

**VOICES**  
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## **PAINTERS OF THE CAVES**

Reindeer  
Alert and frightened  
Seeing, breathing, hurrying  
They are swimming across the river.  
Reindeer

Painters of the Caves

### **Grade Level**

Grades 3

### **Curriculum Area**

Geography • Social Studies • Art

### **Overview**

The Chauvet Cave contains the oldest Ice Age paintings known. Most of the colors in the paintings are red, yellow, brown, and black. Researchers believe that minerals found in the caves were fashioned into a type of crayon or were mixed with water to form paint. The cave painters also used charcoal fires in the caves. In Lascaux Cave, discovered in 1940, and at Chauvet, the cave painters applied the paint with their fingers, a pad of animal fur, and brushes of animal hair or crushed twigs. Though none of the paintings are signed, since these artists had no written language, in Chauvet the artists made handprints. They used two methods: applying the paint to the palm of the hand and then pressing the hand against the stone wall, and blowing paint from a tube, or perhaps directly from the mouth, around the perimeter of the hand while the hand is pressed against the wall. Many of the paintings are outlines of animals. Some include shading that adds a three-dimensional quality.

### **Objectives**

To understand the significance of the cave paintings found at Chauvet and Lascaux.

To learn how artifacts provide insight into human activities.

To discover how artifacts are used to learn about people of the past.

To consider the pros and cons of public access to the caves where paintings have been found.



Lascaux Cave Website 2000

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## **PAINTERS OF THE CAVES**

### **Key Words**

#### **Artifact**

Definition-an object made by humans, such as a tool, especially with historical or archaeological interest.

Context-The artifacts left behind by early people give us insight into their daily lives.

#### **Graffiti**

Definition-words or drawings scratched or painted on walls in public places.

Context-The cave paintings of Lascaux could be examples of early graffiti.

#### **Vandalize**

Definition-to damage public property.

Context-Some modern day visitors vandalize the caves by adding writing or drawings of their own.

#### **Researchers**

Definition-an individual who does a careful investigation into some area of study.

Context-Researchers believe that minerals found in the caves were fashioned into a type of crayon or were mixed with water to form paint.

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## **PAINTERS OF THE CAVES**

### **Activities**

#### **Activity**

Show students the Internet site on the caves in Lascaux and Chauvet. Discuss the description “virtual” Lascaux. Ask the students to scrutinize the pictures. Encourage their careful observation by asking questions such as these:

How is shading used to add depth to the paintings?

What technique is used to depict a herd of animals?

Students will then choose five animals from among those portrayed in the virtual cave. To help them begin, ask how they would describe the reindeer. Ask if they think that the reindeer has spotted a hunter and, if so, why. These are some of the words students may pick to describe the reindeer: alert, frightened, breathing, listening, watching, watchful, moving forward, hurrying, quiet.

#### **Activity**

When everyone has finished describing one of the animals, ask them to write a poem about that animal, using the descriptive words they listed. A simple poem might follow this pattern: First line, name of the animal; second line, two adjectives; third line, three "ing" words; fourth line, one sentence about the animal; fifth line, the name of the animal again. A sample is given at the beginning of the lesson.



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## **PAINTERS OF THE CAVES**

### **Resources**

*Lascaux Revisited*. Glenview, Illinois: Crystal Video Productions. 1994.  
*Painters of the Caves*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. 1999. Kit.  
*Painters of the Caves*. Patricia Lauber. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. 1999.

### **Internet Links**

#### **Teachers**

*Introduction to sites and research artifacts, access to caves*

<http://www.corecom.net/~beccaapu/anthro.html>

*Chauvet Cave*

<http://www.chauvet.com>

#### **Students**

*Lascaux Cave*

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org>

### **Textbooks**

- ***Time Detectives***  
***Literacy Place***  
Grade 3 Unit 5  
Scholastic
  
- ***Unwrapping Ancient Mysteries***  
***Invitations to Literacy***  
Level 6 Theme 3  
Houghton Mifflin Company



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## **PAINTERS OF THE CAVES**

### **Standards and Expectations**

• *MPS Standards Level 3 English Language Arts A.3.3*

Read and discuss literary and nonliterary texts in order to understand human experiences.

• *MPS Expectations Level 3 English Language Arts A.3.3*

Distinguish fiction from nonfiction, realistic fiction from fantasy, fact from opinion, and biography from autobiography.

• *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Visual Arts*

Students will reflect upon the nature of art and meaning in art and culture.

• *Wisconsin's State Expectations for Visual Arts J.3.8*

Know that different cultures have different concepts of beauty.

### **Assessment**

Using brown kraft paper students will create their own cave painting. They will then interpret the meanings of the paintings, orally or in writing, and how they give insight into human activities past or present.

Teachers will evaluate using the Milwaukee Public Schools performance assessment rubrics appropriate to the disciplines scored.