

LESSON PLAN: WYOMING DINWOODY TRADITION ROCK ART AND VANDALISM

Objective

In this study of rock art, the students will:

- 1) Learn about Dinwoody Tradition prehistoric rock art in Wyoming
- 2) Use examples of Wyoming rock art images found in the University of Wyoming Archaeological Repository digital database to cooperatively create a rock art panel
- 3) Interpret the rock art and illustrate its importance as a tool for helping to understand different cultures
- 4) Discuss the problem of rock art vandalism and how to protect rock art for the future

Age Level: Grades K-6

Materials:

For each student or group of students, a large brown paper bag or a roll of brown paper cut into sections. Any drawing implements like pens, paints, crayons, markers, pencils can be used.

Vocabulary:

Petroglyph: a design chiseled or chipped out of a rock surface

Pictograph: a design painted on a rock surface

Deface: to spoil or mar the surface or appearance of something

Vandalism: willful or malicious defacing or destruction of public or private property

Rock art: general term for an image found on rock surfaces

Rock art panel: a group of rock art images

Background:

People living over the entire world and in virtually every culture made rock art. It has been found in caves, on cliff walls, and on boulders. Some rock art is as old as 30,000 years. Rock art occurs in modern America as well. The most common modern rock art is painted on the concrete and brick walls in our cities and on bridge abutments and rock faces along highways. This art expresses the values, attitudes, beliefs, and desires of the people who created it. As members of the artists' society, we may or may not understand what the representations mean. Regardless of our views of modern rock art, prehistoric rock art also means something to whomever put it there, but the archaeologist may not know its original intent.

In Wyoming, we have lots of different types of rock art. They can be pictographs, designs painted on rocks, or petroglyphs, designs chipped or chiseled into rocks. Rock art can be found alone or in large panels comprised of many different figures. A type of rock art unique to Wyoming is the Dinwoody Tradition. These petroglyphs are found in and nearby the Bighorn Basin in north-central

Wyoming. They are very large – some even three feet tall! They usually show anthropomorphic (human-like), animal, or abstract images that may have pecked interior lines, wings, headdresses, or horns. Some researchers believe the images were made by shamans or represent the religious or supernatural beliefs of prehistoric people. Rock art is difficult to date, but the Dinwoody Tradition spans from the Early Archaic through the Historic Periods, approximately 4500-500 BP.

Procedure:

- 1) Use the UWAR database to find examples of rock art images. Some sites to examine include FR194, FR311, FR343, FR372, HO186, HO660, and HO693. The instructor can do this beforehand and print the images if it is too advanced for the students.
- 2) Explain Dinwoody Tradition rock art. Show them the examples.
- 3) Divide students into groups. Explain to them they will all contribute to making a large Dinwoody Tradition rock art panel using the database images.
- 4) Cut large swaths of the brown paper. Students can crumple then re-flatten their paper to make it more like real rock surfaces.
- 5) Space students around the paper. Have each student pick a rock art image to draw on brown paper panel, or have them plan the panel design together.
- 6) When students have finished, ask them, “What is the meaning of their drawing” or “What do they think their panel or drawing represents?” Then ask questions like, “What do they think it meant to the people who made it originally? Why did the artists make the rock art? What purpose did the rock art serve? Is there a story in the rock art? Can people see different stories in the rock art?”
- 7) Display the students work in the classroom
- 8) Hold a can of paint or a marker in front of one of the panels, ask the students, “How would you feel if I were to paint my name over your rock art panel? Would that harm it?” Explain to them that defacing or destroying rock art is vandalism. How would they feel about vandalized rock art given how they felt about their own work being destroyed? Connect their feelings about their rock art being damaged to how Native Americans, archaeologists, and the public might feel when they see vandalized sites. Ask students to think of ways they can help prevent vandalism.

Wyoming Educational Standards Met

Fine and Performing Arts:

FPA4.1.A.1/FPA8.1.A.1: Students create and revise original art to express ideas, experiences, or stories

FPA4.1.A.2: Students investigate and apply a variety of materials, resources, technologies, and processes to communicate experiences and ideas through art

FPA4.1.A.3: Students apply the elements and principles of design to their artwork

FPA4.1.A.4/FPA8.1.A.4: Students collaborate with others in creative artistic processes

FPA4.1.A.5/FPA8.1.A.5: Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

FPA4.1.A.6/FPA8.1.A.6: Students complete and exhibit their artwork

FPA4.2.A.1: Students observe and describe in detail the physical properties of works of art

FPA4.2.A.2/FPA8.2.A.2: Students respond to (or interpret) art using vocabulary that describes subjects, themes, and symbols (which communicate their knowledge of context, values, and meaning)

FPA4.2.A.3/FPA8.2.A.3: Students describe (and analyze) works of art using the language of artistic elements and principles

FPA4.3.A.1: Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationship to various cultures

FPA4.3.A.3: Students understand that history, environment, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other

FPA8.3.A.3: Students analyze, describe, and relate how factors of culture, time, and environment influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

FPA4.4.A.1: Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

Social Studies

SS2.2.1/SS.5.2.1/SS8.2.1: Name the ways groups meet human needs and concerns and contribute to personal identity and daily life

SS2.2.2/SS.5.2.2: Recognize (identify and describe) ways in which expressions of culture influence people

SS5.2.3: Identify and describe characteristic and contributions of local and state cultural groups in Wyoming

SS2.6.1/SS5.6.1: Identify what kinds of information can be found in different resources; Use various resources in order to address a question or solve a problem

SS2.6.3/SS5.6.3/SS8.6.3: Use digital tools to learn about social studies concepts/Use digital tools to research, design, and present social studies concepts.