

# ABORIGINAL ART STYLES

## BARK PAINTING

Bark painting is one of the oldest forms of Aboriginal artwork. The bark most commonly used is from the stringy bark tree, which can only be taken at specific times of the year. After being cut from the tree, the bark is heated over a fire until it becomes flexible enough to flatten out. It's then scraped with an axe or stone to make it flat enough to paint on and then weighted down with rocks and left in the sun to flatten further. Detailed designs are usually applied to the bark using ochre and a twig or blade of grass.



## BODY PAINTING

Body painting is a tradition which holds deep spiritual significance to all Aboriginal people through its connection with traditional dance and ceremonies. Ochre or white clay is painted and smeared over the body to create unique designs which can signify clan, identity, totem, social status and land. Body paintings range from simply smearing clay or natural ochre from the earth onto the skin to detailed geometric paintings on the torso, face and limbs.

## ROCK PAINTING

Aboriginal rock art is among the oldest recorded artwork in the world. Rock paintings are located in all regions around the country and feature designs of symbols and tracks, people, animals and objects, as well as more figurative designs of spirits from the dreamtime. Colours used for rock art are predominately red, yellow, black and white, and painting techniques include drawing with dry pebbles, fingers or brushes of dried twig, rubbing ochre over the surface by hand, and stencilling designs by blowing paint through the mouth.



## SAND PAINTING

The dot paintings of the people of Central Australia are often called sand paintings. This is because they are artworks made in the sand that have been created by people as they move from place to place. After a site has been cleared, a painting can be created using seeds, flowers, sand, stones, feathers and other natural materials. At the same time, Elders use the creative process to pass down knowledge to young people as the various symbols are explained and interpreted as lessons in history and heritage, including creation stories, the location of sacred sites, food sources, and water holes.



## SCULPTURE AND WOOD-CARVING

Aboriginal sculpture usually takes on the form of three-dimensional wood carving. Carving is predominantly an art form of northern Australia and Arnhem Land. Shields, weapons and sacred boards are all part of the desert carving tradition. Arnhem Land is famous for its carved posts, as well as small wood carvings such as message sticks, carved totemic animals and pipes. Wood carving is also used to make mortuary posts and coffins.



# ABORIGINAL ART STYLES



**ACTIVITY 1:**

Look at the **headings** on this page. There are five different styles of Aboriginal art described. List them.

- 1. B \_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. B \_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. R \_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. S \_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. S \_\_\_\_\_ and W \_\_\_\_ - C \_\_\_\_\_

**Bark Painting**

**ACTIVITY 2: READING FOR MEANING**

Are these statements true or false?

- Bark painting is one of the oldest forms of Aboriginal artwork. T F
- Bark from the stringy bark tree is usually used for bark paintings. T F
- After being cut from the tree, the bark is placed in water. T F

**ACTIVITY 3: READING FOR MEANING**

In the space below, draw your design for a bark painting.

# ABORIGINAL ART STYLES



### ACTIVITY 4:

On the lines below, write three sentences to tell the story of your bark painting.

---

---

---

---

---

### ACTIVITY 5: WORD LINKS

Link these word pieces. Write the word on the line next to it.

paint	ible	_____
old	work	_____
flex	ing	_____
art	re	_____
och	est	_____

### ACTIVITY 6: SPELLING

How many words can you make from the word *painting*?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---