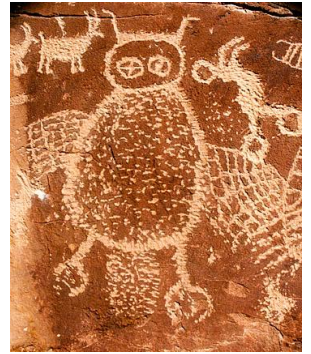


# Rock Art of Southwestern USA



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The Art Heritage Program's Rock Art of Southwestern USA unit meets the following Colorado Department of Education-Visual Arts Standards (2009)

1. Observe and Learn to Comprehend
2. Envision and Critique to Transfer
3. Invent and Discover to Create
4. Reflect and Connect to Transfer



## LEARNING TARGET:

- I know two important facts about Rock Art of the Southwest.
- I can create art in the style of the artists.

## SUMMARY

- ✚ Rock art is the expression of the belief system of an ancient culture. To understand rock art, you have to get to know the people, both ancient and modern, associated with it.
- ✚ America's first artists left paintings and carvings on rock surfaces, perhaps as early as 10,000 years ago. These prehistoric images, known as rock art, have been found in 41 of the 50 states, as well as in Canada and Mexico. Some of the ancient rock art found in other areas of the world is possibly 30,000 years old. Rock art was created by almost every ancient culture.
- ✚ Our rock art unit focuses on the American Southwest, primarily Colorado and, Utah. We are fortunate to live within a few miles of magnificent rock art, created hundreds to thousands of years ago by our ancient neighbors.

- ✦ Rock art may be found in caves, on cliff walls or on boulders. The painted images are called *pictographs*. Pecked or scratched images are called *petroglyphs*.
- ✦ The meaning of rock art is unknown. The designs may have recorded religious or mythological events, migrations, hunting trips, resource locations, travel routes, celestial information and other important knowledge. Many believe rock art uses symbolic concepts that provide the observer with information and that it was important, not simply artistic expression or doodling.

Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, curator of anthropology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science commented in the **Denver Post**:

*“Ancient rock art matters because it is not really a kind of ancient graffiti — as some might like to think — but the cultural archive of our nation’s first peoples. As history books written in stone, rock art recounts what Native Americans have seen, touched, believed and lived through the millennia. For contemporary Native Americans, these ancient places are monuments that venerate their ancestors. The rock art that garlands the Grand Canyon are like the words that adorn the Lincoln Memorial or the frescoes that consecrate the Sistine Chapel. These are sacred places.*

*Yet the values of these places go beyond Native American communities; they belong within a larger set of nested communities that connect science, the nation, and the world. For archaeologists, rock art is a key to unlock the past’s untold stories. Few other kinds of archaeological remains can give such penetrating insights into psychology, religion, settlement patterns, political economy, subsistence strategies, and aesthetics.*

*The chronicle of ancient Native Americans — their arrival and survival here — is the first chapter in all American history. The people before us have much to teach about the past and the present human condition. The public lands that protect so much of Native American history serve to celebrate the foundations of the place that all of us now call home. Still further, America’s story is a part of humanity’s story. Cultural objects often transcend national boundaries. Painted and pecked imagery in stone can be found in nearly every corner of the globe. North America’s ancient visual inventory is not isolated from but linked with France’s Lascaux Cave and Australia’s Ayer’s Rock. The human desire to depict our world through images tells us about our differences, but also about our common heritage.”* [Guest Commentary: The Denver Post www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci\\_17595952#ixzz1ZC65xCeP](http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci_17595952#ixzz1ZC65xCeP)

## WHERE ARE THOSE PEOPLE NOW? WHY DID THEY DISAPPEAR?

### 4.6 BILLION YEARS CONDENSED INTO ONE YEAR

(Adapted from the Time-Life, Time Frame series, Volume I, The Human Dawn)

***Pretend you are present at 12:59 pm on December 31st looking back at the year...***

January to July		Air on Earth is not breathable
August to October		Microscopic organisms begin to develop
October 1		Fish appear
October 14		Plants grow on land
October 21 into November		Insects, amphibians, forests, and reptiles come
December 15		Dinosaurs appear
December 16		Mammals appear
December 25		Dinosaurs vanish
December 28		First apes appear
December 31	6am	Australopithecines emerge
	11 minutes ago	Modern man emerges
	1 minute ago	Agriculture began
	20 seconds ago	First city built
	1.5 seconds ago	Declaration of Independence signed

The people that made these images did not "disappear"- they are still right here today. Their descendants are the modern Hopi, Zuni, Acoma and other Pueblos, the Paiute, Mohave, Quechan, Cocopa, Maricopa, the Pai Groups, and many others- just ask them! Most of these Native Americans have an unbroken tradition associated with rock art sites, and consider them sacred.

### HOW CAN WE LEARN MORE ABOUT ROCK ART?

Remember, rock art is the expression of the belief system of an ancient culture. To understand rock art, you have to get to know the people, both ancient and modern, associated with it. One way is to learn more about other aspects of their culture-pottery symbols, textiles and jewelry, kiva wall murals, and the shape and style of their buildings. We can learn about rock art from several sources: from modern archaeological methods of investigation and site recording, and from the Native Americans themselves, our most important source of knowledge.

### Protecting the Past: Things Not To Do

1. Touching rock art with your hands can harm it.
2. Making paper rubbings or tracings may crumble the rock art.
3. Only professionals who have been given approval, should make latex molds of rock art, and only if the rock art is going to be destroyed by construction or development.
4. Building fires nearby can cause serious damage from smoke and high temperature
5. Some selfish people steal rock art by using rock saws and chisels.
6. Chalking is harmful to the rock art and makes it impossible to use new methods of dating the figures.
7. Re-pecking or re-painting a difficult to see image doesn't restore it, but rather destroys the original.
8. Defacement is a sign of disrespect for other cultures. Insensitive people often paint their names over rock art, or shoot bullets at it.
9. Beware of "tunnel vision". People like rock art so much, they often forget to watch where they are walking and may trample or damage important artifacts.
10. Removal or rearrangement of artifacts destroys archaeological data. Artifacts should be left where they are found.
11. Any digging at an archaeological site is not allowed. Even too many visitors walking around may damage an archaeological site.

*Excerpted from Hurst and Pachak, 1989, pp. 25-26.*

### Bibliography and websites:

- James Q. Jacobs, photographer [www.jamesqjacobs.net](http://www.jamesqjacobs.net)
- B. Jane Bush: If Rocks Could Talk (teacher's edition) 1993, Dale Seymour Publications.
- Rock art: <http://www.angelfire.com/trek/archaeology/index.html>
- Utah Rock Art Assoc. Information on ethics, etc.: <http://www.utahrockart.org/> (click on "education")
- Visit Rock Art: Capitol Reef, Utah Rock Art: <http://www.nps.gov/care/petpull.htm>
- Barrier Canyon Rock Art: [http://www.jqjacobs.net/rock\\_art/barrier1.html](http://www.jqjacobs.net/rock_art/barrier1.html)

*Remember, rock art symbols found throughout the southwestern states likely have religious and/or symbolic meanings.*

*Please treat discussions with respect for the Native American culture and for the people who created the art.*

## **POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**

*Observe and Learn to Comprehend & Envision and Critique to Transfer (VA 1 & 2)*

1. Rock art can be found all over the world, in almost every culture. Some of the rock art found in Europe is thought to be about 30,000 years old, created during the time of the last ice age.

Our Art Heritage lesson focuses on the rock art found in Western Colorado and Eastern Utah. Although we do not know much about the people who created these images, archeologists (scientists who explore ancient sites) are able to tell us the food they ate and the homes they lived in. They know this because the archeologists have found remains of food, baskets and other items that the people left behind.

2. **Great Gallery, Barrier Canyon.** [http://www.igjacobs.net/rock\\_art/barrier1.html](http://www.igjacobs.net/rock_art/barrier1.html) Long, long ago, people who lived and traveled through Western Colorado and Utah left interesting images on rock surfaces that we are puzzled by. These early inhabitants were people who traveled to find food. The animals they hunted most often were rabbits, antelope and desert or mountain sheep. The people also gathered and used as many as 200 different plants. They collected the food in woven baskets.

This rock panel is thought to be about 2,000-4,000 years old. The rock panel is found in Barrier Canyon, Canyonlands National Park, Utah. The art includes tiny birds flying about the heads and tiny people and animals perched on the shoulders of life-sized or larger figures. The figures are painted in reds and browns and have long, decorated bodies with no (or tiny) arms.

3. **Newspaper Rock.** No one really knows what the symbols mean. Rock art can't be "read" although some researchers have tried to decode the symbols. Different groups made different styles of rock art. Is it a type of storytelling? Does it depict religious or spiritual beliefs? Was it done just for decoration? Stories from present-day descendants are sometimes used to try to understand meaning. Many Native American people believe the spirit of the artists/makers resides in what they created.
4. There are two types of rock art: **Pictographs** and **petroglyphs**. *Pictographs* were painted on the rock. Paints were made by crushing minerals into powder and putting them into damp rock surfaces. Powdered pigments were kept in hollow, bone tubes. Crushed rock and soil produced browns, yellows, reds and orange. Powdered charcoal gave black. Chalk made white. Greens and blues came from crushed rocks.

5. Many petroglyphs were made by using a hard rock to peck away on an exposed rock surface. Other examples were engraved or "cut" into the rock, again with the use of a harder implement. Sometimes the surfaces were prepared by chipping or scraping to create a smooth surface.
6. There were several groups or tribes who lived or traveled through the area. Each had a style of their own. Figures in the **Barrier Canyon style** (500 BC – AD 500) were usually painted under overhangs so the art was not exposed to sun and weather. The pictographs were painted in bright colors. The paint used had three components: pigment, binder and vehicle. Pigments, or color elements, came from colored soils and vegetable dyes. The binder was anything that made the paint more permanent. Blood, milk, animal fat and urine were the most common binders. The vehicle was added to make the paint easier to apply. In many cases binder and vehicle were the same. Adding vehicle could be as simple as adding water to make the paint thin enough to apply or heating the animal fat to make the paint easier to use.
7. Sego Canyon panel.
8. **Seven Mile Canyon: Fremont** (300-AD 1500) art shows a great deal of variety. In the early part of this period, the figures are trapezoidal shapes with bucket heads. The figures become more decorated as time goes on. The Fremont usually made petroglyphs and Ancestral Puebloan people painted their art. What images do you recognize? (Kokopelli, centipede, bighorn sheep, etc.)
9. Westwater Canyon. This image is familiar to many people who raft the Colorado River between Loma and Moab.
10. Nine Mile Canyon and McDonald Creek Canyon rock art.
11. Deer Petroglyph from Arches and No Thoroughfare Canyon petroglyph from Colorado National Monument. The Monument photograph was taken around 1963 by T.R. Giles, U.S. Geological Survey. The figures were first colored with chalk to make them stand out for the photo.  
 Unfortunately, we've learned that although the chalk helped Mr. Giles see the petroglyph better, it also damaged it. People must be careful to not touch or add anything to rock art because it can be easily damaged. It is also now illegal to do this. Researchers believe that the figures are Shoshone (Ute) and Fremont. <http://rexmario.blogspot.com/2010/04/no-thoroughfare-canyon-petroglyphs.html>
12. These Fremont figures wear elaborate jewelry, with breastplates, necklaces, and large earrings. Some also have headdresses. Female figures typically wear dresses with fringe along the bottom. The figures are still trapezoidal. Most of the human figures are shown from the front, but the animals are always shown in profile. Sheep and deer frequently

appear in the art.

13. Kokopelli is probably the best known of Southwestern rock art. The image of the flute player is used in advertisement and as a trail name for a popular biking trail. This site includes what is thought to be the largest Kokopelli figure, it measures 48 inches from tip of feather to tip of flute.
14. The Three King's Panel has been called the best petroglyph panel in the world. This is one of many rock panels along Dry Fork on and near the McConkie Ranch. It is located about 125 feet up a cliff. The nearest photography position is a six inch ledge on the cliff face using a telephoto lens. Access to the panel is not possible. The largest figure is well over six feet tall. (Vernal area, Utah)
15. Later rock art showing figures riding horses. Southwestern rock art changed greatly after the Spanish began trading in the early 1600's because the Spanish provided both metal tools and horses. The metal tools allowed greater detail in rock art, and horses became common figures in the art.
16. When explorers, mountain men and settlers came to the area, they added their marks to the rocks. Unfortunately, it often was over the top of ancient art, damaging the rock forever. Notice the bullet holes as well as the painted and pecked names.
17. Rock Art panel, Dominquez Canyon.
18. **TAKE ONLY PHOTOS -- LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS.** As new techniques develop, the symbols preserved in stone reveal new secrets about the past. Through careful study, scientists can use rock art to learn where and how ancient people lived. A rock art site is not just the art on the rocks; it includes the art, the rocks and cliffs, and the surrounding area.

For Native Americans, rock art is an important and unique part of their rich cultural legacy. It is a treasure that must be preserved for study, reflection and sheer enjoyment for generations to come.

We need to remember that any visit to a rock art site may endanger it. This is much more than "don't touch the rock art."

**REFLECT AND CONNECT TO TRANSFER** (VA Standard #4)

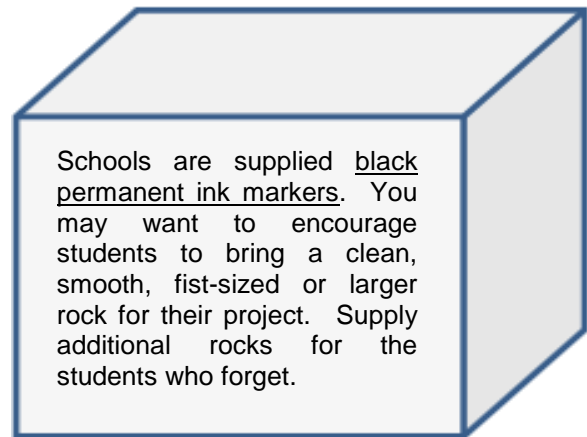
***During the last 5 minutes with your students, perhaps as they are cleaning up or while they are creating, take a moment to encourage the students to discuss and review their understanding of Rock Art of the Southwest:***

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

1. *What was one thing you learned about Rock Art of the Southwest?*
2. *How did ancient people use images to communicate?*
3. *How will you use images to create your art?*
4. *What do you wonder?*

## FEATURED ART PROJECT

*Invent and Discover to Create (VA Standard #3)*

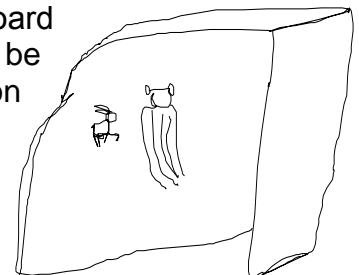


**“Rock Art”:** Gather small river rocks or sandstone pieces. Students use black markers to create their own “ancient rock art” on the rocks. The images provided should be used as inspiration for students. Encourage students to create original images based upon their interests. (Ex: figure with a soccer ball)

A coat of Future™ floor polish or Tempera Varnish (available at art/craft stores or D51 Warehouse) can seal the image. If the rocks are small and thin enough, they can be made into refrigerator magnets by gluing a magnet on the back.

**Alternative Projects:** (#1 & 2 are from Jane Bush, URARA)

- 1. PAINT a STORY:** Hang a large sheet of butcher paper on the classroom wall and provide students with tempera paint and brushes. Have students make a mural that tells a story by using Indian symbols or symbols the students invent.
- 2. PLASTER PETROGLYPHS:** Mix plaster with tempera paint to look like sandstone, and then pour the plaster onto a lined cookie sheet, or Styrofoam plates and allow setting. Just before you are ready to carve, have the students paint a coat of darker colored tempera paint on the top surface. They can then carve designs into the plaster, with nails, paper clips or other sharp objects. Encourage the students to plan their designs ahead of time, because it is hard to repair mistakes.
- 3. COLORING PAGES:** Younger students may enjoy coloring the rock art images provided by URARA for Art Heritage Program use. These are actual representations of rock art found in Utah.
- 4. “CAVE ART”:** Locate a large packing box from an appliance store (if possible) or create a “cave-like” setting by forming large pieces of cardboard in an arcing shape. Torn sections of brown-paper bags can be glued to the cardboard to add texture and hide any writing on the box. Have students imagine they are transported to a place long ago. Students use charcoal or black markers to add their images on the “cave walls” as inspired by ancient rock art.



**Rock Art Panel:** Materials: brown construction paper and/or a roll of brown butcher paper, a box of cotton swabs (Q-tips), liquid Dishwasher detergent with chlorine, “rock art symbols” master sheets

Procedure: (you may want to open a window for this!)

- Give each student a piece of brown construction paper and a cotton swab. Dipping the cotton swab in the bleach solution and rubbing it on paper create the art.
- Demonstrate the process, emphasizing to students that they must be very careful not to touch anything but the paper with their cotton swab. Place a container with a small amount of the solution in the center of the worktable or carry a small cup to students and have him or her dip their cotton swab. They should only need one or two dips for the activity.
- Lay the roll of brown butcher paper on a table or floor. Divide the class into groups no larger than 10 students. An adult aide for each group would be helpful. Alternatively, have only one group at a time do the activity.
- After students have completed their own “petroglyph” they take turns making figures on the large piece of butcher paper. Space students a few feet apart, and have small groups work at a time.
- Exhibit the rock art panel in the classroom or hallway

5. **Crayon Resist:** students make petroglyphs “telling a story” of some aspect of their lives.

Materials: white crayons, drawing paper, brown washable paint (thinned for a wash), flat brushes, paper towels, containers, and glue.

Procedure: Students draw their images on the drawing paper with white crayons. Then they cover the paper with the thinned brown paint. When the resists are dry, students can wrinkle, fold and cut the edges of the paper to give the petroglyph 3-D form and further texture. The final product is framed on brown construction paper, trimmed to the image contour and displayed.

6. **“Rocks”** *Sheri Woodard, an art teacher shares:* “A couple years ago I did this project with my first grade students. The way I set it up was that the students sat in my storeroom (very dark and cave-like) and we looked at pictures from a National Geographic that showed many cave paintings. I also read a book called Rock Art (I don't remember the author). We discussed why these early artists probably drew these animals and then they drew stylized animals also. I had them draw their animals on small lunch bags and we used markers to color them in. We next stuffed them with newspaper and taped them closed. I took the “rocks” and made a wall on rock art in the hallway. The kids loved the project, but the “rocks” didn't stay up on the wall very well. I guess I need to use super strong tape.”

