

Animals in Art
2025-2026 School Year
Grades: K-5

Lesson Overview

Students will create hybrid animals that embody physical or behavioral traits of multiple animals. Applying prior knowledge of and experience with animals, students will use their imagination to construct a unique creature.

Learning Objectives

Essential Questions

- What are the unique characteristics of animals?
- How can students create something using elements from different sources?

Students will be able to . . .

- Identify varying animal characteristics.
- Connect dissimilar things to create a new and unusual creature.
- Create a work of art inspired by the unique attributes of animals and their habitats.

Performance Tasks

- Discussion-based observation
- Art-making exploration

Vocabulary

- Amphibian
- Bird
- Characteristics
- Fish
- Habitat
- Invertebrate
- Mammal
- Pattern
- Reptile
- Zoologist

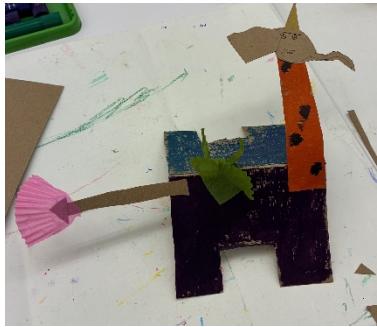
Materials

- Cardboard pieces cut into various small shapes
- Glue or glue stick
- Scissors
- Tempera paint sticks
- Chipboard
- Tagboard
- Paper plates
- Crayons
- Construction paper or cardstock for collage
- Images of works of art with animals from the High's collection

High Museum of Art Collection Connection

- [Felipe Benito Archuleta, Untitled \(Lion\)](#)
- [Jaime Hayon, Green Chicken](#)
- [Ivy Billiot, Bear](#)
- [Bill Traylor, Untitled \(Black Elephant with a Brown Ear\)](#)
- [Howard Finster, The Angel of the Waters, #1302](#)

Sample Works of Art



Procedure

Introduction (5 minutes)

Begin by asking students questions such as, *What is a zoologist? How is an artist like a zoologist? Name two animals that are similar to each other. What makes them similar? Name two animals that are different from each other. What makes them different?* Use the conversation about similarities and differences to segue into discussing characteristics.

As grade-level appropriate, discuss the six types of animals and how artists depict different types of animals in various ways. Use visual aids to explain why unique

characteristics help certain animals survive and why the habitats that animals live in are equally important.

Collection Connection (10 minutes)

Ask students to observe the images of artworks in the High's collection that depict animals. What mediums (such as paint, wood, plaster) did the artists work in to show their animals? How did they use line, shape, and color to depict their animals?

Art Making (20 minutes)

Transition to art making by showing an example of an animal sculpture. Explain how this sculpture was created with dynamic lines, bold shapes, and expressive colors—in the same ways artists in the High's collection created their works.

Using glue, assorted cardboard shapes, paper plates, tagboard, and chipboard, students will arrange paper shapes to create their own animal. After they have created their animal, they will begin adding color with tempera paint sticks, crayons, and construction paper. Throughout the making process, they 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 their animal, they will stand it up on cardboard props. Demonstrate how to cut notches on both pieces of cardboard to slot them together.

Extension

- Introduce the word *abstract* as additional vocabulary. How are the students' animal sculptures, as well as some of the art they saw in the museum, abstractions of real-life animals?
- Ask students to create their animal's habitat with the same materials they used to create their animal. What will their animal eat? Where will it sleep and keep safe from predators?

Reflection and Cleanup (15 minutes)

Invite students to share their work in small groups or with the class. What type of animal did they choose? Why? What elements did they use to represent that animal's characteristics? Allow time for students to tidy their stations and throw away scraps.

Georgia Standards of Excellence Alignment

Kindergarten

SKL2 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to compare the similarities and differences in groups of organisms.

VAK.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.

VAK.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, and processes of two-dimensional art.

VAK.CR.3.a Attempt to fill the space in an art composition.

VAK.CR.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and appropriate use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

VAK.RE.1 Discuss personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.

VAK.RE.1.c Demonstrate an appreciation for art and art making processes by communicating thoughts and feelings.

VAK.RE.1.b Discuss works of art using art vocabulary with an emphasis on the elements of art.

VAK.RE.1.a Use a variety of strategies for art criticism.

VAK.CN.2 Integrate information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of works of art.

VAK.CN.3 Develop life skills through the study and production of art (e.g. collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication).

First Grade

S1L1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the basic needs of plants and animals.

VA1.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning.

VA1.CR.1.b Generate visual images in response to open ended prompts, themes, and narratives.

VA1.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.

VA1.CR.2.b Create works of art that attempt to fill the space in an art composition.

VA1.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, and processes of two-dimensional art.

VA1.CR.3.c Develop manual dexterity through craft techniques (e.g. collage, stitchery, weaving).

VA1.CR.3.e Explore spatial relationships.

VA1.CR.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and appropriate use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

VA1.RE.1 Discuss personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.

VA1.RE.1.c Demonstrate an appreciation for art and art making processes by communicating thoughts and feelings.

VA1.CN.2 Integrate information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of works of art.

VA1.CN.3 Develop life skills through the study and production of art (e.g. collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication).

Second Grade

S2L1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the life cycles of different living organisms.

VA2.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning.

VA2.CR.1.b Produce visual images in response to open-ended prompts, themes, and narratives.

VA2.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.

VA2.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, and processes of two-dimensional art.

VA2.CR.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and appropriate use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

VA2.RE.1 Discuss personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.

VA2.RE.1.b Demonstrate an appreciation for art and art making processes by communicating thoughts and feelings.

VA2.RE.1.d Use a variety of strategies to discuss and reflect on personal works of art and the work of peers.

VA2.CN.2 Integrate information from other disciplines to engage in the understanding and production of works of art.

VA2.CN.3 Develop life skills through the study and production of art (e.g. collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication).

Third Grade

S3L1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the similarities and differences between plants, animals, and habitats found within geographic regions (Blue Ridge Mountains, Piedmont, Coastal Plains, Valley and Ridge, and Appalachian Plateau) of Georgia.

S3L1.b Construct an explanation of how external features and adaptations (camouflage, hibernation, migration, mimicry) of animals allow them to survive in their habitat.

S3L1.c Use evidence to construct an explanation of why some organisms can thrive in one habitat and not in another.

VA3.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning.

VA3.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.

VA3.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of two-dimensional art.

VA3.CR.3.a Develop drawings and paintings with a variety of media (e.g. pencil, crayon, pastel, tempera, watercolor).

VA3.CR.3.c Combine materials in creative ways to make works of art (e.g. mixed-media, collage).

VA3.CR.3.e Use spatial concepts to create works of art (e.g. foreground, middle ground, background, size, placement, detail).

VA3.CR.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and appropriate use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

VA3.RE.1 Use a variety of approaches for art criticism and to critique personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.

VA3.RE.1.d Use a variety of strategies to critique, discuss, and reflect on personal works of art and the work of peers.

VA3.CN.2 Integrate information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of works of art.

VA3.CN.2.a Apply art skills and knowledge to improve understanding in other disciplines.

VA3.CN.3 Develop life skills through the study and production of art (e.g. collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication).

VA3.CR.4 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of three-dimensional art.

VA3.CR.4.a Create sculpture using a variety of methods (e.g., papier-mâché, cutting, folding, found objects).

Fourth Grade

S4L1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the roles of organisms and the flow of energy within an ecosystem.

VA4.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning.

VA4.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.

VA4.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of two-dimensional art.

VA4.CR.3.a Apply drawing and painting techniques with a variety of media (e.g. pencil, crayon, pastel, charcoal, tempera, watercolor, acrylic).

VA4.CR.4 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of three-dimensional art.

VA4.CR.4.b Create open or closed form sculptures using selected methods/techniques (e.g. papier-mâché, paper sculpture, assemblage, found object sculpture).

VA4.CR.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and appropriate use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

VA4.RE.1 Use a variety of approaches for art criticism and to critique personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.

VA4.RE.1.d Use a variety of strategies to critique, discuss, and reflect on personal works of art and the work of peers.

VA4.CN.1 Investigate and discover the personal relationships of artists to community, culture, and the world through making and studying art.

VA4.CN.2 Integrate information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of works of art.

VA4.CN.2.a Apply art skills and knowledge to improve understanding in other disciplines.

VA4.CN.3 Develop life skills through the study and production of art (e.g. collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication).

Fifth Grade

S5L1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to group organisms using scientific classification procedures.

S5L1.a Develop a model that illustrates how animals are sorted into groups (vertebrate and invertebrate) and how vertebrates are sorted into groups (fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal) using data from multiple sources

VA5.CR.1 Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning.

VA5.CR.3 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of two-dimensional art.

VA5.CR.3.a Refine drawings and paintings with a variety of media (e.g. pencil, crayon, pastel, charcoal, tempera, watercolor, acrylic).

VA5.CR.3.c Utilize a variety of materials in creative ways to make works of art (e.g. mixed-media, collage, or use of available technology).

VA5.CR.4 Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of three-dimensional works of art.

VA5.CR.4.b Create sculpture that demonstrates a design concept using a variety of methods (e.g. papier-mâché, paper sculpture, assemblage, found object sculpture).

VA5.RE.1 Use a variety of approaches for art criticism and to critique personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.

VA5.RE.1.d Use a variety of strategies to critique, discuss, and reflect on personal works of art and the work of peers.

VA5.CN.2 Integrate information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of works of art.

VA5.CN.3 Develop life skills through the study and production of art (e.g. collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication).