

Cave Paintings

1 (45) minute class session required

Project Description: Students will learn about the earliest form of art: prehistoric art. They will learn about ancient humans and the reasons behind the earliest cave paintings. Students will take what they have learned about pre-historic art and about drawing animals and apply that in a simulated cave painting experience.

Project Rationale: Students should have a vast understanding and knowledge of the place of art in history. This project will begin a foundation of that understanding and knowledge.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify cave paintings from other areas of the world and the history behind those cave paintings
2. Students will be able to apply what they have learned about pre-historic art and drawing basic animal shapes.
3. Students will work on, in groups, a large simulated cave painting.

Materials:

Large sheets of brown/white/gray paper

Earth-toned chalk/pastels

Art-shirts/aprons

Large visual examples of early pre-historic cave paintings

Flashlight and red tissue paper (to simulate light in a cave)

Procedure:

Day 1: Create a cave in the room by turning the tables on their sides and facing the tops of the tables in toward each other, touching at the edges to create an enclosed cave. Crumple large paper slightly to resemble rough rock walls and cover the table tops to create the walls of the cave. Print or photocopy images from the caves in Lascaux and Altamira and stick them randomly around the cave walls. You may create a "fire" out of a flashlight and tissue paper. Intercept students before they enter the room.

When students enter classroom: "We are entering a sacred cave, we must be very quiet - sit in a circle inside the cave and close your eyes" - students may open their eyes when it is time for discussion. "What are some of your ideas about people who lived in the Stone Age? What did they look like? What did they wear? What did they do?"

Discussion:

1. Look at the pictures stuck on the walls of the cave. Discuss the ways that people made pictures in the Stone Age - they didn't have tubes of paint and brushes. Imagine that the stick of charcoal is a stick from yesterday's fire that has cooled, and we are using the coals to draw.
2. Close your eyes once again - and we will go back in time. "It has been a long time since we have been on a hunt, and our family is getting very hungry. We have entered our

sacred cave, to ask the spirits to help us to catch some large animals to feed us, and to provide us with clothes. By drawing the animals we will hunt on the walls of our sacred cave. We will have power. We will be as fast as the deer, as strong as the bear and the mighty buffalo. Our drawings are as sacred and as special as this cave.”

3. Students will be divided up into groups and may begin to draw on the walls of the cave.