

# Sacred Images - Geographic Characteristics of Utah

## Summary

Students will learn about Utah's physical environment through the study of the four styles of rock art, Barrier Canyon, Hisatsenom, Fremont and Ute. Students will create a time line, learn how rock art was made, learn about symbols and create their own rock art.

## Time Frame

4 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Group Size

Small Groups

## Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

- *Sacred Images A Vision of Native American Rock Art*
- *Map of Utah Tribes with rock art sites*
- *Intrigue of the Past (Smith, Moe, Letts, Paterson 1992)*  
CD *Intrigue of the Past* Investigating Archeology: A Curriculum sponsored by the Utah Interagency Task Force on Cultural Resources, Bureau of Land Management, State of Utah  
See handout from lesson on Sacred Images - Gallery Walk

## Background for Teachers

Teachers will need to read the chapter by David Sucec in *Sacred Images A Vision of Native American Rock Art* to get acquainted with the material. Sucec reports Utah's first human inhabitants came 12,000 years ago and these Native American Indians left numerous examples of their rock art throughout Utah on their canyon walls and mountain homelands. Sucec claims that about 80 percent of all known North American rock art sites are found west of the Rocky Mountains. Utah's has some of the most spectacular panels in the world.

The four styles of rock art include:

Barrier Canyon Style (ca.6000 B.C. - ca. A.D. 500)included a wide variety of painting techniques. Paint was applied with brushes, hands, fingertips, fiber wads and even by blowing paint from the mouth. The most popular color red was made from ochre or iron oxide (hematite). Archeologists claim that these people were hunters and gathers of food and did not maintain permanent dwellings although they did return to the same seasonal shelters year after year. According to Sucec their is a preponderance of anthropomorphic or human figures seen in the Barrier Canyon rock art. Many of these figures lack arms and legs, and are so high on the canyon walls they often appear like spirits or ghosts hovering above. Frequently the spirit figures are next to birds, sheep, deer and unidentified creatures.

Hisatsenom Style (ca. 1000 B.C. - A.D. 700) is also referred to as the Anasazi. Archeologists claim they occupied the bottom one-quarter of Utah. According to the ancestors of the Pueblo cultures, the Basketmakers, names for their beautifully and skillfully made baskets, are the earliest phase of this style. They lived as hunters and gatherers, traveling to their various seasonal dwellings. They had a more settled life style involved with agriculture, architecture, weaving, ceramics and wall painting. Their rock art is found along the San Juan River and

although their anthropomorphic figures are similar to the Barrier Canyon Style, their figures are always represented with arms and legs. Along the San Juan River the Basketmaker panels are almost exclusively pecked, whereas those figures away from the San Juan, especially in Canyonlands, are most often painted.

Fremont Style (ca. A.D. 700 - 1300) rock art covers the top three-quarters of Utah. Archeologists claim the Fremont were not as involved with agriculture as the Puebloans and were mostly hunters and gatherers. The Fremont continued to live in pit houses long after the Pueblo people were building homes above ground. Rock art styles were different to Sucec, the northern Fremont style (Uinta) rock art panels are dominated by pecked, anthropomorphic figures wearing elaborate necklaces. Shield figures are also common and were created by pecking and painting. The horned figure is interpreted as an individual with power.

Ute Style (before A.D. 1600 - A.D. 1930) rock art is found as far south as the San Juan River, west to the Wasatch Front, north into the Uinta Mountains near the Wyoming border and as far east as Denver. Although the Ute's believe they are related to the Hopi, the Ute rock art style is quite distinct from Pueblo styles in technique and in imagery. The early style contains shields, abstract figures and a distinct bison image. Over time the images included horses, birds, and animals, and war bonnets and lances later appeared.

### Student Prior Knowledge

Students should be familiar with the map of Utah and the location of the 5 Native American tribes.

See the lessons AIH-1-4 on [www.uen.org](http://www.uen.org)

Students should look at the map of Utah and distinguish the various rock art sites.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will know the four styles of rock art and the time frame when they were created.

Students will understand that each tribe has a unique history.

Students will understand how the photographs document Utah history, their history.

### Instructional Procedures

#### Setting the Stage:

Show the students four of the rock art images, one from each of the four styles.

Ask them to look at the photographs and guess when the rock was created and write down their answers.

Explain to the students that during the next four class periods they will be traveling back in time and learning about the early Native Americans through the study of their rock art.

#### Activity: Creating a Time Line

Students will be given a handout with dates and information about the various early people. They will fill in the handout from the various clues given which rock art style occurred when.

Ask students why it is important to see and preserve the rock art as history? How does the rock art preserve their history?

Students will create a personal time line of their lives using pictographs.

#### Activity: Learn How Rock Art Was Made

Students will learn the difference between pictographs (painted) and petroglyphs (pecked).

Students will research the various ways the paints were developed (red ochre, iron oxide - hematite)

Students will research the various ways the early rock artists painted (using brushes, fingertips, hands, fiber wads and by blowing paint from the mouth).

Discuss what the artists intended. For what purposes was their art created?

#### Activity: Learning About Symbols

Students will understand that symbols are used to represent something important in a culture. What symbols do they see in their home, community, state, country, and world? Some examples include \$, %, @, or #. What do these symbols represent?

Ask students to examine the various symbols in some of the rock art. What do they think these symbols represent to the ancient people of Utah? Some examples may include hands, circles, animal helpers, anthropomorphic figures, etc.

Ask students to research information about the hand in other cultures or in other art forms. For example, how is the hand a symbol of healing?

Activity: Students Create Their Own Rock Art

Students create on paper rock art designs using personal symbols that having meaning for them.

Once they have sketched they design they can chose to create either a petroglyph or pictograph.

### Strategies for Diverse Learners

#### Extensions

Art - Ask students to examine photographs of the rock art and describe what they have in common and what are the differences.

Language Arts - Ask students to create a story after they made their timeline. Students can present these stories in front of the class.

Discuss ways to honor the culture of the Native American Indians.

#### Authors

[JOYCE KELEN](#)