

ACTIVITY 3.1**PRACTICE WRITING THE GREEK ALPHABET**

The ancient Athenians didn't have paper to write on, but they did have papyrus, parchment, wax tablets, pieces of wood, and ostraka. Check out the following website to see samples and descriptions of the different writing materials of the time: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/papyrus-collection/ancient-writing-materials>.

Materials

- » Small piece of wood (at least the size of your hand)
- » Sanding paper
- » Fine-point marking pen
- » Access to Internet

Directions:

- » With the sanding paper, smooth the piece of wood on the front- and backsides. Brush the dust off the wood with a paper towel or dry cloth.
- » Pretend that you are back in first grade learning to write the alphabet, except that you are Greek, and you are practicing the Greek alphabet, shown below:

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

- » Write the alphabet three different ways. First, from alpha (the first letter) to omega (the last letter). Second, from omega to alpha. Third, alternate the first and last letters (alpha followed by omega, then beta followed by psi, etc.). This is the way that Greek boys were taught the alphabet.

Extra Fun

Search the Internet for the names of all of the Greek letters. Here's one website that could help: <http://www.ancientscripts.com/greek.html>. What sounds do the Greek letters make, according to this website? Use an online translator, like Google Translate, to translate your name into Greek.

Figure 3.1B. Names written on a lamp. From *Graffiti in the Athenian Agora* (p. 15), by M. Lang, 1988, Princeton, NJ: ASCSA. Copyright 1988 by ASCSA. Reprinted with permission.