

"Birds and Culture"

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Overview: “Throughout history, birds have been viewed as animals of special value and have been endowed with meanings often drawn from legends and stories that have endured over many generations.”¹ The selection of activities leads students to read and write about birds as they appear within cultures, including mythology, modern literature, state and national symbols, the arts, and social issues.

Connection to the Curriculum:

Language Arts

- K-1.4 Generate a retelling that identifies the characters and the setting in a story and relates the important events in sequential order.
- K-6.2 Understand that information can be found in print sources such as books, pictures, simple graphs, and charts and nonprint media such as videos, television, films, radio, and the Internet.
- 1-1.4 Generate a retelling that identifies the characters and the setting in a story and relates the important events in sequential order.
- 1-6.4 Use the Internet with the aid of a teacher.
- 2-1.7 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as writing, creative dramatics, and the visual and performing arts.
- 2-5.3 Create written pieces that describe objects, people, places, or events and that use words that appeal to the senses.
- 2-6.4 Use the Internet with the aid of a teacher.
- 3-1.7 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as writing, creative dramatics, and the visual and performing arts.
- 3-6.5 Use the Internet as a source of information.
- 4-1.7 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as writing, creative dramatics, and the visual and performing arts.
- 4-6.6 Use the Internet with the aid of a teacher.
- 5-1.7 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as writing, creative dramatics, and the visual and performing arts.
- 5-6.4 Paraphrase research information accurately and meaningfully.
- 6-1.7 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as written works, oral presentations, media productions, and the visual and performing arts.
- 6-5.3 Create written descriptions using precise language and vivid details.
- 6-5.4 Create persuasive writings such as print advertisements and commercial scripts that develop a central idea with supporting evidence and use language appropriate for the specific audience.
- 7-1.7 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as written works, oral presentations, media productions, and the visual and performing arts.
- 7-5.4 Create persuasive pieces such as letters to the editor or essays that include a stated position with supporting evidence and are aimed at a specific audience.
- 8-1.6 Create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods such as written works, oral presentations, media productions, and the visual and performing arts.

8-5.4 Create persuasive pieces such as editorials, essays, or speeches that support a clearly stated position with concrete evidence.

Suggested Grade Range: K-8

Time: 30-45 minutes per activity

Materials Needed:

1. Journal
2. Images of birds
3. Books with birds as characters
4. Internet access or printed materials from those pages

Objectives:

1. SWBAT describe in writing how birds appear within cultures (literature, visual arts, symbolism, human/environmental interaction).

Procedures:

1. Students will write all of their responses in their journal (http://sc.audubon.org/PDFs/Decoupage_habitats.pdf). The students may not attempt all of the options listed below.
2. Using an image of a bird (some can be found at http://sc.audubon.org/Centers_FBF_Educators_Species-Birds.html or in old nature/photography magazines), have students write a description of the bird without naming it and without showing their bird's image. Students should be reminded to use the anatomical vocabulary they learn in a previous lesson (http://sc.audubon.org/PDFs/Bird_field_marks.pdf). Once all students have completed their written descriptions, have them trade journals. Using only the description, have the students draw and attempt to identify the bird described in the journal they received in the trade. Select creative descriptions to share with the class.
3. Have students read a fiction book of their choice with a bird being one of the characters or the subject of the story. Have students write a summary of the story, including why the bird was important to the story.
 - a. In mythology <http://petcaretips.net/mythology-bird.html>
 - b. In literature http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_birds#Birds_in_literature
 - c. *The Story of Chicken Little*
 - d. *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey
4. Nations and states within our country designate birds to be representative of their people. National birds can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_birds and state birds can be found at <http://www.50states.com/bird/>. Have students select a nation or a state within our country and describe why the bird was selected by that government. State government webpages contain explanations regarding the selection of the state bird. South Carolina's webpage can be found at <http://www.scstatehouse.net/studentpage/bird.htm>.
5. From the Japanese American National Museum, "*Throughout history, birds have been viewed as animals of special value and have been endowed with meanings often drawn from legends and stories that have endured over many generations. For the Japanese, the crane --*

or tsuru -- is considered a national treasure, appearing in art, literature, and folklore. The Japanese regard the crane as a symbol of good fortune and longevity because of its fabled life span of a thousand years. It also represents fidelity, as Japanese cranes are known to mate for life.” Have students select an art form (like those listed below) and describe how birds appear in the art forms of a culture or describe a particular piece of bird-related art.

- a. Drawing/painting
 - b. Photography
 - c. Origami – here is one of many examples
<http://gojapan.about.com/od/origami/ss/origamicrane.htm>
 - d. Sculpture
6. Have students research the issue of shorebird threats on the beach. Some samples are listed below. Have students write a response to the prompt, “The beach is big enough for dogs and birds.” Students might point out the obvious canine fecal issues, but (no matter their opinion) they should mention the interaction between dogs (or humans) and birds and the affect that has on birds (*disturbs their resting periods; causes unnecessary expenditure of energy; disturbed birds leave nests with eggs or chicks exposed to the sun and elements; eggs or chicks are destroyed, even accidentally, by dogs or humans or attacked by predators when unguarded*).
- a. http://sc.audubon.org/ConsAdvocacy_Issues_Shorebirds.html
 - b. <http://beidlerforest.blogspot.com/2008/01/piping-plover.html>
 - c. http://www.charlestonaudubon.org/downloads/03_06_squawk.pdf
 - d. http://www.charleston.net/news/2007/aug/04/shorebirds_safe_sound12124/

Suggested Evaluation:

1. Teacher-generated rubric based on the grade level and activity selected.

Extending the Lesson:

1. Have students create their own bird-related story using information that they have gathered during their research.
2. Have students study the birds in their neighborhood and participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.

Resources:

1. Japanese American National Museum at <http://www.janmstore.com/tsuru.html>
2. Audubon South Carolina at <http://sc.audubon.org/>