STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKBOOK

Eight traditions. Many ways to write.

World Writing Systems Classroom Kit · Volume 1









Observe carefully. Compare structures. Ask what the evidence can—and cannot—tell us.

Name _____

Class / date _____

Your tools

The eight reference sheets, this workbook, a pencil and curiosity. No knowledge of how to read these scripts is expected.

A1 / USE THE REFERENCES

The specimen detective

Use R1–R8. Match each specimen with its writing tradition. This is visual identification, not translation.

1a · Specimen A

தமிழ்

Tradition: _____

1b · Specimen B



Tradition: _____

1c · Specimen C

العربية

Tradition: _____

1d · Specimen D

ⲤⲰⲨ

Tradition: _____

A7 / USE THE REFERENCES

Match material and method

Use the materials page and references. More than one tradition may use a material. This is not a universal clay-to-paper ladder.

7a

Which material can receive impressions before it dries? Name the strongly associated tradition in the kit.

7b

Are papyrus and parchment the same? Identify their starting materials.

7c

Name the South Asian manuscript surface associated with Tamil in this kit.

7d

Name two traditions in the kit associated with stone inscriptions.

PRINT OR PROJECT THIS PAGE

A 45-minute first lesson

Minutes	Activity	Facilitation
0–5	Observe	Show two labeled specimens. Ask what students notice, not what they guess the signs mean.
5–13	Reference jigsaw	Pairs read R1–R8; each pair reports one structure and one caution.
13–21	Match	Complete A1–A2. Check labels together; no translations.
21–29	Compare	Choose two questions each from A3 and A4. Use the glossary.
29–39	Material inquiry	Read the materials sheet. Complete A7 and discuss the evidence card in A8.
39–45	Exit ticket	Complete A12. Share one supported claim and one unanswered question.

Times sum to 45 minutes. All twelve activities are not expected in a single lesson.

Success check

Look for evidence-based comparisons, not memorized pronunciations or cultural rankings. Use the Answer Key to separate objective responses from discussion guidance.

R1 / REFERENCE SHEET

Tamil

தமிழ்

Modern digital specimen: the Tamil self-name. This is not a tracing of an inscription.

Place context

Tamil Nadu (India) & Eelam (Sri Lanka)

Historical context

Tamil writing tradition: c. 3rd century BCE–present

Writing direction

Left-to-right

Writing structure

Abugida

Material traditions

Palm-leaf manuscripts and inscriptions; later paper and print

A story to notice

A writing tradition can remain alive while its letterforms change. Tamil-Brahmi belongs to the history of Tamil writing; the modern letters on this page are not unchanged ancient forms.

> **Look closely**
>
> Look for a vowel sign attached to a base letter. You do not need to pronounce or translate the sample to compare its structure.

Remember: The historical period describes a continuum of writing traditions, not one unchanging font or script form.

Evidence: S1, S2. See Source & Attribution Notes.