

## Lesson: Bird Silhouette Painting

**Description:** To create a painting with an informational card that informs the viewer about a local bird and the birds role in their ecosystem.

### Goals:

- Students will be able to identify and practice the use of contour in drawing.
- Students will conduct research online to learn about their bird, including role in their ecosystem.
- Students will decipher bird calls and create an onomatopoeia to reflect the sound.

### Modivator

1. Ask students to name several birds that they know are local to the area. Write them down on the whiteboard in a chart as well as where they have seen the bird before.

Bird Name	Seen Where?	Habitat	Bird call (Onomatopoeia)	Importance to Ecosystem

### Procedure

1. Choose one of the birds to model researching. Show the students [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) and how to look through the different menus to learn more about the bird.
2. Explain that they will be creating a painting and also an informational card to teach about their bird. It will be important that they know all about the birds habitat because that is going to be the background of the painting.
3. Review onomatopoeia. Practice creating one based on the sound of the bird call. Record under the bird you are modeling researching.
4. As they learn about the habitat and listen to the bird call, tell them to record those two things on the whiteboard.
5. Brainstorm other things that would be helpful to put on their information card. (diet, migration, size, etc.) If no one mentions it, be sure they write at least one sentence about the birds role in their ecosystem. Add this column to the whiteboard chart. For example, the pileated woodpecker creates holes in snags that provide habitat for secondary cavity users such as the common mergansers.

6. Send them off to do their research on tablets or computers. Provide a large note card for them to take their notes on - a rough draft for their informational card.
7. Once their rough draft card is done, have them research the habitat in google images. They should choose one that would be easy enough to paint with watercolors. It helps to search for the habitat name followed by the word watercolor (ex. Nw forest watercolor)
8. Review mixing natural colors using complimentary colors.
9. Introduce the word Contour for today's vocabulary word. Model how to use the silhouette drawing on allaboutbirds.org to draw your miniature one to be added to your painting later.
10. They should then be ready to get a watercolor paper and a small piece of cardstock to draw and then sharpie in their bird silhouette.
11. Provide an additional cut piece of cardstock for the students to create their final draft information card in sharpie. They can do this while their watercolor dries. Most likely, you will have to glue all together the following day or later in the day.

### **Wrap Up**

1. As the session ends, direct students attention back to the front board and review their findings.
2. Have students read aloud the information they provided and to mimic the bird call.

### **Reflection**

This lesson was fun and engaging for the kids! At first, I was thinking I would need to guide them on their bird selections, but the group pleasantly surprised me. After the initial bird species brainstorm we had a list of 12 local birds. After the research session, several kids wanted to change their bird as they came across new species that were local that they preferred. On average, 2 kids studied the same bird.

The most difficult part of the lesson was definitely the watercolor painting. This is not a surprise though as I always feel like watercolor is difficult for kids to feel comfortable with and also to achieve a certain color/layout when trying to mimic an image. Their colors were not deep enough and the paper was not of a very good quality to receive the amount of water that they were applying.

On a positive note, the kids did an excellent job with the research. They were able to find the information they were looking for and then some. It was difficult for some of them to summarize the habitat information and also to be able to figure out the role in the birds environment. This information takes some extra thinking and is not clearly outlined in a subheader like diet or habitat. I like the extra thinking that it asked the children to do, but it definitely was their least favorite part because it was the hardest.