

Just like the ancient people you can find everything you need in nature to create beautiful pictographs. Ask an adult to help you with cutting some of the materials.

## Making Brushes and Other Paint Applicators

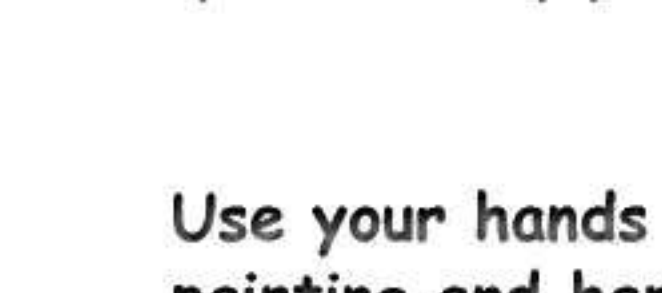


Prehistoric artists used fiber brushes made from plants. The ends of leaves such as yucca were chewed to form brushes.

Try making a brush from a yucca leaf. Cut off the sharp tip (careful!) and shred the end to create a "brush".



They also used sharpened sticks. Find a pencil size stick and sharpen the end. Or tape a small bunch of straw from a broom onto the end to make a brush. (Some ancient artists used human hair!)

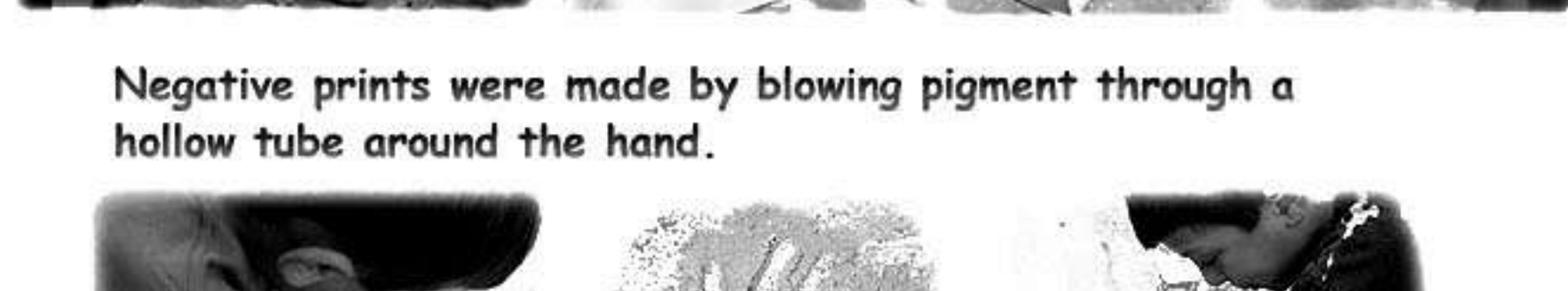


Experiment with popsicle sticks with frayed ends.

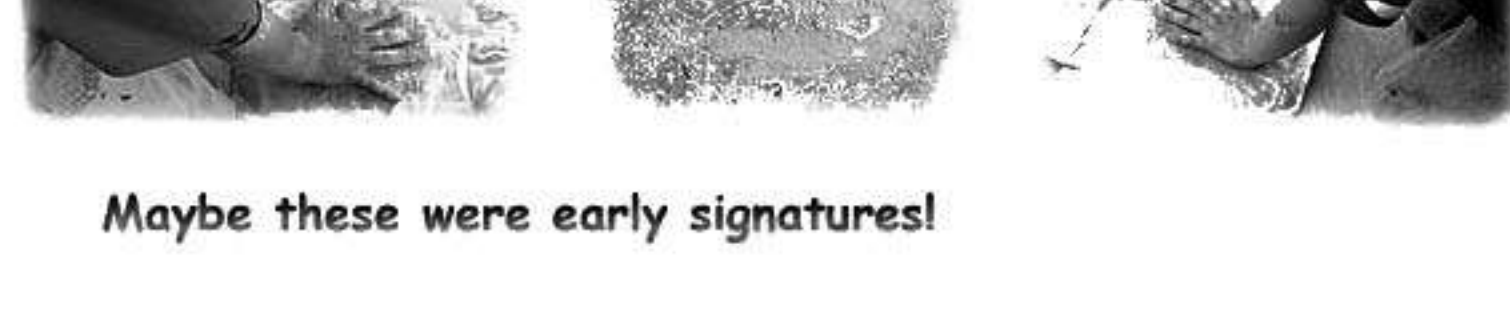
## Use your hands for finger painting and hand printing!



Ancient artists made positive prints by dipping their hands in paint and pressing against the rock.



Negative prints were made by blowing pigment through a hollow tube around the hand.



Maybe these were early signatures!

## Finding Paint Pigment

remember, the colors used in the past were shades of red, black, yellow, orange, and white

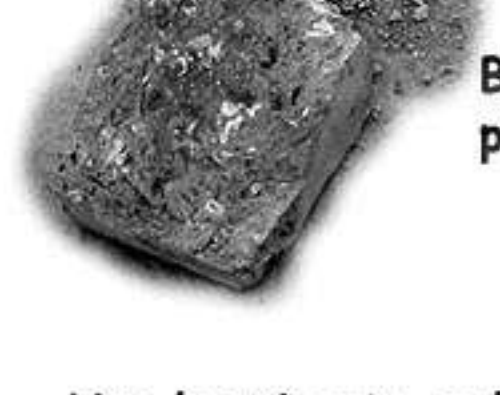


Soft stones and minerals make great pigment. Use the scratch test: if you can scratch a stone with another, it might be soft enough to grind into a fine powder.



Find raw clay and dry it in the sun.

Broken bricks can also be ground into pigment.



Use berries to make paints. Get rid of seeds and skins and crush.



Sidewalk chalk can be ground into pigments also



Use pieces of charcoal from burned wood or artist charcoal for black.



(NEVER use charcoal briquettes for backyard or patio grills! They are toxic!)

If you don't have access to a backyard or park, experiment by making watercolors from food coloring available from grocery stores.

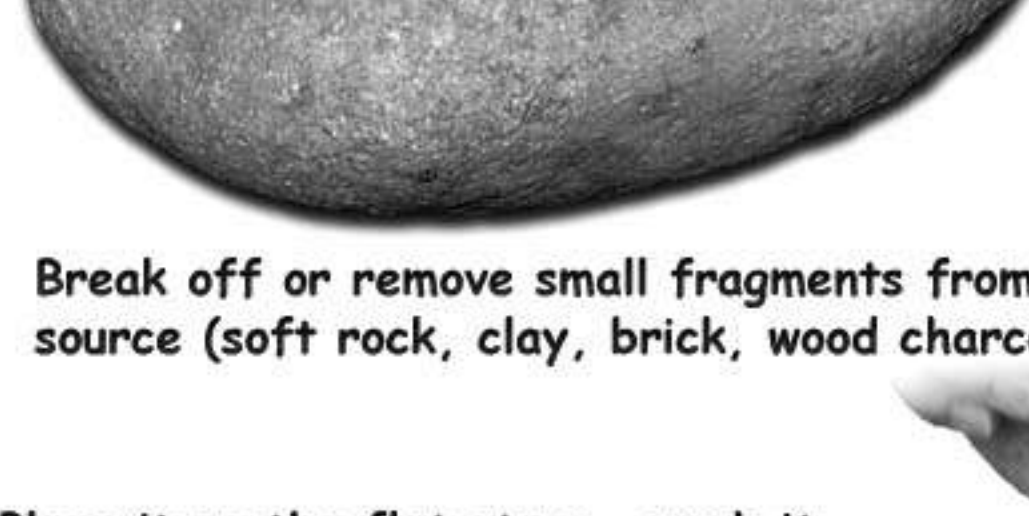
Of course if you can't find any of the above sources, you can always use crayons, watercolors, or tempera paints.



## Grinding the Pigment



You can use any hard flat rock, or one with a depression in it, to grind the pigment on.



Use a small, smooth rock as a mano or handstone.

Break off or remove small fragments from your pigment source (soft rock, clay, brick, wood charcoal, etc.)



Place it on the flat stone, crush it, and then grind it to a powder with the small stone by rubbing in a circular motion.



## Mixing the Paint

First, you will need to get a container for your paint.

Since the ancient people used natural objects like shells or curved stones, try to find something used and recyclable around your house like jar lids or pie tins.



Next, add liquid to your pigment.

Water is easy because it washes off. Vegetable oil or glue make a more permanent paint. Stir the liquid into the pigment until you get the right consistency.



## Designing Your Pictograph

Here comes the fun and creative part!



Research:

You can find lots of ideas and symbols for pictographs on [www.TexasBeyondHistory.net](http://www.TexasBeyondHistory.net). Use the search engine to search for rock art or pictographs. Or search the Internet for other sites.

Look around you, particularly in nature, for ideas: trees, plants, animals, sun, moon, etc.

Think of an important event in your own life and create a mural of pictographs to commemorate it.

If you were a shaman which animal would be your guardian animal and why? Illustrate the shaman.



## Painting Your Surface

Sketch your pictograph. Use a brown grocery bag as a surface or any other type of paper.

Experiment with different methods of paint application and blending of paint to make new colors. Use the stick to draw the outline and the brush to apply color.



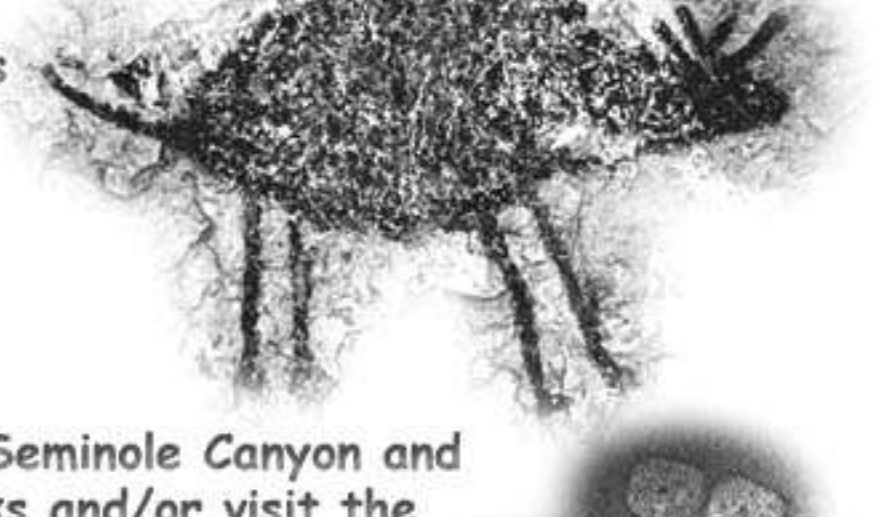
Dry your pictograph in the sun. Hang it, mount it, or crumple it for a "rock" effect.



## Other Things To Do

Design a T-shirt with your favorite pictograph using clothing paint.

Research the art of other regions such as the Lower Pecos of Texas.



Write a letter to Texas Parks and Wildlife to get brochures on Seminole Canyon and Hueco Tanks State Historical Parks and/or visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife WWW site:

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Information Department  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, TX 78744  
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/seminole/seminole.htm>

Write a letter to the Rock Art Foundation to get a great color brochure on rock art and/or visit the Rock Art WWW

The Rock Art Foundation  
4833 Fredericksburg Road  
San Antonio, Texas 78230  
<http://www.rockart.org>

Visit Seminole Canyon and Hueco Tanks State Historic Parks in west Texas!

## Credits:

This section was created by TBH editorial assistant Heather Smith and is based in part on an online exhibit created by the Texas Memorial Museum, University of Texas at Austin. Some of the ideas about making your own materials came from, Rock Art Painting Kit and Field Guide. Ancient Graffiti. Vergennes, Vermont.

This activity features models Haley, Jacob, and Ryan Rivera, students at Hardy Oak Elementary in San Antonio, Texas.

