

Hunter gatherers: Cave paintings

Key Facts

Cave paintings are paintings on cave walls and ceilings.

Usually these paintings were made in prehistoric times. Most cave paintings date from 10,000 to 20,000 years ago. The oldest are from about 32,000 years ago, but scientists still disagree if this dating is correct.

Most often, animals or hunting scenes were painted. These paintings tell a story.

The paintings were drawn with red and yellow ochre, hematite, manganese oxide and charcoal.

Today, there are about 350 caves known which have paintings in them. Many are in France, Spain and southern Africa.

Some of the most impressive and famous cave paintings in the world are to be found at Lascaux in southwestern France. Here the largest animal to be discovered so far in any cave, a 5.2 metre long bull, can be seen in The Great Hall of the Bulls.



Key Skills

Paint techniques	Experiment with and use a variety of techniques including, creating own paints from natural materials and mixing tints and tones to match own observations.
Composition	Think carefully about how elements are placed or arranged to create a final image.
Drawing	Draw figures accurately using a range of materials, line and form, from imagination and memory.

Key Vocabulary

origin	The point or place where something begins, arises or comes from.
figure	A person or animal's body shape.
natural resource	Materials or substances found in nature.
scene	A representation of a story being told by the picture.
wash	An art technique resulting in a semi-transparent layer of colour.
depth	The distance created in an artwork that shows front to back or near to far.

