



LESSON PLAN: Creature Collages

the new children's museum

OVERVIEW

Inspired by:

The Wonder Sound, an installation on the Upper Level of the Museum by Wes Sam-Bruce, in which visitors are invited to enter a new environment that feels both foreign and familiar at the same time. *The Wonder Sound* incorporates plants, animals and patterns to create a new world. Students will have the opportunity to design their own unique animals and place them in newly created places, turning familiar found images into new landscapes.

Grades:

Kindergarten and up

Duration:

1 hour

HOW-TO

Materials:

- o Chipboard
- o Sharpies or Felt-Tip Pens
- o White Paper
- o Glue Sticks
- o Scissors
- o Erasers
- o Pencils
- o Magazines



STEPS

Project Introduction (10 minutes):

1. Introduce project inspiration and outline.
2. Define key terms by asking questions and brainstorming examples as a group:
 - a. Who here knows what collage means? Has anyone made a collage before? What did you do?
 - b. Can anyone tell me what a habitat is? What is a monkey's habitat?
 - c. Does anyone know what an adaptation is? What adaptation do monkeys have that let them live in the trees of the jungle?
 - d. What is a pattern? How can you create a pattern?

Creating the Creatures (10-15 minutes):

1. Pass out white paper, a pencil and an eraser to each student.
2. Draw creature's outline, trying to fill up as much of the paper as possible.
3. Fill in animal with pattern.
4. Pass out Sharpies and felt-tip pens so students can trace over their pencil marks, then erase any pencil still showing.

Collaging the Habitats (30 minutes):

1. Pass out chipboard and ask students to write their names on it.
2. Pass out magazines and scissors.
3. After about 10 minutes, pass out glue – this gives students a chance to think about layering before gluing anything down.
4. At the end, cut out the creature and glue on top of the collage.

Tips, Tricks and Troubleshooting

Try creating a "collage kit" – one or two containers per table that new materials can be added to as the group is ready for them.

Print out reference photos of landscapes (river banks, beaches, forests) and animal features (noses, tails, scales, eyes) to help students visualize their creations.

Help a student who isn't sure what to make by asking them questions:

- Think about a landscape you're familiar with – what kinds of creatures live in the desert, near a lake or in the rainforest?
- What kinds of animals do you like (mammals, reptiles, birds, fish)? What do you like about them (claws, beaks, fur, scales)? How can you exaggerate or highlight those characteristics in your design?

Adjust the project:

- for younger students by focusing on simple drawings and patterns. Encourage littles to cut out larger images to fill their collaged landscapes more easily.
- for older students by setting challenges or limitations: Must have at least five different photos to create their background or must use at least six shapes in their patterns.
- to extend the length of the activity by doing a gallery walk to observe classmate's pieces.
- to shorten the length of the activity by spending less time on the introduction and focusing on simple drawings.
- to extend the project in another session by creating a taxonomy of the animals created by your students or describing your creature's favorite foods, behaviors, etc., or writing a story about your creature.