, dots were used as separators. These are just some of the things that gave translators some problems in decoding ancient documents.

TASK #2: Decode the question on the back of this page. Write the decoded question in the Task #2 column.

TASK #3: Write your answer to the question in the Task #3 column for Station 5.

Phoenician Alphabet Chart: Take a few moments to look at the Phoenician Alphabet chart. Note the changes that have been included to show you which Phoenician characters match our current alphabet.

⋆	(A)	⊗	T	⌒	P, Ph
∩	B	λ	Y (I, J)	⌒	C
∧	G	→	K	⊗	Q
∇	D	∩	L	∇	R
≡	H (E)	∩	M	∩	Š, Šh
∩	W (F, V, U)	∩	N	x	Th
I	Z	⊗	(X)		
⊗	Ch	○	(o)		

PHOENICIAN ALPHABET
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Question to decode:

Y ⊗ ⋆ ⊗ 4 λ Y ≡ ∇ W

⋆ 4 ≡ λ ∩ ∩ ∩ ⊗ ⋆ ∩ ⊗

λ ∩ ≡ W ∩ ∩ ⊗ ⋆ ∩ λ ⋆?

Y ≡ λ?