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The following lessons were created by **Gregory N. Thomas**, a teacher participating in the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled Touch the Past: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Region.

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Interpreting Rock Art

Grade Level	9 th Grade
Subjects	World History I
Objectives	<p>Students will be introduced to a form of prehistoric creative expression called rock art.</p> <p>Students will become familiarized with archeological terms associated with rock art.</p> <p>Students will view examples of cave paintings mentioned in textbook.</p> <p>Students will observe examples of petroglyphs from Pennsylvania and make inferences about the images.</p> <p>Students will create their own “rock art” to share with the class and have classmates interpret the meaning of the images.</p>
Standards	<p>Academic Standards for History Pennsylvania Department of Education</p> <p>8.4.W.B. Evaluate the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.</p> <p>8.4.W.C. Evaluate how continuity and change have impacted the world today.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belief systems and religions

- Commerce and industry
- Technology
- Politics and government
- Physical and human geography
- Social organization

Duration 2 Period-length lesson, with homework component, that is part of larger Pre-History Unit

Materials/Supplies

PowerPoint
 LCD Projector and Screen
 Computer
 PowerPoint Remote Control
 Sheets of poster paper

Vocabulary

Petroglyph : a design chiseled or chipped out of a rock surface.
 petro = rock (Latin)
 glyph = carved work (Greek)

Pictograph: a design painted on a rock surface.
 picto = to paint (Latin)
 graph = to write (Greek)

Rock art: a general term for the pecking, incising, or painting of designs onto rock surfaces.

Rock art panel: a group of pictograph and/or petroglyph figures.

Symbol: a thing which represents something else.

Background

The instructor will need to be familiarized with what rock art is, its place in the lives of prehistoric people, key terms, and then recognizable examples and their locations. Students will not need to have much background information other than what is being presented in the Pre-History Unit and what is mentioned in the textbook.

Setting the Stage

This activity is embedded into the larger Prehistory Unit of my World History I course. Up to this point in the Unit students will have been exposed to a broad survey of hominid evolution as humans develop culture and move closer toward the emergence of civilization. An important component of culture is the expression of creativity, which our hominid ancestors increasingly become sophisticated in doing during

Prehistory.

Procedure

While lecturing through the PowerPoint “Moving out of Human Prehistory” the Instructor will transition to the topic of art as a part of emerging culture during Prehistory. The Instructor will review Slide #16, explaining the difference between mobiliary and mural art, sharing some examples of each, referencing images, making connections to the textbook, and then emphasizing key terms from the textbook. Then the Instructor will steer the lecture toward a more in-depth look at rock art and move into Slide #17 and go over vocabulary. Next the Instructor will make the case for relevancy to Pennsylvania by explaining that there are many rock art sites in our state, as demonstrated with the map on Slide #18.

Then the Instructor will present a case study for discussion with Slide #19. After providing a little background information, the Instructor will have students look at actual images of the Little Indian Rock Petroglyph on the Susquehanna River in Safe Harbor, PA. Then the Instructor will reveal the illustration of the entire rock art panel and open up discussion with the class for students to share their inferences of what the figures are or represent and why the petroglyphs were created. Lastly, the Instructor will reveal the image that explains what each petroglyph is and then point out the modern vandalism then transition into wrapping up the conversation with the Closure.

Closure

The Closure for this portion of the Unit will:

- (1.) reiterate that we can never fully be sure of what prehistoric people intended with their creative expression
- (2.) we can conclude that this artwork, and other like it, is another example of culture which serves as a building block on the path to the emergence of civilization
- (3.) stress the importance of preservation for future generations

Evaluation

For the evaluation of this activity, students will be challenged to take a story from their own lives and depict it by drawing their own “rock art” images which will then be shared during the next class session. As a class we will see if we can interpret the images to accurately construct the intended story. The instructor will provide the poster paper and this will be completed for homework.

Links/Extension

This activity will serve as an opportunity for students to pause from taking notes and have a chance to intellectually engage with the subject matter. I am looking for students to be able to not only become more informed about prehistoric art but to then utilize what they have been taught to

make inferences about the past, taking on the role of an anthropologist. From there, the right-brain assignment portion of this activity will also allow students to utilize their creativity and produce their own images to tell a story. Finally, students will practice their public speaking and presentation skills by sharing their rock artwork with the class followed by having their peers interpret their product.

References

World History: The Human Experience – The Early Ages textbook by Mounir A. Farah, Ph.D. and Andrea Berens Karls, Copyright © 2003 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Digging and Discovery: Wisconsin Archaeology 2nd Edition by Diane Holliday and Bobbie Malone, Published by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press

Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades Printed by the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, "Petroglyphs of Pennsylvania" online article by Kurt Carr and Paul Nevin
<<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/petroglyphs/3892>>

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, "Petroglyphs of Pennsylvania Brochure" pdf available online at
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_77423_16940_2058_285529_43/http://pubcontent.state.pa.us/publishedcontent/publish/cop_environment/phmc/communities/extranet/archaeology/archpub_extucontent/petroglyphs.pdf