Prehistoric Cave Art
Pictograph:
Painting on a surface like a cave wall.

Petroglyph:
Design carved into rock or other surface.
Why is Prehistoric Art So Important?

- It demonstrates early human expression of beliefs or actions. In other words, it is evidence of early human culture.
- It is evidence for our unique ability for symbolic thought, i.e., to use symbols to represent beliefs or ideas.
- Art sets us apart from the rest of the animals who create things simply to survive; *art is one of the things that makes us uniquely human.*
Cave of Lascaux, France

Discovered by four boys in 1940.

Caves are filled with pictographs and petroglyphs that were made about 17,000 years ago.
There are almost 600 pictures of animals, mostly horses.

Other animals painted are stags, bulls, bison, and ibex.

Only one man is painted.
Think about some of these facts.

The caves were extremely dark.

The caves were not easy to access.

The paintings demonstrate amazing artistic talent.

**WHY WOULD THEY TAKE TIME TO PAINT INSTEAD OF SEARCH FOR FOOD?**
Possible Reasons for Cave Art

Decoration?

Represent clan/tribe?

To mark possession / show ownership?

Symbols of opposites, e.g., signs?
Male Signs of Lascaux?
Female Signs of Lascaux?
Signs Found on Artifacts in the Cave Compared to Paintings

- Antler tips

- Does this indicate ownership?
- Are these tribal marks?
Is Cave Art Evidence of Early Religious Beliefs?
Traditional Interpretations of Cave Art

Religious/spiritual purpose: to show a connection/dependence on the animal kingdom?

OR

Survival: a kind of “magic” (to hunt or gain the power of the animals)?
The Shaman?

Cave Art = Spiritual Connection to the Animal Kingdom
A Hunter? (The Wounded Man)

Cave Art = “Good Luck” or “Magic” to Hunt Animals?
Most Recent Interpretation of Cave Art

- To express inner visions, dreams, hallucinations
- To paint what they saw in a trance, i.e., altered-states of consciousness
- Animals as “spirit guides,” e.g., in South Africa, the eland and the San shaman-hunter.
Guess the Animal(s) Game

Look at the following cave art from a variety of sources (Lascaux, Chauvet, a few modern interpretations, etc.) and try to guess the kinds of animals that have been depicted. Sometimes there are many animals mixed together. *DO NOT SHOUT OUT THE NAMES!*
Horse
Stag
Boar
Deer
Owl
Hyena and a Panther
Mammoths
Ibexes
Bear
Penguins
Bison
Bison – Modern Painting
Horse
Bison Man
(Sorcerer of the Chauvet Cave)
Lions and Rhinos
Horses and Bison
Rhino
Bear
Horses
Wolf – Modern Painting
Hand stencil (Chauvet Cave)
CAVE ART PROJECT

You are going to create your own cave art!

What are some similarities that you noticed in the cave art you have seen?
Simple Pictures
Outline Drawings with Shading
What Colors are Used?
Now you will create your own cave art for a homework assignment.

Remember, art is one of the things that makes us human.

FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS YOU ARE GIVEN!
This is NOT Cave Art
References


<http://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi&q=>

The Caves of Lascaux. 1 May 2005.  
<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/>
References


<http://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi&q=>

The Caves of Lascaux. 1 May 2005.  
<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/>
THE END

Please note that a small handful of slides for this PowerPoint were taken off the internet and added to by William Jones, the teacher of the Grade 6 Social Studies class, Ancient Civilizations (2007-2013). The references were created by the author of the original short PowerPoint.