

Early Civilisations

History

Year 3/4

Lesson 2 of 7

Learning Objective		Resources
To find out about the first writing systems.		Slides Worksheet 2A/2B/2C Word Cards A/B Phoenician Alphabet sheet Clay and clay tools (FSD? activity only)
Teaching Input		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we find out about the past? Children to think, pair, share their ideas. Explain that until people developed writing systems, we had to rely on archaeological evidence to help us find out about what life was like. We can find out some things from archaeological evidence but not others. Can you think of some things we can't find out about if we only rely on archaeological evidence? Children to share their ideas, then check the suggestions on the slides. Explain that the first people to invent writing were the Sumerians. Go through the information on the slides about what early writing was used for and how it developed. Explain that other early civilisations had their own writing systems that they developed. Go through the information on the slides about Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Shang Dynasty oracle bones and the first alphabets of the Phoenicians. How do you think the invention of writing has helped us to find out about the past? How do you think it changed the lives of people at the time? Invite children to share their ideas. 		
Main Activity		
<u>Lower ability:</u> Provide children with the Phoenician Alphabet sheet and a set of Word Cards A. Challenge children to match the pictures to the words written in the Phoenician alphabet. Remind children that there were no vowels so the word e.g. 'cat' would have been written 'ct'. Some of the words in the cards (e.g. cat and cot) will be spelt the same using the Phoenician alphabet. Encourage children to discuss what difficulties this might have caused.	<u>Middle ability:</u> Provide children with the Phoenician Alphabet sheet and a set of Word Cards B. Challenge children to match the pictures to the words written in the Phoenician alphabet. Remind children that there were no vowels so the word e.g. 'cat' would have been written 'ct'. Some of the words in the cards (e.g. cat and cot) will be spelt the same using the Phoenician alphabet. Encourage children to discuss what difficulties this might have caused.	<u>Higher ability:</u> Provide children with the Phoenician Alphabet and worksheet 2A. Children to try and translate the text using by translating the Phoenician letters and adding in which vowels they think are missing. Children will need to use the context to help them find out the meaning of the word. When finished, children to share their work with a partner. Are all our words the same? If not, why not? What difficulties do you think this might have caused?
Fancy something different...?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide children with worksheet 2B or 2C (depending on ability) showing different objects that ancient civilisations might have needed to record, e.g. 'king', 'palace', 'grain', 'river', etc. Challenge children to come up with their own symbols to represent each of these objects and record on the worksheet. Children could then create a clay tablet to record their symbols by rolling clay into a tablet and carving the symbols into them, just like the Sumerians would have done. When children have finished, discuss how similar or different all their symbols are. Do you think you could explain why the writings of early civilisations are all different? Invite children to discuss their ideas. 		
Plenary		Assessment Questions
Can you imagine what life would be like without writing? What wouldn't we be able to do? Discuss ideas as a class. Encourage children to think about how different their lives would be. Would they be at school? If not, what would they do with their time? There would be no road signs, no books, no menus, no shop signs, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do children know when people first started using a writing system? Can children suggest reasons why writing systems were necessary? Do children know that writing systems developed over time?