You probably write all the time without even thinking about it. Writing is a very important part of daily life. It serves several important purposes. One purpose of writing is to communicate. In fact, before there were telephones, writing was just about the only way people could stay in contact. That was especially true if they did not live in the same town. Writing also helps us to remember things and keep records. That’s one reason you take notes in class. It’s also why people make shopping lists and write down telephone numbers. Imagine what it would be like if your teacher did not keep records of your assignments and exam scores. It would be difficult to recall what work you had completed. It would also be hard to know how you were doing in class.

1. What is this text mostly about?
   A. why people make shopping lists
   B. why people write
   C. what life was like before telephones
   D. how to get a better exam score

2. Which is not a reason people write?
   A. to keep records
   B. to remember things
   C. to communicate
   D. to follow rules

3. Which word is a synonym for recall?
   A. remember
   B. write
   C. discuss
   D. complete

4. What part of speech is the word true?
   A. noun
   B. adverb
   C. adjective
   D. verb

5. What is the meaning of the word record in this text?
   A. a musical release
   B. a top performance
   C. an exam
   D. written proof

SCORE
1. Y N
2. Y N
3. Y N
4. Y N
5. Y N
___ / 5
Total
The alphabet you use is a very important tool for writing, but it is not the only one. There are many kinds of alphabets. Children in Japan learn to write with kanji (KAHN-gee). Kanji are small drawings, or characters. They do not represent letters, the way the alphabet you know does. Instead, they represent a whole meaning. For instance, there is a kanji for water and one for big. Russian children learn another kind of alphabet called the Cyrillic (si-RIL-ik) alphabet. Some Cyrillic letters, such as O and T, sound like the letters you know. But there are many Cyrillic letters that sound different from the letters you know. Hebrew and Arabic also use alphabets that are different from the one you know. So does Hindi. Hindi is a language spoken in India.

1. Which of these is the topic sentence for this text?
   - A. There are many kinds of alphabets.
   - B. Hindi is a language spoken in India.
   - C. They do not represent letters, the way the alphabet you know does.
   - D. Children in Japan learn to write with kanji.

2. Which statement is not true about alphabets?
   - A. There are many kinds of alphabets.
   - B. Kanji represent whole meanings.
   - C. Everyone around the world uses the same alphabet.
   - D. Some Cyrillic letters sound like the letters you know.

3. Which word is defined as drawings, or characters, that represent whole meanings?
   - A. Cyrillic letters
   - B. kanji
   - C. alphabets
   - D. languages

4. Which word from the text can be both a noun and a verb?
   - A. writing
   - B. one
   - C. letters
   - D. learn

5. What is the meaning of the word tool as it is used in the first sentence?
   - A. somebody manipulated by another
   - B. way to get something
   - C. hammer
   - D. instrument
There are several languages that do not have a written alphabet. One example is American Sign Language. It is a language used by many people who are deaf. This language uses hand signs and facial expressions. It has an alphabet, but it is not a written alphabet. Instead, each letter is made with a special hand shape. Many American Indian languages did not have written languages at first. So people created alphabets for them. For instance, the Cherokee did not have a written alphabet. So a Cherokee named Sequoyah (si-KWOI-uh) created one. There are also some other languages that do not have written alphabets. Ainu is an example. Ainu is a very old language spoken in Japan.

1. Which of these is the main idea of this text?
   - **A** Ainu is a very old language.
   - **B** American Sign Language is used by people with deafness.
   - **C** The Cherokee did not use to have a written alphabet.
   - **D** Several languages do not have a written alphabet.

2. How are American Sign Language letters made?
   - **A** with characters
   - **B** with a written alphabet
   - **C** with special hand shapes
   - **D** with pictures

3. Which is not an example of a facial expression?
   - **A** a slap
   - **B** a scowl
   - **C** a smile
   - **D** a look of surprise

4. What does the pronoun *it* in the third sentence refer to?
   - **A** Ainu
   - **B** American Sign Language
   - **C** American Indians
   - **D** people

5. What is the meaning of the phrase *for instance*?
   - **A** for that matter
   - **B** for what it’s worth
   - **C** for example
   - **D** for a start

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Score:

1. [Y] [N]
2. [Y] [N]
3. [Y] [N]
4. [Y] [N]
5. [Y] [N]

Total: ___ / 5
Alphabets are very important tools. Without them, we wouldn’t be able to write. How did alphabets get started in the first place? When and why did people start to write?

The first people were hunter-gatherers who didn’t really need a writing system. They left behind beautiful paintings, but they didn’t leave anything written. Then, people learned to grow crops and domesticate animals. Now, people needed some sort of system to record what they grew and keep track of their animals. They needed a writing system to help them keep records.

The first writing systems developed in two places, Egypt and Mesopotamia, at about the same time. Both systems used pictograms, which are pictures that represent things. For instance, a picture of a bull might represent a real bull. For a while, those systems were very successful.

But as cities began to grow, people needed more than a system of pictures. People needed to be able to represent new ideas. So the Sumerians developed a system of wedge-shaped marks. That system is called cuneiform (kyoo-NEE-uh-fawrm). At first, those marks represented things. Later, they represented sounds. A similar thing happened in Egypt. At first, Egyptian hieroglyphics (hahy-er-uh-GLIF-iks) were pictures of things. Later, they came to represent sounds, and still later, the symbols for those sounds became letters.

The alphabet you know developed from those symbols. Even the word alphabet itself comes from those ancient symbols. The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is alef, which is the Hebrew word for “ox.” The original Hebrew letter looks a little like a symbol for an ox’s head—that is how that letter got its name. The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet is bet, which is also the Hebrew word for “house.” The Hebrew letter bet looks a little like a symbol for a house, and that is how that letter got its name.
Read "Alphabet Soup" and then answer the questions.

1. Why did hunter-gatherers not need an alphabet?
   - A They lived in Mesopotamia.
   - B They lived in large cities.
   - C They didn’t need to keep track of things.
   - D They used hieroglyphics.

2. If readers forget what cuneiform means, what can they do?
   - A Write the word.
   - B Read the last sentence again.
   - C Read the title and look at the pictures.
   - D Read the fourth paragraph again.

3. Which statement reflects an appropriate purpose for reading this?
   - A I want to learn the recipe for alphabet soup.
   - B I want to know the history of alphabets and how they came to be.
   - C I want to memorize a new alphabet.
   - D I want to alphabetize words.

4. Why did pictograms stop being successful?
   - A Pictograms took too long to write.
   - B Pictograms were too small.
   - C People were bored with pictograms.
   - D People needed to represent new ideas.

5. What happened as a result of the Sumerians developing cuneiform writing?
   - A Today’s alphabet was developed.
   - B Hunter-gatherers left paintings behind.
   - C People began to live in cities.
   - D People used pictograms.

6. Which topic is the author interested in?
   - A science
   - B language
   - C music
   - D soccer

7. Why did the first writing systems develop in Egypt and Mesopotamia?
   - A The first humans hunted there.
   - B Those places had a lot of animals.
   - C The first cities were located there.
   - D Those places had very cold climates.

8. What do all the alphabets discussed in the text have in common?
   - A They were all established in the same era.
   - B They are important tools that allow people to write and communicate.
   - C They all share some symbols and letters.
   - D The alphabets in the text do not have anything in common.
Imagine you lived in Mesopotamia. What sort of writing would you invent? Create five or six symbols. Draw the symbols and explain what they mean.

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