

The Pictograph Wall

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Age: all children; younger than 5 with their parent's assistance

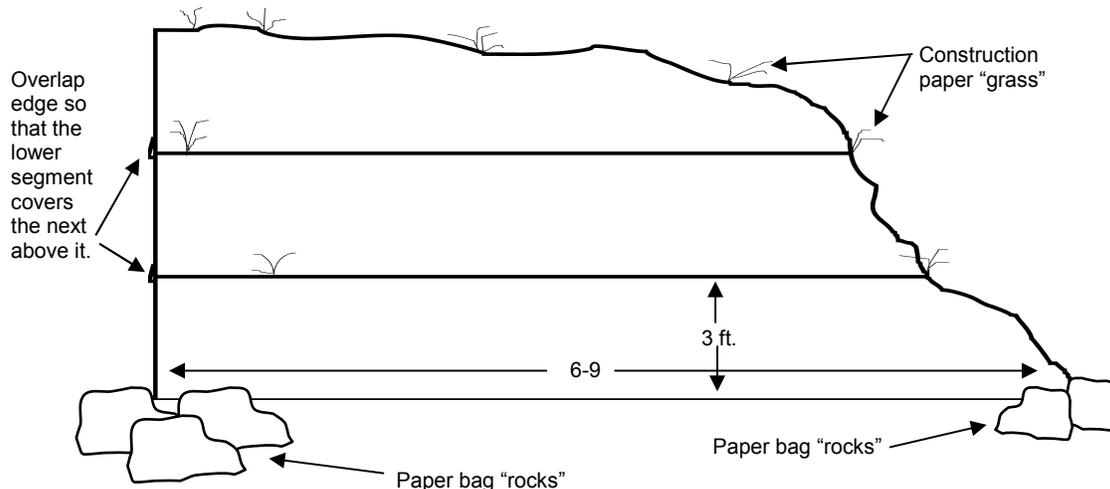
Objectives: Provides an introduction to how pictographs are produced and their significance as a means of communicating. Also provides information on the preservation of rock art sites.

Materials: 16–24 ft. of brown butcher paper (package/mailling paper) 3 ft. wide; 8 large (grocery bag-sized) brown bags to make “rocks”; green construction paper torn into ½ inch strips; scissors; clear packing tape, duct tape, and masking tape; pencils or pens; orange-red, white, and black liquid tempera paint; 3 spray bottles; bucket; water; paper towels; 2 drop-cloths or extra butcher paper; newspapers; paper lunch bags; brown construction paper (construction paper is used if take-home bags are not provided). Take-home bags may be filled with goodies and preservation information.

Preparation: Cut butcher paper into three segments—the longest, bottom section—measuring approximately 6–9 feet long depending on how long you want the wall to be. Lay sections on the floor. Tape the entire length of the back of the butcher paper edge-to-edge so that the bottom layer slightly overlaps the next above it. To make the wall look more realistic, roughly cut the butcher paper to form a slope on one side. Attach the paper wall to the wall. Experiment with the tape to make sure that it will hold the paper wall up without hurting the wall you are attaching it to. Sometimes package tape will work and sometimes duct tape will. Try to have a variety with you in case one type of tape does not work.

Tear strips of green construction paper and tape them together at the base to form clumps of grass. Put the drop cloth or an additional length of paper on the floor beneath the paper wall. Add boulders along the base by crumbling several paper lunch bags and attach them with tape to the rock wall. Add occasional clumps of grass in between boulders and strata.

Prepare the tempera paint by mixing a 1:1 ratio with tap water in a spray bottle. This will be done for all three colors (black=charcoal; red=ocher; white=clay). **Experiment with the mixture prior to the event.** Some paints require a weaker solution than others. Keep the nozzle moist so it does not plug-up.



Place a bucket of water and a roll of paper towels on the drop cloth, to the side of the paper wall. The tempera paint is water soluble and will rinse off if visitors rub their hands in the bucket like they were washing their hands.

Set up the table for visitors to make their handprints on bags or construction paper. Begin by protecting the floor with butcher paper or a drop cloth. This will protect against over-spray. Cover the table with newspaper to protect it. Lay out finished bags or construction paper as examples. The bag may need to dry before the visitor takes it. The visitor may wish to print his or her name on the bag.

Number of volunteers: 1 volunteer to 1 child

Procedure: Visitors to the station will participate in the creation of the pictograph wall by leaving their “signature” (hand outline) on the rock wall. The participant does this by first placing his/ her hand palm down on the rock wall. A volunteer will then use the spray bottle to spray the tempera paint mix on the participant’s hand. Only two or three sprays are necessary to form the image. When the participant removes his/ her hand an outline should be left on the rock wall.



Next, the participants can create a pictograph to take home by repeating the procedure with the help of the volunteer. (The bag can be pre-filled with relevant propaganda such as maps of local archaeological and historic sites, bookmarks, balloons, coloring books, etc. Or, it may be used through the event to carry the materials they pick up and make.) If you are not providing a take-home bag, use the brown construction paper for take-home handprints.

The paint may take a bit of time to dry. If this is the case, provide an area for visitors to leave their product. People may want to write their name on their creation so that it will be easily identified when they return.

Provide a bucket of water at the station for the participants to wash their hands.



What they take away: Each person will take home a pictograph of their hand.

Preservation method: Demonstrates what pictographs were, how they were made, and how they were used as a means of communication. Presents information on protecting pictograph and petroglyph sites.

Pictographs and Petroglyphs



Pictographs and Petroglyphs

Images like these were created by Indigenous peoples around the world. Images painted that were painted onto a rock surface are called pictographs. Images that were carved or pecked into a rock surface are called petroglyphs. The handprints in this picture were made on the rock by the ancestors of the modern-day Aboriginal people who live in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Protecting Petroglyphs and Pictographs

Natural oils from our skin can stain or wear away the designs. Making rubbings or tracings can also damage rock art. Never add images to rocks or cliffs. Doing so would disturb the area. Names, dates, or images added today are “graffiti”.

Scientists who record rock art images take photos or make scaled drawings using a grid and graph paper without ever touching the image.

For more information on the “Dos” and “Don’ts” of rock art sites visit the American Rock Art Research Association Webpage: <http://www.arara.org>.