









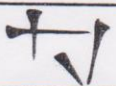



# The Development of Writing

People lived without a system of writing until the Sumerians invented one. Sumerian merchants and traders needed a way to keep track of the items they bought and sold. They made tablets of wet clay and etched marks in them as a record of their business activities. Scholars think that these marks led to the Sumerians' idea of writing.

The first written symbols were pictographs, or picture symbols. The Sumerians used a sharpened reed called a stylus to carve the symbols onto moist clay. Later, the symbols were simplified and made wedge-shaped (triangular). This type of writing became known as **cuneiform**.

Here are examples of how Mesopotamian pictographs turned into wedge-shaped symbols.

Meaning	Early Pictograph	Later Pictograph	Early Cuneiform	Later Cuneiform
sun				
ox				
bird				

Make up your own wedge-shaped symbols. Begin with a simple picture. Then change it gradually to an abstract, wedge-shaped form.

Meaning	Simple Picture	Abstract Picture	Wedge-Shaped Symbol

## Mesopotamia- Early Writing

1. Name the civilization that first used writing.
2. What were the first records that led to writing?
3. What was first used to represent words?
4. Eventually, the pictures became?
5. What was Sumer's writing called?
6. Name the tool and writing surface used for writing in Sumer.
7. Why did writing make Sumer powerful?
8. How long did it take to become a scribe?
9. Name something scribes wrote down.
10. What are the stories of the gods called?
11. Write down some important parts of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.
12. Why is the ability to write important for a civilization?

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Summary