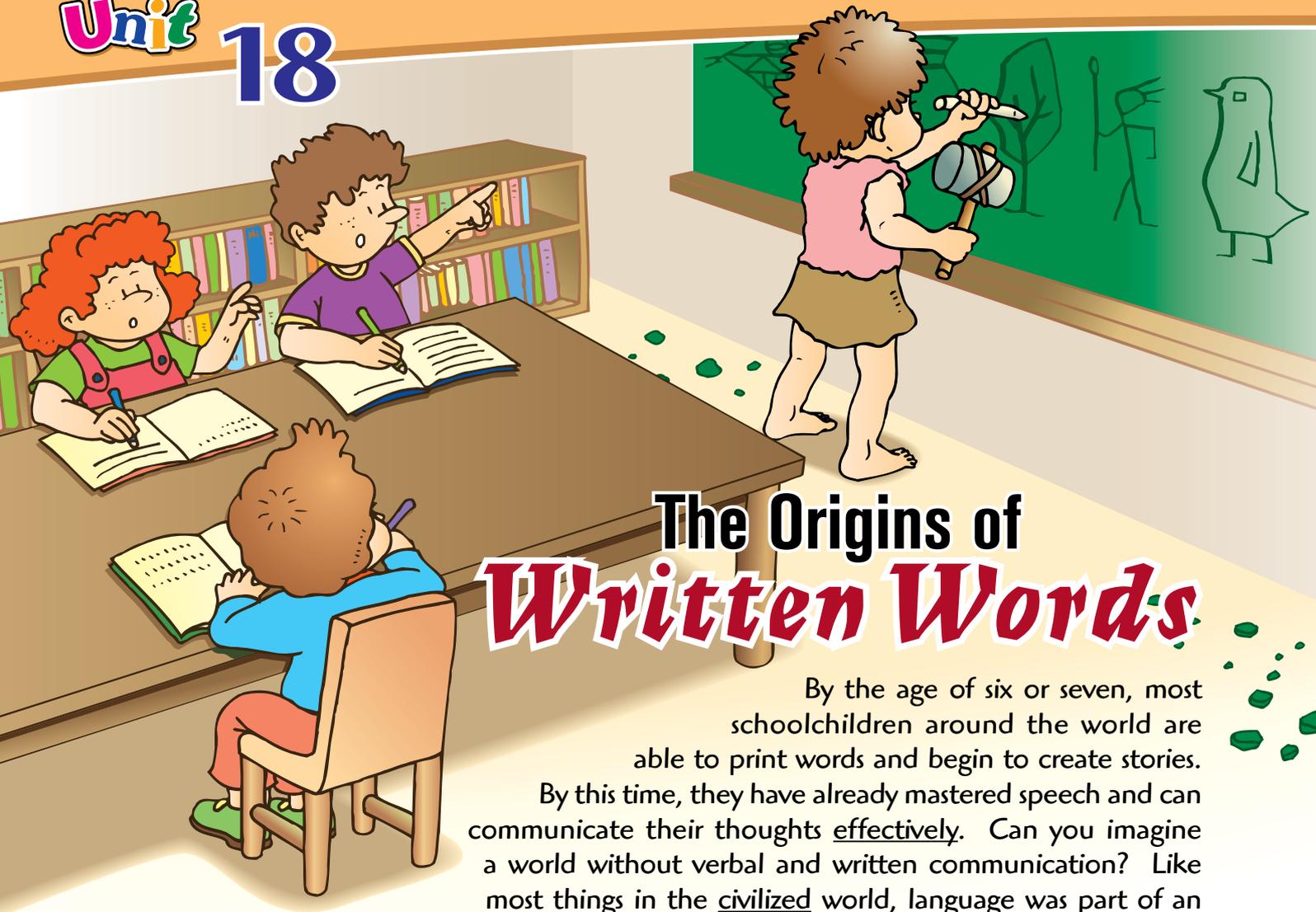


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The Origins of *Written Words*

By the age of six or seven, most schoolchildren around the world are able to print words and begin to create stories. By this time, they have already mastered speech and can communicate their thoughts effectively. Can you imagine a world without verbal and written communication? Like most things in the civilized world, language was part of an evolutionary process.

Long ago, cave people communicated by drawing pictures on the walls of caves. They would draw pictures of their hunts and of important social and personal family events. It was not until 3000 BCE that actual writing, a method of recording language sounds, came into being. Early forms of writing were traced back to the Sumerians of Mesopotamia. Their writing was made up of symbols called logograms that stood for words and phrases. This system evolved to include representations of syllables. Thus the Sumerians were using both logograms and syllabic forms to create writing.

To avoid confusion, sounds, such as the vowel and consonant sounds that we use today, were given specific symbols. This was the early creation of an alphabetic system. There are not many symbols needed to create a language. For example, the English language uses an alphabet with only 26 letters but there are over 500 000 English words listed in the Oxford Dictionary.

The Egyptians developed hieroglyphics, a system of writing, approximately a hundred years after the Sumerian system. Many forms of writing were adapted by other groups until about the year 1500 BCE when a partially alphabetic system was created. This marked the early stages of writing as we know it today. The Greeks are credited with separating vowel and consonant sounds by 750 BCE, thereby creating the fully alphabetic system, which paved the way for the development of organized language.



The Main Idea

A. Check the statement that best sums up each paragraph.

Paragraph One

- A. ___ Language has evolved over the years.
- B. ___ Children have learned how to write.
- C. ___ What would happen if we could not communicate?

Paragraph Two

- A. ___ Cave people liked drawing pictures on cave walls.
- B. ___ Actual writing is a method of recording language sounds.
- C. ___ The Sumerians began to use both symbols and syllables in their writing.

Paragraph Three

- A. ___ Sounds without symbols were confusing.
- B. ___ Specific symbols given to sounds marked the beginning of an alphabetic system.
- C. ___ Symbols were needed to create a language.

In each paragraph, there is a main idea that is the subject of the paragraph.



Paragraph Four

- A. ___ The Egyptians developed hieroglyphics.
- B. ___ Different groups used different forms of writing.
- C. ___ A fully alphabetic system was created, which led to the development of organized language.

B. Write 1 to 5 to put the events in order.

- ___ Hieroglyphics were created.
- ___ The alphabet was created.
- ___ Pictures were drawn in caves.
- ___ Symbols were used for words.
- ___ Sounds were given symbols.



Using the Comma

1. Use a **comma** to separate words in a series or list.
Example: We played hockey, baseball, basketball, and tennis.
2. Use a comma between adjectives describing a noun.
Example: The tall, thin, poorly dressed man walked by.
3. Use a comma to separate a noun in apposition.
Example: My friend, Paul, came to visit me.
4. Use a comma in dates.
Example: Her birthday was July 22, 1953.
5. Use a comma after a dependent clause that appears before an independent clause.
Example: After we ate the meal, we went for a walk.
6. Use a comma to set off a direct quotation.
Example: She asked, "May I use your telephone?"

C. Punctuate the sentences below.

The number at the end of each sentence represents the number of punctuation marks you have to add.



1. Where would one go to find good weather interesting shopping friendly people and inexpensive accommodations (4)
2. You can play different sports such as hockey golf and tennis here (4)
3. The teacher said "Hand in your test papers your pencils and your question sheets now" (4)
4. "Get out of bed right now or you'll be late for school" my mother yelled "Don't you realize it's September 5 the first day of school" (4)
5. John's father Mr. Williams carried the balls the bases and the bats (5)
6. When Susan went shopping at the local store she bought milk bread cheese eggs and butter (6)



Word Building Chart

D. Fill in the chart below to create new words from the “original” words from the passage. Then write the meanings of the new words.

Locate each word in the passage and learn its meaning from the sentence in which it appears.



Original Word <i>(from passage)</i>	New Word <i>(add a prefix/suffix)</i>	Meaning
1. effectively		
2. civilized		
3. process		
4. social		
5. symbols		
6. system		
7. evolved		
8. create		
9. confusion		
10. specific		