

Name _____

Aboriginal Art

The Aboriginal people in Australia are hunters and gatherers. They are also skilled artists. They have been painting and carving rocks for thousands of years. The paintings are found mostly in caves throughout central Australia. The oldest paintings that have been discovered are about 30,000 years old.

Day 1

1. What does the title tell us about the subject of this passage? _____
2. Where do Aborigines live? _____
3. What details does the first paragraph tell you about them? _____
4. Aborigines are the original dwellers of Australia. Who do they compare with in the United States? _____

Aborigine artists still use natural paints made from the earth, tree bark, and plants. Red comes from ochre and hematite. Ochre and hematite are minerals. Black comes from charcoal. White comes from gypsum, a mineral found in rocks. It's used to make cement.

Day 2

1. Where do Aborigine artists find their paints? _____
2. What color does not come from a mineral? _____
3. Does this paragraph give you any examples of colors from plants? _____
4. What do Aboriginal paintings have in common with cement? _____

Aborigine musicians have unusual musical instruments. One is called the didgeridoo. It is made from a hollowed-out log. It is a wind instrument played by blowing air through it. A didgeridoo may be painted with the same elaborate designs found in the rock paintings.

Day 3

1. So far, in this passage, what two things do Aborigine artists paint on? _____
2. Do you think the didgeridoo is a small or a large instrument? Why? _____

3. Did Aborigine musicians find their musical instruments in nature? _____
4. What clues helped you answer question 3? _____

Aborigines paint themselves for special religious ceremonies. These ceremonies are a part of their traditional culture. Their religion links them to the land and nature. They express themselves artistically through music making, dancing, singing, and storytelling.

Day 4

1. List the things Aborigine artists paint. _____
2. What is important to their religion? _____
3. What do Aborigines do in their religious ceremonies? _____

4. How is painting used in their religious ceremonies? _____

Name _____

Dreamtime

Many cultures have stories telling how the world was created. The Aborigines believe that spirits created the world in a time known as Dreamtime. The Aborigines have lived in Australia for thousands of years. Some scientists believe they have been in Australia for about 30,000 years. The name Aborigine means "the very first." The Aborigines were the very first people in Australia. Today, the elders pass on the Dreamtime stories to younger generations.

Stories from Dreamtime explain the beginning of the world. Aborigines believe that spirits created the land, animals, plants, and people. The spirits then continued to live in nature. The spirits also live within the Aboriginal beliefs and sacred rituals. Dreamtime stories tell more than the origin of the world, they explain the rules for living. They explain the rules for behavior and society.

Dreamtime paintings show stories from Dreamtime. The paintings are usually symmetrical. They are made of arcs, circles, and ovals. Some lines are straight. Other lines are curved. The men paint Dreamtime symbols and patterns on their bodies for special ceremonies.

1. What is Dreamtime? _____

2. Is Dreamtime still a part of Aboriginal culture today? Explain. _____

3. Describe Dreamtime paintings. _____

4. Compare this passage to another creation story you have heard. _____
