

# Cave Paintings

Cave paintings are drawings found on cave walls and ceilings and appear all over the world, even here in the Southeast.

The ancient artists used charcoal and dirt mixed with animal fat to make paint. Many Southeast Native American peoples created cave paintings with mud since it was associated with the origin of the world.

These ancient cave paintings give us an opportunity to understand what life was like thousands of years ago.



*A 17,000 year old cave painting of a horse from the Lascaux Caves in Southwestern France.*

## What Do Cave Paintings Mean?

Thousands of years later, it is hard to know exactly why the cave paintings were made. Some experts think the paintings were used for magic in ceremonies to aid in hunts. Other paintings may have been used to teach children, like an ancient blackboard. It is also possible that cave paintings were used to tell stories about life during the time they were drawn.



*This charcoal pictograph of a hunter was painted in a Tennessee Cave 6,000 years ago*

## Now Make Your Own!

Regardless of the reasons behind their creation, these paintings share important information about ancient life. They can tell us what animals were hunted, the types of tools that were used, or the religious beliefs of the artist. What would you paint on a cave wall today?

### **Directions:**

1) Draw your own cave art using chalk on the pavement or on paper with your choice of coloring tools.



*A human figure thought to be a Shaman or self-portrait of the artist was found in Northern Alabama.*