Chapter 3 – Section 1 “The Civilization of Sumer”
Cuneiform Web Quest and Activity

As you have learned from your textbook, the ancient Sumerians developed an intricate writing system known as cuneiform over several thousand years ago. This system of communication was later adopted and used as part of the Babylonian dialect.

Your objective for this activity is to conduct an educational journey through this ancient civilization to discover more about this unique writing system.

**Quest #1**: Go to the following website: [http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~scmarkve/2910Su11/WrSys/evolofcuneiform3100–600BC.htm](http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~scmarkve/2910Su11/WrSys/evolofcuneiform3100–600BC.htm)

As you read about cuneiform, answer the following questions in well-developed sentences. Be sure to restate the question in your response.

1. What is the origin of the word cuneiform?

2. What was one of the most important forms of agriculture in southern Mesopotamia? Draw a symbol for that crop here.

3. Who was a scribe and what tool(s) did he use for his job?

4. Write this math equation using cuneiform. Use our plus sign and equal sign, but write the numbers for the equation \(2 + 3 = 5\).

5. Describe the sun god tablet.
Quest #2: Now go to the following website: http://www.penn.museum/games/cuneiform.shtml

6. Read further about cuneiform and explain a pictograph/pictogram.

7. What did the Sumerians and other use to write on? Briefly explain the process.

8. When was knowledge of this type of writing lost? Who discovered its existence?

Quest#3: Lastly, go to the following site and follow the instructions to translate the initials of your name to cuneiform. Once you have it on the screen, copy it onto a separate piece of paper or take a screen shot. You may also practice writing your initials using a whiteboard app. Once you feel that you have perfected your three initials, you will write them on a larger piece of paper supplied by your teacher—first with light pencil strokes and then traced over with permanent marker. http://www.penn.museum/cgi/cuneiform.cgi

Scoring Guide:

Answered all questions to the web quest in complete sentences (restating the question) 5 pts.

Answers demonstrate a thorough understanding and evidence of learning about cuneiform 5 pts.

Finished product of initials written correctly and neatly in cuneiform according to directions 10 pts.