

Using a script

The Egyptians wrote on a type of paper called papyrus. At first they wrote in hieroglyphs but over time they made the pictures much simpler so they could be written faster. Diagram 1 shows how a bird symbol was made into a shape which was much easier to write.

Diagram 1

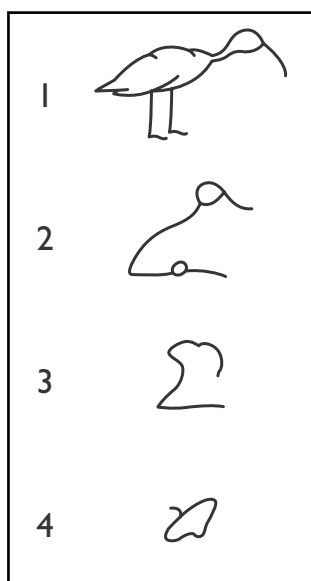


Diagram 2

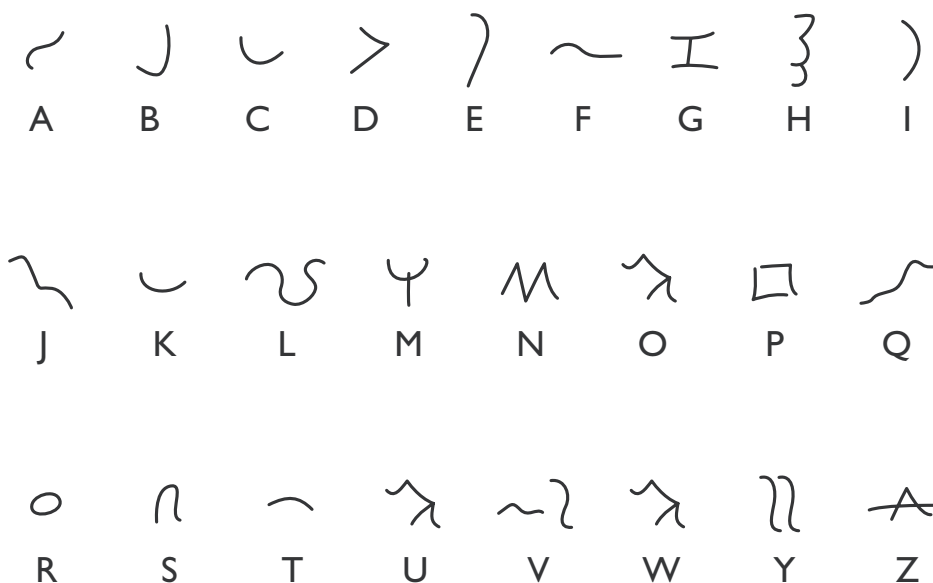


Diagram 2 shows how the symbols of the hieroglyphs can be made simpler so that writing became faster.

1. Write your name with the new script and time how long it takes you.

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2. Write your name in hieroglyphs and time how long it takes you.

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3. Write the message that you wrote in activity **10b** in hieroglyphs using this script. Does it use more or less space than the message in hieroglyphs?

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Using a script

Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

Using the worksheet

The Egyptians had a very ordered society and many records were kept. They were written on scrolls of papyrus by writers called scribes. Over the centuries the scribes simplified the symbols of the hieroglyphs so they could write more easily. These simplifications are known as the hieratic and demotic scripts. The demotic script developed after the hieratic script and is on the Rosetta Stone next to the hieroglyphs and were a key in enabling the Rosetta Stone to be translated. On the worksheet an actual simplification of a hieroglyph is shown in diagram 1. In diagram 2 a simple script has been invented by one of the authors to show how the hieroglyphs could be simplified. This allows the students to realise that the scribes did not write in hieroglyphs on papyrus and that using a script is faster and uses less space than using hieroglyphs. Step 2 also allows the students to experience what it was like to translate hieroglyphs into a script which was done by Egyptologists when they translated the information on the Rosetta Stone.

Younger students

You may wish to have teacher helpers in class to help the students use the script.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Realise that scribes used a script to record information on papyrus.
- Use a stop clock to time their writing activities.
- Compare writing in hieroglyphs with writing in a script.

Older students

The students can work on their own. They could try and write a longer piece in script than they did when writing using hieroglyphs in activity 10a.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Realise that scribes used a script to record information on papyrus.
- Use a stop clock to time their writing activities.
- Compare writing in hieroglyphs with writing in a script.