

## CAVE ART



### CAVE ART AND ITS ORIGINS

Dating back to the early prehistoric, Palaeolithic Age, most cave art has been found in France and Spain, considered to be the work of Homo sapiens (early species of humans). The total number of discovered sites roughly totals 400.

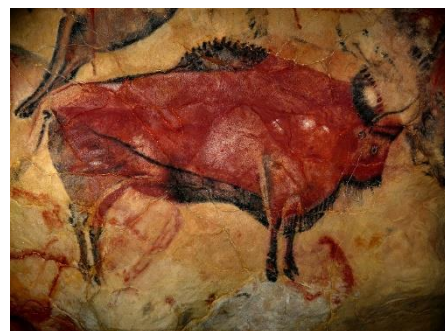
The Lascaux Cave in France was discovered in 1940 by four young French boys. After the Second World War, Lascaux was open to the public for several years until 1963. Many visitors came to visit the site, around 1500 visitors a day, but the carbon dioxide in the human breath soon began to damage the prehistoric paintings of the painted cave. Today the site is closed and protected by UNESCO.

It is home to about 600 paintings of mainly animals, with horses being the most notable. There are also around 1400 similar engravings. The art is dated to about 17,000 – 15,000BC.



### WHY WAS CAVE ART CREATED?

The earliest cave paintings commonly contained handprints. They often depicted animals, hunting and other traditions but only some hinted at the human form. Mammoths, woolly rhinoceroses and cave bears were the earlier represented animals. Later on, horses, bison, aurochs, cervids, and ibex became prevalent, as in the Lascaux and Niaux caves. Historians suggest the art has a religious, symbolic function as they left their marks on shelters. Others feel it may have been a way of storytelling to keep them entertained or share culture.



### HOW WAS CAVE ART CREATED?



Most cave art consists of paintings made with either red or black coloured materials. The reds were made with iron oxides (hematite), whereas manganese dioxide and charcoal were used for the blacks before mixing with water or animal fats to make a paste. Some sculptures and basic engravings have also been found.



FIND OUT MORE...

<https://www.britannica.com/art/cave-painting>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnSq0c7jM-A>

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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Most cave art can be found in Spain and where else?
2. How many paintings does the Lascaux Cave in France house?
3. What do historians believe cave art represents?
4. What is used to create the red markings?
5. What else is used to make a paste for the colour?