

Ideas on the Move

Trace how ancient cultures borrowed, changed, and shared ideas.

SS.6.G.2.6 "Explain the concept of cultural diffusion and identify the influences of different ancient cultures on one another."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each example of an idea, belief, skill, or writing system moving between cultures. Circle the words that show how the receiving culture changed or blended that influence.

Culture Meets Culture

- ① Cultural diffusion happens when ideas, goods, skills, or beliefs move from one culture to another. It often occurs when people trade, migrate, travel, or conquer new lands. Ancient ports along the Mediterranean Sea brought merchants together. A trader might carry purple dye, carved ivory, and stories from home. People who met these traders could adopt useful products or practices. Diffusion did not make every culture the same. Groups selected, changed, and blended ideas with their own traditions.
- ② The Phoenicians, skilled sailors and traders, used an alphabet with signs mainly for consonant sounds. Around the eighth century BCE, Greek communities borrowed this writing system through contact with Phoenician traders. Greeks changed several signs to represent vowel sounds, making the alphabet fit their language. Later, Etruscans in Italy adapted Greek letters, and Romans adapted Etruscan writing. The modern English alphabet developed much later from the Roman alphabet. One idea traveled, but each culture reshaped it.
- ③ After Alexander of Macedon conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, Greek and Egyptian traditions met more often. The city of Alexandria became a center of trade and learning where Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and others lived and worked. Greek rulers in Egypt supported temples for Egyptian gods, while Greek-style columns and statues appeared in some Egyptian settings. A new god, Serapis, combined Greek and Egyptian religious features. Cultural diffusion can move in more than one direction as communities exchange and adapt ideas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What is cultural diffusion? Name two ways it can happen.

2 How did Greek communities first gain the Phoenician writing system?

3 Trace the path of the alphabet from the Phoenicians to the Romans. How did the Greeks change it?

4 Give two details that show Greek and Egyptian traditions influencing one another in Egypt.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose two ancient cultures not named in the passage. Write three sentences explaining one idea, belief, skill, or product that moved between them, how the receiving culture changed or used it, and why this is cultural diffusion.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each example of an idea, belief, skill, or writing system moving between cultures. Circle the words that show how the receiving culture changed or blended that influence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is cultural diffusion? Name two ways it can happen.	Cultural diffusion is the movement of ideas, goods, skills, or beliefs from one culture to another. It can happen through trade, migration, travel, or conquest.
2	How did Greek communities first gain the Phoenician writing system?	Greek communities gained it through contact with Phoenician traders.
3	Trace the path of the alphabet from the Phoenicians to the Romans. How did the Greeks change it?	Phoenicians used the alphabet, Greeks borrowed and changed it, Etruscans adapted Greek letters, and Romans adapted Etruscan writing. Greeks changed some signs to represent vowel sounds.
4	Give two details that show Greek and Egyptian traditions influencing one another in Egypt.	Greek rulers supported temples for Egyptian gods, and Greek-style columns and statues appeared in Egyptian settings. Serapis also combined Greek and Egyptian religious features.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Ancient Chinese writing and Buddhist ideas reached Korea through travelers and diplomats. Korean kingdoms used Chinese characters and adopted Buddhism, but they shaped Buddhist art and customs to fit their own traditions. This is cultural diffusion because Korea adapted ideas from another culture.

Accept any accurate example of influence between two ancient cultures not named in the passage. The response must identify what moved, describe how the receiving culture used or adapted it, and connect the example to cultural diffusion.