



# LESSON 2: Connections to the Past

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

## Activity 4: Tracing the Past

How do we connect with the past?

### Objective:

Students use pictographs to tell their own story.

### Procedure:

- ✓ Ask the students to think of all the writing examples they see in the world around them. Give them time to consider various purposes for writing and ask them to make a list of these purposes in their journal. Discuss the evolution of the English alphabet.
- ✓ Have students share their answers and make a list of responses on the board. Sample answers may include:
  - to communicate*
  - to make a list to remind us to do things*
  - to prove that we know something*
  - to prove that we were at a place*
  - to leave a memory*
  - to help us learn, etc.*
- ✓ Write the following questions on the board and have your students log their answers in their journal.
  - How do you record your daily activities?*
  - How could you record or write your life story?*
  - How will you leave your mark?*
- ✓ Ask students to consider various forms of communication. Ask students how humans create a lasting memory, thought, design, religious belief, etc. Sample answers may include: graffiti, roadside memorials for accident victims, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Basque arborglyphs (tree carvings) and objects left at historical places (i.e., paper cranes at Manzanar National Historic Site).
- ✓ Show pictures of communication: Bighorn Sheep petroglyph, artifacts left at the Manzanar cemetery, graffiti found inside the Manzanar sentry posts, objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and a poem left at Ground Zero in New York (photographs found in Lesson 2 Activity 4 Resources section). Stress that each form of communication is unique and discuss their purpose. Discuss dates that the images/messages were made. Discuss the significance and/or meaning of images or items.
- ✓ Discuss the Rock Art of the Owens Valley handout. Stress comparison between American Indian petroglyphs and Japanese Kanji. Stress that both forms of communication use symbols that may represent entire words or ideas rather than individual letters.

**Grade Level:** 4th  
**Time:** 2 hours (Day 1)  
40 minutes (Day 2)  
**Materials:**  
Rock Art handout  
4 Photographs/ 1 poem  
Assignment Sheet  
Paint, Paper & Brushes

### Concepts Covered:

**Determine** the purpose of various forms of communication from different historical periods.  
**Compare & contrast** visual forms of communication.  
**Understand** vocabulary for visual writing and **experiment** with new forms of communication.  
**Utilize** the internet to research petroglyphs and pictographs.  
**Create** a story using historical forms of communication.  
**Present** an oral report.  
**Organize & communicate** ideas clearly in written and in verbal form.

### CDE Standards:

#### 4th Grade

#### English/Language Arts: Reading

1.0 1.1 1.3

#### Writing

1.1 1.7

#### Visual Arts:

#### Historical & Cultural Context

3.0 3.2

#### History/Social Science

4.2.1 4.2.3 4.2.5

Activity 4: **Tracing the Past**

How do we connect with the past?



*Kanji writings on the reservoir wall at Manzanar NHS. National Park Service photo*

**Procedure (continued):**

- ✓ Have students use the Internet to explore and discover where Paiute and other American Indian Tribes have created pictographs and petroglyphs and what they look like.
- ✓ Have students create their own pictograph stories. Have students paint their stories in bright colors on large paper (school children interned at Manzanar used butcher paper). Write the complete story beneath the pictographs.
- ✓ Have each student read his/her story aloud and share his/her pictographs with the class.
- ✓ Conclude the lesson by reviewing how important and unique identities and cultures are to our past and that we each share our cultures and identities in different ways. When we trace the past, we can connect with our future.

*Discuss the implications and legal ramifications associated with defacing the environment. The point of the lesson is to explore various forms of communication, not to encourage graffiti.*

**Assessment:**

1. Teacher guides & evaluates class discussion.
2. Evaluation of both oral and written student pictograph stories.

**Extension:**

1. Encourage students to learn other forms of communication like Japanese Kanji. Many websites and books cover this topic, including **Kanji Picto-o-Graphix** by Michael Rowley.
2. Give your students a list of Kanji characters and have them create a name for themselves as well as a Japanese identity.
3. If possible, take your students to a nearby cemetery or memorial. Ask them to describe the place, the objects they find, and the wording on plaques/memorials. An alternative would be to share pictures of a local cemetery, memorial or event.



## Leaving your Mark

1. Look online at American Indian pictograph symbols and figures representing daily life, special events and beliefs.
2. Choose several symbols that suggest a story to you.
3. When you choose your symbols, remember that symbols may represent words or ideas, not an individual letter of the alphabet. Arrange the symbols to tell a story.
4. Draw your symbols on a large sheet of paper (butcher paper).
5. Paint or color your symbols with bright colors.
6. Underneath each line of symbols, write out the complete story you want to tell.
7. Show your pictographs to the class and read your story aloud.



## Activity 4: Tracing the Past

## Rock Art of the Owens Valley

### Vocabulary:

**petroglyph:** a carving or line drawing on rock, especially one made by prehistoric people. Petroglyphs are engravings, made by pecking, carving or scratching a design into a rock surface. Early explorers and pioneers also made petroglyphs.

**pictograph:** a picture representing a word or idea, a hieroglyph. Pictographs are rock paintings, made from plants and minerals like red ocher mixed with oil and applied to rock surfaces with sticks, fingers, hands and brushes (made of animal fur or tail).

**tableland:** a flat elevated region; a plateau or mesa. Petroglyphs can be found in the tableland areas of the Owens Valley, CA.

For at least 12,000 years, American Indian cultures have called the Owens Valley home (Manzanar War Relocation Center was located in the Owens Valley). American Indians were attracted to the area because of its abundant resources, especially in the volcanic tablelands (near Bishop, California). Almost every plant and animal was used by the American Indians for food, fiber or medicine. Evidence of American Indians can be seen in the petroglyphs in the mountains, valleys and eastern deserts of California. The Owens Valley Paiute continue to live in the region.

In California, American Indians made two types of rock art: petroglyphs and pictographs. Petroglyphs are typically found in the desert regions (sometimes on tablelands or canyon walls) like Little Petroglyph Canyon on the China Lake Naval Weapons Center known as one of the greatest concentrations of rock art in the world. This Mojave desert site has 20 known pictographs compared to nearly 5,000 petroglyphs.

Some American Indians share stories about shamans or medicine men creating rock art to preserve a record of their visionary trances. Many pictographs and petroglyphs appear to be geometric designs. Symbols may represent an idea or an object rather than a specific letter of an alphabet. American Indians told stories through symbols.





Activity 4: **Tracing the Past**



*Petroglyph of a Big Horn Sheep made by American Indians. Petroglyph located in the Mojave Desert, California.  
Carrie Andresen-Strawn, 2006.*



## Activity 4: Tracing the Past



*Cemetery Monument at Manzanar National Historic Site. Kanji characters represent the phrase “soul consoling tower.”  
National Park Service photo*

Offerings and objects found at Manzanar, a former World War II War Relocation Center for Japanese Americans, have diverse meanings. Among the objects are photographs, letters, glass pieces, ceramics, barbed wire, metal objects, tin cans, flowers, coins, origami cranes, flags and banners. Many objects are from Manzanar, left over from the camp era. Former internees, their children and others leave offerings on the monument. Some offerings represent spiritual connections, others symbolize relatives, and peace is represented through origami cranes. The objects tell stories about Manzanar and about a specific time period.



Activity 4: Tracing the Past



*Kanji and English writing on the walls of the Manzanar sentry post written decades after World War II.  
National Park Service photo.*



# Objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Washington, D.C.



*Personal artifacts left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2005.  
National Park Service photo*

This collection is unlike any museum collection. Among the artifacts are photographs, letters, MIA/POW bracelets, medals, helmets, dog tags, boots, canned food, unopened beer cans, cigarettes, birthday cards, toys, bullets and casings. Soldiers who returned home leave objects for those who did not. Many objects are from parents, spouses, siblings, and children. Some offerings are direct communications between the living and the dead, connections between those who were killed and those who remember. They tell us not only something about the people on the Wall, but as well as any history book, they tell us about an era.

*Learn more about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at [www.nps.gov/vive](http://www.nps.gov/vive).*



Poem left at Ground Zero,  
New York City, NY

### The Towers

You rushed up the stairs of the towers  
As we rushed down...  
You looked for those who needed you...  
They were all around

Your job is to save...that is what you  
are taught to do...  
no matter each horror or incident  
it is expected...of you..

We see you today...going up each stair...  
We are helpless and cry out  
In despair  
The building collapsed  
Our hearts did too...  
America lost its heroes  
With you

Those of us living who don't even  
Know your name  
Yet your brothers  
And America will never be the same

Again and again firefighters  
will all come along  
the same oaths and traditions  
will always carry on

And you... who follow the footsteps  
Of those who went up those stairs  
We give you our love and hope  
And our prayers

And that this horror in America  
Can never again be  
We wish God speed to you  
And hold your brothers  
Eternally.

*Author's name unreadable*

*Poem found on <http://memory.loc.gov/service/afc/afc2001015/ph/ph037v.jpg>*