

Unit 4 Academic reading

Ancient art

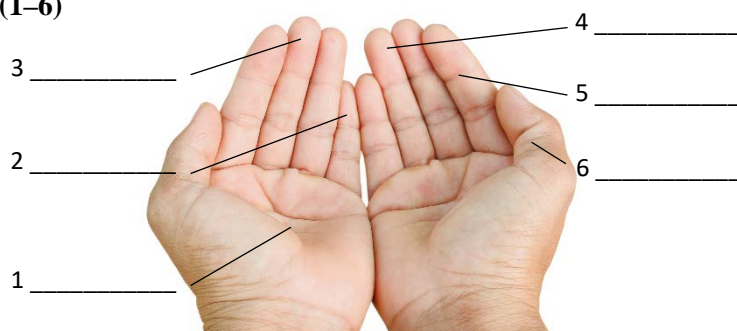


1 Match the words from the article (1–9) with their meanings (a–i).

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 an archaeologist (n) | 6 a hand stencil (n) |
| 2 an adolescent (n) | 7 a hunter-gatherer society (n) |
| 3 a cave painting (n) | 8 Palaeolithic (adj) |
| 4 a game animal (n) | 9 prehistoric (adj) |
| 5 a traditional healer (n) | |
-
- a an image found on the walls, ceiling or floor of a cave or rock shelter
b wild animals that are hunted for food e.g. horses, bison
c relating to the Stone Age – the period of time thousands of years ago when people used stone tools and weapons
d someone who uses traditional medicine (e.g. using herbs or plants) to cure people who are sick or injured
e a group of people who live by killing wild animals and finding food in the wild
f a young person, usually between the ages of 12 and 18, who is developing into an adult
g relating to the period of time before history was first written down
h a person whose job it is to study ancient societies by examining what remains of their buildings, tools, art, etc
i an image made by blowing a coloured powder over a hand held against a wall so that only the outline of the hand shape remains

2 Label the parts of the hand (1–6) with the words (a–f).

- a the thumb
b the index finger
c the little finger
d the palm (of your hand)
e the ring finger
f the middle finger



- 3 Work in pairs. Look at the cave art picture on the first page of the worksheet and discuss these questions, using some of the words from Exercise 1.**
- 1 Who do you think made the art?
 - 2 Why do you think the artists drew animals?
 - 3 Why do you think they made hand stencils?
 - 4 How do you think researchers find out whether the hands were male or female?
- 4 Read the article and check your ideas from Exercise 3. What did you find most interesting in the text?**
- 5 Read the article again and complete the summary, using one word from the article in each space.**

The earliest form of art

For many years it was believed that cave art and hand stencils were produced by **1**, perhaps as a way of improving their success at **2** It may have worked a bit like **3**

Dean Snow used the work of John Manning to challenge this belief. Manning found the male **4** finger is often shorter than the **5** finger, whereas in women they are usually the same length.

Snow created a computer program and input the hand and finger measurements of people with a **6** background. The computer results were not always **7**, however, as there is a great deal of **8** between male and female hands now. In contrast, the **9** of prehistoric male and female hands varied a great deal. Snow's results showed that three-quarters of the prehistoric hand stencils in the study must have been made by **10**

R. Dale Guthrie has argued that the hand stencils were made by **11** who enjoyed spending time in caves for **12** The art shows images of things that for them were **13** Dave Whitley, however, suggests that **14**, who used the cave for spiritual reasons, created the hand stencils.

SKILLS FOCUS: Identifying the purpose of parts of a text

When you read an academic text, it is important to recognize the purpose of each paragraph. Often the paragraph will contain one idea, and the first sentence – the topic sentence – will introduce the topic. It is important to read topic sentences carefully so you know what to expect from the paragraph as a whole.

6 Choose the correct option for each definition (1–10).

- 1 reasons to support a point of view: *a suggestion / an argument*
- 2 saying that something is possibly true: *a background / a suggestion*
- 3 the details that someone gives to make it easy to understand: *an explanation / a suggestion*
- 4 ideas that are against someone else's idea: *a counter-argument / a concurring argument*
- 5 ideas that are similar to someone else's idea: *a counter-argument / a concurring argument*
- 6 say something again using different words: *a restatement / a mention*
- 7 saying why something happened: *a reason / a restatement*
- 8 accepting that something is true or right: *a suggestion / an acknowledgement*
- 9 saying something briefly in speaking or writing: *a background / a mention*
- 10 information about the past to help understand the present: *an argument / a background*

7 Work in pairs. You are going to complete the outline of the article.

- 1 Match the headings in the box with the paragraphs of the article A–F. Write the headings in the outline (A–F).

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Details of the study | Conclusion | Counter-argument |
| Concurring argument | Background to the study | Introduction |

- 2 Match the details (a–i) with the paragraphs and write them in the outline (1–9).
- a the first mention of the recent finding that is the focus of the text
 - b a re-statement of the surprising outcome of the research
 - c an acknowledgement of the importance of the research
 - d the reason why the recent research began
 - e another possible reason for the research findings
 - f the suggestion that the research findings don't give us all the information we need
 - g the background to the topic as a whole
 - h an explanation of how the research was conducted
 - i an argument against the research findings

Article outline

| | |
|----------|-------|
| A | _____ |
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| B | _____ |
| 3 | |
| C | _____ |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| D | _____ |
| 6 | |
| E | _____ |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |
| F | _____ |
| 9 | |

- 8** **Evaluating claims and beliefs** In paragraphs D and E the writer is trying to provide a balanced view of the research by introducing other people's ideas about Snow's findings. Match the beginnings of the sentences 1–4 with the endings a–d, then match 5–8 with e–h.

D

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Some experts are unsure about | a the majority of hand stencils came from boys. |
| 2 Guthrie's work found that | b while they were in the caves, they drew pictures. |
| 3 He argued that for | c Snow's findings. |
| 4 He believes that | d adults, caves would have been uninteresting. |

E

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5 Other researchers are more convinced by | e most of the art was made by traditional healers. |
| 6 Whitley rejects | f doesn't discount his theory. |
| 7 His view is that | g Guthrie's idea. |
| 8 Snow's study | h Snow's data. |

- 9** Work in groups. Do you think the writer is successful in providing a balanced view of Snow's research in paragraphs D and E?
- 10** Work in pairs. No-one knows for certain what the purpose of the prehistoric cave art was. Below are some suggestions that people have made. Read the list of theories and decide which two or three you think are most likely and why.

Theories

- 1 Prehistoric people had lots of free time, so it was something to do.
- 2 Just like today, some people loved to paint and express themselves.
- 3 The cave art left something permanent to show they existed.
- 4 The art was connected to some kind of prehistoric religion.
- 5 Painting animals worked like magic and helped improve their hunting.
- 6 Young people created the art as part of their growing up rituals.
- 7 It was a way of communicating with other people at the time.
- 8 It was an early form of storytelling – just like a story book today.

- 11** Now work in groups of four and compare your ideas.

Who were the first artists?

A

Archaeologists have found hundreds of hand prints on cave walls across the world, in Argentina, Africa and Australia, and most famously in southern France and northern Spain. Because many of these prehistoric paintings also show game animals – bison, horses, woolly mammoths – researchers have proposed that they were made by male hunters, perhaps to document their kills or as some kind of ‘hunting magic’ to improve the success of an upcoming hunt. In 2013, however, archaeologist Dean Snow of Pennsylvania State University announced that hand stencils he had analysed in eight cave sites in France and Spain were made by females, a finding which overturned decades of archaeological belief.

B

Snow's study began when he came across the work of John Manning, a British biologist who had found that men and women differ in the relative lengths of their fingers: women tend to have ring and index fingers of about the same length, whereas men's ring fingers tend to be longer than their index fingers. One day, after reading about Manning's studies, Snow pulled a 40-year-old book about cave paintings off his bookshelf. The inside front cover of the book showed a colourful hand print from the famous Pech Merle cave in southern France. ‘I looked at it and thought, if Manning knows what he's talking about, then this is almost certainly a female hand,’ Snow recalled.

C

In his study, Snow analysed the measurements from 32 stencils, including 16 from the cave of El Castillo in Spain, 6 from the caves of Gargas in France, and 5 from Pech Merle. He put the numbers into a computer program that he had created, based on the measurements of hands from people of European descent who lived near his university in America. Using several measurements – such as the length of the fingers, the length of the hand, and the length of ring, index and little finger in relation to each other – the program could predict whether a handprint was male or female. Because there is a lot of similarity between modern-day men and women's hands, however, the program wasn't especially precise: it predicted the gender of Snow's modern

sample with about 60 per cent accuracy. Luckily for Snow, that wasn't a problem for the analysis of the prehistoric handprints. As it turned out – much to his surprise – the hands in the caves were very different in size depending on whether they were male or female. Snow's analysis determined that 24 of the 32 hands – 75 percent – were female.

D

Some experts are unsure about Snow's findings. Several years ago, evolutionary biologist R. Dale Guthrie performed a similar analysis of Palaeolithic hand stencils. His work – based mostly on differences in the width of the palm and the thumb – found that the vast majority of hand stencils came from adolescent boys. He argued that for adults, caves would have been dangerous and uninteresting, but young boys would have explored them for adventure. He believes while they were in the caves, the boys stencilled their hands and drew pictures of what was on their mind – mainly frightening mammals.

E

Other researchers are more convinced by Snow's data. ‘I think the article is an important contribution,’ said archaeologist Dave Whitley. ‘Despite these handprints being discussed for half a decade, this is the first time anyone's synthesized a good body of evidence.’ Whitley rejects Guthrie's idea that this art was made for purely practical reasons related to hunting. His view is that most of the art was made by traditional healers who entered the dark caves to connect with the spirit world. Whitley added that Snow's study doesn't discount his traditional healer theory, because in some hunter-gatherer societies traditional healers are female.

F

It is possible that Snow's work raises many more questions than it answers. Why would women be the primary artists? Were they creating only the hand stencils, or the rest of the animal art as well? The question Snow most often gets asked, though, is why these ancient artists, whoever they were, left handprints at all. ‘I have no idea, but a pretty good hypothesis is that this is somebody saying, “This is mine, I did this,”’ he said.