

# Prehistoric Art



## The Stone Age, Bronze Age & Iron Age Year 3

### Essential Knowledge

#### By the end of this unit children will

- Recognise the processes involved in creating prehistoric art.
- Explain approximately how many years ago prehistoric art was produced.
- Use simple shapes to build initial sketches.
- Create a large scale copy of a small sketch.
- Use charcoal to recreate the style of cave artists.
- Demonstrate good understanding of colour mixing with natural pigments.
- Discuss the differences between prehistoric and modern paint.
- Make choices about equipment or paint to recreate features of prehistoric art, experimenting with colours and textures.
- Successfully make positive and negative handprints in a range of colours.
- Apply their knowledge of colour mixing to make natural colours.
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### Vocabulary

Ancestors, climate: nomadic;  
communal: historical sources;  
artefacts; archaeology; archaeologists;  
scavenging; predators; prehistoric;  
Palaeolithic; Mesolithic; Neolithic;  
Skara Brae; Stonehenge; Hill Forts

### Prehistoric Art Topic Intention

Through this topic, children will find out about life during the stone age, bronze age and iron age. They will be able to appreciate how long ago these periods were and can place them on to a timeline in chronological order. They understand that it is one of the earliest periods of recorded history. Children will be able to use sources of information to compare how life was different then to how they live their own lives. They will be able to talk about what they ate, what they wore, where they lived with these things during this period of time. Using atlases, they will locate Skara Brae and use evidence to help them suggest what this settlement tells them about life in that period. They will gain further insight of this time period during an educational visit to Flag Fen.

## Art

### Key Objectives- Art

- Create sketchbooks to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas
- Know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms
- Develop their techniques, including their control and their use of materials, with creativity, experimentation and an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design
- Improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay
- Pupils should be taught to develop their techniques, including their control and their use of materials, with creativity, experimentation and an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design.

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### Session 1

Focus: To learn how prehistoric man made art and to reflect this style in their work.

Show the pupils the images from the Prehistoric Art PowerPoint. Allow them time to fully absorb the details and complexity of the images, then discuss them as a class or in small groups. Encourage them to: highlight details that interest them; name the animals depicted and to describe the patterns, colours and textures in the images. Give children some background information for context: These paintings were produced approximately 17,000 years ago, before there were any houses, buildings, roads, cars, electricity or schools! To the people of this time, wild animals were their primary source of food and were very important to them. They are huge paintings done on the walls of caves in extremely dark places, so they would have needed oil lamps (made from stone and animal fat) to see what they were doing.

Ask: If you wanted to show people in 5,000 years time what your favourite animals native to Britain were, what would you draw? In table groups, get pupils to look at the Line Drawings and Photos of Native British Animals PowerPoint provided and then choose two or three animals that they love and would like to show people in the future. Model how to pick out the key geometric shapes in the photographs and line drawings to help map out the relative sizes and shapes. Get them to draw a picture of their favourite animal in their sketchbooks, trying to replicate the prehistoric style. Children should lightly map out their sketch first to get the proportions right, then go over the main outline in a darker pencil line. They then add colour to their favourite animal using pencil or crayon in colours appropriate to prehistory (i.e.: earthy tones).

After the animal is drawn in rough form, ask pupils to look at each other's work and suggest ways in which it might be improved, such as adding more detail, correcting some shapes, adding fur, colour or pattern.

## Session 2

Focus: To scale up drawings and sketches in a different medium.

Focus: To apply and blend charcoal to create tone and texture.

Remind the class of the images in the Prehistoric Art PowerPoint from Lesson 1, explaining that many of these were drawn with charcoal. Tell children how we make charcoal in the same way even today (pieces of willow branches baked and fired in a kiln). Explain that they will be scaling up their sketches from Lesson 1 and that this means everything within their drawings will get proportionally larger. Demonstrate how to scale up their sketchbook drawings by identifying the basic shapes within it. This is a good opportunity to recap common 2D shape names too.

Show children how they begin by creating a rock texture by lightly rubbing crushed charcoal and earth tones of chalk pastel over sugar paper with a paper towel and spraying with fixative (or hairspray) to fix (do so in a well ventilated area). Once their background is prepared, they then draw their favourite British animals from their sketchbooks onto large sugar paper. Encourage them again to look for key 2D shapes and to check the relative size of each part of their animal. They can fill the area using charcoal, chalk or pastel sticks or with paper stumps (made by tightly rolling paper towels and sticking them together with tape) rubbed in crushed charcoal powder. Using these can reduce the amount of chalk or charcoal children get on their fingers. Pupils should sketch lightly so they can smudge away mistakes.

Remind them to keep their drawings in the style of prehistoric artists, with simple, bold lines and shapes.

Ask pupils to gather around their drawings to look at them more closely. Ask them to identify any features which are similar to the style of the cave artists and to consider: - Which details have you changed or altered to your own style? - How did you find working with charcoal? - What did it feel like? - What is good about using charcoal? What is difficult?

## Session 3

Focus: To experiment with the pigments in natural products to make different colours.

Recap the colours used in prehistoric art and why they are limited to these. *People from the Stone Age didn't have access to paints, so they had to use natural objects to create marks and shapes, eg: crushed berries, burnt wood, plants, animal fats mixed with natural pigments.* Show some of the cave painting images from Lesson 1 again and, if useful, keep them displayed throughout the activity. **Natural Colours Walk** Take children outside to look at different colours found in nature, or collect some items yourself before the lesson. Ask them to find things they they could draw or paint with (green leaves, mud, twigs, grass, petals from flowers, berries, fruit).

Back in the classroom, children experiment with the *natural objects they found, using them to make marks with white paper and discussing in groups which work well and which don't.* Get them to think about why this is. Eg: *It's too dry, the pigments aren't strong enough, etc.* **Natural paint** Next, they are going to make their own paint from natural products. Start by creating a base (a liquid medium to hold the colour) from flour and water mixed into a paste the consistency of paint. Model how to add a pigment, such as turmeric or paprika to make a different colour. Give pupils a palette with some flour and water mixture and ask them to experiment with mixing their own colours from the spices and things found in their walk, into the flour.

Get children to experiment with this new paint in their sketchbooks, making a mark with it, then writing next to it how they made it. They could try painting some simple shapes, patterns and symbols.

Explain that although we usually work on smooth paper, people in the stone age would have to paint on the walls of caves. Hold up different materials that they could use to recreate the rough texture of a cave wall, showing them how to stick down objects, then paint over the surface when dry. Pupils create textured backgrounds by using modroc dipped in water or by gluing down couscous, bulgur wheat, lentils, coarse flour, seeds or sand, etc to strong card then painting over the rough surface using their natural paints or natural coloured poster paint.

Ask pupils to share their work, showing the different coloured natural paints they were able to create. As a class, discuss how the most successful colours were made and why this might be. Get them to consider what they like and dislike about their natural paint and whether they think it's better or worse than the paints they usually use.

#### Session 4

##### Focus: To develop painting skills

Explain to the children that they are going to be creating a cave style painting of an animal using natural coloured paints on a textured surface. Demonstrate how to do this, using different shades and tints by adding a tiny amount of another colour or water.

Hand out pupils' work from previous lessons and explain that they are going to be painting the animal they sketched in Lessons 1 and 2, using the colours skills from Lesson 3. If they had time to create textured backgrounds on card in Lesson 3, hand these out too. (If they ran out of time, they can use plain paper or card instead.) They start by lightly sketching out the key shapes of their animal from Lesson 1 and 2, remembering to keep everything in proportion. They then start to mix the colours they will need - remind them at this point about their work from Lesson 3, creating colours found in nature, encouraging them to revisit their sketchbooks to see the colours they created. Ask pupils to paint neatly and evenly, filling in all the gaps. They should try to apply some of the techniques from the Stone Age, such as simple bold black outlines, patterns and dots. Encourage them to experiment with creating different textures by using different parts of the brush and different techniques to vary the effects. Get them to use a small brush for finer details. Top tip: You could make your own paintbrushes here for extra effect by placing a small piece of sponge over the blunt end of a paintbrush or twig, securing with an elastic band.

It's exhibition time! Lay the children's paintings out on the floor, reminding them to be careful not to step on anyone else's work, then gather round to discuss them as a class, asking: What did you enjoy or not enjoy about this? - Which work is similar/different to the real cave paintings? - Are the colours accurate?

#### Session 5

##### Focus: To collaborate in small or large groups to create a joint piece of artwork

Show pupils pictures and information on 'Cueva de las Manos' and tell them that they will be creating a class version of this. Explain that scientists have found that many of these hands are women's hands and some are children's. There are two types of hand images: - Negative - where the artist paints around the hand - Positive - where the hand is dipped in paint and applied.

If you have time, it's a nice idea to create a texture effect background using rags dipped in paint or with sponges and spray bottles; however, it needs to be completely dry before the lesson. Alternatively, you could slightly scrunch the paper or add charcoal smudges and lines to make it look more authentic. To make their hand art, you could group the children either: - In small groups of three/four - hand them large sheets of yellow, grey or brown sugar paper. - In large groups of six/eight - give them long sheets of wallpaper or lining paper. Model to the children how they can create both negative and positive hand images. Positive > place your hand into a tray of child safe paint, scraping off any excess as needed, then firmly pressing onto the paper, taking care not to move it around. Negative > show them how to paint carefully around their hand, dragging the brushstrokes outwards so that it is not just a thick line. Get pupils to recreate the natural colours they made in Lessons 3 and 4 and then start creating their handprints. Alternatively, they could use vibrant colours for a modern take on the cave art.

Assemble the pieces of art to create one huge work of art. Ask the children to point out the handprints that came out most clearly. As a class, discuss what they enjoyed the most or found the most difficult about working together on this. Finally, ask them to suggest where they could proudly display this joint work of art.

#### Learning Challenge Week

*'Art gallery' open to other children and staff.*

Children to write instructions of how they made the piece of art.

#### Assessment:

- I can use sketches to produce a final piece of art.
- I can use different art equipment to shade and to show different tones and textures.
- I recognise when art is from different historical periods