

	OX	HOUSE	WATER	EYE	HEAD	
EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS c3000 BC						Egyptian writing did not develop far from the use of pictorial symbols.
CANAANITE c2000 BC						Canaanite writing shows its pictorial origins, but in fact symbolizes basic sounds.
PHOENICIAN c1000 BC						The 22 basic symbols of the Canaanite system became the standard for the region.
HEBREW c700 BC						The Hebrews adopted the Canaanite alphabet in a modified form.
OLD GREEK c650 BC						The Canaanite origins can still be seen in archaic Greek script.
ARAMAIC c350 BC						Aramaic was the main language of the Persian Empire, and displaced Hebrew in Palestine.
FORMAL HEBREW c150 BC						Classical Hebrew was written in a 'square' form of the common script of the region.
FORMAL GREEK c450 BC						The Greek alphabet allocated vowel sounds to some of the letters, and added more symbols.
ROMAN c550 BC						The Romans gained their alphabet from the Etruscans and Greek colonists.

Canaanite scribes invented the first alphabet, from which all other Western systems are derived. The early Egyptian hieroglyphs bear some resemblance to the ideograms that are the basis of early Chinese written character, but by the time of Roman alphabet lettering becomes standardized.

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