
Cave Hands



Grade: 2nd Grade

Medium: Paint

Learning Objective: the students will:

- Observe prehistoric cave paintings
- Review the concept of positive and negative space
- Create an image using hands & stencils

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Elements of Art

Shape: a closed line, in this lesson an organic shape, since it describes a natural object.

Space: an element of visual arts; the area above, below, around, and within an artwork.

- **Negative space:** the empty space surrounding a shape, figure, or form in a two- or three-dimensional artwork.
- **Positive space:** the actual space taken up by the line, shape, or form.

Principles of Design

Rhythm: created by movement implied through the repetition of the organic shapes in a non-uniform but organized way.

Contrast: the difference between the positive and negative space. The negative space is filled in so as to make the empty, positive space show up.

Additional Vocabulary Words

Overlapping: extend over so as to cover partly.

Materials & Supplies

- Spray Bottles
- Tempera Paint in Black, Brown, White, Gold, Red (all colors are not necessary)
- Kraft Paper or Grocery-Size Paper Bags (cut into rectangles) 1 per student
- Soap (for clean-up)
- Towels or Paper Towel (to dry hands)
- Hand Cut-outs (if using)
- Buckets of Water (for handwashing)
- Baby Wipes and/or Paper Towels (a couple for each student)

Context (History and/or Artists)

Cave paintings, or parietal art as it is also called, are the oldest art in the world. Some date back almost as far as 40,000 years ago! Cave paintings are found in the deepest part of the cave.

Cave paintings are sometimes of deer, horses, mammoths, cattle and boars but hand stencils are almost always found in cave paintings. The oldest hand stencil in the world is 39,900 years old and was found in Indonesia. Archeologists think that the hand stencils were made by using dirt as “paint” and then blowing it through hollow bones over a hand that was pressed against the cave wall.

Advanced Preparation

- Ensure that there will be extra adult help in the classroom.
- Put tempera paint in spray bottles and water down enough so the paint can spray (but not too watery). The spray bottles do not need to be full.
- Prepare hand cut-outs, laminate if possible (if using).
- Prepare an example of negative space with just a hand outline and a hand that is filled in with color for positive space.
- Find a map of cave paintings and possibly pictograph sites in the US.

Tips & Tricks

- Put large pieces of newsprint on the desks to protect them.
- Stations could be set up instead of the students staying at their own desks.
- Students waiting at their desks for a turn can draw cave art animals on an extra paper or their scrap paper until it is their turn to get sprayed.
- A couple extra buckets of water and extra soap and towels for handwashing are extremely useful to help alleviate long lines at the sink.
- Use pre-cut hand shapes if hand washing is not available or have some pre-cut hand shapes for any students who don't want to get their hands painty.
- Remind students that they shouldn't move their hands once it's placed & to spray straight down with the paint, not from the sides.
- When showing the cave paintings examples, turn off the lights to simulate being in a dark cave.
- If students are interested in learning more about cave painting, a good follow-up book is *The Cave Painter of Lascaux* by Roberta Angeletti.

Discussion Points

Show students images of cave paintings and a pre-made example. Make sure to end showing some pictures of hands such as the hands from the “Cueva de las Manos” (Cave of the Hands) or Cave Pettakere in South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

- Why do you think these cave paintings were made? (Anthropologists think it could have possibly been for good luck hunting but no one actually knows why).
- What is positive space?
- What is negative space?

- Notice how the colors and hand prints are overlapped.
- Point out how the hands are made not by painting in the hands but by paint going around the hands. Explain that in art this is called negative space (the empty space in artwork).
- Have the students identify which uses positive and which uses negative space.

Reflection Point (Assessment of Learning Objectives)

Students will observe prehistoric cave paintings, review the concept of positive and negative space and create an image using hands & stencils.

Instructions for Lesson

1. Tell the students that we will be creating our own cave art using negative space.
2. Pass out brown paper to each student.
3. Have the students write their names on their paper.
4. Instruct the students to crumple their brown paper and then smooth it out again.
5. Have the students put their non-writing hand on the brown paper with the fingers spread apart and palm down. Have an adult spray it with the spray bottle. Spray right over top of the hand. Make sure the paint spatters on the area surrounding the hand.
6. Lift it up and notice the negative space.
7. Have the students wipe their hand off with a paper towel. It probably will not come clean but they need to make sure to wipe any paint off their palm. Don't wet their hands, it will smear the paint.
8. Repeat steps 8-10 if with a different color turning their hand to keep the eye following the fingers back into the space. Making sure they don't lose their original outlines by adding too many layers
9. Have the students wash their hands.
10. Set the paintings to dry.
11. Ta da! You are now all cave artists.

Examples





References

Hubbard, Bethany. "Prehistoric Cave Art Discovered in the Tropics." *Discover: Science for the Curious*, 8 Oct. 2014, 12:00 pm, blogs.discovermagazine.com/d-brief/2014/10/08/prehistoric-cave-art-discovered-tropics/#.Ww1raUgvy70.

Vergano, Dan. "Cave Paintings in Indonesia Redraw Picture of Earliest Art." *National Geographic Sites*, National Geographic.

"Hot Minute of Art History: Cave Painting." *YouTube*, Stevens, Cassie, 27 Sept. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugUopbEdfPM.

Notes for Educators

21st Century Thinking Skills

Creating, reflecting, observing, making connections, visualizing, sequencing, predicting, contrasting, determining main idea, finding evidence, cause and effect, decision making.

WA State Learning Standards

(VA:Cr1.1.2) a. Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem. This happens when showing different forms to make.

(VA:Cr1.2.2) a. Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. This happens when students make choices about details.

(VA:Cr.3.1.2) Refine and complete artistic work. Discuss and reflect with peers about choices made in creating artwork. This happens if students observe each other's work and talk about how they did it.

(VA:Re7.1.2) a. Perceive and describe aesthetic characteristics of one's natural world and constructed environments. This happens when geometric forms and complementary colors are found within art and architecture.

(VA:Re9.1.2) a. Use learned art vocabulary to express preferences about artwork. This happens when the vocabulary words are used by students during the lesson.

(VA:Cn11.1.2) a. Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places. This happens if characteristics of abstract sculpture are described as it relates to time and place.

Arts Integration Opportunities

Writing: Procedural writing, or elements and principles used in spelling lists. A fictional description of the use of the sculpture or its place in a habitat can also be prompted.

Math: the link between 2 & 3-dimensional shapes and forms are useful when learning math concepts.