

The Role of language in Human Evolution.

Anthropologist debate whether humans should be seen as tool-makers or as being defined by language. While tool-making is important, the passage argues that language is what truly separates human from animal. Without language human would be no different from instant driven creature like Yahoo's from Gulliver's travel. It is through language that human have developed civilization, including spread of knowledge.

Practice Activity # 1

Q1. Make a précis of the given passage, also give a suitable heading (CSS 2002)

(The official name of our species is homo sapiens; but there are many anthropologists who prefer to think of man as homo Faber-the smith, the maker of tools It would be possible.) I think, to reconcile these two definitions in a third. (If man is a knower and an efficient doer, it is only because he is also a talker In order to be Faber and Sapiens, Homo must first be loquax, the loquacious one.) Without language we should merely be hairless chimpanzees. Indeed we should be something much worse. (Possessed of a high IQ but no language, we should be like the Yahoos of Gulliver's Travels- Creatures too clever to be guided by instinct, too Self-centered to live in a state of animal grace, and therefore condemned forever, frustrated and malignant, between contented apehood and aspiring humanity.) It was language that made possible the accumulation of knowledge and the broadcasting of information. It was language that permitted the expression of religious insight, the formulation of ethical ideals, the codification to laws. (It was language, in a word, that turned us into human beings and gave birth to civilization.)