

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Open Educational Resources

Hostos Community College

2020

Academic ESL - City in World History: Lascaux Assignment

Karin Lundberg

CUNY Hostos Community College

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ho_oers/13

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).

Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

OER ESL 86: UNIT 1- READING, WRITING AND LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS
THE CAVES AT LASCAUX

I. BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE: Discuss and take notes-

A. What, in your opinion, are some of the most important innovations in human history? Which impact do you think these innovations have had on human cultural development?

B. What is your definition of *civilization*?

C. What is the oldest piece of writing you are familiar with? How old is it? What is this writing about? What was the purpose of this text? What impact do you think this text had on human society and culture?

D. What are some of the main purposes of writing? Think: what do we communicate through writing?

E. Consider the quote below.

“Humanity has a problem living in the now. If we aren’t lost in our memories of the past, we’re fantasizing about what the future might bring”. (Chatterton, Steve)

Do you recognize yourself in this quote? Do you think more about the past or the future?

II. Extensive Reading Exercise-- *Art is Imagining: Inferring and Hypothesizing.*

Sources:

- A. [Chatterton, Steve. What the Lascaux Paintings Tell Us About the Nature of Human Desire](https://medium.com/@stevechatterton/what-the-lascaux-cave-paintings-tell-us-about-the-nature-of-human-desire-4c8do6deef83)
(<https://medium.com/@stevechatterton/what-the-lascaux-cave-paintings-tell-us-about-the-nature-of-human-desire-4c8do6deef83>)

B. https://www.ancient.eu/Lascaux_Cave/

FIRST, BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Take a look at the following picture.



(Original image published on Flickr by Bayes Ahmed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), then retrieved from the ancient History Encyclopedia page about the Lascaux II Cave Today- <https://www.ancient.eu/image/8664/lascaux-ii-cave-today/>)

What do you see? Where would you find these animals? In nature? On a farm? How do you feel looking at the picture? Is it a positive or negative feeling, and if so why? Why would a person paint these animals in a cave? Which other questions do you have when looking at the picture?

2. Think and answer: *“Humanity has a problem living in the now. If we aren’t lost in our memories of the past, we’re fantasizing about what the future might bring.” (Chatterton, Steve)* Do you recognize yourself in this quote? What do you think more about, the past, or the future?

INTRODUCTION:

The need to express ourselves as humans is as old as the species itself. Throughout history, we have depicted images of the real, or imagined world on stones, wood, walls or animal hides in order to express who we are, how we feel and think. These forms of expression tell our story as humans, how we lived, and what happened in the past. In other words, human expression leaves a trace of our history and evolution across time and cultures. The sophistication of expression has evolved and changed over time. So, for instance, is the capacity to write and use signs and alphabets fairly new. The Latin alphabet we use in English came with the Romans and is ca. 2500 years old.

Other important skills we have as humans is the ability to predict, infer and hypothesize based on what we see, read and experience. These are activities we are constantly engaged in, often without knowing it. In the upcoming text about the cave paintings in Lascaux the author is doing exactly that. The author is inferring, reflecting and hypothesizing based on what he believes is one of the purposes of the cave paintings. This is often what we do when we write about academic subjects. We express an idea about a subject matter and we use either our own, or others' ideas to support our thinking.

Another important intellectual activity is to compare. We are constantly involved in comparing what we see, hear or experience to something else that we know. It is through comparison itself that we are able to draw conclusions about ourselves and the world. This is another skill we learn to apply in academic writing and reading. In the upcoming text, the author is contemplating the images in the caves of Lascaux. The cave paintings were discovered in France in 1940 and have since been an attraction for both researchers and tourists. The writer, Steve Chatterton, draws conclusions about the paintings based on a comparison to what we know about humans of today. He is comparing who we are to what he believes the people of Lascaux were like 17 000 years ago.

Extensive Reading

This reading will be an extensive reading activity. This means, you will read the text, not for detail, vocabulary or grammar, but focus on the global aspects of the text by:

- a) Following one main statement the author makes about the text.
- b) Trace elements of prediction, inferring and hypothesizing.

Extensive reading is also a form of reading where you don't stop and interrupt the "flow", but hang on to the ideas you are picking up as you go, and simply hold the threads together in your mind. You will be surprised how much your brain is able to absorb just by reading along in a text, even when it is difficult, or you don't know all the words. A researcher who developed this idea is Stephen Krashen. He firmly believes that we are able to absorb vocabulary and grammar structures by exposing ourselves to extensive and long readings. (Krashen)

Read the quote below and take notes. Explain the quote briefly in your own words.

"When I think of Lascaux, I don't wonder at the differences. I look for the similarities. That burning desire within that keeps us striving for more, for ourselves and others. The very thing that defines us as a species". (Chatterton, Steve)

Read the text "What the Lascaux Paintings Tell Us about Human Desire".

- a. Mark down time, names of places and make sure you know where you can find these on a map.
- b. Mark any parts in the text that are linked to the quote above.
- c. Find five quotes in the text that you think represent the statement above.

Quote	Explain

d. Search for definitions:

Look up the expressions:

1. “Hedonism” and “hedonistic happiness”
2. “Perpetual rack”

Take notes. Explain these concepts in your own words. Don't forget to add the source for your information.

- e. The author is looking for similarities, not differences between ourselves and the humans who painted the walls in the cave. He is hypothesizing that this is what the cave paintings are expressing. To verify his thinking he is using clues that help him understand or answer the questions he has about the subject matter. In this case: Why did they paint the images in the cave? Since he cannot ask these people or any other person who descends from this group of humans, he tries to answer this question by **inferring from what he sees in the cave**. Inferring is a way of indirectly drawing a conclusion about a circumstance or situation. If you enter a room without people and all you find is blood on the floor, you infer that something bad has happened, but you don't know for sure. This is the situation in the cave, and also the situation for many other researchers. Aside from inferred ideas about the cave, there are also facts. These are easier to detect.

How do we determine whether something is a fact or just an assumption?

- When we infer, we use modifying words and expressions such as: **may be, could, would and sometimes should. You also find adverbs: probably, possibly, perhaps and maybe.**
- So what about facts? Facts are expressed through language that doesn't invite doubts or questions. This is also how you write general statements.

The caves were found by teenagers.

Lascaux is a town in France.

Find three sentences that show the author is inferring facts about the caves and three that represent facts. Scan for language listed above to find these sentences.

Sentences that infer what could be true about the cave	Sentences that express facts or truth about the caves

- a. What in your own words, is the conclusion by the author? Do you agree with the conclusion of the author? What are some other possible interpretations mentioned in the text. Which interpretation do you agree with?

- b. Based on today's society, which images would we put on the walls of a cave today following his idea of daydreaming about the future? Write down your thoughts in at least 7 sentences.