

National Geographic Kids News (Adapted)

### Cave Art Turns Out to Be Britain's Oldest

About two years ago, scientists discovered that pictures on cave walls at Creswell Crags are the oldest known in Great Britain. However, scientists did not find out in the usual way.

Archaeologists (ar-key-ALL-uh-jists) study what has been left behind by people in the past. Cave art is often dated with a process called radiocarbon dating. The technique can measure the age of carbon found in charcoal drawings or painted pictures. Carbon is an element found in many things, including charcoal and even people.



In this case, there was no paint or charcoal to test. People carved the pictures of animals and figures into the rock using stone tools. The scientists had an "aha!" moment when they noticed small rocks stuck to the top of the drawings. They must have formed after the drawings were made. These small rock formations are similar to stalagmites, the spiky mineral formations found on the floors and walls of caves.

"It is rare to be able to scientifically date rock art," said Alistair Pike, an archaeological scientist at Britain's University of Bristol. "We were very fortunate that some of the engravings were covered by stalagmites." When a test proved that the stalagmites formed 12,800 years ago, the scientists knew the art underneath them had to be at least that old. Some of the animals depicted, such as the European bison, are now extinct.

The artists came to Creswell Crags. This place is one of the farthest points north reached by our ancient ancestors during the Ice Age. At that time, much of the North Sea was dry, so people could move about more easily. Some tools and bones found there are 13,000 to 15,000 years old. They show that the travelers hunted horses, reindeer, and arctic hare. Their artwork is similar to art discovered in France and Germany. It tells scientists that the Creswell Crags artists must have had a close connection to peoples several thousand kilometers away. This is another important clue to understanding how humans spread out across the world.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary Sentence



who .....

(discovered) what .....

when .....

where .....

how .....

**Summary Sentence:**

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Possible answer

### Summary

who **scientists**

(discovered) what **how old cave pictures were**

when **about two years ago**

where **at Creswell Crags in Great Britain**

how **by testing the rocks attached to the art**

### Summary Sentence:

About two years ago, scientists discovered how old pictures were on cave walls at Creswell Crags by testing the rocks (stalagmites) attached to the art.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Directions:** Write two questions about this picture.

1.

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2.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



*"Yes, it is a 'wonderful discovery'. But whatever you do, don't touch it!"*

Scientists have proof early man created art and made tools. For example, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Did you know that early man did not live at the same time as the dinosaurs? Scientists have different theories about why the dinosaurs disappeared, but they do know that dinosaurs died out about 65 million years ago. Humans did not appear until about 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  million years ago. Therefore, you know it is fiction if you see a movie that depicts the cave men, running from the dinosaurs. Even though early man did not have to fight off dinosaurs, he did not have an easy life. For example, cave men shared their environment with animals such as sabre-toothed tigers, cave lions, and woolly mammoths. Additionally, these Stone Age people were hunters and gatherers. We know about them because scientists have found fossils and artifacts, which reveal traces of their life.

We know early man did not live at the same time as the dinosaurs because

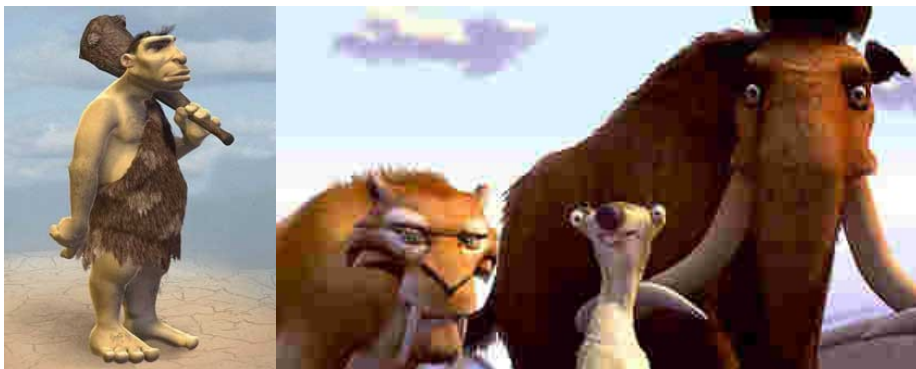
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Even though we know early man did not live at the same time as the dinosaurs,

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### How did the Stone Age get its name?

The term *Stone Age* has been used since the early 1800s. About this time, archaeological sites that contained mysterious artifacts from prehistoric times were found in Europe. A curator of a museum developed a classification system to organize the artifacts into three stages of tool development: *Stone Age*, *Bronze Age*, and *Iron Age*. The *Stone Age* normally predated the invention or spread of metal tool technology. The *Stone Age* is divided into three separate periods, *Paleolithic Period*, *Mesolithic Period*, and *Neolithic Period*, based on the degree of sophistication in the fashioning and use of tools. In summary, the *Stone Age* is a prehistoric cultural stage or level of human development that is distinguished by the creation and use of stone tools.



The *Stone Age* was given that name  
because \_\_\_\_\_

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