



Animals in Art
2023–2024 School Year Workshop
Grades: Kindergarten–5

Lesson Overview

Using prior knowledge, workshop instruction, and observations from artworks in the High’s collection, students will compose their own cardboard sculpture of an animal. Students will intentionally think about animal characteristics and habitat when creating their sculpture.

Learning Objectives

Essential Questions

- What is a zoologist? How might an artist be like a zoologist?
- How do artists represent animal characteristics in unique ways?
- What is a habitat, and why is it important?

Students will be able to . . .

- Identify varying animal characteristics
- Understand the importance of habitats
- Create a work of art inspired by the unique attributes of animals and their habitats

Performance Tasks

- Discussion-based observation, art-making activity

Mini Glossary

- Amphibian: a type of cold-blooded vertebrate animal that starts life in water (gills) and then transitions to land (lungs)
- Bird: a type of warm-blooded vertebrate animal that lays eggs and has a beak, feathers, and wings
- Characteristics: the typical or distinguishing attributes and qualities of a person, group, action, or thing

- Fish: a type of vertebrate animal that has gills and fins and lives underwater
- Habitat: the natural environment of a plant or animal
- Invertebrate: a type of animal that lacks a spine (e.g., snails, jellyfish, insects)
- Mammal: a type of warm-blooded vertebrate animal that feeds milk to its young and usually has hair or fur covering most of its skin
- Pattern: a design (lines, shapes, colors) that repeats
- Reptile: a type of cold-blooded vertebrate that has scales
- Zoologist: a person who studies animals

Materials

- Cardboard (precut in assorted shapes)
- Glue or glue stick
- Scissors
- Tempera paint sticks
- Crayola color sticks
- Pipe cleaners
- Foam shapes
- Fabric scraps
- Embellishments (beads, buttons, googly eyes, etc.)

Additional Needs per Classroom

- Large images of animal-inspired artwork from the museum’s collection
- Images of various real-life animals and habitats
- Example of an animal sculpture
- Visual timer
- Visual schedule

Advanced Prep

- Cut cardboard sheets into oblong shapes that can be matched together, as well as plenty of smaller scraps for detail work.
- Prep bins for each table.

Procedures

Introduction (5 mins)

Discuss with students what a zoologist is and how they will be thinking like one in today's lesson. Discuss the six types of animals (mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, and invertebrates). Ask students: What is a mammal [or other type of animal]? What are examples of mammals? How might an artist draw a mammal so that people can recognize it? Use visual aids to explain why unique characteristics help certain animals survive and why the habitats that animals live in are equally important.

Connecting to the Collection (10 mins)

Let's look at some of the animals on display in the museum (refer to laminated images from the museum's collection). What did the artist do to show us what type of animal they were creating?

Animal Creation! (20 mins)

Transition the students to art making by showing them an example of a cardboard animal sculpture and by explaining how the animal art in the museum inspired you to create your own animal. Then pass out assorted cardboard shapes to students.

Give the students the following challenge: Using the glue at their table, they should find a way to arrange the precut cardboard shapes in front of them to create an animal of their choice. Students may use glue or a glue stick but should be instructed on glue quantity and holding their pieces together for at least twenty seconds to make sure the glue holds. After students have created their animal, they should begin coloring and decorating it (paint/color sticks, embellishments, fabrics, etc.) Throughout the making process, students should consider the following questions:

- How will I make my animal recognizable?
- What patterns or textures can I add to my animal?
- How does my animal survive? What does it eat and drink?

After students have finished decorating their animal, they will stand it up on its cardboard props. Demonstrate for the students how to cut notches on both pieces of cardboard to slot them together.

- **Adaptations for older or advanced students:**
 - Introduce the word *abstract* as additional vocabulary. How is your sculpture, as well as some of the art we saw in the museum, an abstraction of a real-life animal?
 - As an additional challenge: How can you represent your animal's habitat within your sculpture?

Conclusions (10 mins)

Invite students to share their work in small groups or with the class. Ask them to put into their own words what type of animal they chose to represent and how they chose to represent that animal's characteristics. Ask them to reflect on what their favorite part of their sculpture is.

Cleanup (5 mins)

Allow time for students to tidy their stations and throw away scraps.