

4 The Caves of Lascaux

Imagine looking for your lost dog. You step into a cave. But instead of the dog, you find beautiful cave paintings. You see paintings of horses, deer, and bison. They are drawn in black, brown, red, and yellow. Your first question would probably be "Who did this?"

This is what happened to four French boys in 1940. They found the Lascaux (la skō') caves. The paintings the boys discovered in those caves are 17,000 years old. They were drawn by the prehistoric people called Cro-Magnons.

Cro-Magnons looked much like people of today. They used tools, such as fishing nets, that look familiar too. But their art was extraordinary. The main cave at Lascaux is called the Great Hall of Bulls. It has a picture of bulls and horses in many colors. The largest animal is 18 feet long. There are smaller animals too. They include bison, stags, and a bear. There is also an odd, spotted, two-horned animal.

To the left of the main cave are the most famous paintings. These are drawings of multicolored animals. One painting is called Little Horses. On the ceiling are horses and cows. The most unusual sight may be in the Shaft of the Dead Man. Here is a rhinoceros, a carefully drawn dead man, a wounded bison, and a bird.

Why did Cro-Magnon artists do these beautiful drawings on cave walls? Did the drawings call upon some magical power? Did the Cro-Magnon people hope that the drawings would bring luck? There is one thing the paintings seem to tell us. The Cro-Magnons had a sense of wonder about the world. They looked at beauty and they understood it.

Main Idea

1

Answer

Mark the *main idea*

M

Mark the statement that is *too broad*

B

Mark the statement that is *too narrow*

N

a. Cave paintings are beautiful.

b. The caves of Lascaux hold colorful prehistoric paintings.

c. Drawings of horses are on the walls of the Lascaux caves.

Subject Matter 2 The main topic of this passage is
 a. the lives of Cro-Magnon people.
 b. animals of prehistoric times.
 c. what the cave paintings of Lascaux looked like.
 d. the boys who discovered the paintings. _____

Supporting Details 3 Most of the drawings in the caves are of
 a. several types of animals.
 b. horses.
 c. dead people.
 d. teenage boys. _____

Conclusion 4 The writer would like you to conclude that
 a. anyone can find cave art.
 b. the cave paintings of Lascaux are remarkable.
 c. the Cro-Magnon people are a mystery.
 d. the Cro-Magnon people were magicians. _____

Clarifying Devices 5 The writer uses the word *you* in the first paragraph to
 a. give the reader good directions to find the caves.
 b. pull the reader into the story.
 c. compare present-day readers with Cro-Magnon people.
 d. make it clear that this is a true story. _____

Vocabulary in Context 6 The word extraordinary means
 a. about animals.
 b. familiar.
 c. colorful.
 d. very unusual. _____