Origin Of Writing Essay, Research Paper

The article The Origins of Writing by Andrew Robinson describes writing as perhaps the most outstanding achievement in human history. Since its development thousands of years ago, it has helped the advancement of world civilizations to reach the unimaginable. Although most people today take it for granted, writing is a fundamental tool that when used effectively can be very powerful. Throughout the ages, there have been those who have pointed out the ambivalence for the uses of writing. In Ancient Greece, Socrates claimed that writing would lead to a weakened state of mind and ability of people to retain thought. He claimed that people would become ignorant of the spoken word, and in turn rely on written materials to recollect thought. In contemporary times, the evidence to support this view is too apparent. With remarkable information technology people rely on these tools to retain all information that is important. The notion of memorizing facts is sadly becoming just a bleak idea.Throughout history writing has been used for many purposes. With the invention of writing came the ability to administrate vast territories of land. During the era of the Roman Empire, writing allowed the great Caesars to control their realm over great distances. It made laws and public records into a manageable form of information. In time it became and instrument of propaganda, as leaders could effectively convey their desires to manipulate the public. Writing allowed civilizations to record their uncertainties about the future. Although the methods of recording such information were significantly different in all corners of the world; the ideas preserved were remarkably similar. For example, In Japan a seal, rather than a signature would be honored as a symbol of identity. This practice of using variations of symbols to convey meaning would be found in Mesopotamia and other civilizations.

Although most scholars accept that writing developed from an accounting system, there are still many theories behind its actual origins. One highly accepted notion is that it is the result of evolution over a long period, rather than a flash of inspiration. The idea that writing spread from one culture to another in a geographical sense. However, there are still discrepancies in the theory of how writing developed on a global scale. Some believe it was created independently in each civilization; others tend to think its development was copied around the world. Today there is considerable evidence to support the latter argument as seen in many of the world s scripts. The most substantial difference in global writing systems is their use of phonetic and semantic signs. The proportions of these signs constitute a spectrum between languages that are phonetically efficient (Finnish) and highly deficient (Japanese).The efficiency of writing has been challenged by the idea of using more hieroglyphs in our writing systems. Some people have even proposed to develop a universal writing system based on pictorial symbols. This would allow for a simple communication process in which symbols would represent concepts independent of any of the spoken languages of the world. As the information revolution of the 21st century continues, writing will certainly exhibit changes as well. Perhaps with the advancement of the Internet, our written codes of communication will change into a universally understandable form. The future is uncertain, yet by looking at the past we can clearly see how writing has already profoundly affected our development throughout the ages.