



EduTrend Contents

W4C · ART HISTORY AND APPRECIATION · PRIMARY

Cave Art Studio

Discover the first artists and make natural pigments

Ages 8–11

Level: Developing

60 minutes

Groups of 4 · up to 30

Activity 02

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 pupil worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 02 · AT A GLANCE

Cave Art Studio

Pupils look at images of prehistoric cave paintings and discuss why people made them. They make paints from earth pigments and charcoal, try hand stencils and finger painting on crumpled paper, and create a cave wall with animals and symbols.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- describe features of prehistoric cave art;
- explain how early artists made pigments;
- use natural materials to create cave-style art;
- suggest reasons why people made cave art.

KEY WORDS

prehistoric · cave painting · pigment · ochre · charcoal · stencil · symbol · archaeologist

CURRICULUM LINKS

History: the Stone Age. Science: materials and rocks. Art and design: natural materials and mark-making.

1**LOOK**

Slow looking

2**DESCRIBE**

What do you see?

3**ANALYSE**

How was it made?

4**CONTEXT**

When, where, why?

5**INTERPRET**

What does it mean?

6**RESPOND**

Judge and create

Materials (per group)

- Images of cave art from museum and heritage sources
- Charcoal sticks, chalk, powdered earth pigments or brown and red paint
- Water, a little glue, mixing pots
- Brown paper crumpled and smoothed
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Collect images of cave art from different continents.
- Crumple and smooth brown paper for a rock texture.
- Prepare pigment stations.
- Cover tables.

SAFETY

Aprons on. Avoid breathing powder; mix pigments gently. Wash hands after using charcoal and pigments.

ACTIVITY 02 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Turn the lights down and use a torch on the cave wall for atmosphere.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Lights down: show cave paintings by torchlight.	<i>"Who made these, and why?"</i>
10–20 min Explore	Look at animals, hand stencils and symbols.	<i>"What animals do you recognise?"</i>
20–30 min Pigments	Mix earth pigments with water and a little glue; test charcoal marks.	<i>"Where would early artists find colours?"</i>
30–50 min Create	Groups create a cave wall with animals, hand stencils and symbols.	<i>"How can you show movement?"</i>
50–60 min Gallery	Torchlit gallery walk and discussion.	<i>"Why might people have painted in dark caves?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Create a cave-style artwork using natural pigments, including an animal that shows movement and a hand stencil.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The art history in brief

Prehistoric people painted and engraved on cave walls and rock shelters on every inhabited continent. Famous examples include Lascaux and Chauvet in France and Altamira in Spain. Some cave paintings in Indonesia have been dated to more than 40,000 years ago.

Early artists used pigments from the earth, such as red and yellow ochre, which contain iron oxides, and black from charcoal or manganese. They made hand stencils by blowing pigment around a hand held against the wall. Archaeologists debate why cave art was made: for rituals, storytelling, recording or other reasons.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Cave people could not make real art.” Many cave paintings show great skill and observation.
- “Cave art is only in Europe.” It is found worldwide.
- “We know exactly why it was made.” Experts still debate its purposes.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use ready-mixed brown, red and black paint and a stencil of an animal outline.

Stretch

Research one cave site and present three facts with sources.

WORKSHEET 1

Cave art observations

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Look closely at the images.

What I see

Image	Animals or symbols	Colours used
A		
B		
C		

WORKSHEET 2

Pigment lab

Record your tests.

Pigments

Material	Colour	How it spread
Charcoal		
Red earth		
Yellow earth		
Chalk		

WORKSHEET 3

Why cave art?

Share your ideas.

I think people made cave art because...

My evidence

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight pupils; copy as needed.

Pupil	Describes cave art features	Explains pigments	Suggests reasons with evidence

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Cave Art Studio is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Art History and Appreciation programme (primary, level: developing). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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