
Birdwatching in Art (A Sense of Place through Sight)

NATIONAL CORE ART STANDARDS

VA:Cr1.2.1a Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art.

VA:Cr2.1.1a Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.

VA:Cr2.2.2a Demonstrate safe procedures for using and cleaning art tools, equipment, and studio spaces.

VA:Cr2.3.2a Repurpose objects to make something new.

VA:Re7.2.1a Compare images that represent the same subject.

VA:Cn11.1.1a Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons.

OBJECTIVES: STUDENTS WILL...

- Compare and contrast how different artists illustrate the same subject matter
- Identify common bird characteristics and ways in which they differ
- Discuss why artists like Audubon dedicated their lives to drawing birds
- Construct a 3-dimensional object out of found materials that resembles personalized binoculars
- Draw from observation with emphasis on drawing what you observe and not what you think an object looks like
- Synthesize learned information about birds to design and create their own bird using cut paper collage and paint.

1st & 2nd Grade

Art Supplies

- Tape
- Assorted paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- String
- Hole puncher
- Sprocket dials
- Small pencils
- Paintbrushes
- Feather paint brushes

Other Resources

- *Birds* book
- Audubon book
- Bird Identification book
- *Beautiful Blackbird* book
- Audubon Postcards
- Stuffed birds
- Blackbird puppet
- Tools that resemble a bird's beak (tongs, pliers, etc.)
- Things that birds might eat (bug toys, seeds, plants, etc.)
- White board

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Formative assessment in which students will discuss common bird characteristics and their differences in a whole group. Additional discussion comparing/contrasting different artists' use of bird imagery. Students will also demonstrate the use of their binoculars by observing birds around the room.

LESSON SEQUENCE

DAY 1

1. After students sit on carpet the art teacher looks through their art binoculars and sees a bird perched in the art room. A variety of fake, 3D birds will be placed around the classroom prior to class.
 - a. Teacher dramatizes the need for the special art binoculars in order to see the birds.
2. Explain what the students will learn with this project.
 - a. We are all going to become experts at carefully looking at something (in this case, birds).
 - b. We will also be comparing how different artists illustrate the same thing.
 - c. Today, we will be making some binoculars to help you with your observations.
 - d. Next week, we will be making our own bird sketchbooks.
 - e. And to finish, we will make our own bird collages/paintings using everything we have learned.
3. Have a discussion including these questions:
 - a. How might have people remembered different things (like different types of birds) before the camera was invented? Teacher physically does these things as the students answer/discuss these options.
 - i. Sketching
 - ii. Labeling
 - iii. Coloring
 - iv. Naming
 - v. Writing descriptions
 - b. Connect it to having visual memory / visual library in your head
4. Transition into book: *Birds* by Kevin Henkes and Laura Dronzek
 - a. "Now let's read a book that shows us how birds can be different"
5. Transition to binoculars demonstration: "Today we are going to make binoculars to help you next week when we draw the birds we carefully observe." "Who can explain what binoculars are and what people use them for?"
Pass around actual binoculars so students can try them out.
 - a. Cut the provided rectangle piece of cardboard/tagboard in half
 - b. Glue ends and roll to form a tube
 - c. Tape ends so roll stays intact
 - d. Glue both tubes onto colored strip of paper to connect them and form the binocular body
 - e. Write name with pencil inside one of the tubes of the binoculars
 - f. Wedge the binocular's focus dial into piece of cardboard (teacher will pre-cut the slit in the cardboard)
 - g. Glue onto body of binoculars
 - h. Hole punch the sides of the binoculars
 - i. Tie string to each side for the neck strap
 - j. Explain that when everyone is done with this part they will be called back for the painting demo
6. Transition to work time
7. Call students back for painting demo when they are done with the first part
 - a. Demonstrate proper use of paintbrushes and how to keep paint pure and not mixed
 - b. Paint outside of binoculars however you want
 - c. Show them how to add strips of paper to simulate binocular gauges, etc.
8. Transition to work time
9. Cleanup

DAY 2

1. Gather around carpet and remind students of last week's work
 - a. "Remember how we made binoculars last week?"
 - b. "Can anyone tell me why we made binoculars?"
 - i. We made them to look closely at birds. We are going to become *experts at observation*.
 - c. "Lots of people and scientists like birds and there are a lot of artists who also like birds and use them in their art."
2. Introduce Audubon book: *John James Audubon and the Birds of America : a visionary achievement in ornithological illustration* by Lee A. Vedder
 - a. Discuss how the artists illustrate a variety of birds and how each is unique
 - b. Discuss similarities and differences in birds
 - c. Discuss the process the artist took to illustrate his birds
 - i. Killed birds (explain how we wouldn't do that today)
 - ii. Propped them into action poses
 - iii. Carefully observed the bird
 - iv. Sketched out the birds
 - v. Colored them in
 - d. Discuss why he did this
 - i. To learn about birds and document them
 - ii. Tie to last week's discussion about how people remembered things before cameras
 - e. Show picture of Audubon's sketchbook (inside the Audubon book) where he drew all his initial sketches of the birds and explain how we are also going to be making our own special bird sketchbook. (use this as transition into explaining today's project)
3. Introduce today's project: "Now, let me show you the bird sketchbook that I made!"
 - a. Show them example of the bird sketchbook I made
 - i. Explain that I got this level of detail by taking my time and carefully observing details.
 - ii. Emphasize that we drawing from observation and not from what we think the bird looks like
 - iii. Explain how a good way to start drawing these complicated birds is to break it down into its basic shapes (small circle for the head, big oval for the body, rectangle for the neck and legs, triangle for the beak, etc.)
 1. Use a new page in your sketchbook to demonstrate this while still at the carpet
 - a. Have a student pick one of the birds around that you can draw
 - b. Use art binoculars from last week to help you observe
 - c. Show them the *Birds of Wisconsin* book to try and find the bird we just drew
4. Transition to demo
 - a. Take large colored paper strip and fold in half (this will be the sketchbook cover)
 - b. Count out 6 page of white paper from pad of paper
 - c. Place them inside your cover while making sure they are lined up along the cover crease
 - d. Go up to the art station and place inside the hole puncher where it is marked with green tape
 - e. Push down on the hole puncher and make two holes
 - f. Select a stick and a string from the baskets
 - g. Take the string and pretend it is a worm; "The worm goes down through one of the holes and peaks his head through the other hole"
 - h. Place the stick along the holes
 - i. Wrap the two ends of the worm around each end of the stick two times.
 - j. Tie the two ends of the string in the middle.
 - k. Write name on the sketchbook.
 - l. Look through the binoculars and draw the birds on the stand. Color sketches with colored pencils.
 - m. Use the *Birds of Wisconsin* book to identify the birds.
 - n. Work until the bell rings for clean-up.

DAY 3

1. Gather students on the carpet and review what the students made last week.
 - a. “Remember how we all became experts at observation and carefully looking at birds?”
 - b. Review differences and similarities between birds by having a discussion
 - i. Students can raise their hand and say one thing that birds have in common (beak, feathers, wings)
 - ii. Students can raise their hand and say one thing that birds are different in (color, size, shape)
2. Transition into today’s lesson and illustrated book using a blackbird puppet to grab student’s attentions; “now I have a friend who decided to stop by today, I told him we were working with birds and he wanted to help”
 - a. Have the puppet talk through the next part
 - i. Puppet explains what makes him special and what makes all birds unique: their beak
 1. Explain that a bird’s beak is important because they are all different depending on what they eat.
 2. Tell students that were going to read a book that has a lot of birds and to play close attention to all the different types of beaks they have
 - ii. “And guess what, the book we’re going to read is all about me, the beautiful blackbird”
 - iii. Transition into reading the book (only read first half of book, next half will be read next week)
 1. Show students how the book artists used flat colored paper and cut out the bird shapes
 2. Stop at the part where the blackbird makes blackening brew to paint designs on the other birds
3. Transition into beak display part of demonstration:
 - a. Start demo by showing students the tray of tools that resemble bird beaks
 - i. “Remember talking about how a bird’s beak is one of the most important parts of a bird?”
 - ii. Have Audubon postcards around the demo table and call on students to participate (you can remind students that this is the artist we looked at last week)
 1. Student who is picked can pick a postcard (all of them with birds that have different beaks)
 2. That student can try to match that beak with one of the tools on the tray (ex: curved pliers)
 3. Students then try to imagine what the bird might eat with that beak and try to pick up that object from the tray (various bug toys, seeds, plants, etc. will be on the tray)
 - b. Transition to bird making demo: “now let me show you how to make your own birds and think carefully about what type of beak you want your bird to have and why”
 - i. Pick out one color of construction paper at your table and cut it into 3 different sizes
 - ii. Remind students that last week we broke up the birds into its basic shapes
 - iii. Use the biggest size to cut into an oval for the bird’s body
 - iv. Use leftover sheets to make the rest of the bird (smaller circle or oval for the head, small rectangle for the body, long skinny rectangles for the legs, triangle for beak, etc.)
 1. Remind them to carefully think about what type of beak they want their bird to have
 2. Demo cutting multiple types of beaks and explain what type of food they could be used for
 - v. After all the bird parts are cut out, glue them onto a larger white sheet of paper
 - vi. If there is time remaining, have students use scrap paper to cut out what the bird might eat and glue it onto their sheet
 - c. Cleanup

DAY 4

1. Gather at carpet and review last week’s progress
 - a. “Remember how we made our birds last week?”
 - b. “Today lets finish the book we started and see how those birds get decorated”

2. Transition into reading the second half of the *Beautiful Blackbird* book
 - a. While reading point out to the different designs used on the birds in the book
 - b. “Today you will paint your own black designs on your birds similar to the story”
 - c. Demonstrate on the whiteboard how artists make different lines and designs while still at the carpet
 - i. Ask students to name out a type of line for you to draw
3. Transition into demo
 - a. Take a feather brush and show how to make line designs.
 - i. Explain that they will only use the black paint for the designs
 - b. Explain that they need to stop frequently to dip the brush for more paint because when the paint runs out on the bristle it makes a blurry edge.
 - c. Demonstrate painting a variety of line making (zig zag, dots, curvy, etc.)
 - d. When finished they can wash out brush and return to tray
 - e. Use 2 colors for the background to paint sky and ground
 - f. Add details with paper if time allows
 - i. Students can cut out small insects, plants, etc.
4. Cleanup