

SIDEWALK PETROGLYPHS

with Anthropologist Andrea Conger

Supplies included in this kit:

- Information Packet, including Sidewalk Petroglyph Activity Instructions
- 2 sponges
- 1 foam brush
- 4 sticks sidewalk chalk
- 1 container petroleum jelly
- ½ cup corn starch
- Link to video by Dr. Conger:
<https://my.nicheacademy.com/kidsathome/course/32149>
- List of related books you may enjoy!

Supplies you will need from home:

- Measuring cups: ½ cup & ¼ cup
- Water
- Spoon or tool to crush sidewalk chalk
- Surface for painting, if *outdoors*
- Paper for painting, if *indoors*

We want to hear from you!

Complete a survey about your experience:
rclreads.org/library-program-evaluation-for-legacy/

Share pictures and stories on social media by using the hashtag: **#RCLReadMakeDo**

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Resource List

BOOKS

Digging deep: how science unearths puzzles from the past by Laura Scandiffio (2019) **J Nonfiction - 930.1 S28D**

Early people by Jim Pipe (2015) **J Nonfiction 569.9 P66E**

The first drawing by Mordicai Gerstein (2013) **E GERS**

Life in the Stone Age by Deborah Lock (2018) **Reader 930 L81L**

Secrets in stone: all about Maya hieroglyphs by Laurie Coulter (2001) **J 497.415 C85S**

Strong as stone by Christopher Browne (2021) **E BROW**

The history of prehistory by Mick Manning (2020) **J Nonfiction 930 M28H**

The secret cave: discovering Lascaux (2010) **E Nonfiction 944.72 M13S**

What's great about Minnesota? by Nadia Higgins (2015) - section on Jeffers Petroglyphs Historic Site **J Nonfiction 977.6 H63W**

INTERNET (links provided in packet)

Jeffers Petroglyphs in Minnesota: <https://www.mnhs.org/jefferspetroglyphs>

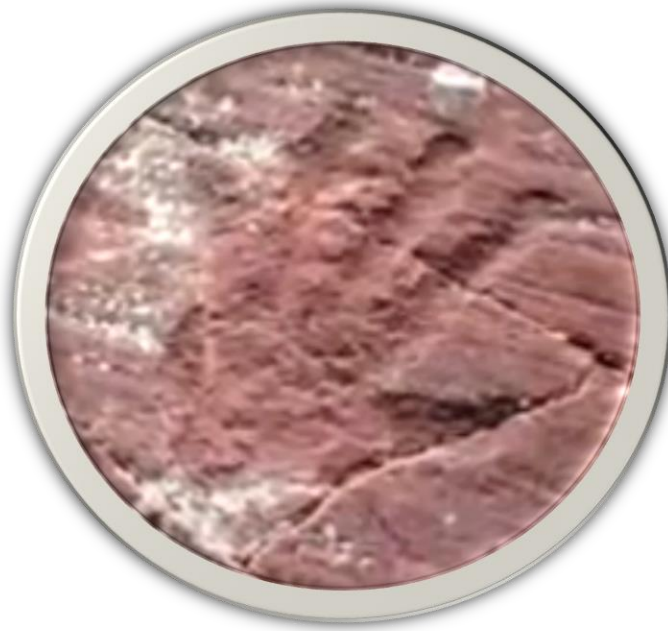
Paintings and Petroglyphs in Winnemucca Lake, Nevada: <https://www.donsmaps.com/winnemucca.html>

Painting in Kimberly region of Australia & Namibia, Africa: www.bradshawfoundation.com

Paintings in Lascaux, France: <https://youtu.be/2hiFqqqjTxQ> or <https://youtu.be/UnSq0c7jM-A>

SIDEWALK PETROGLYPHS

Rock Art Stories, Petroglyphs, and Cave Paintings for Kids (and their Grown Ups)



Hi!



My name is Dr. Andrea Conger and I'm an anthropologist.

An anthropologist is a scientist



who studies humans.



Stories, storytelling, and storytellers are one very important thing that makes us humans unique.

People all over the world, at all times in history have told stories. We tell all kinds of stories, in all kinds of ways, and for all kinds of reasons. We tell stories about the past to explain and remember what happened. We tell made up stories to imagine what the world *could* be like. We tell stories to teach lessons, scary stories and stories to make us laugh. We tell stories through pictures and words, movies, using our bodies, toys, even food. Humans love stories and often come to have favorite stories that let us use our imaginations, remember important things, think about new ideas, or feel big feelings.

Do you have a favorite story? How do you like to tell or hear it?
What does your favorite story help you do?

HOW LONG HAVE HUMANS BEEN TELLING STORIES?

We think that the oldest form of stories are the ones we tell aloud with our voices. This is often called oral storytelling and we have been doing it for as long as humans have existed. But it wasn't long before humans wanted to have a way to write down really important stories so other people could see them later. So, humans started carving (petroglyphs) and painting (cave painting), picture stories on rocks using stone tools or paints they made from the natural things around them such as mud, clay, chalk, or plants and berries.

Special anthropologists, called archeologists, have found petroglyphs and cave paintings that were made by people over 30,000 years ago! Just imagine! There are stories we can read today that are over 30,000 years old!



Sidewalk Paintings and Petroglyphs We Made About Our Covid Experiences!

What kinds of stories do you think kids 30,000 years ago wanted to tell?
What stories would you tell today that you think people 30,000 years into the future might want to read?

North America is home to many cave paintings and petroglyphs. There are more than 60 registered sites for petroglyphs alone! Some of the oldest can be found at Winnemucca Lake in Nevada. They are located in the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation and looked after by people of the Paiute Tribe. The pictures include simple shapes such as straight lines and swirls, as well as some more complex shapes that look like trees, flowers, and leaves. **You can see more here**
<https://www.donsmaps.com/winnemucca.html>

Rock art has also become very well known in **Australia**, particularly in an area known as the Kimberly region. A group of paintings called the Bradshaw paintings and the Wandjina paintings have over 100,000 picture stories and they are still counting! These paintings show very exciting details and have particularly intricate depictions of human figures.
See www.bradshawfoundation.com for more

WHERE ARE THESE STORIES?

Some of the most famous and extensive cave paintings can be seen at a place called Lascaux (Pronounced like Lass-cow), France in **Europe**. Over 600 paintings decorate a series of caves and are thought to be around 17,000 years old. These stories have lots of pictures of animals and nature. Sadly, so many people have visited them over the years that they have started to become damaged and need to be more carefully protected. But, good news! Clever teams of artists and scientists have created several virtual tours of these paintings which means we can explore them from our homes here in Minnesota! Check it out
<https://youtu.be/2hiFqqgjTxQ> or
<https://youtu.be/UnSq0c7jM-A>

Painting and engraving traditions in **Africa** have developed over the last 30,000 years into a highly sophisticated way of expressing beliefs about the supernatural world. There are paintings in the country of Namibia at a place known as Apollo 11 Cave that scientists have dated at roughly 27,500 years old. Some of these paintings include animals that resemble a zebra with stripes but unusually long legs, and what might be a rhino!
Visit www.bradshawfoundation.com to see these and A LOT MORE!

In some cases, there are disagreements about who owns rock art, who should take care of it, who should get to see it, and how it should be preserved.
What do you think?

DO WE HAVE CAVE ART IN MINNESOTA?

We sure do! Cave paintings and petroglyphs are found all over the world, even right here in Minnesota!! While there are a number of sites with cave paintings, many are on private land. You can visit the Jeffers Petroglyph site though and see some stories for yourself.

Jeffers Petroglyphs



Located about 2hrs from the Twin Cities in the southwestern part of Minnesota. Jeffers Petroglyph site is home to a collection of pre-contact (before White settlers came) Native American petroglyphs. The site lies in an area where the Dakota people lived (and many still do) and match some of the pictures, decorations, and stories that appear on Dakota hide paintings, quill designs (decorations made from porcupine quills), and beadwork. The site is also believed to be along the old stage coach route from New Ulm, MN to Sioux Falls, SD. The exact age of these petroglyphs is not known, but some scientists think they could be as old as 3000 BCE, so that's pretty old! The carvings include thunderbirds, dragonflies, turtles, and shamans as well as many other really cool natural objects. For the Dakota people, Jeffers is more than a place for science, it is a sacred and spiritual place where "Grandmother Earth speaks of the past, present, and future". Story places have great power in our lives and we should always treat such places with a lot of respect.

The visitor's center at Jeffers is open from May through September and features hands-on exhibits, a multi-media presentation, and daily natural and cultural history programs. **See more here** <https://www.mnhs.org/jefferspetroglyphs>.

Watch a great short video about Jeffers Petroglyphs (cut and paste this link into your browser <https://youtu.be/gqQVvWHUsOc>) and **listen** to Virnell Wabasha, a Sioux Elder, talk about what these stories mean to her and the Dakota Sioux (cut and paste this link into your browser <https://youtu.be/7ccs0oqJop4>)



Hegman Lake Pictographs

Another great example of rock art can be found on North Hegman Lake in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness here in Minnesota. This rock art is considered “Perhaps the most visited and photogenic pictograph within the state of Minnesota” and people come from all over to view it. The rock wall overlooking the lake has a very vivid picture showing a human standing next to what might be a dog or a wolf, and a bull moose.

This pictograph also shows the use of symbols (a thing that represents something else) so we can see three canoes with paddlers that might represent larger groups of people traveling on the lake, and also some markings. These pictographs tell us stories about the traditions, legends, and values of the Ojibway people and their close tie to nature and their animal “brothers”.

Ojibway and other Indigenous Peoples have lived in this area for at least 9,000 years. Scientists believe the stories at Hegman Lake to be between 500-1000 years old. The paint here is red ochre paint. It was made by mixing raw iron with boiled sturgeon spine and bear grease. There are different ideas about what the story says exactly, but many people think that they were probably made during the winter since it would be easier to get to the rocks and paint when the lake was frozen, and we do know that many Indigenous peoples in Minnesota celebrated the winter season as a time for hunting and storytelling.

Ask a grown up to help you look up some photos online or go visit yourself someday!

What kinds of stories do you think kids in Minnesota told in the past?
What stories would you tell about Minnesota today?

WHAT KINDS OF STORIES DID EARLY HUMANS TELL?

Petroglyphs and cave paintings were a lot of work to make, so people often told their most important stories this way. They sometimes told stories about big events, or serious disruptions to their lives like big floods, storms, battles, or meetings with other groups of humans.

Petroglyphs and cave paintings also tell stories of daily life and what it was like for people at that time. They show how people lived together in groups, their relationships to animals including pets, going on hunts for food, and what was important to people.

Today we might think about making drawings that tell the stories of how Covid changed our lives for example, or maybe how our environment is changing and our efforts to take better care of the earth. We might tell stories about sad or difficult things that happen in our lives and how we need to learn to take better care of each other, or perhaps fantastical futures we might like to see come true.

One other thing that we find in almost all of these stories are human hand prints like the one on the cover that I photographed in Wisconsin. This was a way of signing your picture, or telling the world, we humans were here!

What kinds of events, people, or things would you draw into a petroglyph or cave painting? Write or draw some ideas below.

Ideas for my awesome story...

Now it's your turn! Use the below recipe to make your own washable chalk paint. Then find a place outside like a sidewalk or patio or use paper if you don't have an outdoor spot and paint your own stories. Remember to ask a grown up where it is ok to paint.

Check out the instructional video on Ramsey County Library's website: <https://my.nicheacademy.com/kidsathome> (under Read. Make. Do. Kits).

*Paint is washable and non-toxic, but **very messy** so it is recommended to wear older clothes and paint in a place that can be washed down or will get rained on. Please note, pavement may be slick when first painted.

How to Make Your Cave Paint

In the plastic bag, carefully crush up the sidewalk chalk until powder. We recommend using a wooden spoon or other sturdy, but smooth tool, or use the side of a metal spoon to "shave down" the chalk. Ask a grown-up for help with little ones, and watch your fingers, but this part is especially fun for kids to help.

Sidewalk – Transfer chalk powder to a bowl. Add 1/2 cup water and 1/4 cup cornstarch. Mix until smooth. Feel free to add more chalk for color or cornstarch for thicker paint. (note: paint will get darker as it dries)

Paper or Very Rough Pavement- Carefully check that your bag does not have any holes. Add a generous dollop of petroleum jelly to your bag. Squeeze out as much of the air as you can, and seal the bag. Use your hands to squeeze the bag until the jelly and chalk powder are well mixed. This part is also very fun for small hands. Keep adding petroleum jelly until your paint is a desired consistency (you want it pretty gooey). Feel free to add more sidewalk chalk if desired. Any color is great.

Use your fingers, the sponge, paintbrushes, or anything else you like to paint your story. We found that dabbing works best on rough pavement.

Common Themes for Cave Paintings and Petroglyphs

Hand Print: Paint the palm of your hand and use this to stamp your signature. (feet can be fun too!)

Hand Outline: Lay your hand palm flat on the ground. Use the sponge to dab around the edges then lift palm to make an outline of your hand.

Animals and Nature: Use brushes, sponges, and your imagination to create animals and nature for your story. Perhaps paint a whole family of dogs, or paint a really big tree to represent a forest. Use natural objects such as leaves, rocks, or sticks as stencils.

Other Objects or Symbols: Paint a house to tell about family, home, safety, or quarantine. A symbol like a heart might mean love or care, while a broken heart could tell about sadness or loss. A lightning bolt might mean something sudden, shocking, or a big change, while a rainbow could symbolize new life.

Imaginative or Fantasy Creatures: Paint a world that *could be* in the future, or a world you imagine. Stories are very good for helping us imagine worlds that could be.

Be creative and have fun!

Stories are an important part of being human.

- We use stories to tell others, and ourselves who we are, where we have been, and what is important to us.
- We use stories to remember important things, events, and people.
- We use stories to help us figure out what has happened during a confusing or scary time.
- We use stories to leave a record that we were here.
- We use stories to teach lessons about things like what we love, how to avoid danger, stories of heroes and bad guys, and things we need to grow or reimagine.
- And we tell stories to help us imagine new things and new ways to be in the world.

STORIES MAKE US HUMAN



Dr. Conger is a public anthropologist and a professor at Saint Olaf College. She wants people to know what anthropology is and how it can help them in their everyday lives. This kit is sponsored by RCL and is part of the Adventures With Anthropology program run by Dr. Conger. Find more at andreaconger.com/adventures and check out more great RCL programs!

Dr. Conger earned her PhD from Indiana University Bloomington, her MA from the University of Limerick in Ireland, and her BA here in Minnesota. She has lived all over the world and was a professional dancer before becoming an anthropologist.