

Prehistoric Art

The time period we refer to as 'prehistory' encompasses 3 periods of human development that historians and archeologists have deemed **Paleolithic (old stone age)**, **Mesolithic (middle stone age)** and **Neolithic (new stone age)**.

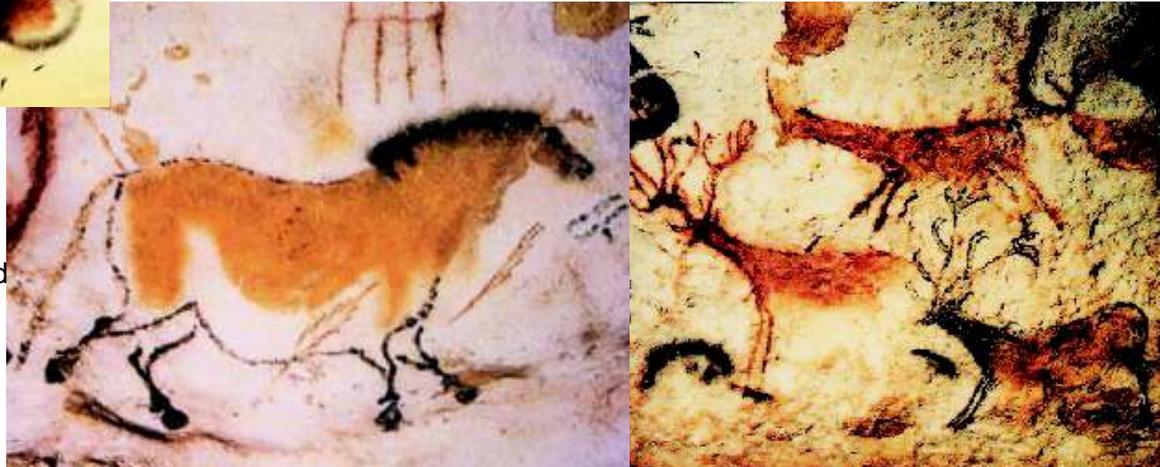
During the **Paleolithic period**, people spent most of their lives just trying to stay alive by hunting and gathering food and living in shelters they found often abandoned by cave-dwelling animals. They lived in related clan groups and shared what they had.

Painting



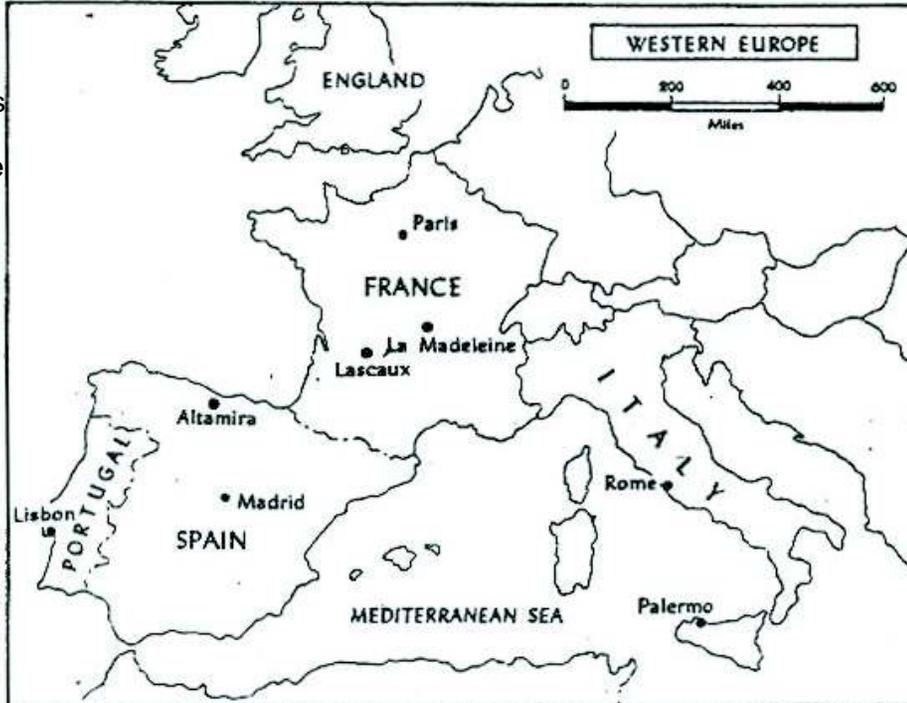
Survival was difficult and people did not live very long, but they developed a belief structure based on the **spirit world**.

The earth was their spiritual mother and caves were held **sacred**.



Cave Art: Bison, Horse, Deer, 15,000-10,000 BC, Altamira, Spain.

They painted the walls of the deepest caves with realistic representations of the animals they hunted as if they respected their spirits. They made pigments from **charcoal (black)**, **chalk (white)** and **clays (reds, browns, yellows and oranges)**. Brushes were made by chewing the ends of green sticks to fray them and also chewed charcoal and spit it out as fine spray lines. Many of these paintings have been found in the caves of **Lascaux (France)** and **Altamira (Spain)**.



Map Cave Sites in Western Europe (Altamira, La Madeleine & Lascaux)

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Name: _____

Grade 9 - Prehistoric Art Questions

1. What are the three time period that historians have defined as prehistory? (3)

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____

2. What was the belief structure of many prehistoric people considered to have based on? (1)

3. To Prehistoric artists during the Prehistoric era caves were thought to be what kind of spaces? (1)

S _____ spaces

4. What materials did prehistoric artists use to create pigments for their colours? (3)

black: _____ white: _____
red, brown, yellow, orange: _____

5. What materials did prehistoric artists use to create brushes? (1)

6. Many prehistoric paintings can be found in what three caves in Europe? (3)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

7. Make a sketch outline of one of the three Cave Art animals (horse, bison or deer)(1)

Prehistoric Art

Sculpture

The early men also sculpted. They modeled in clay and carved small fetish figures out of ivory, bone, antlers and stone. These often represented animals and sometimes-human portraits. Very often they carved pregnant or obese women whose breasts and bellies were exaggerated while their heads, feet and hands were minimal. It is believed by many today that these **fetish figures** were designed to give those who owned them some kind of power over their spirits of the figures they represented. The female figures may have represented a desire to become pregnant since the continuation of life was of prime importance and pregnancies were difficult and infant mortality rates were high.



Venus of Willendorf, 15,000-10,000 BC, Stone 4 3/8 high



Venus of Laussel c.20,000-18,000 BC, Limestone 17 inches

In the **Neolithic period**, humanity had domesticated some animals (dogs and cattle) and some grains. This enabled them to settle down in one place instead of following the herds that were their major food source. Soon villages grew and human population stabilized and became sedentary. This led to the creation of civilization and eventually cities.



Carved Horse, Antler France

Sign: is anything that stands for something else. A sign represents something - an idea, an experience, a feeling, an object, etc. Words as ordinarily used are signs in this sense. The object referred to by a sign does not need to be present for the meaning of the sign to be understood.

Symbol: can be a material object whose shape or origin is related by nature or convention, to the thing it represents: for instances, the cross is the main symbol of Christianity, and the scepter is a traditional symbol of royal power. Often involving multiple meanings.
Petroglyphs (petro=rock; glyphs=carving).



Bison with Turned Head, La Madeleine, c.11,000-9,000 BC. Reindeer Horn 10.5cm Dordogne, France

8. What materials did they use to sculpt with? (4)
i _____, b _____, a _____ and s _____.
9. Make a sketch of the carved horse sculpture. (1)
10. Make a sketch of the Bison with Turned head. (1)
11. The Venus of Willendorf is an example of what kind of figure? (1)
F _____
12. The small fetish figures sculpted by Prehistoric artists may have represented a desire to what? (1)
13. Compare the Venus of Willendorf and the Venus of Laussel sculpture and list two stylistic similarities that they both share. (2)
 - 1.
 - 2.
14. What era did humanity domesticate animals and some grain? (1)