

Stick Painting

All Grades

Objective:

Students learn about the artistic potential in natural objects.

Method:

Students paint with a stick and natural paint.

Materials:

Sticks, rocks, natural clay, small bowls, water, white glue, cardboard or brown paper bags. Optional: food coloring.

Background:

Native Americans painted beautiful works of art on boulders and animal hides. Their paints and brushes were taken from nature: they were often made from sticks and clay. These paintings are called petroglyphs. They often contained great religious meaning or recorded significant events, such as a great hunt or the gods.

The most famous petroglyph in our area is called Hospital Rock. Hospital Rock is in Sequoia National Park. Gigantic red symbols are painted on an enormous boulder that was a Native American village site for hundreds of years. Many petroglyphs are also located in Yokohl Valley, between Exeter and Springville.

Procedure:

1. Tell your class about the background information.
2. Take your class outside, and have them break sticks off bushes or trees.
3. Then, have them find rocks to mash the ends of their sticks.
4. Have your class mash the ends of their sticks until they are soft and bristly.
5. Tell your students find clay soil—soil that sticks together when you pinch it with your fingers.
 - a. Have them collect a hand-full of it.
 - b. They should put the clay in a small bowl. Add water and a drop of glue, then stir with the stick.
 - c. They may also add a drop of food coloring to the clay and mix it to make natural paint.
6. Next, they can paint on cardboard or lunch bags with their stick paint brushes and natural paints.