



Birds

What makes a bird a bird?

Age: 7-14

Topic: Biology

Time: 1 hour



What should learners already know?

- Children may have an awareness of some basic bird biology.
- We can tell the difference between different animals based on their appearance and behaviour.

What equipment will I need?

- Chalk and an area of school ground to draw on.
- Alternatively, pens or pencils and A3 paper.



How will learners explore this?

1. Divide the class into three teams and encourage each team to talk with each other about what makes a bird a bird. Prompt questions could be: what is special about a bird? How do you recognise a bird? What does a bird look like?
2. Encourage each team to use chalk to draw a bird in the playground. Challenge children by asking them what features they need to include to make it a bird, and if they are able to label all the features. These features are called anatomical characteristics.
3. Now, teams can go and look at the birds other teams have drawn. Are they similar or different? What features do all drawings have in common?
4. Children can return to their own drawing and think about the things that all birds do. What makes birds different from mammals? Can children draw any of the things that birds do; how they move, how and what they eat, how they raise their young? These features are called behavioural characteristics.

How can we show the learning?

- What features did other teams include in their murals? Did they include any features that your team did not?
- Encourage children to think about the difference between the behavioural and anatomical features they have identified. Ask children why they think studying both anatomy and behaviour is important when studying animals.
- Challenge children by asking them which features seem the most important for identification. Might some of these features be more useful for telling the difference between species than others?
- Ask children why they think that being able to identify bird species is important?



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