

Birds Eye View

Objectives

Learn about migration; learn about environmental features and factors that are important to migrating birds; investigate the interrelationships of living things. Practice skills of imagination, visualization, geography, use of scale, and drawing.

Method

Students will visualize the world from the view of a migrating bird, then draw what they see. You may choose a specific bird species or a group of birds.

Background

Most birds travel or migrate from several hundred miles to thousands of miles each year from their summer home to their winter home and back again. While in flight, they must overcome many threats along the way. Weather conditions, habitat availability, and presence of predators are some of the challenges they face. The major purpose of this activity is to inspire the students' creative minds, to imagine what it might be like to be a bird, flying high, over many miles of different terrain in order to reach home. Consider combining the activity with the video, *Winged Migration*.

Materials

Large newsprint

Large drawing paper (one sheet per student)

Pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons, or paints

Procedure:

1. Ask students to remember what the world looked like below them when and if they've ever been in an airplane. Have they ever looked down on the tops of trees, tundra, clouds, a river, or the ocean shore? What was the purpose of their journey (did they have to go, or did they want to go?) Did they look forward with anticipation to the sight of the village, town, or even different type of climate and geography that they were traveling towards?
2. Ask them to imagine what the world looks like to a migrating bird in the spring or in the fall. How high does it fly? Brainstorm as a class about what sort of things on the earth below would be important to a bird? What kind of weather would it be experiencing? What would it see? (e.g., the shoreline; estuaries, river deltas, tundra, mountains, lakes; ice or snow; other birds flying with it or landing, feeding, or roosting below, perhaps in large flocks; tree tops; the height of the tide, storms; clouds; warm sunshine; people below with binoculars; villages, towns; cities; bare plowed field where there was food last year?)

3. Instruct students to draw or paint a picture of the world from the view of a migrating bird. Encourage them to accurately portray the habitat the bird might pass over and use their imaginations so that their picture conveys the length of the journey, the altitude the bird is flying, the feel of the air, and the weather they may be experiencing.

Have them use the newsprint to practice drawing aerial views of objects and the appropriate sizes, etc. When they are satisfied with their plans, they can draw a careful and complete picture on the drawing paper.

Grade Level: 2-12

Subjects: English/Language Arts, Art, Science

Duration: One or two 30 minute classroom periods

Setting: Indoors, Outdoors

Key Vocabulary: migration, habitat, weather, predator, altitude, geography, bird species names