

The History of Writing Quiz

1. There are about 6900 languages in the world today. How many of them can be written?
 - a. All of them
 - b. About 3000
 - c. Less than 2000
 - d. More than 4000

2. The ancient Sumerians (modern Iraq) are said to have invented one of the the first writing systems. When did they do it?
 - a. About 2000 years ago
 - b. About 10 000 years ago
 - c. About 4000 years ago
 - d. About 6000 years ago

3. The Chinese also invented writing about 3500 years ago. About how many Chinese characters are there?
 - a. About 56 000
 - b. About 46 000
 - c. About 36 000
 - d. About 26 000

4. English is written in the Roman alphabet, which was first adapted from
 - a. Hebrew (Israel)
 - b. Runes (ancient Europe)
 - c. Russian
 - d. Ancient Greek

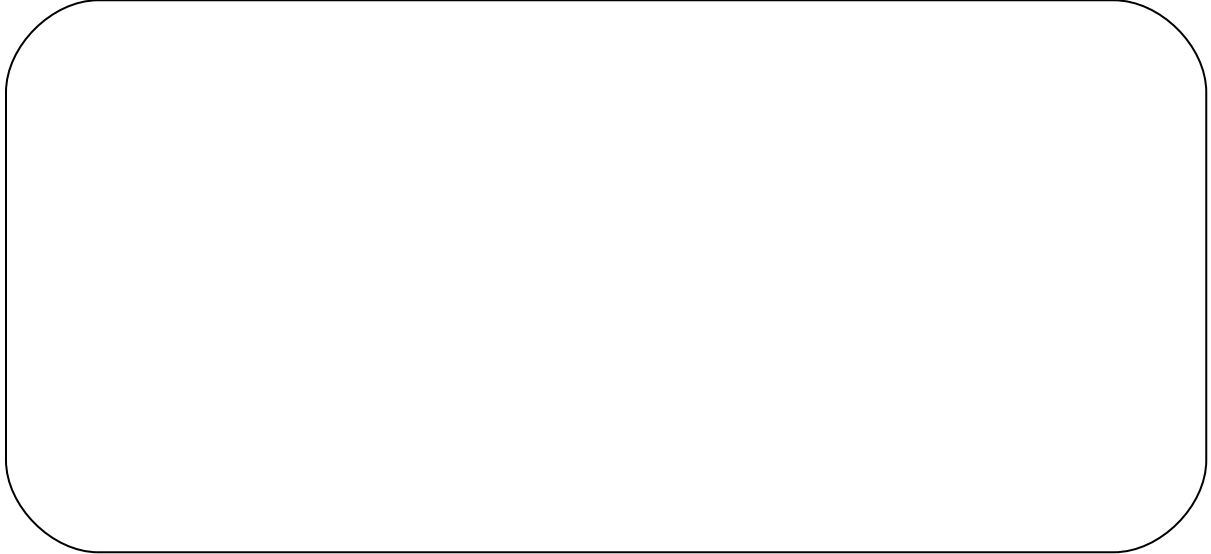
5. The Roman alphabet is the most commonly used alphabetic writing system in the world today, with only 26 letters. How many letters does the Cambodian alphabet have?
 - a. 74
 - b. 36
 - c. 20
 - d. 56

FYI

- The shortest alphabet in the world is Rotokas (Solomon Islands) with only 11 letters!
- There are at least nine writing systems whose secrets have been lost, and as yet, no one can read them.

Why do we write?

In your group, try to list as many reasons writing as you can. For example, leaving a message for someone...



Types of Writing

Categorize the following sentences

**A science report, A mobile phone message, A poem, An argument,
An advert, A description, A story, A recipe**

1. Suddenly the dragon woke up!
2. My love is like a red, red rose.
3. First, put the milk and eggs in a bowl.
4. That's why New York needs to recycle all of its garbage.
5. The whole mountain was covered with a beautiful blanket of snow.
6. In the winter, the rabbit's fur turns white so the rabbit can hide in the snow.
7. The chance of a lifetime! Call now and get 50% off on any flight.
8. CU at J's at 9 don't B L8!

Writing in the Classroom

The most common types of classroom writing are:

- a. D _____
- b. E _____
- c. N _____
- d. R _____
- e. P _____
- f. P _____
- g. L _____

Writing troubles?

What sort of writing do your students do in English class?

In your group, list the difficulties that students have with English writing.

Writing a Short Story

What would happen if you just told your students to write a story? Obviously we need to provide structure for less experienced writers. This is called _____

Set up: An Example of a Completed Story

A Day at the Beach

The other day I went to the beach with my friend Harry. Harry is very tall and thin and he has very long arms and legs, so he looks a bit like an insect. He has a friendly face and big smile. His hair is long and curly and his eyes are round. When I see him I always want to smile.

Describe

It was really hot that day. There were no clouds, the sky was blue, and so was the sea. The sun was very bright and everyone was wearing hats and sunglasses. It looked like a postcard. A vendor was walking up and down the beach yelling, "Cold drinks! Cold drinks!" Harry and I were sitting under a big red beach umbrella eating ice cream and watching the surfers.

Set

Suddenly a strong wind picked up the umbrella and sent it rolling down the beach. Harry and I jumped up and ran after the umbrella, but Harry forgot to put down his ice cream first. He was running down the beach with his long insect arms and legs flying everywhere. He dived to catch the umbrella, but he forgot that he still had an ice cream in his hand. He missed the umbrella and fell with his face in the ice cream. Luckily a nice girl caught the umbrella and came to sit with us because Harry was so funny. It was a great day.

What

Structure: Your story should have three paragraphs

These paragraphs work together to answer the five 'W' questions and the 'S':

Question	Paragraph
Who is the story about?	
When did it happen? Where did it happen?	
Why did it happen? How did it happen? So what happened in the end?	

(Sometimes the first two paragraphs can be switched around.)

Read the example again and find:

1. When
2. Where
3. Who
4. Why (What caused the problem?)
5. How (What happened first, second etc?)
6. So (What was the final result?)

Stage 1: Describe Character(s)

Language for describing a person

Appearance

(He/She) **is**...

a little, quite, pretty, very, really

tall/short
strong/thin

heavy/skinny
chubby/slim

(He/She) **has**...

straight/wavy/curly
dark/blonde/red/fair
messy/neat
hair

brown/blue/green
round/narrow
friendly/mean
eyes

a large/small
a flat/sharp
nose

a round/long/oval
a friendly/kind/cute
face

Personality

(He/She) **is**...

friendly/unfriendly
kind/unkind
outgoing/shy
patient/impatient

selfish/unselfish
stubborn/flexible
stressed-out/laid back
funny/serious

Using similes

(He/She) looks **like** ...

a movie star/a rock star (cool)
a doll/a baby/a teddy bear (cute)
a giant (big)

(He/She) is **as** (adj) **as** a (noun)

as tall as a tree
as strong as an ox
as skinny as a pencil

Stage 2: Set the Scene

Find the following things in the paragraph:

- a. _____ – what do they describe?
- b. _____ – what do they describe?
- c. things you can _____
- d. things you can _____
- e. a simile
- f. past continuous tense
- g. sentences with ‘*there was/were*’

It was really hot that day. There were no clouds, the sky was blue, and so was the sea. The sun was very bright and everyone was wearing hats and sunglasses. It looked like a postcard. A vendor was walking up and down the beach yelling, “Cold drinks! Cold drinks!” Harry and I were sitting under a big red beach umbrella eating ice cream and watching the surfers.

Language for describing a scene:

Adjectives and Adverbs

The department store was very busy.
The lights were really bright.
There was a big yellow sign outside the door.
The bed was soft and warm.

Sensory verbs

The restaurant looked beautiful.
The music sounded romantic.
The chairs felt comfortable.
The food tasted delicious.
The coffee smelled fresh.

There was/were

There were a lot of people in the room.
There was a tall tree by the house.

Activities

An old woman was talking loudly on her cell phone.
People were walking quickly.

Try this activity: Describe the pictures



It's your turn:

Describe when and where your story takes place, and what it looks (and smells, sounds and feels) like. Try to use sensory verbs and similes. It's okay to make your own.

Stage 3: What Happened?

Example

Answer the following questions about the story:

- a. Why?
- b. How?
- c. So?

Suddenly a strong wind picked up the umbrella and sent it rolling down the beach. Harry and I jumped up and ran after the umbrella, but Harry forgot to put down his ice cream first. He was running down the beach with his long insect arms and legs flying everywhere. He dived to catch the umbrella, but he forgot that he still had an ice cream in his hand. He missed the umbrella and fell with his face in the ice cream. Luckily a nice girl caught the umbrella and came to sit with us because Harry was so funny. It was a great day.

Find the following things in the paragraph:

- a. Adverbs
- b. Past continuous tense
- c. Past tense
- d. Conjunctions

Language for talking about past events:

Past tense

Harry and I jumped up.
A nice girl caught the umbrella.

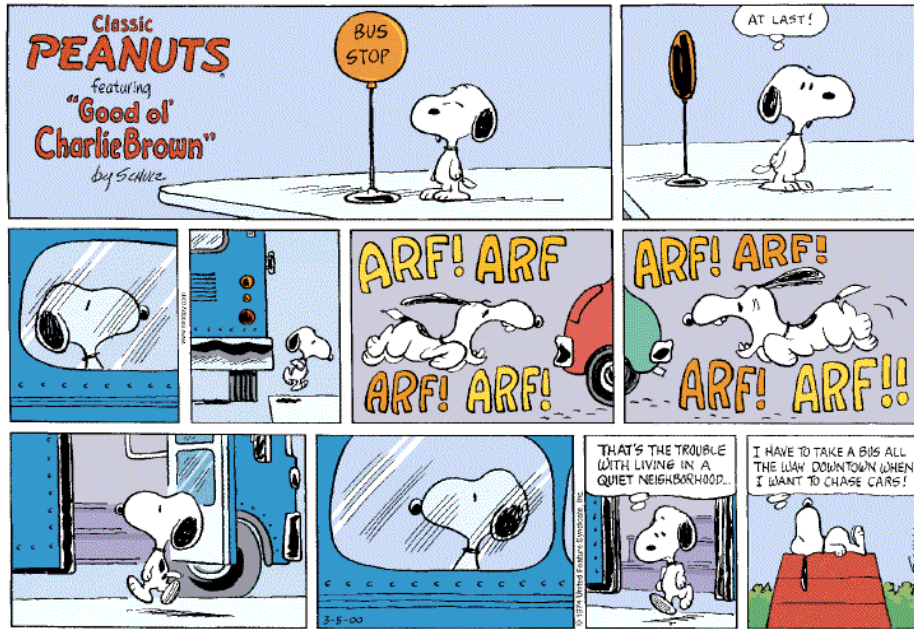
Past continuous tense

We were sitting under a big umbrella.
He was running when he fell.

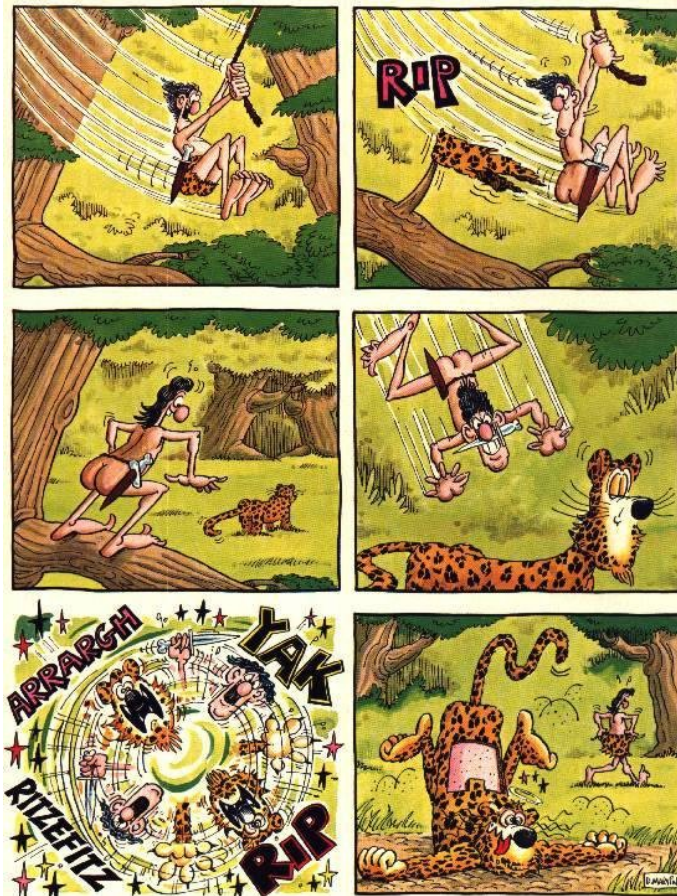
Past perfect tense

The wind had blown the umbrella away before we could catch it.
The thief had already left when the police arrived.

Try it: Re-tell the stories



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