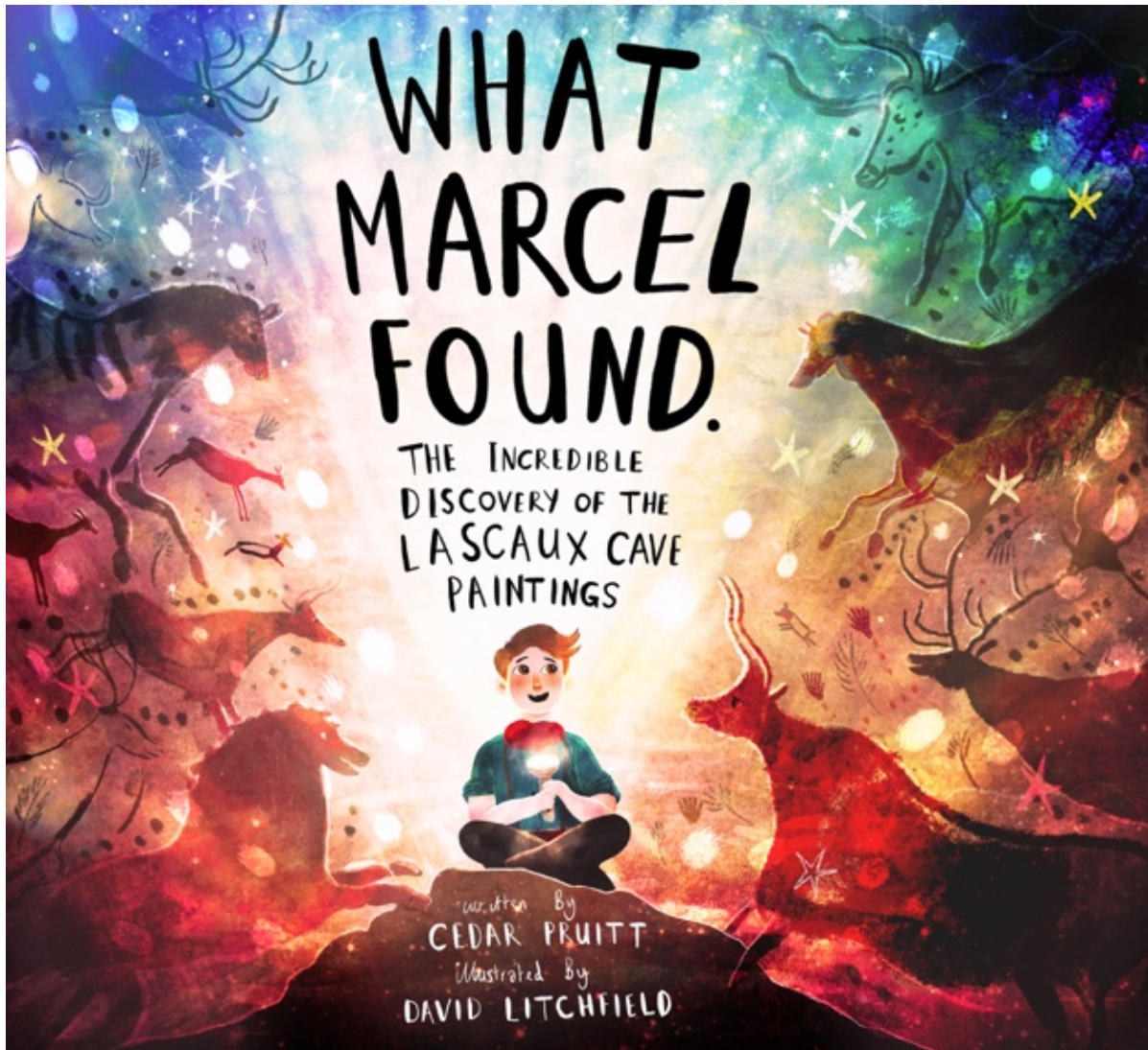


# Educator Resource Guide



**Two starred reviews!**

**Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection**

**Publisher:** Beach Lane Books / Simon & Schuster (October 13, 2026)

**Length:** 40 pages    **ISBN13:** 9781665941419    **Grades:** P – 3    **Ages:** 4 - 8

**Genre:** Children's Non-Fiction

**Topic Areas:** History, Europe, Social Studies, Archaeology, Art, Painting

## About the Book:

When Marcel Ravidat finds a secret underground tunnel in the woods, he doesn't hesitate to explore. While World War II rages outside, he discovers a treasure for the ages: hundreds of extraordinary animal paintings made by humans more than 17,000 years ago.

Uncover the amazing true story of a boy who made a profound archaeological discovery—the Lascaux Cave Paintings—in this “thrilling...poetically told and luminously illustrated” (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review) nonfiction picture book.

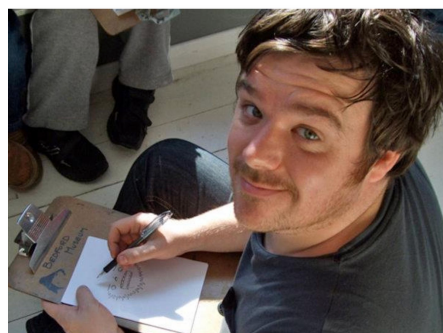


## About the Author:

Cedar Pruitt is a children's author who loves using poetry, joy, and playful inquiry in her picture books. Her debut *Fire Flight*, illustrated by Chiara Fedele, was named a Best Children's Book of the Year by Bank Street College. She lives with her family in Massachusetts. Visit her website at [CedarPruitt.com](http://CedarPruitt.com).

## About the Illustrator:

David Litchfield is a multi-award-winning illustrator and author. David's author/illustrator picture books include *The Bear & The Piano*, *Grandad's Secret Giant*, and *Lights on Cotton Rock*. David has also illustrated a number of picture books and novels. David lives with his family in Bedford, England.



# Table of Contents



|                                     |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Build Background Knowledge ----     | Page 4  |
| Reading Prompts -----               | Page 5  |
| Activity & Facts: Ancient People -- | Page 6  |
| Activity: Art -----                 | Page 7  |
| Activity: Cave Art -----            | Page 8  |
| Activity: Color Lascaux Animals --  | Page 9  |
| Resources -----                     | Page 10 |

# Build Background Knowledge

## What is Archaeology?

Archaeology is the scientific study of the material remains of **past human life** and activities.

These include human artifacts from the very earliest stone tools to the man-made objects that are buried or thrown away in the present day: everything made by human beings—from simple tools to complex machines, from the earliest houses and temples and tombs to palaces, cathedrals, and pyramids.

Archaeological investigations are a principal source of knowledge of prehistoric, ancient, and extinct culture. The word comes from the Greek *archaia* (“ancient things”) and *logos* (“theory” or “science”).

SOURCE: Britannica.com, September 2026

## Like a Detective

People who study past human life are called Archaeologists. They use clues to try to figure out how people lived long ago.

Like detectives, they piece together clues to learn. Their work might include:

-  Studying old maps and current satellite photos of old dwellings
-  Careful excavation of old cities, villages, caves, and places where people lived
-  Understanding different materials through testing
-  Rock layer analysis and carbon dating to learn the age of objects and artifacts
-  Exploring spaces....just like Marcel!



Photo credit: Dejan Marjanovic

## ***Bonus: What kind of scientist digs up fossils?***

A scientist who studies fossils is called a paleontologist. They also use clues to learn about the past, but they focus on animal and plant life. That's how we learned about dinosaurs.

# Reading Prompts

## Before Reading:

Show the cover of the book. Read the title aloud. Repeat the word “Lascaux.” Explain that it is a French word, pronounced “Las-co.” If in the U.S., explain that France is a country in Europe, across the Atlantic Ocean.

Ask:

-  What do you see on the cover?
-  Do you see any animals you recognize?
-  Do you see any animals you’ve never seen before?
-  What do you think Marcel found?
-  Can you say “Lascaux?”

## During Reading:

Read the story straight through. Take advantage of pauses to build suspense. Place emphasis on action words. Encourage careful listening.

## After Reading:

Point to the Author’s Note. Share that more information about this discovery can be found here. Turn the page again to show the picture of Marcel Ravidat. Explain that this is a true story with an original photo. Point to the pictures of cave paintings. Share that people painted those at least 17,000 years ago. Ask:

-  Who do you think made these paintings?
-  What did they use for brushes and paint?
-  Why do you think they painted so many horses?

Revisit the spread of Marcel lying in bed, thinking about the cave. Ask:

-  What do you think made Marcel go back the next day?

Revisit the spread of the boys having to “squint, search, squeeze and crawl” through the tight tunnel. Ask:

-  How do you think the boys were feeling inside the tunnel?

Revisit the spread when the boys find “lines painted on the rock.” Share:

-  The artists painted the animals on rock in a way that made it look like they were moving, as if the rocks were muscles in their body.

Ask:

-  Can you imagine seeing animals seem to move in the light?
-  How do you think the boys felt then?

Older children might discuss the impact of World War II on the discovery.

## Activity: Ancient People

Our ancient ancestors who lived 20,000 years ago are fascinating. The fact that they made beautiful art suggests they not only survived, but even thrived. Share with students the facts listed below. Then work together to complete the chart.

## Facts Learned Through Archaeology:

400,000 years ago: Humans controlled fire for gathering and cooking.

170,000 years ago: Humans wore clothing.

42,000 years ago: Humans played musical instruments.

23,000 years ago: Humans domesticated wolves, resulting in pet dogs.

12,000 years ago: Humans grew food on farms.

9,000 years ago: Humans domesticated wildcats, resulting in pet cats.

7,000 years ago: Humans built a city.

5,000 years ago: Humans used an alphabet.

## What do we have in common with ancient people from 20,000 years ago?

## What's different about how we experience life now?

# Activity: Art

Art is something humans make. It's not something to be good at or bad at – instead, it's a way to process and record our emotions and feelings. Everyone can make art. Try it now!

-  Think about how you're feeling right now.
-  Pick a color that represents that feeling, in marker, crayon, paint, pen or something else.
-  Use that color to make some lines, marks and sketches on this page. They don't need to look familiar – they can just be lines and marks. Art is up to you!

# Activity: Cave Art

Art first began appearing during the Paleolithic Era, which is the time period from 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 years ago. Ancient humans made art in caves all over the world, found in Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas.

To create art, humans drew with materials like charcoal, clay, berries, red ochre, minerals and plant. They also carved engravings in the rock with sharp flint. They reached hard-to-get spaces using ladders and scaffolding made of wood and plant materials tied together with sinew from animals and reeds from plants, and to see, they used stone lamps that burned fire using sources such as animal fat. Cave art is called parietal art. This activity helps us to imagine making it.

## Materials Needed:

-  Brown craft paper – enough to line walls
-  Duct tape (brown if possible)
-  Compressed chalk in black, red and brown colors
-  Headlamps, flashlights

## Steps:

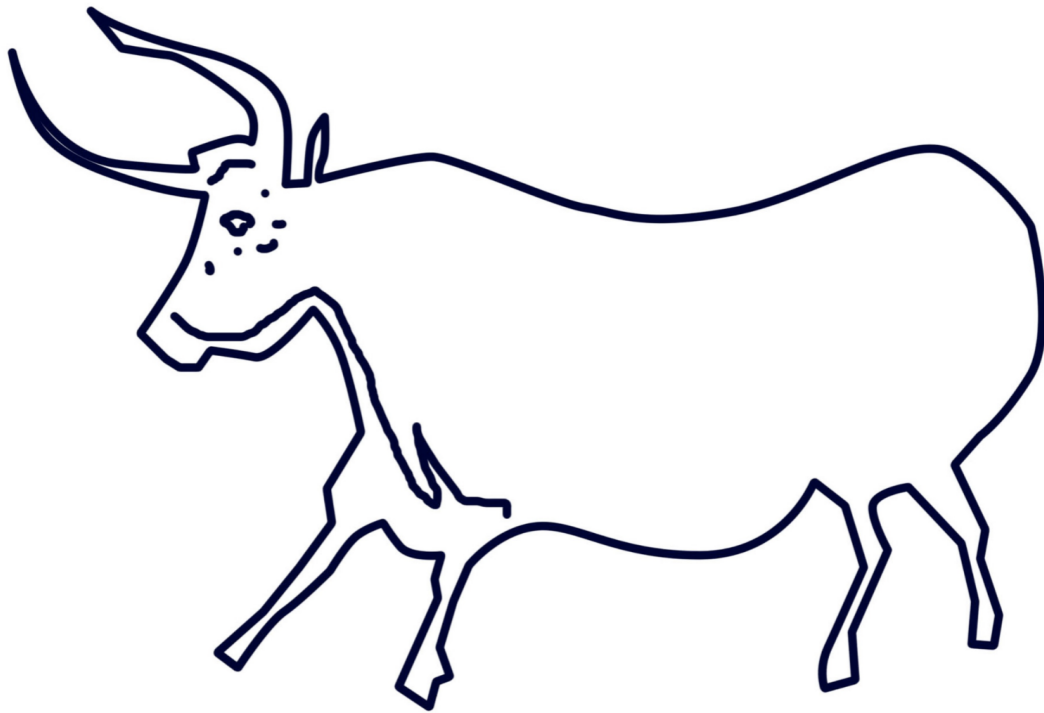
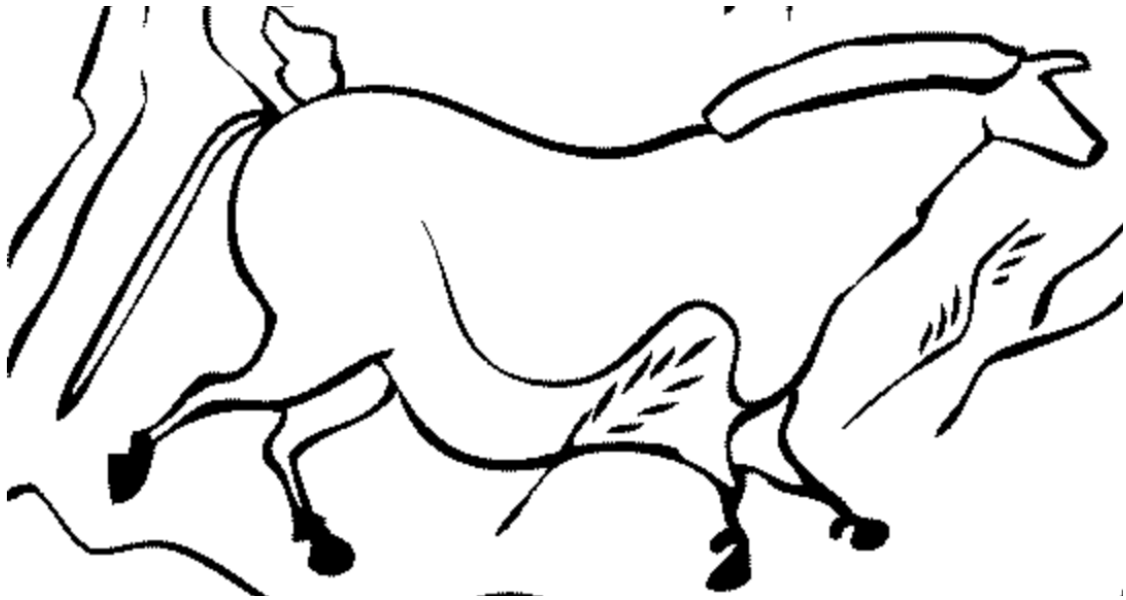
1. Crumple the craft paper so that it is lumpy and bumpy (like a cave wall).
2. Tape it up in an enclosed space (under desks that have been pushed together, or along a low hallway). Keep the space darkened.
3. Draw on it! Use images of cave art from Lascaux as a model.



## Ask:

How do you think the artists reached little spaces? How did they see in dark caves?  
How did they make brushes or pencils?

## Activity: Color Lascaux Animals



Visit [CedarPruitt.com](https://cedarpruitt.com) to learn more about  
**What Marcel Found: The Incredible Discovery of the Lascaux Cave Paintings**

# Resources

See Lascaux online:

Be sure to take the incredible video tour of Lascaux!

<https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/lascaux/fr>

Learn about cave art:

Bradshaw Foundation: <https://www.bradshawfoundation.com>

Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/art/cave-art>

National Geographic: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/history-101-cave-art>

Learn about prehistoric discoveries by archaeologists:

Timeline of the Human Condition: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~cpd/history.html>

EBSCO: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/anthropology/paleolithic-period>

Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/science/archaeology>

Learn about art:

SmartHistory: <https://smarthistory.org>

National Gallery, London: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/learn-about-art>



Visit [CedarPruitt.com](https://cedarpruitt.com) to learn more about

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