The History of Writing

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage. Identify the central idea and the details that support it.

Some anthropologists theorize that it wasn’t the creation and use of tools that marked the emergence of early humans from their more animal-like ancestors, but the beginning of genuine oral, and later pictorial communication. The development of a genuine system of writing, though, came much later, as some societies transitioned from hunter-gatherer to permanent agrarian communities. This new lifestyle required counting property – like parcels of land, livestock or measures of crops – and also the ability to transfer ownership of things from one individual or settlement to another. Early such record-keeping was done with "counting tokens" about 9,000 years ago. But these tokens eventually were replaced by symbols that could be pressed or inscribed into clay, and this marked the beginning of a written language. These symbols began as pictures that represented what they pictured, but over time pictures also began to represent concepts and, eventually sounds. Thus, written language was a natural outgrowth of an increasingly agrarian society.

Central idea: __________________________________________________________

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Supporting details: ___________________________________________________

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