

Depicting Birds and Animals

Birds

FEATURED ART

[*An eagle on a snow-laden blossoming plum tree by Soga Nichokuan*](#)



An eagle on a snow-laden blossoming plum tree by Soga Nichokuan

Objective One

Students will be able to describe how an animal's features can help it interact with its surroundings.

Objective Two

Students will be able to compare the visual characteristics of birds with other animals.

Objective Three

Students will be able to articulate ways in which they respect nature and what they can learn from animals.

Assigned Readings for Teachers

1. [Excerpt from *The Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman \(page 45\)](#)

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to describe how an animal's features can help it interact with its surroundings.

On [Google Slides Page 1](#)

Images	An eagle on a snow-laden blossoming plum tree by Soga Nichokuan An eagle on a snow-laden blossoming plum tree Detail #3
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Ask students to describe the eagle they see in Detail #3 of the featured work. Expand the exploration of the features of the bird's form and functions by showing students the full screen with the eagle and its surroundings. Challenge students to consider the function of the different parts of the eagle—its beak, claws, feather pattern, etc.—and how those features help the bird interact with and survive in its environment. Ask students to think about other animals with some or all the features they described.

Objective Two

Students will be able to compare the visual characteristics of birds with other animals.

On [Google Slides Page 2](#)

Images	Heron and willow by Hanabusa Itchō Heron and willow Detail #1 Heron and willow Detail #2
Assigned Reading	Excerpt from <i>The Genius of Birds</i> by Jennifer Ackerman (page 45)

Read aloud the excerpt from *The Genius of Birds* (page 45), omitting the names of birds. Ask students if they can identify what animal dinosaurs are being compared to? What examples in the reading do they connect with that animal?

Show students Hanabusa Itchō's *Heron and willow*, making sure to examine Detail #1 and Detail #2, close-up images of the bird's legs and eye. How would they describe the texture of the legs, feathers, and beak? Can students identify a dinosaur with similar characteristics?

Ask students to compare the heron to the eagle on the previous screen. Describe the ways in which the heron is both similar to and different from the eagle. Identify the differences

between the habitats of the heron and the eagle, noting how their physical characteristics help them survive in their respective environments.

Objective Three

Students will be able to articulate ways in which they respect nature and what they can learn from animals.

On [Google Slides Page 3](#)

Image	Mynah birds in a plum tree by Yosa Buson
Video	Animal Wisdom

Show *Mynah birds in a plum tree* by Buson, pointing out to students that like the eagle on the folding screen, these birds are also sitting in a tree. Ask students to describe the scene on this scroll. Based on visual evidence, can students tell the time of year in which these birds are being painted compared to the time of year when the eagle scene took place? The plum tree often represents the coming spring, and the artist has depicted the blossoms on the tree.

Watch the video *Animal Wisdom*. What are some of the ways the eagle and the mynah birds have to adapt in different seasons? What can we learn from the ability of these birds to adapt? Ask students to complete a quick-write activity explaining the narrator's comments how people "have respected them . . . and understood we have much to learn from them." In what ways have students respected nature and learned from it?