

Cuneiform Narratives

Cuneiform Tablet, circa 2350-2000 BCE

Use the alphabet and icons provided to develop a story in cuneiform- it can be a historical narrative, a record of objects in your house, or a story you create all your own. You can also develop your own cuneiform alphabet and system of symbols for words inspired by the ones provided.

Before you start marking your clay, write down your cuneiform story on a piece of paper since, once the clay is exposed to air, you will have to work quickly so it will not dry out. Make sure you have planned ahead and that the size of your story or record will fit onto the tablet you will be molding.

Take the clay and mold it into a round or squared shape pressing down firmly to flatten it in order to create a large enough writing surface.

Use both ends of your stylus to create the wedged shapes of your alphabet into the tablet.

Once you have filled your tablet, set it aside to air dry. It may take up to 24 hours to dry all the way through.



Cuneiform
Tablet
Iraq,
2350-2000 BCE

List of Materials

Nail Cuticle Stick (as stylus)

Air dry clay

Cuneiform alphabet print out

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	↓

Fig. 3.

1	Y	11	<Y	100	Y Y-
2	YY	12	<YY	200	YY Y-
3	YYY	20	<<	300	YYY Y-
4	▼	30	<<<	400	▼ Y-
5	W	40	↘↗	500	W Y-
6	WY	50	Y	600	WY Y-
7	WY	60	Y<	700	WY Y-
8	WY	70	Y<<	800	WY Y-
9	WY	80	Y<<<	900	WY Y-
10	<	90	Y<<<	1000	Y< Y-

TABLE ILLUSTRATING THE SIMPLIFICATION OF CUNEIFORM SIGNS.

	LINE CHARACTER. (Vertical)	LINE CHARACTER. (Rotated)	OLD BABYLONIAN.	ASSYRIAN.	NEW BABYLONIAN.
FISH					
REED					
DRINKING POT					
HOUSE					
RAIN					
CIRCLE, SUN					
KING (with his crown)					
MAN					
EAR OF WHEAT					
HEAD OF A MAN					
STAR					

3000 BC	2800 BC	2500 BC	1800BC	600 BC	
					an (sky, heaven)
					ki (place; ground, earth, land, country)
					lu (who(m), which, man, ruler, person)
					munus (woman)
					kur (underworld, land, country, mountain(s), east, east wind)
					geme (female worker)
					saġ (head, person, capital)
					kag (mouth)
					ninda (bread, food)

a	á	e	é	i	í	u	ú
ba	bá	bà	be	bé	bè	bi	bí
bi	bu	bú	bù	da	dá	de	dè
di	dí	du	dú	dù	du4	ga	gá
ge	gé	gè	gi	gí	gi	gi4	gi5
gu	gú	gù	gu4	gu5	gu6	gu7	ħa

Phonogram Alphabet
(Symbols representing vocal sounds)

Phonogram Alphabet
(Symbols representing
vocal sounds)

há	hà	ha4	he	hé	hi	hí	hu
ka	ká	kà	ke	ké	ki	kí	ku
kú	kù	ku4	la	lá	là	le	lé
li	lí	lu	lú	ma	má	me	mé
mè	mi	mí	mì	mu	mú	na	
ná	nà	na4	ne	né	ni	ní	nu

Phonogram Alphabet
(Symbols representing
vocal sounds)

nú	pa	pá	pe	pé	pi	pí	pì
pu	pú	pù	ra	rá	re	ré	ri
rí	ru	rú	rù	sa	sá	sà	sa4
se	sé	si	sí	su	sú	sù	su4
ša	šá	šà	še	šè	ši	ší	šu
šú	šù	šu4	ta	tá	te	ti	tì

Phonogram Alphabet
(Symbols representing
vocal sounds)

ti4	tu	tú	tù	za	zá	ze	zé
zi	zí	zì	zu	zú			
ab	áb	eb	éb	ib	íb	ub	úb
ad	ád	ed	id	íd	ud	úd	ag
ág	eg	ég	ig	íg	ug	ah	áh
eh	ih	uh	úh	ak	ek	ik	uk

Phonogram Alphabet
(Symbols representing
vocal sounds)

al	ál	el	él	il	íl	ul	úl
am	ám	em	im	ím	um	úm	
an	en	èn	in	in4	in5	un	ún
ap	ép	ip	íp	up	úp	ar	ár
er	ir	ip	ur	úr	as	es	és
is	ís	ús	aš	aš	eš	éš	

Phonogram Alphabet
(Symbols representing
vocal sounds)



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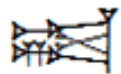
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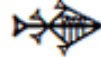
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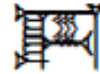
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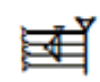
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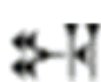
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