

Answer each of the following questions in a few paragraphs. Include specific examples to support your thesis and conclusions.

1. **Comparative Analysis:** Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the early writing systems depicted in Snapshot, “Writing in Ancient Civilizations,” in the main text.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** Compare and contrast life in a Neolithic village to life in a city in one of the First Civilizations.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** Compare and contrast the life of a woman in Egypt to that of a woman living in Mesopotamia.
4. **Personal Reflection:** Do you think that, on the whole, the emergence of the First Civilizations was a positive or negative development for humankind?

Answer Key

1. *Answer would ideally include:*

- Consideration of *all* writing systems included in the Snapshot, not just one or two
- What the writing system could do—could it express all human thought?
- How difficult it would be to read and write using each system, and the length of time needed to learn each one
- How long it would take to write a message using each system
- The expense of writing materials (especially considering the cheapness of Mesopotamian clay compared to Egyptian papyrus)
- The relative advantages of pictographs compared to symbols representing sounds, syllables, or consonants

A *really* good response will make a meaningful comparison to our modern alphabet.

2. *Answer would ideally include:*

- Size of population
- Occupation of inhabitants
- Issues of social status
- Government and ceremony
- Defense
- Issues of gender equality or inequality

3. *Answer would ideally include:*

- The legal status of women
- Evidence of affection between the sexes

A *really* good essay will go beyond these points to a consideration of *why* women in Egypt enjoyed a much more equal position to men, possibly bringing in issues such as:

- Urban (Mesopotamia) versus village (Egypt) life
- Relative prosperity of the two lands
- Belief in powerful goddesses (Egypt) versus increasingly weak goddesses (Mesopotamia)

4. *Answer would ideally include:*

Positive:

- The development of “culture” (writing, monumental art, literature, etc.)
- Defense
- Cooperation for the good of many (irrigation works, flood control)
- Increased productivity

Negative:

- The institutionalization of inequality—social, economic, gender
- Large-scale warfare
- Epidemic disease