



# Even the Rocks Cry Out!

## Communication Through Rock Art

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**Grade Level** 6  
**Duration** 1-2 class periods

### National Standards

#### GEOGRAPHY

##### Element 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places

##### Element 5: Environment and Society

14. How human actions modify the physical environment

##### Element 6: The Uses of Geography

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past

### AZ Standards

#### ELA

##### Writing

##### Production and Distribution of Writing

6.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

### Arizona Social Science Standards

#### GEOGRAPHY

**Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.**

6.G3.1 Analyze how cultural and environmental characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas.

#### HISTORY

**The development of civilizations, societies, cultures, and innovations have influenced history and continue to impact the modern world.**

6.H1.1 Compare the development and characteristics of historical cultures and civilizations from different global regions within designated time periods.

### Overview

Our students today are in the age of technology and are communicating in ways we never dreamed of when we were in middle school. This lesson is designed to help students understand that, even though the methods of communication may have changed over time, the messages sent then and now are much the same and serve the same purpose. Communication's purpose has been and still is to spread understanding to others, to impart meaningful information, and to exchange ideas and information with others. This lesson will look at rock petroglyphs and pictographs and compare those with communication of today.

### Purpose

In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of how we use geography to interpret the past. Students will be able to describe how places with petroglyphs, like the Petrified Forest National Park, have changed over time, and analyze if humans have impacted the area in a positive or a

negative way as a result of the rock art we see today.

### Materials

- Whiteboard
- Computer and projector
- Rock Art Slide Show
- Rock Art in the Petrified Forest National Park Background document for teacher before lesson begins
- 11" x 14" white, tan, or brown construction paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Exit slip

### Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Describe how the Petrified Forest National Park has changed over time, specifically due to the petroglyphs found there.
2. Analyze positive and negative outcomes of human environment interaction.

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3. Apply geographical concepts to interpreting the past specifically in and around the Petrified Forest National Park

### Procedures

Prior to the lesson, read the “Rock Art in the Petrified Forest National Park Background” document. Use this information as you conduct the classroom discussions that follows in Session One.

#### SESSION ONE

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to brainstorm and list, in 3 minutes, ways communication occurs. After 3 minutes is over, write their answers on the board. As these are being recorded, discuss with the class if they agree that the item suggested is a method of communication.
2. Project the second slide in the Rock Art Slide Show. Ask, “Did these markings occur naturally or did someone put them there?” Tell the class that some Native American (Puebloan, Hohokam, and/or Mogollon) living in the Petrified Forest National Park in the past left records of their communication. The communication left is seen today as petroglyphs (carved into the rock) or pictographs (painted on the rock). Ask students to think about what those Native Americans might have had in order to record their communication (paper? pencils? chalk? telephones?). What would they have had to communicate about? With whom would they have to communicate? Why don't we find these kinds of rock art in other parts of the United States?
3. Divide students into pairs. Show the slide show of the rock art from the Petrified Forest National Park (slides 3-23). As students watch, ask partners to sketch at least 4 of the examples shown, and what they think those images might mean. Did the rock art change the environment? If yes, did it change it for better or worse?
4. Now ask students what the rock art viewed in the slide show might have been intended to communicate. Do the pictures go together, like our sentences (at least 2 words put together)? Does the rock art describe people? Events? Animals? Their imaginations? Discuss these ideas and their possibilities. Have students save their sketches and notes for the next session.

#### SESSION TWO

1. Have students take out their notes and sketches from the previous session. On construction

paper, each student will use colored pencils or markers to make a “message” for someone else. Like the rock art they saw in the slide show, they must use symbols only – no words – to convey their intended message. Students can draw one or more symbol(s) to create their message.

2. When finished with the message, on the back of the paper, students will write their message out in words.
3. When the whole class is finished, students will exchange their message with another student to see if another person can interpret their message correctly. After examining the message, students should write out what they think the message is, and only then can they look at the back of the paper to see how accurate their interpretation is.
4. Then discuss with the class, was it easy to know what the author was saying? What pictures or graphics were more difficult to interpret? Which were easier? Why?
5. On the exit slip, each student will evaluate the lesson. What did they learn today? How is the lesson of value to them? Can they think of how this could help them learn about other societies in history?

### Assessment

#### Geography and ELA

Students can be evaluated on their completion and/or their answers recorded on the exit slip, as well as on their message and interpretation of messages. Mastery will be considered a complete image and explanation.

### Extensions

1. Do more extensive research on one or more of the Native American tribes that are believed to have left the petroglyphs.
2. Research how, when, and why the National Park System was set up.
3. Find out more about petrified wood. How does it form? How old is it? Where else in the world can it be found?
4. Schedule a field trip to South Mountain Park in Phoenix (or other known location of rock art) to find out more about rock art and what is being done to protect it for the future.

### Sources

Petrified Forest National Park  
(<http://www.nps.gov/pefo>)

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