Painted Petroglyph Rocks

**Grade:** Any
**Time:** 1.5-2 hours
**Lesson Description:** Take students on a beach walk to collect rocks and make your own painted petroglyph rocks.

**Kit Includes:**
- Alutiiq Petroglyphs
- Petroglyph PowerPoint (Found on USB)

**Materials Needed:**
- Rocks
- Acrylic Paint or Paint Markers
- Fine Tip Paint Brushes

**Photo:** Example Painted Petroglyph Rock

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**Objectives and Assessment Criteria:**

Students will learn...
- What a petroglyph is.
- What petroglyphs depict.
- How to paint their own petroglyph.

**Cultural Relevance:**

Petroglyphs are designs carved into boulders, cliff faces, and other stationary pieces of stone. They are found in various parts of Alaska and in the Kodiak Archipelago. Petroglyph locations often depict human figures, animal forms, and geometric designs. Archaeologists do not know exactly how old they are but suspect that Kodiak petroglyphs are between 600 and 1200 years old, based on their association with ancient village sites. How did the Alutiiq people create petroglyphs? The clues may be found in other types of stone tools. Archaeologists note that Kodiak’s prehistoric craftsmen used stone hammers to shape beach cobbles into lamps,
mauls, fishing weights, and even anchors. With similar tools, Alutiq ancestors probably pecked petroglyph images into Kodiak’s coastal granite bedrock. Why did Alutiq people make designs on rock? The original meaning of the petroglyphs has been lost to time, but Alutiq spiritual beliefs and other artwork can give us clues. Could they be territorial markers? Part of hunting rituals for luck or? Could they tell the story of a successful hunt or other event? Or perhaps permanent signs that linked families with particular subsistence areas? Why do you think petroglyphs were made?

Create:

- Watch the Cape Alitak Petroglyphs DVD (30 minutes).
- Share with the students the Petroglyph PowerPoint.
- Take the class to a beach, playground, or trail that has smooth round rocks.
- Share the petroglyph designs with your students and have them discuss what they think each petroglyph is.
- Have them pick a petroglyph design and paint it onto a rock. Students can use a paintbrush and paint or paint markers.

Close and Assessment:

- Each student will have created his or her own painted rock.
- Students will have an understanding of petroglyphs and how they were made.
- Students will be able to state the three different types of petroglyph depictions: Human figures, animal forms, and geometric designs.

Modification:

- Students can trace and cut out the petroglyphs designs and glue them onto the rocks.
- Students can use another rock to draw petroglyph designs onto the rocks.
- Students can use the Cape Alitak Petroglyphs Coloring Pages to select a design and become familiar with the different designs.
- Use scratch cards and wooden styluses for students to draw petroglyph designs.

Additional Resources:

- Alutiq Rock Art & Fish Traps of the Kodiak Archipelago Presentation [https://vimeo.com/631442640](https://vimeo.com/631442640)
- The Appearing and Disappearing Petroglyphs of Cape Alitak Video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03pdkH52820](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03pdkH52820)
- Igaruakirpet — Our Way of Making Designs Book
- Cape Alitak Petroglyphs Coloring Pages developed by The Alutiq Museum and Subway
- The Cape Alitak Petroglyphs by Woody Knebel
Alutiiq Petroglyphs
Petroglyph Rubbings & Stamps Activity

Grade: Any
Time: 30-45 minutes
Lesson Description: Students will learn about Alutiiq petroglyphs. Create petroglyph rubbings and stamps, then explain what they believe to be the petroglyph’s meaning.

Kit Includes:
- Cape Alitak Petroglyphs DVD
- Clay Tablets with Petroglyph Carvings
- Petroglyph Stamps

Materials Needed:
- Pencils or Crayons
- Paper
- Acrylic Paints
- Small Sponges

Photo: Petroglyph clay tablet

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Objectives and Assessment Criteria:

Students will learn...

- Create petroglyph rubbings and stamps. Then explained what they believe to be the petroglyph’s meaning.
- Students have an understanding about petroglyphs and how they were used.

Cultural Relevance:

Petroglyphs are designs carved into boulders, cliff faces, and other stationary pieces of stone. They are found in various parts of Alaska and in the Kodiak Archipelago. Petroglyph locations often depict human figures, animal forms, and geometric designs. Archaeologists do
not know exactly how old they are but suspect that Kodiak petroglyphs are between 600 and 1200 years old. This is based on their association with ancient village sites.

How did the Alutiiq people create petroglyphs? The clues may be found in other types of stone tools. Archaeologists note that Kodiak’s prehistoric craftsmen used stone hammers to shape beach cobbles into lamps, mauls, fishing weights, and even anchors. With similar tools, Alutiiq ancestors probably pecked petroglyph images into Kodiak’s coastal boulders and bedrock. Why did Alutiiq people make designs on rock? The original meaning of the petroglyphs has been lost to time, but Alutiiq spiritual beliefs and other artwork can give us clues. Could they be territorial markers? Part of hunting rituals for luck? Could they tell the story of a successful hunt or other event? Or perhaps permanent signs that linked families with particular subsistence areas? Why do you think petroglyphs were made?

Create:

- Discuss what petroglyphs are. The word petroglyph translates to rock carving. It comes from the Greek word petros (petra) for rock and gluphein (glyph) for carving.
- Talk to your students about non-verbal communication.
- Ask the students, “What do you think this looks like or means?” Explain that petroglyphs are believed to be used as a means of communication. Used for storytelling and as territorial markers.
- Watch the video on Cape Alitak Petroglyphs, and ask the students, “What were petroglyphs being used for?” “Is there a story you would like to tell?”
- Pass around the clay tablets with petroglyphs carvings on them. Have the students look at the different designs.
- Have the students place a piece of paper on top of the petroglyph clay tablets. Then have the students use a pencil or crayon to gently rub on the piece of paper transferring the petroglyph symbol onto the paper.
- Have the students pass around the clay tablets and do a rubbing of each design.
- Provide the students with paint and pass out the petroglyph stamps.
- Have the students use a small sponge to dab the paint onto the stamp and then press the stamp onto a piece of paper. This will create a petroglyph stamp.
- Have all the students use the petroglyph stamps.
- Once they have completely their rubbings and stamps. Have the students choose petroglyph they would like to share with the class and explain why they like that petroglyph the most.
- Have a classroom discussion about what the students believe to be each petroglyph meaning.

Close and Assessment:

- Having each student present their creation is a great way for them to emphasize its meaning. “Why did you choose this petroglyph? What does it mean to you?” Children are given the opportunity to be proud of their original work and show their creation. Along with speaking/listening skills this activity helps each student understand the different designs.
• Each student created a petroglyph piece rubbing and stamps. Then explain what they believe to be the petroglyph’s meaning.
• Students have an understanding about petroglyphs and how they were used.

Modification:

• Have the students paint a petroglyph using a paintbrush, sticks, straws, their fingers etc.
• Have the students use sidewalk chalk and draw the petroglyphs outside.
• Have the students use the petroglyph stamps with ink instead of paint and stamp it onto a piece of paper.

Additional Resources:

• Book: From the Old People— The Cape Alitak Petroglyphs by Woody Knebel (Found in the Petroglyph Educational Box)
• Alutiiq Rock Art & Fish Traps Presentation Video: https://vimeo.com/631442640
• “The Appearing and Disappearing Petroglyphs of Cape Alitak” video: WonderVisions (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03pdkHS2620
• Origins of the Alutiiq Alphabet found at alutiiqmuseum.org.
Petroglyphs

**Grade:** 6-12th  
**Time:** 1-2 Days  
**Lesson Description:** Students will learn about Alutiq Petroglyphs, discuss the meanings of the graphics, and then select another heritage site of petroglyphs to compare and contrast.

**Kit Includes:**
- Petroglyph Educational Handout
- Igaruacirpet—Our Way of Making Designs Book
- From the Old People: The Cape Alitak Petroglyphs Book
- Cape Alitak video (DVD)
- Alutiq Rock Art & Fish Traps Presentation Video (Found on USB or Online)

**Materials Needed:**
- Computer

**Photo:** Petroglyph from the Afognak village area, Alutiq Museum photo.

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**Objectives and Assessment Criteria:**

Students will learn...

- What a petroglyph is and where they are located.
- What petroglyphs depict.
- The historical significance of petroglyphs on Kodiak and in other locations.
- The petroglyphs that exist around the world from past and current civilizations.
Cultural Relevance:

Petroglyphs are designs carved into boulders, cliff faces, and other stationary pieces of stone. They are found in various parts of Alaska and in the Kodiak Archipelago. Petroglyph locations often depict human figures, animal forms, and geometric designs. Archaeologists do not know exactly how old they are but suspect that Kodiak petroglyphs are between 600 and 1200 years old. This is based on their association with ancient village sites.

How did the Alutiiq people create petroglyphs? The clues may be found in other types of stone tools. Archaeologists note that Kodiak’s prehistoric craftsmen used stone hammers to shape beach cobbles into lamps, mauls, fishing weights, and even anchors. With similar tools, Alutiiq ancestors probably pecked petroglyph images into Kodiak’s coastal boulders and bedrock. Why did Alutiiq people make designs on rock? The original meaning of the petroglyphs has been lost to time, but Alutiiq spiritual beliefs and other artwork can give us clues. Could they be territorial markers? Part of hunting rituals for luck? Could they tell the story of a successful hunt or other event? Or perhaps permanent signs that linked families with particular subsistence areas? Why do you think petroglyphs were made?

Create:

- Watch the Cape Alitak Petroglyphs DVD (30 mins).
- Give out the Petroglyph Educational Handout.
- Have students explore the books: Igwaacirpet—Our Way of Making Designs And From the Old People: The Cape Alitak Petroglyphs.
- Ask the students these following questions and have a discussion:
  - What is a petroglyph and where they are located?
  - What do petroglyphs depict?
  - What is the historical significance of petroglyphs on Kodiak?
- Show the students the Alutiiq Rock Art & Fish Traps presentation video (Found on the USB or online.
- Ask students: What similarities or differences can one note about Kodiak’s Alutiiq petroglyphs and other etchings found elsewhere in Alaska or the United States?
- Brainstorm ways to compare and contrast characteristics of Alutiiq petroglyphs and those made elsewhere in Alaska and/or the world. Students can:
  - Write an essay, create digital stories, a podcast, a news-style article, photo essays, visual art to possibly include on posters, photo manipulations, silk paintings, 2 and 3-D works of art, etc.

Close and Assessment:

- Each student will have examined Kodiak’s petroglyphs and at least one other site.
- Students will have an understanding of petroglyphs and how they were made.
- Students will share their evidence of learning through one of the suggested ways.
- Students will share their learning in a public setting: a presentation, gallery walk, bulletin board, website, etc.
Modification:

- Create a Venn diagram to share similarities and differences between the Kodiak Petroglyphs and the Petroglyphs found elsewhere.
- Explore the additional resources to learn more about the different petroglyphs.
- Look at the different Petroglyphs and draw one that you feel most connected to and share why.

Additional Resources:

Petroglyphs in Alaska:

- Recording Petroglyphs and Sharing Techniques on the Tongass National Forest, Alaska: USDA Forest Service: (Southeast Alaska) [https://vimeo.com/533264106](https://vimeo.com/533264106)
- PETROGLYPH STATE HISTORIC SITE: Alaska Department of Natural Resources: DIVISION OF PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION: (Southeast Alaska) [http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/southeast/wrangapetros.hs.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/southeast/wrangapetros.hs.htm)
- Noatak prehistoric site contains new artifacts for Alaska: University of Alaska Fairbanks: By Theresa Bakker (Northern Alaska) [https://news.uaf.edu/noatak-prehistoric-site-contains-new-artifacts-for-alaska/](https://news.uaf.edu/noatak-prehistoric-site-contains-new-artifacts-for-alaska/)

Petroglyphs in the United States:

- National Park Service:
  - A Landscape of Sacred Symbols: [https://www.nps.gov/petr/index.htm](https://www.nps.gov/petr/index.htm)
- Minnesota Historical Society: Jeffers Petroglyphs: [https://www.mnhs.org/jefferspetroglyphs](https://www.mnhs.org/jefferspetroglyphs)
Telling Stories Through Pictures

Grade: 2nd
Time: 2-3 hours
Lesson Description: Students will create petroglyphs on clay or playdough to illustrate a story.

Photo: Drawing of petroglyphs from Cape Alitak, from an illustration by Sven Haakanson.

Kit Includes:
- Cape Alitak Petroglyphs DVD
- Petroglyph Educational Handout
- Petroglyph PowerPoint (Found on USB)

Materials Needed:
- Clay or Playdough
- Cardboard (Cut into Squares)
- Straws or Sticks
- Glitter or Sand

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Objectives and Assessment Criteria:

Students will learn...

- To demonstrate the ability to compose a short story based on real or imagined events and translate elements of the story into visual form through creation or revision of a petroglyph.

Cultural Relevance:

Petroglyphs are designs carved into boulders, cliff faces, and other stationary pieces of stone. They are found in various parts of Alaska and in the Kodiak Archipelago. Petroglyph locations often depict human figures, animal forms, and geometric designs.

Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository
215 Mission Rd, Suite 101, Kodiak, AK 99615, (844) 425-8844; alutiiqmuseum.org
Archaeologists do not know exactly how old they are but suspect that Kodiak petroglyphs are between 600 and 1200 years old. This is based on their association with ancient village sites. How did Alutiq people create petroglyphs? The clues may be found in other types of stone tools. Archaeologists note that Kodiak’s prehistoric craftsmen used stone hammers to shape beach cobbles into lamps, mauls, fishing weights, and even anchors. With similar tools, Alutiq ancestors probably pecked petroglyph images into Kodiak’s coastal boulders and bedrock.

Why did Alutiq people make designs on rock? The original meaning of the petroglyphs has been lost to time, but Alutiq spiritual beliefs and other artwork can give us clues. Could they be territorial markers? Part of hunting rituals for luck? Could they tell the story of a successful hunt or other event? Or perhaps permanent signs that linked families with particular subsistence areas? Why do you think petroglyphs were made?

Create:

- Discuss what a petroglyph is. Use the Petroglyph PowerPoint and educational handouts to guide a discussion.
- Ask the students, “What do you think this looks like or means?” Explain that petroglyphs are believed to be used as a means of communication. Used for storytelling and as territorial markers.
- Watch the video on Cape Alitak Petroglyphs, and ask the students, “What were petroglyphs being used for?” “Is there a story you would like to tell?”
- Instruct the class to write a short story of their own that they would like to share. It can be based on a real event, something imagined, or an interpretation of the video.
- When the stories are finished, have the students share something from their writing that they would like to represent visually. This can be a feeling, character, object of importance, emotion, action etc.
- Depending on the grade level, students can either choose a petroglyph from the examples, revise one, or create their own original petroglyph.
- Cut pieces of cardboard into shapes and place clay or play dough across it. Have students carve or build their piece, using straws and other objects as tools. Sand and glitter should be encouraged and experimented with to create texture.
- If time and space permits, students can mount their writing piece alongside their petroglyph creation and describe and label their artwork. (AK Speaking/Listening Standard)

Close and Assessment:

- Having each student discuss or present their creation is a great way for them to emphasize its meaning. “Why did you choose this petroglyph? What does it mean in your story?” Children are given the opportunity to be proud of their original work and show their creation. Along with speaking/listening skills this activity helps each student understand that all work is different and interesting.
- Each student can read or summarize their story.
- Each student had created a petroglyph-based piece that is related to that story and can explain the petroglyph’s relationship to their written story.
- Students have an understanding about petroglyphs and how they were used.

Modification:

- Have the students paint a petroglyph using a paintbrush, sticks, straws, their fingers etc.
- Have the students use sidewalk chalk and draw the petroglyphs outside.
- Have the students use the petroglyph stamps with ink and stamp it onto a piece of paper.

Additional Resources:

- Book: From the Old People- The Cape Alitak Petroglyphs by Woody Knebel (Found in the Petroglyph Educational Box)
- Alutiiq Rock Art & Fish Traps Presentation Video: https://vimeo.com/631442640
- “The Appearing and Disappearing Petroglyphs of Cape Alitak” video: WonderVisions (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03pdhHS2820
- Origins of the Alutiiq Alphabet found at alutiiqmuseum.org.