Prehistoric Paleolithic Paintings
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did ancient people use to paint and record their images?
2. What causes a cave painting to deteriorate?
3. How were these cave paintings preserved for thousands of years?
PALEOLITHIC ERA (STONE AGE)

- Lower Paleolithic: 2.5 Million B.C. – 200,000 B.C.
- Middle Paleolithic: 200,000 B.C. – 45,000 B.C.
- Upper Paleolithic: 45,000 B.C. – 10,000 B.C.
EUROPEAN CAVE PAINTINGS

- El Castillo Cave – 33,000 B.C.
  - Aurignancian Period
  - Red Discs – Oldest Painting in the World
  - Red Ochre – Paint made from red dirt containing iron
EUROPEAN CAVE PAINTINGS

- El Castillo Cave – 33,000 B.C.
  - Discovered in 1903
  - By Hermilio Alcalde del Río, the Spanish archaeologist
EL CASTILLO CAVE – NORTHERN SPAIN
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EUROPEAN CAVE PAINTINGS

- Chauvet Cave – 30,000 B.C. – 25,000 B.C
  - Aurignancian and Gravettian Period
  - Spectacular in quality and quantity
  - Predatory Animals
  - Lions, Hyenas, bears, panthers, rhinos
EUROPEAN CAVE PAINTINGS

• Chauvet Cave – 30,000 B.C. – 25,000 B.C
  • Discovered in 1994
  • Cave hunters walking along the hillside
  • Colors:
    • Carbon Black – Made from burnt stuff
    • Red Ocher
    • White – Scraped by rocks
CHAUVET CAVE – SOUTHERN FRANCE
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LASCAUX CAVE PAINTINGS

- Lascaux Cave – 18,000 B.C. – 11,000 B.C
  - Magdalenian Period – End of Ice Age
  - These people didn’t live in the caves.
  - They made huts from animal skins
  - 2,000 figures in three groups: animals, humans, and abstract signs
LASCAUX CAVE PAINTINGS

- Lascaux Cave – 18,000 B.C. – 11,000 B.C
  - Discovered in 1940
  - 4 kids and a dog chasing a rabbit into a hole
  - Colors:
    - Red Ochre
    - Yellow Ochre – Yellow Dirt
    - Umber – Brown Dirt
    - Carbon Black
CHINESE HORSE

- Lascaux Cave – 18,000 B.C. – 10,000 B.C.
HALL OF BULLS

- Largest Cave Mural in the World
HALL OF BULLS

Largest Cave Mural in the World
OIL LAMP

- Cooked animal fat for light
ALTIMIRA CAVE PAINTINGS

- Altimira Cave—18,500 B.C. – 14,000 B.C
  - Upper Solutrean and Upper Magdalenean Period
  - 13,000 B.C. a rockslide sealed the entrance to the cave
  - Polychrome figures
  - Paintings so good the discoverer was accused of forgery
  - Very Detailed – Used shapes of rocks to paint
ALTIMIRA CAVE PAINTINGS

- Altimira Cave— 18,500 B.C. – 14,000 B.C
  - Discovered in 1879
  - 9 – Year old daughter of an archeologist
  - Northern Spain
ALTIMIRA CAVE
ALTIMIRA CAVE
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ART

- Ubirr Cave – 40,000 – 6,000 B.C.
- Red Ocher Paintings
- X-Ray Figures
UBIRR CAVE
SOUTH AMERICA – ARGENTINA

- Cave of Hands – 13,000 – 9,000 B.C.
- Iron Oxide (red and purple), Kaolin (white), natrojarosite (yellow), manganesse oxide (black)
- Hunting Techniques
- All hands are left hands
CAVE OF HANDS
AFRICA - NAMIBIA

- Apollo 11 Cave – 27,500 – 25,500 B.C.
- Oldest known stone canvas painting
- Lion on stone with charcoal
AFRICA - EGYPT

- Gilf Kebir Plateau – Cave of Swimmers 10,000 B.C.
- Swimming in a once wet land.
- The mountains of the Liberian Desert
CAVE OF SWIMMERS
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CAVE OF SWIMMERS
INDIA

- Bhimbetka Rock Shelter 30,000 B.C.
- Earliest painting depicting dance
BHIMBETKA ROCK SHELTER
TOP TEN CAVE PAINTINGS
#10 – MAGURA CAVE – BULGARIA – BAT GUANO
#9 – CUEVA DE LAS MANOS - ARGENTINA
#8 – BHIMBETKA - INDIA
#7 – SERRA DA CAPIVRA - BRAZIL
#6 – LAAS GAAL - SOMALIA
#5 – TADRART ACACUS - LYBIA
#4 – CHAUVET CAVE - FRANCE
#3 – KAKADU ROCK PAINTING - AUSTRALIA
#2 – ALTAMIRA CAVE - SPAIN
#1 – LASCAUX CAVE - FRANCE
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did ancient people use to paint and record their images?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. What causes a cave painting to deteriorate?
   1. Carbon Dioxide – From human breath
   2. Humidity
   3. Microorganisms – Need light, warmth, and humidity
      1. Bacterial and Fungal growth
      2. Black Mold
      3. Tracked in on shoes
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

3. How were these cave paintings preserved for thousands of years?
   1. Cave collapse sealed the cave like a tomb
   2. Rise in sea level
TOUR THE CAVE OF LASCAUX

HTTP://WWW.LASCAUX.CULTURE.FR/?LNG=EN#/FR/00.XML

GOOGLE: CAVE OF LASCAUX VIRTUAL TOUR
TOUR THE CAVE OF CHAUVET

HTTP://ARCHEOLOGIE.CULTURE.FR/CHAUVET/

GOOGLE: CAVE OF CHAUVET VIRTUAL TOUR