

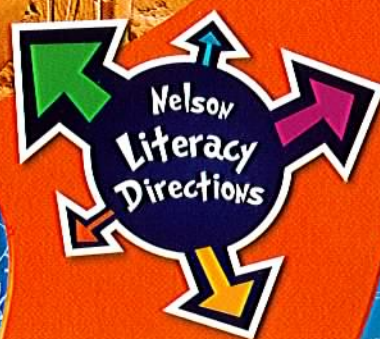
A SECRET WORLD

OF CODES



Hidden MESSAGES, hidden MEANINGS

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Look Out **Behind** You!

People have used codes to pass secret messages to others for thousands of years.

The sounds and words we use in languages are codes. These codes are ancient. We use these codes every day when we speak. Others understand the code because they speak the same language. People who don't speak our language cannot decode what we say.

Tiger Codes

The sounds made by the letters **T-I-G-E-R** are a code. The word is really no more than a sound. But everyone who speaks English understands that this code, or word, means a large, wild cat. It is a useful code, especially if a tiger is creeping up on you!

The same large, wild cat has different codenames in different languages:

- in Russian, the code is: **тигр**
- in Spanish, the code is: **tigre**
- in French, the code is: **le tigre**
- in Mandarin, the code is: **老虎**



"Danger! I can see a human!"

**Le Tigre!**

If a person was yelling, "*le tigre!*" or "*tigre!*" at you and looking frightened, you would probably understand the code, even if you didn't speak French or Spanish. But you might not fully understand if someone from Russia or China was trying to warn you!

A code is like a different alphabet for spelling words. As long as the other person knows that alphabet (or code), they can read and understand the words.

Language

The Very First Language

Between three and four million years ago, the ancestors of modern humans may have used sounds to communicate. Scientists think that "real" language was first used about 40 to 50 thousand years ago.



an image of a human ancestor who lived about three million years ago

Environment

Declining Numbers of Tigers

Less than a hundred years ago, there were around 100 000 tigers in the wild. Now, there are less than 2500.

The hunting of tigers and the destruction of their habitat to provide more land for farming are the main causes of their low numbers.

People are a bigger threat to tigers than tigers are to people.



2 Picture Codes

Stories Use Art Codes

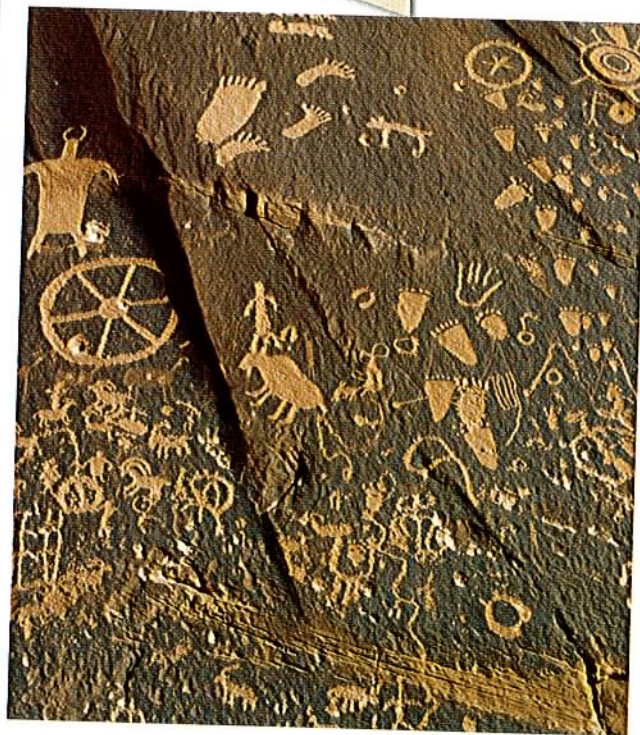
In ancient times, people used art to send messages and tell stories – it was their code. When people saw the pictures they would immediately understand what they meant.

Pigments and charcoal were used to draw lines.

Story Codes

Humans started using colours and pigments about 120 000 years ago. By 35 000 years ago, humans could tell stories by painting on cave walls and on rocks.

The first art was a really useful code!



an example of early rock art in the USA

PIGMENTS

Pigments are used to colour something. The first natural pigments would have been made from things in the environment, such as leaves to make the colour green and berries to make the colour red.

Petroglyphs

Paintings or carvings that use symbols carved or painted onto rocks are called "petroglyphs". This word comes from two Latin words – "petro", which means rock, and "glyph", which means symbol or picture.



a petroglyph showing antelopes



This is an example of rock art from Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory, Australia. It represents an Indigenous legend. The main character is the creation ancestor, Namondjok. To his right is Namarrgon (the lightning man) and the female figure below Namondjok is Barrginj, Namarrgon's wife. Underneath all three figures is a large family group of men and women.

