

Reading Explorer 5 Unit 9 Lesson B

DIRECTIONS: Choose the best answer for each question.

The Power of Writing

Joel L. Swerdlow investigates the history and future of one of humanity's most potent forms of artistic and cultural expression.

[A] No other invention - perhaps only the wheel comes close - has had a longer and greater impact on humanity's development than writing. Written words have overthrown governments and changed the course of history. So powerful is writing that the beginnings of civilization and history are most often defined as the moment cultures develop it. The transformation of language into written words has immortalized passion, genius, art, and science.

[B] Much of writing's power comes from its flexibility. Ever since the Sumerians¹ began keeping records by carving signs on clay tablets 5,000 years ago, humans have searched for the ideal tool to portray words. They have carved symbols in stone and bone and written on leaves, bark, silk, papyrus, parchment, paper, and electronic screens. This skill, once known only to a few professional scribes, grew into mass literacy: More than five billion people - over 86 percent of the world's population - can now read and write.

[C] To understand how writing evolved, I visited Serabit el Khadim, a flat-topped, wind-eroded mountain of reddish sandstone in the southwestern Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. Here, in a turquoise mine dug by Egyptians almost 3,500 years ago, is one of the earliest examples of a phonetic alphabet.

[D] "What do you think?" asked Avner Goren as we stooped to enter a dark hole. Goren, an archeologist who supervised excavations in the Sinai for 15 years, was pointing to a wall just ahead of us. Carved into the stone were crude sketches of a fish, an ox head, and a square. The simplicity of the marks belied² their significance. The people who made them were among the first to use characters that denote sounds - an alphabet. The alphabetic symbols each represented the initial sound of an object. The picture of the square - a house - thus stood for the *b* sound because the word for house was *beit*.

[E] The signs were remarkably different from the Egyptian hieroglyphs found elsewhere at the site. If these ancient writers were not Egyptians, who were they? Most researchers now believe that this alphabet was invented in Canaan, a region between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Most likely, Canaanites who were brought in to work the mines left these messages.

[F] Egyptian scribes had to master hundreds of symbols. I asked Goren if alphabetic writing must have seemed attractive to those scribes. "Probably not," he says. "About 30 of the symbols in Egyptian hieroglyphs represent single sounds, just like the alphabet. They knew about using symbols to represent sounds, so to the Egyptians, the Semitic writing may have looked too primitive to be significant."

[G] Goren warned me against seeing an alphabet as "superior" to pictographic writing. "If you came from outer space and wrote a report, you'd give the alphabet high marks," he says. "It's flexible and easy to learn. But what actual effect did that have? There was no mass literacy until after the development of the printing press in the mid-15th century."

[H] Nevertheless, although it took hundreds of years, alphabets would eventually change the way people thought. From a small patch in the Middle East, the notion of one symbol per sound gradually became widespread around the world, taking root first among the Greeks, who adapted some characters into written vowels. The Latin alphabet of the Romans evolved from the Greek around the sixth century B.C. By the ninth century A.D., Japan had integrated phonetic components into its written language; Korea did so by the 15th century.

[I] Indeed, of the several hundred written languages in the world today, only Chinese still relies on a traditional writing system whereby individual characters represent individual words. These characters often mean one thing when used alone, but something else when combined. The Chinese character for *trust*, for example, shows the character for *man* alongside the one for *word*, literally a man standing by his word.

[J] Since its beginning as a means for keeping records, writing has evolved into one of humanity's most powerful forms of self-expression. People have used writing to counter loneliness and to establish a sense of self. In the fourth century B.C., Aristotle³ saw writing as a way to express "affections of the soul." Recent studies have shown that writing about feelings can alleviate depression, boost the immune system, and lower blood pressure.

[K] And yet, of the more than 10,000 languages ever spoken, most had no written form. How, then, do people in societies without writing express themselves? "We talk to each other, listen, visit, and trust the spoken word," says Guujaaw, a leader of the Haida Nation. "Writing is not essential to living. Expressing yourself without writing is natural."

[L] The Haida have lived on the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia for more than 10,000 years. I suggest to Guujaaw that things get distorted when people repeat them to one another, especially over a long duration of time. "Things get distorted in writing as well," he says. "People with writing are a brief chapter in our history. Oral histories from our people go back thousands of years. They are a living history. They provide a link between storyteller and listeners that written stories cannot. In fact, human intimacy and community can best come through oral communication."

[M] Plato, Aristotle's teacher, would probably agree. Living at a time when writing began to challenge Greece's oral-based culture, he warned that writing would make people "trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves ... They will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing."

[N] But Plato lived in the fifth century B.C., when reading was physically difficult. Books were papyrus scrolls often more than 15 meters long; the idea of pages only emerged in Europe in the second century A.D. Spaces between words did not become standard in Western society until the seventh century. Long after Plato's time, writing served mostly as an aid to memory, something to stimulate the spoken word.

[O] The transition from the spoken to the written word occurred because writing meets certain needs so much more effectively. Writing permits analysis, precision, and communication with both current and future generations in a way that is much more powerful than the spoken word.

[P] Thousands of years ago, China's rulers learned the value of a uniform written language, recognizing that it has the power to unite people. In the third century B.C., Chinese people spoke at least eight languages and countless dialects, but with the establishment of a unified empire and a standard writing system around 200 B.C., everyone could read the same characters.

[Q] Today, the extra work needed to manually enter Chinese into a computer - up to five keystrokes for one Chinese character - raises an important issue. China could become the wealthiest country in the world; it already is a major factor in the international economy. As this economy relies more on computers, does the Chinese writing system act as a constraint on its development?

[R] Perhaps not. Usama Fayyad, a former researcher at Microsoft Corporation, whose job was to think about the long-term future of computers and data storage, says technology will eventually offer efficient and economical ways to bypass⁴ keyboards. Technology that incorporates voice and handwriting recognition, he claims, could make it irrelevant which writing system is used.

[S] Fayyad also says that the distinction between an alphabet and Chinese characters does not matter in terms of how a computer operates. He explains that when you hit a letter on the keyboard, the computer enters that action into its memory as a number. Each letter is a different number, and a sentence inside the computer is a string of numbers. It's up to the computer program to interpret how the string of numbers corresponds to an instruction.

[T] Overall, computers are terrifically useful machines, but perhaps paper is still superior. You can hold it, fold it, put it in your pocket, look at it again later when it's convenient. This thought leads me to Joseph Jacobson, a professor of physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He helped found a company, E Ink, whose technology has transformed ink from a permanent medium to a format that can change electronically.

[U] "Paper is fantastic," Jacobson tells me. "If books or newspapers on paper had not already been invented, if we lived in a world only with computer screens, then paper would be a breathtaking breakthrough. But the way we use paper is incredibly wasteful." E Ink is a major developer of electronic-paper - the kind you see on tablets such as Amazon's Kindle. E-paper works by printing electronic letters on squares of plastic that look and feel like paper but can be erased and reused. Jacobson believes that using e-paper will significantly reduce the cost and pollution associated with paper manufacturing.

[V] "Paper needs to be taken into the digital age. We need writing that changes on paper," says Jacobson. With that in mind, E Ink has just released a new kind of e-paper called JustWrite that promises to offer an experience just like writing on real paper. Users can write on the paper, roll it up, and even cut holes in it - all with very low power usage and no backlight.

[W] As I observe E Ink's latest technology, I feel as if I'm back in the cave at Serabit el-Khadim - looking at a piece of the future.

¹ The **Sumerians** were an ancient people in southern Mesopotamia, modern Iraq.

² If one thing **belies** another, it hides it and gives a false impression of it.

³ **Aristotle** (384-322 B.C.) was a Greek philosopher and scientist.

⁴ If you **bypass** something, you go or get around it, trying to avoid it.

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1. Which would be the best alternative title for this passage?
- The First Alphabet
 - The Future of Chinese Characters
 - Writing: Past, Present, and Future
 - Writing Without Paper

- _____ 2. In paragraph D, Goren explains that an alphabet _____.
a. uses characters that represent sounds
b. depends on crude pictures of animals
c. is closely related to hieroglyphic systems
d. is most useful for everyday concepts like "house"
- _____ 3. Which of the following happened first?
a. Japan had phonetic components as part of its written language.
b. The Romans based the Latin alphabet on the Greek one.
c. The Greeks used characters for vowel sounds.
d. Canaanites brought the alphabet to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.
- _____ 4. In the last sentence of paragraph F, what does *They* refer to?
a. Goren
b. Canaanites
c. researchers
d. Egyptian scribes
- _____ 5. From paragraph G, what can we infer had the greatest impact on the spread of literacy?
a. the invention of the modern alphabet
b. the superiority of an alphabet to pictographic writing
c. the development of the printing press
d. the alphabet's flexibility and simplicity
- _____ 6. Why are the Haida mentioned in the reading passage?
a. to describe their lifestyle on the coast of British Columbia
b. to note that some societies communicate without a writing system
c. to explain the history of their writing system
d. to demonstrate that oral communication works with cell phones
- _____ 7. Which statement would Plato be most likely to agree with?
a. Writing encourages people to forget things.
b. Reading papyrus scrolls is a colossal waste of time.
c. Aristotle trusted oral tradition.
d. Writing is the best link between the past and the present.
- _____ 8. Today, Chinese people can all read the same characters even if they speak different dialects because _____.
a. China's rulers implemented a standard writing system
b. there used to be eight different languages but now there's only one
c. the country has become a major international economy
d. the words can be manually entered into a computer
- _____ 9. What is NOT given as an advantage of writing?
a. You are able to communicate with people far away in time and place.
b. It allows for analysis and precision because you can review the words.
c. It is a powerful means of self-expression.
d. Writing led to the development of computers.

10. Which is the best place in paragraph T to insert this sentence?

Paper is tangible, portable, accessible, and cheap.

- a. before the first sentence
- b. after the first sentence
- c. after the third sentence
- d. after the last sentence

DIRECTIONS: Choose the best answer for each question.

First Artists

[A] This is where the cave lions are, and the woolly rhinos, mammoths, and bison, a collection of ancient creatures, stampeding, battling, stalking in total silence. Outside the cave, where the real world is, they are all gone now. But this is not the real world. Here they remain alive on the shadowed walls.

[B] Around 36,000 years ago, someone living in a time incomprehensibly different from ours walked from the original mouth of this cave to the chamber where we stand and, by flickering firelight, began to draw on its bare walls: profiles of cave lions, herds of rhinos and mammoths, a magnificent bison off to the right, and a chimeric creature - part bison, part woman - on an enormous rock. Other chambers harbor horses; an owl shaped out of mud by a single finger on a rock wall; an immense bison formed from handprints; and cave bears walking casually, as if in search of a spot for a long winter's nap. The works are often drawn with nothing more than a single and perfect continuous line. In all, the artists depicted 442 animals over perhaps thousands of years, using nearly 400,000 square feet of cave surface as their canvas.

[C] Hidden by a rock slide for 22,000 years, the cave came to light in December 1994, when three spelunkers named Eliette Brunel, Christian Hillaire, and Jean-Marie Chauvet scrambled through a narrow crevice in a cliff and dropped into the dark entry. Since then, what is now known as the Cave of Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc has been ferociously protected by the French Ministry of Culture. We are among the rare few who have been allowed to make the same journey the ancient artists did. The age of these drawings makes youngsters of Egypt's storied pyramids, yet every charcoal stroke, every splash of ocher looks as fresh as yesterday. One moment you are anchored in the present, observing coolly. The next you are seeing the paintings as if all other art - all civilization - has yet to exist.

[D] How did such human accomplishment come to be, so long ago, seemingly out of nowhere? Most of the cave paintings in southern France and Spain were created after 40,000 B.C. Why there? Why then? One clue is the deep and extensive caves themselves. Tito Bustillo in northern Spain is a half mile from one end to the other. El Castillo and other caves on Monte Castillo dive, twist, and turn into the ground like enormous corkscrews. France's Lascaux, Grotte du Renne, and Chauvet run football fields deep into the rock, with multiple branches and cathedral-like chambers.

[E] Perhaps the explosion of creativity we see on the walls of these caverns was inspired in part by their sheer depth and darkness - or rather, the interplay of light and dark. Illuminated by the flickering light from fires or stone lamps burning animal grease, such as the lamps found in Lascaux, the bumps and crevices in the rock walls might suggest natural shapes, the way passing clouds can to an imaginative child. In Altamira, in northern Spain, the painters responsible for the famous bison incorporated the humps and bulges of the rock to give their images more life and dimension. Chauvet features a panel of four horse heads drawn over subtle curves and folds in a wall of receding rock, accentuating the animals' snouts and foreheads. Their appearance changes according to your perspective: One view presents perfect profiles, but from another angle the horses' noses and necks seem to strain, as if they are running away from you. In a different chamber a rendering of cave lions seems to emerge from a cut in the wall, accentuating the hunch in one animal's back and shoulders as it stalks its unseen prey.

[F] In his book *La Prehistoire du Cinema*, filmmaker and archeologist Marc Azema argues that some of these ancient artists were the world's first animators, and that the artists' images combined with flickering firelight in the pitch-black caves to create the illusion that the paintings were moving. "They wanted to make these images lifelike," says Azema. He has re-created digital versions of some cave images that illustrate the effect. The Lion Panel in Chauvet's deepest chamber is a good example. It features the heads of ten lions, all seemingly intent on their prey. But in the light of a strategically positioned torch or stone lamp, these ten lions might be successive characterizations of just one lion, or perhaps two or three, moving through a story, much like the frames of a flip-book or animated film. Beyond the lions stands a cluster of rhinoceroses. The head and horn of the top one are repeated six times, one image above the other, as if thrusting upward, its whole body shuddering with multiple outlines.

[G] Azema's interpretation fits with that of eminent prehistorian Jean Clottes - the first scientist to enter Chauvet, only days after its discovery. Clottes believes the images in the cave were intended to be experienced much the way we view movies, theater, or even religious ceremonies today - a departure from the real world that transfixed its audience and bound it in a powerful shared experience. "It was a show!" says Clottes.

[H] Thousands of years later you can still feel the power of that show as you walk the chambers of the cave, the sound of your own breath heavy in your ear, the constant drip, drip of the water falling from the walls and ceilings. In its rhythm you can almost make out the sound of ancient music, the beat of the dance, as a storyteller casts the light of a torch upon a floating image and entralls the audience with a tale.

_____ 11. Which would be the best alternative title for this passage?

- a. Cave Paintings in France
- b. Ancient Cave Painting Techniques
- c. Cave Paintings Bring Ancient Animal World Back to Life
- d. Why Did Ancient People Paint?

_____ 12. In paragraph A, what is implied about the animals in the cave?

- a. They are all either extinct or no longer exist in the area near the cave.
- b. They still live inside the cave but not outside.
- c. They are still common animals but no longer live near the cave.
- d. They still live outside the cave but not inside.

- _____ 13. In paragraph B, what is a *chimeric creature*?
- a wonderful, impossible idea
 - an animal from Greek mythology
 - something that is a combination of two or more creatures
 - a kind of fish
- _____ 14. In paragraph C, what are *spelunkers*?
- scientists who study history
 - scientists who study ancient man
 - people who enjoy history
 - people who explore caves
- _____ 15. What is meant in paragraph D when it says the caves *run football fields deep into the rock*?
- You can easily play football in the caves.
 - The caves are several hundred yards long.
 - The caves drop several hundred yards straight down.
 - Open areas the size of football fields are common in these caves.
- _____ 16. The following sentence would be best placed at the end of which paragraph?

As our guide put it, it is almost as if some animals were already in the rock, waiting to be revealed by the artist's charcoal and paint.

- Paragraph B
 - Paragraph C
 - Paragraph D
 - Paragraph E
- _____ 17. What is the main idea of paragraph F?
- La Prehistoire du Cinema* explains how the art in the Lion Panel was created.
 - Filmmaker and archeologist Marc Azema has re-created digital versions of some cave images.
 - The cave artists may have wanted their paintings to appear to move and come to life.
 - Many of the images in the cave are painted over each other.
- _____ 18. What is shown on the Lion Panel in Chauvet's deepest chamber?
- ten lions
 - one lion
 - two or three lions
 - the world's first animation
- _____ 19. In paragraph G, what does *its* in the phrase *only days after its discovery* refer to?
- the images in the cave
 - the Cave of Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc
 - a departure from the real world
 - a powerful shared experience
- _____ 20. In paragraph H, what does *enthralles* mean?
- frightens
 - fascinates
 - excites
 - relaxes

DIRECTIONS: Complete the sentences. Choose the correct word.

- a. alleviate
- b. constraint
- c. correspond
- d. duration
- e. format
- f. incorporate
- g. integrate
- h. literacy
- i. manually
- j. superior

- ____ 21. Barbados has the fourth highest ____ rate in the world with 99.7% of the population able to read and write.
- ____ 22. This machine is ____ in quality to that one; it's much better in every way.
- ____ 23. The teacher plans to use "blended learning" in this course, which will ____ digital technology with classroom instruction.
- ____ 24. Please refrain from clapping for the ____ of the concert and show your appreciation only at the end.
- ____ 25. After the operation, the doctor will prescribe you some medicine to ____ the pain.
- ____ 26. His computer wasn't programmed to run the update automatically, so he had to do it ____.
- ____ 27. We have sufficient funding to complete the project. The main ____ will be lack of time if we want to launch before Christmas.
- ____ 28. When the two airlines merge, the larger one will ____ the smaller one's frequent flyer program into its own.
- ____ 29. He is writing a research paper on ancient pictograms and how closely they ____ to the words they represent.
- ____ 30. Scholars who submit articles to an encyclopedia are required to use the same ____ so that all the entries have a consistent appearance.

Reading Explorer 5 Unit 9 Lesson B

Answer Section

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|-----|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | ANS: C | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Gist | TOP: Creativity | |
| 2. | ANS: A | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Main Idea | TOP: Creativity | |
| 3. | ANS: D | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Sequence | TOP: Creativity | |
| 4. | ANS: D | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Anaphoric Reference | TOP: Creativity | |
| 5. | ANS: C | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Inference | TOP: Creativity | |
| 6. | ANS: B | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Purpose | TOP: Creativity | |
| 7. | ANS: A | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Inference | TOP: Creativity | |
| 8. | ANS: A | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Cause and Effect | TOP: Creativity | |
| 9. | ANS: D | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Negative Detail | TOP: Creativity | |
| 10. | ANS: B | PTS: 1 | REF: Pages 191-194 |
| | OBJ: Cohesion | TOP: Creativity | |
| 11. | ANS: C | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Gist |
| 12. | ANS: A | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Inference |
| 13. | ANS: C | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Unfamiliar Vocabulary |
| 14. | ANS: D | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Unfamiliar Vocabulary |
| 15. | ANS: B | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Figurative Language |
| 16. | ANS: D | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Cohesion |
| 17. | ANS: C | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Main Idea |
| 18. | ANS: A | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Supporting Detail |
| 19. | ANS: B | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Anaphoric Reference |
| 20. | ANS: B | PTS: 1 | REF: Unit 9 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Unfamiliar Vocabulary |
| 21. | ANS: H | PTS: 1 | REF: Page 198 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Vocabulary |
| 22. | ANS: J | PTS: 1 | REF: Page 198 |
| | TOP: Creativity | | OBJ: Vocabulary |

23.	ANS: G TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
24.	ANS: D TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
25.	ANS: A TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
26.	ANS: I TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
27.	ANS: B TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
28.	ANS: F TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
29.	ANS: C TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary
30.	ANS: E TOP: Creativity	PTS: 1	REF: Page 198	OBJ: Vocabulary