



Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
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This lesson was created by a teacher participating in a Wisconsin ESEA Improving Teacher Quality grant entitled Inquiry Based Technology-Mediated Teacher Professional Development and Application.

Title:	Rock Art
Submitted by:	Judy Berdan
Grade Level:	4-8
Subjects:	Social Studies, Art
Objectives:	The students will create replica symbols of rock art found in Wisconsin and work cooperatively to create a rock art panel.
WI Standards:	Social Studies A.8.8, B.8.1, B.8.4, B.8.8
Duration:	4-5 class periods to read, view parts of a video, make thumbnail sketches and to create their rock art
Materials/Supplies:	<u>Digging and Discovery</u> , sample rock art motifs found in <u>Twelve Millennia</u> Appendix B Rock Art and on Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center's web site: Rock Art Sites http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/SpecificSites/RockArt.htm , and Tainter Cave http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/SpecificSites/Deep%20Cave.htm , notebook, pencil, sandpaper (course), acrylic paint (various colors to create rock colors found here in Wisconsin), water, paint brushes, pie tins and paperclips.
Vocabulary:	Rock art, rock art panel, petroglyph, pictograph, observation, inference, deface
Background:	Information from <u>Twelve Millennia</u> or <u>Digging and Discovery</u> on the rock art of Wisconsin. Prehistoric people throughout North America (and certainly in other parts of the world) created rock art. Their meanings and reasons why they created it remain a mystery. However we view rock art today, it can feed our imaginations as to what the original artists meant to express about their lives through this art form.

Setting the Stage:	Read together the chapter from <u>Digging and Discovery</u> entitled “Stories in Stone,” look at examples of Wisconsin rock art on MVAC’s web site and show parts of the video “If Rocks Could Talk” by B. Jane Bush. Have students make thumbnail sketches of the rock art motifs in their notebooks. Have them also start thinking about a story they’d like to tell in a rock art panel. Students need to keep in mind the various reasons these cultures created rock art – to pass the time, to provide information, to identify a territory, to pass on historical information of their culture, to describe and event.
Procedure:	To create their own rock art, have students paint pieces of sandpaper in different “rock-type” colors they we may see here in Wisconsin – shades of brown, black, gray, etc. Mix a small amount of acrylic paint and water to create a wash for the sandpaper in a pie tin and brush it over the sandpaper. Let dry overnight. The sandpaper will tend to curl a bit as it dries. This is okay as it creates a challenge for the artist! Have each student unbend a large paperclip and practice “carving” their symbol(s) on the sandpaper. When they think they have made enough symbols to give them a fair amount of practice, create teams of 3-4 students to create a rock art panel that tells a story. You may want to use large pieces of prepared sandpaper that can be taped together, depending on the needs of the teams.
Closure:	Each team will display their panel and the other teams will try to decipher a story. Panels can be displayed throughout the school with information about what the students created and what they learned about the creators of the first rock art.
Evaluation:	Class discussion about the project itself and why these prehistoric peoples might have created their rock art. Teacher observation as to how each student is handling the activity.
Links/Extension:	This lesson can be linked to the following lessons in <u>Intrigue of the Past</u> : Lesson 1: Why is the Past Important, Lesson 3: Observation and Inference, Lessons 18-21: Rock Art, Lesson 22: Artifact Ethics, Lesson 26: Archaeology – A Conservation Issue. Any field experiences that would enable students to visit a site with rock art would be invaluable.
References:	<u>Twelve Millennia</u> , <u>Intrigue of the Past</u> , <u>Digging and Discovery</u> were extremely helpful. The video “If Rocks Could Talk” focus on the rock art of the Southwest, but the basic ideas can easily be incorporated into a lesson that focuses on the rock art of Wisconsin, particularly the ideas of preservation and appreciation of our cultural heritage.