

ArtStream

Written Instructional Guide



“Nature Collage with Organic Materials”

For 3rd - 5th Grade Students

With Teaching Artist Alex Ever

Lesson 4: “Nature Collage Creatures”

Introduction

- We'll be making a non-permanent natural collage today.
- I'm going to ask you to use your imagination to invent a creature that you will create out of your organic materials. At the end of this activity, you will have something that is uniquely your idea.



Materials

- Paper or a clean surface
- Natural materials (harvested from a yard, neighborhood, or nearby park)



Step 1: Organize your materials

- Begin by organizing your materials. Match similar shapes, sizes, and colors.
- Organizing your materials is an important part of the process of creating work.
- As you organize your materials, identify some of the shapes, colors, and details you notice.
- Model by sorting materials on the table (leaves, acorns, blades of grass, shells, etc.)



Step 2: Setting up your workspace

- Once piles have been made, move them to the edge of the “workspace”. The workspace can be a blank piece of paper or a clean, flat surface.



Visualization exercise

- *“Imagine you are walking through a forest. Feel the ground under your feet, smell for pinecones, or rain on a hot day... What kind of forest is it? Is it covered in pine trees? Maybe it’s a rainforest. Maybe it’s a fall forest with different color leaves. Take a moment to look at this forest. Is it like one you’ve been to before or one you’ve heard about somewhere? It could be unlike anything you’ve seen or heard of. What’s the weather like? Is it rainy, sunny, misty? What does the air feel like against your skin? What types of creatures might live here? Now while out in this forest you see a bush. Just as soon as you see it, it starts to rustle and shake. You realize that there must be an animal inside. Slowly, it peeks out its head and you realize it’s a creature that doesn’t look like anything you have ever seen before...”*
- Once you’ve read this, take a moment to close your eyes and breath slowly in through your nose at a slow count of 1-2-3-4 and out your mouth with a slow count of 1-2-3-4
- Re-read the paragraph if you need. Take time to envision these ideas as best as you can.

Step 4: Create the body

- Think about the size of the creature. How big or small is it?
- We need lots of room for the details you will be asked about. Make the body at least the size of your hand even if you imagine a smaller body.
- Once you have a body, add a head!
- Remember you can switch out pieces of natural materials if you don't like what you first grabbed.



Step 5: How does the creature move?

- Let's imagine the creature just came out of the bush. How did it move? Is it standing on 2 feet? 8 legs?
- Remember, it is okay to not have the full image in your head right away. Look at your natural materials for ideas. What do the textures of the natural materials remind you of?



Step 6: Add a face

- Now that the animal has come closer, you notice its face. You see their eyes. How many eyes are there? How big are they?
- Remember, you can tear/rip off smaller pieces of your organic materials to help create details
- Now let's add a mouth. Think about your creature, can you see the mouth on them? Is it a beak? Does it have teeth?
- Once you have added a mouth, think about other parts of its face. Can you imagine or see in your head any other details? Do you envision whiskers? A nose? Ear? Horns?



Step 7: Adding patterns

- As you look for more details, you notice a pattern across its body!
- Let's take time to create that pattern. It can be spots, layers of scales, stripes, large quills, etc.
- Is the pattern symmetrical or asymmetrical?
- Try designing your own pattern with the materials you have. Take time to lay everything out in the way you want



Step 8: Adding extra details

- We are almost complete! Now that you have spent time adding all this detail maybe you want to add other details to your creature
- Consider things like a large tail, wings, antenna, spikes, or a second mouth. What are the things you can imagine?



Step 9: Finishing the collage creature

- Allow yourself to come to a pause wherever you are on your creature
- You can keep working on and building out your creature or you can clean up your supplies.
- Our work is not permanent so we will take it apart and use the pieces for next time.
- You can take a picture with a phone to remember the piece.



Closing reflection

- Take a moment to place your hands in your lap, straighten your back, and close your eyes. Imagine the portrait you just made. Take a moment to identify a choice that you made when creating your creature that you feel especially proud of. What was one of the things that you appreciate about your imagination? Take a moment to appreciate the good work you just did. Take a deep breath together.



Thank you!

- Way to trust yourself and explore how imaginative you can be!
- Continue letting your imagination loose with organic collage. Create collages of both real and imaginary subjects. Try incorporating patterns. Allow for actions of mindfulness- try to organize your art supplies before using them.