

# ALPHABETS

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## Chapter 2 Study Questions

1. Early visual language systems were complex and required knowledge of hundreds of signs and symbols, whereas an alphabet, a set of visual symbols or characters that represent the elementary \_\_\_\_\_ of a spoken language, require only twenty or thirty easily learned signs.

- A. vowels
- B. consonants
- C. sounds
- D. concepts

2. Unearthed in Crete in 1908, the \_\_\_\_\_ contains pictographic, and what appear to be alphabetic, forms imprinted on both sides in spiral bands.

- A. Phaistos Disk
- B. Greek stela
- C. Rosetta Stone
- D. Vatican Vergil

3. The North Semitic people helped establish the alphabet thanks to the \_\_\_\_\_: seafaring merchants whose ships linked settlements throughout the Mediterranean region.

- A. Greeks
- B. Sumerians
- C. Etruscans
- D. Phoenicians

4. The Aramaic alphabet evolved from the North Semitic (Phoenician) script and is the predecessor of hundreds of scripts. Three of these modern scripts are still used today. Which is NOT from Aramaic?

- A. Hebrew
- B. Chinese
- C. Sanskrit
- D. Arabic

5. The Phoenician alphabet was adopted by the ancient Greeks who applied \_\_\_\_\_ to the uneven Phoenician characters, converting them into art forms of great harmony and beauty. Many letterforms, including the E and M are based on a square. The A is constructed from an equilateral triangle, and the design of the O is a near perfect circle.

- A. pictographs of animals
- B. calligraphic and gestural scripts
- C. cuneiform characteristics
- D. geometric structure and order

6. In the 4th century, BCE, Alexander the Great expanded Greek culture throughout the ancient world, including Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India. Alexander formed \_\_\_\_\_ to contain and document the hard-won knowledge that would otherwise have been lost from an oral culture.

- A. libraries
- B. military armies
- C. works of Greek literature
- D. inscribed monuments

7. King Eumenes II of Pergamum (ancient Greece, now part of Turkey) developed the process of making \_\_\_\_\_ to overcome an embargo on papyrus placed by Egyptian King Ptolemy V during a fierce rivalry where both sought to influence their command of knowledge and literature through vast libraries each had created.

- A. paper
- B. parchment
- C. codices
- D. papyrus

8. Greek scribes made their pens from hard reeds cut into nibs and split at the tip to aid ink flow onto smooth sheets of vellum or parchment. These pens gave their writing style a different character than writing by Egyptian scribes, who used soft reeds to brush ink onto rough surfaces like papyrus. The Greeks developed a more rounded writing style called \_\_\_\_\_, which could be written more quickly because the rounded letters were formed with fewer strokes.

- A. demotic script
- B. uncials
- C. roman capitals
- D. shorthand

9. The Latin alphabet came to the Romans from Greece by way of the ancient \_\_\_\_\_, a people whose civilization on the Italian peninsula reached its height during the sixth century, BCE.

- A. Egyptians
- B. Etruscans
- C. Spartans
- D. Phoenicians

10. Rome took great pride in its imperial accomplishments and conquests, and created monumental letterforms for architectural inscriptions to celebrate military leaders and their victories. The simple geometric lines of the \_\_\_\_\_ later influenced the roman typography of the Renaissance era.

- A. *capitalis quadrata*
- B. *capitalis rustica*
- C. *capitalis monumentalis*
- D. *capitalis roman*

11. Two theories argue the origin of Roman serifs: the letter outlines were first painted onto stone, and the stone carvers followed the brush marks which flared at stroke ends and corners, creating serifs; or that serifs were devised \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. for connecting the letters of a single word.
- B. to neaten the ends of lines as they were chiseled into stone.
- C. as excuses for flaws made by sloppy stonecutters.
- D. by Christians seeking to distinguish a new style of Latin type.

12. The Roman written hand took several forms. The most important was the \_\_\_\_\_ (square capitals) which was written carefully and slowly with a flat pen in stately proportions and clear legibility. There were no spaces between words. Serifs were added with the pen.

- A. *capitalis quadrata*
- B. *capitalis rustica*
- C. *capitalis monumentalis*
- D. *capitalis roman*

13. The \_\_\_\_\_ came to be used increasingly in Rome and Greece about the time of Christ. The durability and permanence of this book format appealed to Christians because their writings were considered sacred and it was used to distance themselves from pagan formats.

- A. codex
- B. scroll
- C. rotulus
- D. disk

14. By the 1st century, CE, Rome began to experience hostilities from the Barbarians to the north, and from the Huns to the east. The Roman Empire ultimately fell in 476 CE, but by this time the \_\_\_\_\_ became the design form for visible languages in the Western world.

- A. Phoenician alphabet
- B. Arabic script
- C. Latin alphabet
- D. Phaistos disk

15. Three of the following modern alphabets are still in use today. Which one does NOT belong?

- A. Latin A B C D E F G H I J K L
- B. Arabic العبد الصادق لا ينكسر
- C. Cyrillic К Ў Ц А Б В Г Д Е Ж
- D. Phoenician ⚡ 9 1 Δ ≡ 2

16. Hangul was introduced by Korean monarch Sejong in 1446 CE, to put literacy within grasp of ordinary citizens who found the \_\_\_\_\_ writing system too difficult to master.

- A. Latin
- B. hieroglyphic
- C. Chinese
- D. Aramaic

17. The Hangul writing system—the Korean alphabet—is one of the most scientific ever invented. It consists of 14 consonants and 10 vowels that combine alphabet characters into blocks that correspond to \_\_\_\_\_ in the Korean language.

- A. pictographs of animals
- B. spoken syllables
- C. Chinese translations
- D. hand gestures

18. Hangul's 14 consonants are represented by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. abstract depictions of positions of the mouth/tongue when they are spoken.
- B. Latin letters.
- C. dots placed next to horizontal or vertical lines.
- D. complex Chinese characters.