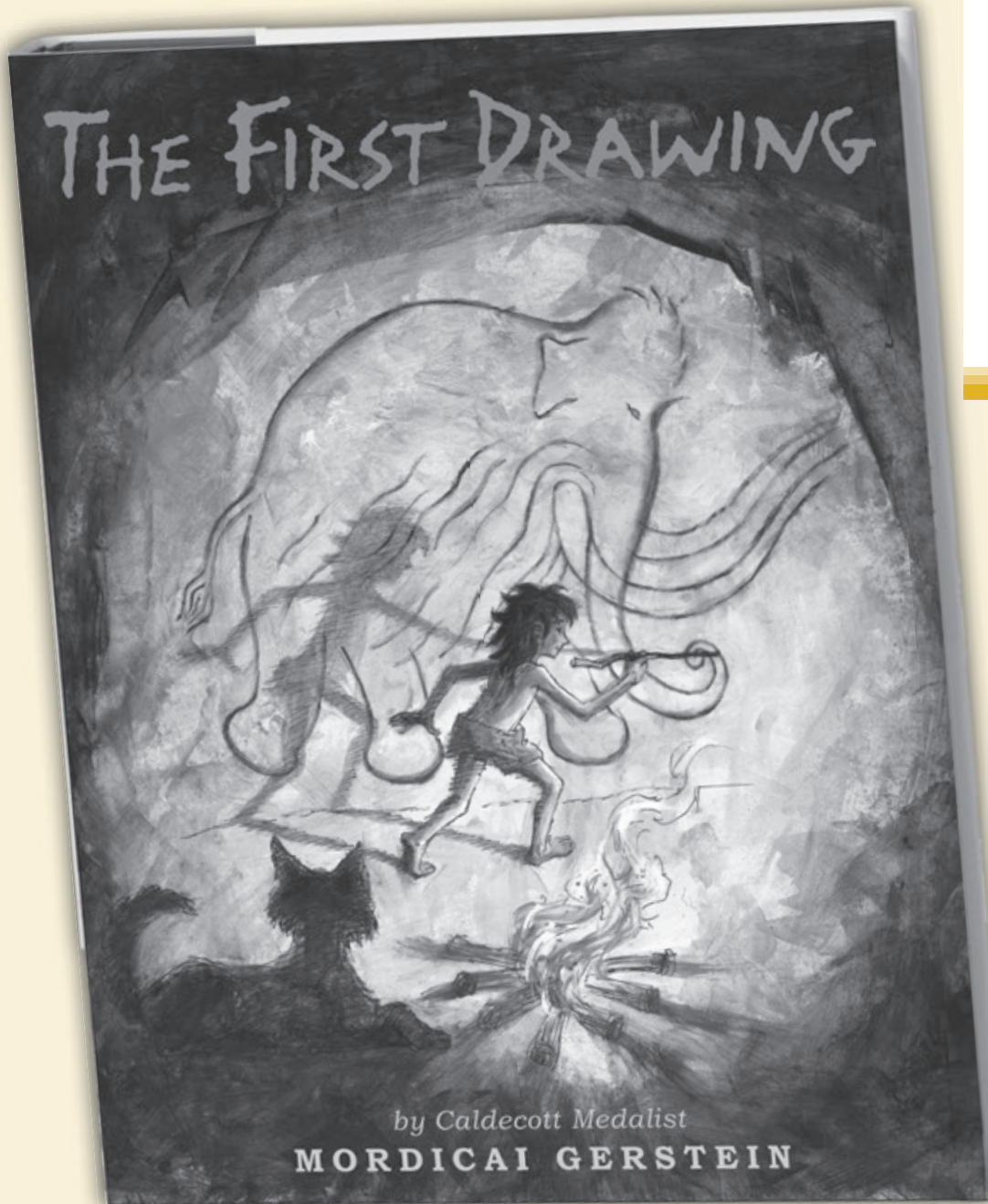


# THE FIRST DRAWING



## curriculum connections

- ❖ Animals
- ❖ Ancient History
- ❖ Art

Ages 3 to 6

BY MORDICAI GERSTEIN

## BUILDING BACKGROUND

### *Predicting and drawing conclusions*

*The First Drawing* begins by referring to the discovery in southern France of a child's footprint and a wolf's paw-print near 30,000 year-old cave paintings. Ask students to think about that information. What could it mean? What conclusions might they draw? Before introducing *The First Drawing*, invite students to think about their own conclusions. What connections could there be among a wolf print, boy's footprint, and the cave paintings? Ask students to record their thinking, and save it for later discussion. After reading, ask students to share their original ideas. Did they have the same thoughts as Mordicai Gerstein? How were they the same? How were they different?

## COMPREHENSION CONNECTION

### *Do you see what I see?*

*The First Drawing* asks readers to imagine what it is like to see pictures and patterns within everyday things. If weather and time permit, begin by having students observe the clouds and choose one to sketch. Have them imagine what they see in the clouds. Then, put a small dab of white paint on a piece of colored paper and press down with another sheet of paper to make a paint blotch. Have students write about what they think it looks like. Do all students have the same ideas? After reading *The First Drawing*, go back and look at the paint blotches again. How did their experience help them understand the boy in the story?

## SUMMARIZING

### *Art is Magic Debate*

When the boy in the story invents drawing, his family seems afraid. His father thinks it is magic. In what ways is drawing like magic? Have students think about and brainstorm a list of qualities they associate with magic, such as appearing and disappearing, making one thing turn into another, or bringing something to life. Then, read each idea about magic and ask students to vote and decide if drawing or art has that quality. To make it a more engaging experience, designate one side of the room as YES and one side

as NO. Have students move to the side of the room that matches their opinion as each quality is read aloud. If there are very strong differences of opinion (a clear split between yes and no), then have each group with the same opinion work together (using evidence or examples) to convince the other side that their opinion is correct. Reconvene as a whole class and try to come to consensus. Is art magic?

## VOCABULARY

### *Physical Theatre Thesaurus*

Just as the boy's drawings help his family envision what he is seeing, the author's use of strong verbs does the same for readers. Words like drift, lumber, clutching, gasps, and wander help create a picture of the action in *The First Drawing*. Help students appreciate the power of word choice by having them act out the verbs in the story. Divide students into small groups or pairs, and give them each one of the verbs from the story. Then, either provide a basic synonym or ask students to find one for the word they are assigned. For example, instead of "lumber," they might choose "walked." Then, ask one student in each group to perform the basic action and one to perform the action of the more vivid verb. In the above example, one student would walk normally, and the other student would walk in a slow, heavy, waddling manner. Discuss how choosing specific words helps readers visualize the story. As an extension, record the actions and create a video thesaurus of strong verbs. Some groups might want to extend their learning by looking up examples of other strong verbs for the word they chose. Encourage students to refer to the powerful verbs for use in their own writing.

## WRITING

Mordicai Gerstein used a real life story to inspire his fictional picture book. Many authors get their inspiration from events they read about in the news, experience with their senses, or learn about in another book. Provide a few examples of other historical discoveries or current mysteries and invite students to write a story inspired by the discovery or that helps explain the discovery. Depending on the age and developmental level of students, they might want to write about a local mystery, such as a pet that was

found, or they might want to consider historical mysteries such as the discovery of ancient artifacts. Regardless of the topic, have students think about a story that might help explain the situation and write a narrative from the perspective of a fictional character. After students publish their fictional narratives, have them display them along with the information they used as their inspiration.

### ***Informational and Persuasive Writing***

Sometimes mistakes can teach powerful lessons. While *The First Drawing* is inspired by the drawings inside the Chauvet Cave in France, there is another cave in the same country known for its ancient paintings. Discovered almost 50 years earlier, the cave paintings in Lascaux were on display to the public for many years. People could walk through the caves and see the paintings for themselves. Unfortunately, this open access to the public caused some significant damage. Provide students with information about the damage done to the Cave of Lascaux or have them research it themselves, then ask them to write a persuasive letter to convince the people in charge of Chauvet Cave to take steps to protect the art, based on what was learned in their research. A great place to start researching is the Lascaux website <http://www.lascaux.culture.fr>.

### **Science**

#### ***Interview a Scientist***

Anthropologists and archaeologists look at historical evidence and try to create a story that makes sense and offers an explanation for the way things are and the way things were. Give students a deeper understanding of the work of an archaeologist by interviewing someone who has chosen this career path. As a class, brainstorm a list of questions to ask, and then contact a local museum or university to set up an interview. If there are no local museums with archaeologists or anthropologists on staff, there are museums all over the world with a web presence, so it is likely a video-conference could be arranged.

#### ***Comparing and Contrasting Animals***

The boy in the story observed horses, elk, reindeer, woolly rhinoceroses, bears, and lions. Invite students to learn more about the animals that were alive 30,000 years ago and

then help them understand how they are the same and different from animals today. Begin by choosing mammals from the story, animals depicted in the real Chauvet Cave or ice age animals from another region of the world. Then, have students either study pictures or read about the animals, recording their observations. Next, have them study an animal alive today that is probably related to the ice age animal they studied and ask them to compare and contrast the two. Have them compare the size, type of fur, appearance, diet, etc. What are the similarities? What are the differences? Why might they have these differences?

#### ***Spelunking Adventure***

Spelunking, exploration of caves, is considered an adventure sport. Have students learn more about spelunking (and at the same time practice reading informational text) by researching a cave that is open to amateur spelunkers. Then, in small groups, have them create an advertisement or brochure to showcase what they learned. Their brochures or advertisements should contain information about the cave, such as its location, how long it is, its depth, year discovered, and anything else that might be of interest to readers. In addition, the brochure should contain information about suggested safety equipment and recommendations for further reading. Since caves are found all over the world, students may want to virtually explore natural wonders from around the globe. They might consider: Puerto Princesa Underground River in the Philippines, Waitomo Glowworm Cave in New Zealand, Barton Creek Cave in Belize, Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, USA or Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, USA. For younger students, this lesson could be differentiated by providing informational text about a specific cave for use as a shared reading experience.

#### ***Timeline***

30,000 years is a long time, almost impossible to imagine. In that time, art has changed in many ways. Create an art timeline as a class by collecting images of famous works of art and display them to show how art has changed (and stayed the same) over the centuries. Begin with images from Chauvet Cave, and then work as a class to find examples from then until present. Each student could be re-

sponsible for bringing in an example from a particular time period. It could also be a collaborative project involving many classes. When the timeline is complete, ask students to generate some statements about how art has changed or stayed the same, using evidence from the examples on the timeline to support their thinking.

## Art

### *Class Mural*

The cave paintings in the Cave of Chauvet, the real-life setting of *The First Drawing*, are considered one of the earliest examples of cave painting, yet the level of detail is quite remarkable. Provide students with photographs of the cave paintings (<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/chaudet/en/index.html>). Then, have them try to recreate the pictures as a mural. Talk about the colors used and how they might have been created, and then using yellows, reds, and blacks, create a class mural.

### *Dancing Shadows*

There is some evidence to suggest that the flickering firelight and the shadows it created might have made the drawings on the cave wall appear to be moving, like Paleolithic animation. Students can try to recreate this idea by drawing a scene (with animals or not) and then using shadow puppet techniques to try to create the illusion of a moving picture. Students can experiment with different light sources and materials to try to use their pictures and shadows to tell a story, much like the boy in *The First Drawing* might have done. For shadow puppet inspiration, you may want to visit <http://www.shadow-puppets.com>.

### *Caldecott Critiques*

The author and illustrator of *The First Drawing* understands the power of art and drawing. He won a Caldecott Medal for his book *The Man Who Walked Between The Towers*. Give students the chance to explore and critique the work of other Caldecott Medalists by gathering a number of examples of past winners (<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottwinners/caldecottmedal>). In partners or small groups, have students choose one book to thoroughly examine. Ask them to discuss why they think the book was chosen for

the award and then tell whether they agree or disagree with the decision. They can record their thinking and save it for later. Then, put all of the books on display and allow students to explore them, adding comments on sticky notes about what they liked or noticed. After everyone has had a chance to explore all of the books, groups can return to their original books and see if their classmates agreed or disagreed with their opinions. As an extension, the class can work together to create a rubric to use when looking at other books or their own work, based on what they noticed about the books the class liked the best.

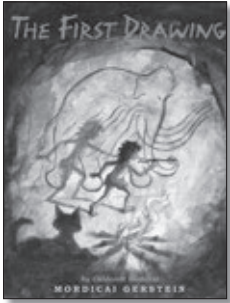
## Character Education

### *Communicating Through Art*

The young boy in *The First Drawing* uses art to communicate. There are many people who may not be able to use words or language. They might have developmental disabilities or physical differences that makes speech difficult. Art can be one way to express thoughts and feelings. Students can make a difference by connecting with a local organization that provides assistance to people with disabilities or by working with a local nursing home or senior center. Then, have students collect donations of art supplies and create care packages for these locations. They might want to include heavy drawing paper, colored pencils, paintbrushes, paint, markers, stamps, and ink. Students can make an even deeper connection by visiting, developing friendships through creating art together or exchanging drawings. Ask students to reflect on the experience and talk about the magic of art. Why is it important as a form of communication?



## about the book



978-0-316-20478-1

Imagine you were born before the invention of drawing, more than 30,000 years ago.

You would live with your whole family in a cave and see woolly mammoths walk by!

You might even see images of animals hidden in the shapes of clouds and rocks.

You would want to share these pictures with your family, but wouldn't know how.

Who would have made the world's first drawing? Would it have been you?

In *The First Drawing*, Caldecott Medal winner Mordicai Gerstein imagines the discovery of drawing...and inspires the young dreamers and artists of today.

## about the author

Mordicai Gerstein is the acclaimed illustrator of more than 45 books, many of which he also wrote. His books are frequently awarded ALA Notable status, and he is the three-time recipient of a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book of the Year honor. In 2004, Mordicai was awarded the Caldecott Medal for *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*. Mordicai lives in western Massachusetts. His website is [MordicaiGerstein.com](http://MordicaiGerstein.com).

## praise for *The First Drawing*

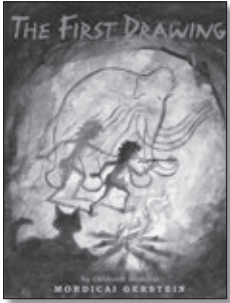
★ “Playful.”

—PW

★ “Compelling.”

—SLJ

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