

WRITE LIKE A SUMERIAN! CUNEIFORM ACTIVITY

Directions: Cuneiform is noted as the first writing system ever recorded. The first cuneiform writings were pictographs—symbols that represented an entire word. Eventually, the Sumerians added abstract symbols or signs to represent specific letters, numbers, and parts of a word.

In this activity, you will translate Sumerian cuneiform writing, write a message in Sumerian language, and then make up your OWN version of cuneiform to write a “coded message.”

Use the cuneiform alphabet and number system on this page. Activities are on the next pages.

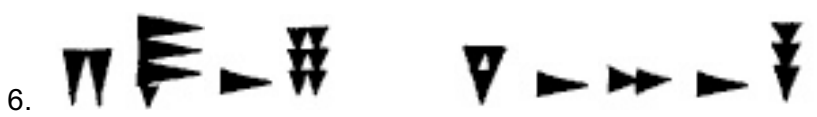
| A Cuneiform “Alphabet” | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|---|-------------|
| A | ▶ | N | ▶▶ |
| B | ◀▶ | O | ▶ |
| C | ▶▶ | P | ◀▶▶ |
| D | ◀▶▶ | Q | ◀▶ |
| E | ▶▶▶ | R | ▶▶▶ |
| F | ▶▶▶ | S | ▶▶▶▶ |
| G | ▶▶▶▶ | T | ▶▶▶▶▶ |
| H | ▶▶▶▶▶ | U | ▶▶▶▶▶▶ |
| I | ▶▶▶▶▶▶ | V | ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶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

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 𐎶 1 | 𐎶𐎶 11 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶 21 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 31 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 41 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 51 |
| 𐎶𐎶 2 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶 12 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 22 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 32 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 42 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 52 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶 3 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 13 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 23 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 33 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 43 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 53 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 4 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 14 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 24 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 34 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 44 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 54 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 5 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 15 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 25 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 35 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 45 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 55 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 6 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 16 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 26 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 36 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 46 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 56 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 7 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 17 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 27 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 37 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 47 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 57 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 8 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 18 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 28 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 38 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 48 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 58 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 9 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 19 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 29 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 39 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 49 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 59 |
| 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 10 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 20 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 30 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 40 | 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 50 | |

PART 1 – CUNEIFORM TRANSLATION

(6 POINTS)

Your job is to translate this ancient language to discover some ideas about ancient Mesopotamia. Good luck!



PART 2 – WRITE LIKE A SUMERIAN! (6 POINTS)

Now, your job is to write your own message using ancient Sumerian cuneiform. Answer the questions below using JUST Sumerian cuneiform symbols.

1. What is your favorite subject in school?

2. What is your favorite color?

3. What is your favorite food?

PART 3 – CREATE YOUR OWN PICTOGRAPH SYSTEM (6 POINTS)

Before cuneiform was invented, the only system of writing was pictographs—picture symbols that represented words. Think of our modern-day emojis as a version of pictographs. **Create your OWN PICTOGRAPH SYSTEM to answer the question below. You must include at least 5 different pictograph symbols. USE COLOR TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR DRAWINGS!** Write your translated answer upside-down in the box at the bottom of the page.

*Use your own pictograph system to answer the question:
“What is a memory from one of your favorite vacations?”*

Write your translated answer up