

PREHISTORIC COMMUNICATIONS
Grade Band: 4-5
Content Focus: Visual Arts & ELA



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

People of prehistoric times used drawings and symbols to communicate on cave walls. In this lesson, students will use the Elements of Art, shape, line, color and texture to create an artistic and written sequence of events that mimic those of the past.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	“I Can” Statements
How can I use the Elements of Art, shape, line, color and texture to communicate messages used by the people of the past?	I can use the Elements of Art, shape, line, color and texture to communicate messages used by people of the past.
How can art inspire narrative writing?	I can identify shapes, lines, colors and textures in examples of prehistoric drawings. I can use some elements of art to draw and write a clear sequence of events. I can convert drawings into words to create a narrative that follows a logical sequence of events.

GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: ELAGSE4W1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose. b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details. c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition). d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <p>Grade 5: ELAGSE5W1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose. b. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details. c. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically). d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p>	<p>Grade 4: VA4.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning</p> <p>VA4.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.</p> <p>VA4.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of two dimensional art.</p> <p>Grade 5: VA5.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning</p> <p>VA5.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.</p> <p>VA5.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of two dimensional art.</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: COMMUNICATION - Meaning and Context Standard 1: Interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one’s views while respecting diverse perspectives.</p> <p>WRITING - Meaning, Context, and Craft Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. 1.1 Write opinion pieces that: a. introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which</p>	<p>Anchor Standard 1: I can use the elements and principles of art to create artwork.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 2: I can use different materials, techniques, and processes to make art.</p>



We bring learning to life.

related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose; b. use information from multiple print and multimedia sources; c. provide reasons supported by facts and details; d. use transitional words or phrases to connect opinions and reasons; e. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing building on personal ideas and the ideas of others; f. use paraphrasing, quotations, and original language to avoid plagiarism; and g. provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Grade 5:

COMMUNICATION - Meaning and Context

Standard 1: Interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one’s views while respecting diverse perspectives.

WRITING - Meaning, Context, and Craft

Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

1.1 Write arguments that: a. introduce a topic or text clearly, state a claim, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose; b. use information from multiple print and multimedia sources; c. provide logically ordered reasons supported by relevant facts and details; d. use transitional words, phrases, and clauses to connect claim and reasons; e. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting; f. use paraphrasing, summarizing, quotations, and original language to avoid plagiarism; and g. provide a concluding statement or section related to the claim presented.

KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Hieroglyphics</u> – A system of writing that employs characters in the form of pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Images</u> - A representation of the external form of a person or thing in art



We bring learning to life.

- Narrative - A literary term for the events that make up a story. It is the way the events connect and make up the plot of a story or book
- Sequence - A set of related events, movements, or things that follow each other in a particular order
- Transition – Words or phrases that are used in writing to connect one idea to the next

- Symbols - A thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract
- Texture - How an object feels or looks as though it might feel
- Graphic - Relating to visual art, especially involving drawing, engraving, or lettering
- Neutral Color - Hues that appear to be without color, and that don't typically appear on the color wheel. Neutral colors, therefore, do not compete with primary and secondary colors and instead complement them.
- Line - A mark connecting two points
- Shape - An enclosed line; it is two dimensional and can be geometric or organic

MATERIALS

- Images of prehistoric drawings
- Brown craft paper
- Oil pastels or paint (neutral colors)/Alternative: [Make your own paint using mud](#)
- Color sticks/Black markers
- Paper and pencils

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Opening/Activating Strategy

- Students will work in teams of four to compare different images of cave drawings from prehistoric times (see “Additional Resources”).
- Students will create a graphic organizer or chart to display their comparisons and briefly share them with the class.
- Teacher will pose questions to students such as:
 - What were the most popular symbols that you noticed in the cave paintings?
 - What ideas were communicated?
 - Were there certain things that were more noticeable than others?

Work Session



We bring learning to life.

- Explain to students that they will be creating cave paintings using the Elements of Art, shape, line, color and texture to communicate a simple sequence of events.
- Discuss sequence in writing and explain to students that they will convert their final drawing into a sequential written narrative using transition words and following the writing process.
- Explain that in prehistoric times people used natural resources found on the Earth to paint symbols on cave walls that communicated different messages.
- Share photos of different prehistoric drawings/images and discuss Elements of Art. Students can work with a partner to discuss where they see the elements.
 - Shape (geometric, organic)
 - Line (bold, thin, jagged, curved)
 - Color (neutral)
 - Texture (bumpy, rocky, uneven)
- Discuss and show how people used different symbols to represent living and nonliving things because letters, numbers and the alphabet were not created at that time.
- Discuss and mix different neutral colors of browns, tans, and beiges that mimic prehistoric “paint” used from natural resources.
- Crumple up a piece of brown paper that represents the rocky texture of a cave wall where many prehistoric drawings were found.
- Demonstrate drawing/painting (oil pastels or paint) a simple sequence of events using crumpled brown paper and Elements of Art that simulate the way prehistoric people communicated messages.
- Assign students to work individually, in pairs, or a large group using one, long, textured piece of brown craft paper.
- Assign students a specific number of “events” they will need to draw/paint for their sequential composition.
- Students should create a rough draft of their sequence of events using the symbols they will use in their painting on plain white paper. Remind students that their symbols need to have meaning—they are not just random.
- After students have completed the sequential drawings/paintings, they will convert them into phrases or sentences to develop a written sequential composition.
- Using this as an outline, students will turn their writing into a full narrative.
- Be sure to remind students to use sequence transition words that show one idea moving to the next. Students will follow the writing process throughout the lesson to complete the assignment.
- Students should engage in the peer review, editing, and revising process.

Closing/Reflection

- Allow students to share their drawings/paintings with their classmates without using spoken words.
- Students in the audience will try to guess what message is being communicated.
- Offer all students the opportunity to revise drawings based on their peers’ feedback to ensure that a proper sequence has been established for writing.

ASSESSMENTS

Formative



We bring learning to life.

The teacher will assess students' understanding of prehistoric communication by analyzing student drawings for the incorporation of shapes (geometric and organic), color (neutral), line, and texture. The teacher will analyze students' writing for sequencing using transition words and following the writing process.

Summative

CHECKLIST

- Students can compare/contrast a variety of prehistoric drawings for similarities and differences that help establish a background for understanding systems of communication used during prehistoric times.
- Students can use symbols and drawings that represent and/or mimic a variety of living and non-living things during prehistoric times.
- Students can create neutral colors and textured paper to demonstrate their understanding of color and texture used for prehistoric cave drawings.
- Students can convert symbols/drawings to words to develop a sequential unfolding of events in a written composition.
- Students can write a narrative that follows a logical sequence of events and meets grade level standards criteria.

DIFFERENTIATION

Acceleration:

- Assign additional drawings for some students.
- Assign a set of students (several groups of three) to collaborate, communicate, and create one group sequence of events using long brown craft paper.
- Students create a unique alphabet composed of different symbols and then write short messages to their peers using that alphabet.

Remediation:

- Decrease the number of drawings for some students.
- Assign specific elements of art or symbols for some students to focus on.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Recipe for creating "mud paint"](#)
- Examples of prehistoric cave paintings:
 - [Smithsonian Magazine](#)
 - [The Collector](#)

**This integrated lesson provides differentiated ideas and activities for educators that are aligned to a sampling of standards. Standards referenced at the time of publishing may differ based on each state's adoption of new standards.*

Ideas contributed by: Kim Spivey. Updated by Katy Betts.

Revised and copyright: June 2024 @ ArtsNOW



We bring learning to life.



We bring learning to life.

10 Glenlake Parkway, Suite 130, Atlanta, GA 30328
www.artsnowlearning.org