

## 7D "The Lascaux paintings"

Open your book and go to page 79 and read the text "The find of the century", then complete only exercise 1.

1. Read the entire text once.
2. Highlight all the superlatives or comparatives you can find.
3. Read each paragraph and write down the main idea.
4. Read the entire text again and write down one paragraph with the main idea of the text.
5. Give your personal opinion of the text.

### **The find of the century**

Near the town of Montignac in southern France there are some of the most extraordinary paintings in the world – the Lascaux cave paintings. In September 1940, four teenage boys and a dog called Robot were playing in the woods when they found a recent hole beneath a tree and decided to explore. They couldn't see very much, so they returned with a light. When they entered the first cave, they couldn't believe their eyes. Its walls were covered with paintings of ancient animals from 16,000 years ago. It was the find of the century. It contains more than 2,000 images painted by prehistoric man.

The most popular subject of the paintings is horses, but there are also prehistoric cats, bison and even a rhinoceros. Many of these creatures are now extinct. Some of the pictures showed men hunting them for food. Undoubtedly, the most striking images are those of four bulls. In the Great Hall of the Bulls there are four black bulls. One of them is over five metres long – the biggest animal ever discovered in cave art so far. It is not clear who painted them, although some people think that a 'shaman' – a sort of priest and magician – did the work. Maybe he painted them to bring them luck with the hunt. Some of the paintings are extremely skilful and use techniques that weren't used again until the Renaissance.

After the Second World War, the caves became an enormous tourist attraction, with a thousand people visiting them each day. Unfortunately, the carbon dioxide from visitors' breath damaged the paintings so badly that in 1963 they had to close the caves to the public. Experts have managed to restore the pictures to their original state but they have to check them constantly because of environmental dangers. The most recent threat is from a fungus\*. This may be due to the air-conditioning in the caves. Only individual scientists can enter the cave on rare occasions. However, even if we can't see the real thing, we can visit a replica\* of two of the caves and their paintings just 200 metres away. Lascaux II opened in 1983 and receives many thousands of visitors without a risk to the precious originals. Obviously it is not the same as visiting the originals, but it gives us a very good idea of what the paintings are like and their setting\*.