# Where Did It Begin?

**Subject:** Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies

**Grade level**: 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>

**Rationale or Purpose:**
Students will learn to work collaboratively in groups to investigate the oldest forms of writing and the materials that were used to create these forms. In addition, students will explore the cultures that used these early forms of written communication and draw conclusions about the reasons a particular form, material, or symbol was used.

**Materials:**
The Gutenberg Bible Education Module,
http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/education/modules/gutenberg
Computer with access to PowerPoint
Information Gathering Worksheet #1
Slide Layout Worksheet #2
Model Planning Worksheet #3

**Lesson Duration:** 3 class periods

**Objectives: Language Arts – 110.7**
(7 A) establish a purpose for reading
(9 A) recognize distinctive and shared characteristics of culture
(12E) compare communication in different forms
(13A) form and revise questions
(15C) write to inform such as to explain, describe, report, and narrate
(19G) refine selected pieces to publish

**Objectives: Social Studies - 113.7**
(24C) Explain how scientific discoveries and technological innovations in the field of communication have benefited individuals and society in the United States.
(24E) Predict how future scientific discoveries and technological innovation could affect life in the United States.
(25A) Differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources

**Activity:**
Step 1: Divide students into groups of four, assigning one student as group leader. This leader will manage time and ensure the group stays on task.

Step 2: Each group will be assigned a geographical region to cover: Mesopotamia-Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, or Rome.

Step 3: Focusing on specific cultures and their early forms of writing, each group will search for information about the early writings of their geographic region found on the

**Early Writing** topic page in **Books Before and After Gutenberg**:
http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/education/modules/gutenberg/books/early

Step 4:  Hand out *Information Gathering Worksheet #1* to each group for note taking purposes.

Step 5:  After completing research, each group should assimilate their information to create a slide(s) to be used in a PowerPoint presentation.  Give each group *Slide Layout Worksheet #2* (some groups will want more than one) to plan the layout before creating the slide(s) on the computer.

Step 6:  Students will view scanned images of artifacts, found on the **Gutenberg Education Module**, depicting the various types of early writing and the forms they took.

Step 7:  Give each group *Model Planning Worksheet #3* for planning their visual.

Step 8:  Using their group's layout design, two group members will work together to create a PowerPoint slide(s) on the computer.  The remaining two members will work together to create a model based on the group's plans.

Step 9:  Show the PowerPoint presentation with each group presenting their slides and sharing their models with the rest of the class.

**Closure:**
Following the presentation, conduct a class discussion with students addressing answers to the following questions:

> What was the purpose of the writing?  Who was the intended audience within the culture?  What are the oldest forms of writing?   What cultures used each form?  What materials were used?  How did the geographical location influence the materials used for writing?    What influenced the type of symbols used in the culture's writing? How have these ancient forms influenced how we write and the materials we use today? How has writing changed technologically, what innovations in printing and writing do you predict for the future?

**Extension:**
Create a map of the world indicating the locations of the various cultures represented by the class's research findings.  The map should include the location name, the culture identity, and the writing form (as indicated in the key by a symbol).

**Activity by:**
Cathey Bennett, librarian
Axtell Jr/Sr High School
Axtell, Texas

Names of group members _____    Date _____

_____

# **Information Gathering Worksheet #1**

Geographic Location:                              Culture Group:

Why did they write?

Who was it written for?

What materials did they use to write?

Where did they get these materials?

What kind of symbols did they use for writing?

Why did they choose these particular symbols?

Names of group members

_____

Date _____

# Slide Layout Worksheet #2

## Text Layout

Title Font-                Title Color-                Title Animations-


Title:



Text Font-                 Text Color-                 Text Animations-


Text:




## Graphic Layout

Graphic used-

Placement of graphic-

Names of group members

_____

Date _____

# **Model Planning Worksheet #3**

Writing form:  _____

Materials needed:

Steps in making model:

Time needed to create model: