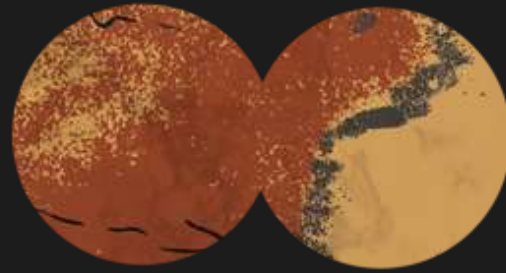




The Discovery of Altamira

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**What can you see in this
picture?**



Reveal

Bison Hunt



Where can you find the cave painting of the bison?

Reveal answer



Does anyone know where that is?

A replica is a close copy or a reproduction of an original painting. In Madrid, at the Archaeological Museum, and in Santander, near the real Altamira Caves, there are 'replicas' of the Altamira cave paintings.





Unlimited Visits

When the Altamira cave paintings were first discovered, people were allowed into the cave without any limit to the number of visitors.

Some visitors even touched the paintings or took pieces of the cave with them!





Protection

But the cave paintings were damaged by the unlimited visits.

Archaeologists warned that if access to the cave was not controlled, the paintings would be lost forever.

That is how the replicas came into existence.

People now visit the replicas, which have been constructed by archaeologists to look exactly the same as the originals, and this protects the Altamira paintings.





How the Story Started

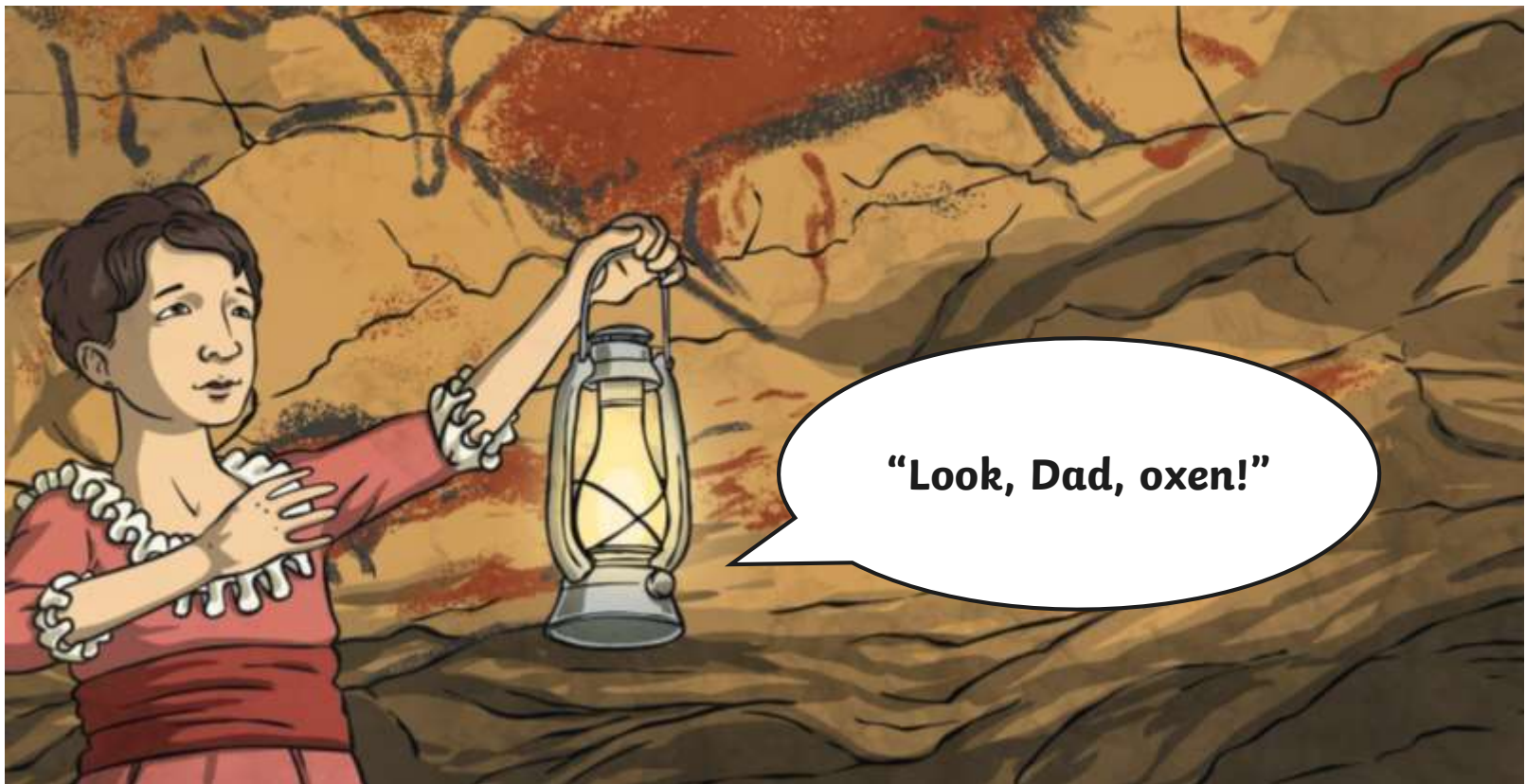
In 1879, an amateur archaeologist called Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola went to explore a cave that was in his land.
He took his daughter, María, with him.





María was getting bored while her father was looking for archaeological remains at the entrance of the cave, so she decided to go into the cave to explore.

Suddenly, on the roof of the cave, she saw some pictures.





But they were not oxen. As Sanz de Sautuola had studied prehistorical animals closely, as soon as he looked at the paintings, he realised they were a species of oxen that was now extinct. He was so excited!





A Difficult Truth

However, the archaeologists of the time did not believe him.

At that time, it was thought that prehistoric human beings were incapable of any form of art.

Sanz de Sautuola spent the rest of his life trying to prove that the paintings were authentic.





Altamira Today

Today, we know that the Altamira cave paintings are at least 14,000 years old. They date from a period called the Upper Palaeolithic, and they were the first example of prehistoric cave paintings ever to be discovered!





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