

Suitable for
Ages 8+

Activity



Greek Writing

In this activity you can learn the Greek alphabet and decipher some words written in Greek. You will need the worksheets on the next pages.

You will need:

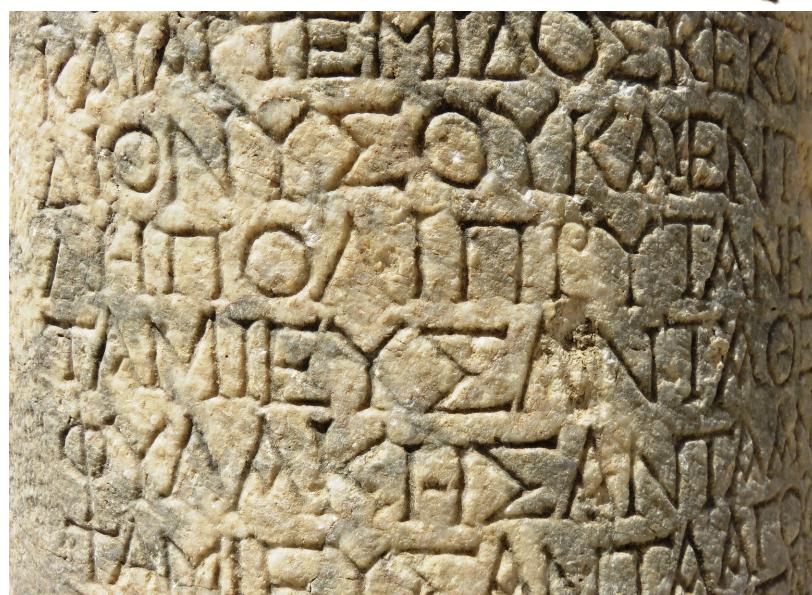
Pen, paper, worksheet

Useful Questions:

- What other alphabets and forms of writing do you know about?
- What was the earliest form of writing?
- Why not make up your own alphabet or code and write secret messages to your friends?



Time
Required:
1 hour



This is some Ancient Greek writing. Greek writing was written with no gaps between words. Why do you think they didn't use gaps between words?



Worksheet 1



This is the Greek alphabet (the first letters are the capital letters, the second are lower case):

A α
Α α

B β
Β β

Γ γ
γamma
Γ Γ

Δ δ
Δ Δ

E ϵ
εpsilon
Ε ε

Z ζ
zeta
Ζ ζ

H η
eta
Η η

Θ θ
theta
Θ θ

I ι
iota
Ι ι

K κ
kappa
Κ κ

Λ λ
lambda
Λ Λ

M μ
mu
Μ μ

N ν
nu
Ν ν

Ξ ξ
xi
Ξ ξ

O \circ
omicron
Ο ο

Π π
pi
Π Π

P ρ
rho
Ρ ρ

Σ σ / ς
sigma
Σ Σ

T τ
tau
Τ τ

Υ υ
upsilon
Υ / Υ υ / υ

Φ ϕ
phi
Φ / Φ ϕ / ϕ

X χ
chi
Χ χ

Ψ ψ
psi
Ψ Ψ

Ω ω
omega
Ω Ω



Worksheet 2

The word ‘alphabet’ comes from the names of the first two letters of the Greek alphabet. Write them down here:

How many letters are there in the Greek alphabet?

How many letters are there in our alphabet? _____

Try and write your name in Greek here:

Lots of words have survived from ancient Greek in the English we speak now. Here are some of those words written in Greek. Write the letters of our alphabet underneath to work them out. Watch out for Greek letters that are two letters in our alphabet.

ε χ ο

δ ρ α μ α

κ ο σ μ ο σ



ολυμπος

ορκεστρα

σκενε

There are lots more words that come from Greek in English. Try writing these words using the Greek alphabet:

Demokratia _____

– in English this translates as ‘democracy’.

Demos means ‘people’

Kratia means ‘power’

So the word ‘democracy’ literally means ‘people power’.

Philosophia _____

– in English this translates as ‘philosophy’.

Philos means ‘love’

Sophia means ‘wisdom’

So the word ‘philosophy’ literally means ‘love of wisdom’.

Strategos _____

– in English this translates as ‘strategy’.

Strategos was the name given to a general in the army So our word ‘strategy’ comes from the Greek word for general



Archaeologia _____

– in English this translates as ‘archaeology’.

Arche means beginning

Ologia means knowledge So the word ‘archaeology’ means ‘knowledge about the beginning [long ago]’.

Hippopotamos _____

– in English this translates as ‘hippopotamus’.

Hippo means ‘horse’

Potamos means ‘river’

So the word ‘hippopotamus’ means ‘river horse’.

Can you find out about any more? Think of the words you know ending in ‘ology’ – they have all come from Greek!

