

by Mary Erickson, Ph.D., with Arizona artist and art teacher Jasen Evoy

This unit is a series of lesson plans designed in conjunction with the Animal Crackers exhibition at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts.

[Preview the Animal Crackers exhibition PowerPoint](#)

Themes

- Theme in Life: Throughout human existence people have lived around and with animals.
- Theme in Art: Many artists have chosen animals as their subject matter.

Key Questions

Lessons approach the themes through three key questions.



and SEEK IDEAS

1. How can I get ideas for my art from the natural world?



and SET GOALS

3. How can I transform a traditional, functional object into a lively new one? (secondary only)



and MAKE CHOICES

2. How are complex shapes and forms made up of smaller, simpler shapes and forms?

Community Connections

The diversity of natural environments in the Southwest is home to a great variety of animals from mountain sheep in the high country to Gila monsters in the low desert. Coyotes, roadrunners, cactus wrens, rattlesnakes, scorpions, geckos and pronghorns not only survive but thrive in Arizona's wild places. Other animals, like horses, cows, greyhounds, cats and goldfish live here only because of their relationships with people.

Lessons

[Lesson One: Animals All Around \(pdf\)](#)

[Lesson Two: Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA \(pdf\)](#)

[Lesson Three: Simply Animals: Clay \(pdf\) \(secondary\)](#)

[Alternative Lesson Three: Simply Animals: Paper \(pdf\) \(secondary\)](#)

[Four: Simple Animal Shapes \(pdf\) \(elementary\)](#)

Resources

[Preview of Animal Crackers Exhibition PowerPoint](#)

[Animals All Around PowerPoint](#)

[Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA \(pdf\)](#)

[Simply Animals: Clay PowerPoint \(secondary\)](#)

[Self Evaluation: Animal Project \(pdf\)](#)

[Simply Animals: Paper PowerPoint \(secondary\)](#)

[Simple Animal Shapes PowerPoint \(elementary\)](#)

[Questor Questions: Animals at Home & on the Road \(pdf\)](#)

Additional Website Resource

[Phoenix Zoo](#)

Supplies

Student access to the internet and a printer or, alternatively, a collection of printed images of animals in books, magazines or Internet printouts.

SECONDARY CLAY PROJECT

Clay facilities (clay, clay tools, kiln, glazes, etc.)

Sketch paper and pencils

SECONDARY PAPER PROJECT

Undecorated paper or cardboard containers (small boxes, shopping bags, paper cups, cupcake cups, etc.)

Scissors

Transparent Tape

Sketch paper and pencils

ELEMENTARY PAPER PROJECT

Collection of printed images of animals in books, magazines, or Internet printouts

Pencils or markers

Construction Paper

Glue

MASK PROJECT OPTION

Paper masks or small paper plates with cut-out eye holes

Self-adhesive Foamie sheets or pre-cut shapes (OPTIONAL)

Credits

Animal Vessels by Jasen Evoy' advanced ceramics students at Marcos di Niza High School

Photography by Mary Erickson, Nancy Egly, Kathy David and Faith Clover

Estimated Time

Pre-visit Lesson = 20-60 minutes

TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip

Secondary Post-visit Lesson = 500-800 minutes

Elementary Post-visit Lesson = 50-100 minutes

Objectives

1. Students will be able to give reasons why animals can be good subject matter for art.
2. Students will be able to identify simple shapes in artworks and other objects of visual culture.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101, 201 and 301: Identify visual/tactile characteristics of artworks from diverse cultures, different places or times.

Preparation

Preview *Animals All Around* PowerPoint and look through the Animal Crackers exhibition preview. You may want to assemble reproductions of artworks or objects from visual culture that use animals as subject matter, such as well-known artworks, sport mascots, advertisements, films and utilitarian objects.

Resources

[Animals All Around PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: Reproductions of artworks or objects from visual culture that use animals as subject matter, such as:

- well-known artworks with animal subject matter (Edward Hicks' *Peaceable Kingdom*, Edwin Landseer's animal portraits, Franz Marc's horses, etc.)
- sport mascots (Arizona Diamondbacks, Denver Broncos, Charlotte Bobcats, Chicago Blackhawks, etc.)
- advertisements (Geico Insurance Gecko, Ford Mustang, Dodge Ram)
- films (*Lion King*, *Life of Pi*)
- utilitarian objects (mug decorated with a cat, pillow case with embroidered butterflies).

Activities

Unit Preview: Introduce the theme in life: "Throughout human existence people have lived around and with animals" by discussing circumstances in which students have come in contact with animals.

Introduce the theme in art: "Many artists have chosen animals as their subject matter" by asking students to describe how they have seen animals used as subject matter in painting, sculpture, films, advertisements, etc.

Introduce the key questions students will be working with in the unit:

1. How can I get ideas for my art from the natural world?
2. How are complex shapes and forms made up of smaller, simpler shapes and forms?
3. How can I transform a traditional, functional object into a lively new one? (secondary only)

Examples: Display slides 1-3 of *Animals All Around* PowerPoint, and ask students to compare characteristics of some of the natural environments (climate, plants, bodies of water, other animals) where the animals in slides 2 and 3 live in the wild.

Display slides 4 and 5 and ask students to describe the natural environments of the Southwest.

Display slides 6 and 7 and ask students to share their experiences with farm or companion animals.

Guided Practice: Display slide 8 and explain that students will be making complex animal shapes or forms by combining simpler shapes and forms. Ask students to identify with words or draw on the board the shapes the artists used to make the eagle's beak, the mountain sheep's body and the flying insect's body and wings.

Practice and Assessment: Display slides 9 and 10. OPTIONAL show reproductions of artworks or objects from visual culture that use animals as subject matter. Ask students to explain how simple shapes and forms have been used to show animals in objects from visual culture.

Transfer to TCA: Display slide 11 and invite students to visit the *Animal Crackers* exhibition (or the exhibition preview PowerPoint) to see some of the ways contemporary artists use animals in their art.

Vocabulary

natural environment

subject matter

simple, simplify

Extension Activities

Collaborate with science or geography teacher to study in more detail diverse natural environments and the animals that live in them.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to give reasons why animals can be good subject matter for art. (Contribution to discussion during *Animals All Around* PowerPoint presentation.)
2. Students will be able to identify simple shapes in artworks and other objects of visual culture. (Contribution to discussion during *Animals All Around* PowerPoint presentation and drawing of simple shape used by an artist to show an animal.)



Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the Tempe Center for the Arts

Lesson Two

Objectives

1. Students will be able to use subject matter to support their interpretations of artworks.
2. Students will be able to distinguish simple from complex shapes in artworks.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Meanings & Purposes: PO 102, 202 and 302: Discuss themes in artworks that illustrate common human experiences that transcend culture, time and place.

RELATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101, 201 and 302: Identify visual/tactile characteristics of artworks from diverse cultures, different places or times.

Preparation

Read and make copies of *Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA* worksheet.

Make arrangements for field trip to the TCA.

Before your visit, talk with assigned TCA docent, if possible. Provide the docent with a copy of *Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA* worksheet in advance of your trip and discuss the extent to which students might complete any or all of the worksheet at the TCA or whether any or all of the questions or ideas might be addressed during their tour.

Read optional *Questor Questions: Animals at Home and on the Road* pdf and decide whether you might want to use it to follow up after a visit to the *Animal Crackers* exhibition.

Resources

[Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL: [Questor Questions: Animals at Home and on the Road pdf](#)

Activities

Review and Application: Distribute *Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA* worksheets to all students and ask them to answer as many questions as they can during their tour. If writing responses on the worksheet is not practical or possible during the tour, use the worksheet to guide students in focused observation as circumstances permit. For example, you might use questions on the worksheet when students assemble or travel to the TCA or when they assemble for or travel back to school.

Take notes on any new information presented by the docent as well as interesting questions, observations or responses made by your students during their tour. If the circumstances of the visit do not allow students to complete their worksheets, explain that later, in class, you will lead a discussion of discoveries they made about a variety of relationships between animals and people in the exhibition using the online *Animal Crackers* Preview.

Assessment Checklist

Objective: Students locate and sketch characteristic features of trompe l'oeil works.

- _____ Students will be able to use subject matter to support their interpretations of artworks. (Completion of questions 1 and 3 of the Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA worksheet)
- _____ Students will be able to distinguish simple from complex shapes in artworks. (Completion of question 2 of the Exploring Relationships between Animals and People at the TCA worksheet)

This lesson is appropriate for secondary students who already have had some experience with hand-building techniques. Alternative Lesson Three, *Simply Animals: Paper*, involves simple paper construction. Lesson Four: *Simple Animal Shapes* is appropriate for elementary students.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to assemble simple forms to make a more complex form.
2. Students will be able to integrate natural forms (inspired by animals) with traditional functional forms.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 302: Make and explain revisions in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 302: Develop and revise plans for his or her own artwork and select the best option.

CREATE: Materials, Tool and Techniques: PO 302: Demonstrate purposeful use of a range of materials, tools and techniques in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements and Principles: PO 302: Solve complex compositional problems in his or her own artwork.

Preparation

Preview *Simply Animals: Clay* PowerPoint to see sample high school students' work to help you assess whether your students have sufficient hand-building skills for the project. If you believe paper construction might be more appropriate for your students, preview *Simply Animals: Paper* PowerPoint.

Resources and Supplies

[Simply Animals: Clay PowerPoint](#)

[Self Evaluation: Animal Project \(pdf\)](#)

Student access to the internet and a printer or, alternatively, a collection of printed images of animals in books, magazines or Internet printouts.

Clay facilities (clay, clay tools, kiln, glazes, etc.)

Sketch paper and pencils

Activities

Review: Review the theme in life: "Throughout human existence people have lived around and with animals." Review the theme in art: "Many artists have chosen animals as their subject matter." Also review the unit's three key questions: 1) How can I get ideas for my art from the natural world? 2) How are complex shapes and forms made up of smaller, simpler shapes and forms? and 3) How can I transform a traditional, functional object into a lively new one?

Introduction: Display the first six slides of *Simply Animals: Clay* PowerPoint to illustrate simple and complex shapes of animals.

Definitions and Examples: Display slides -9 to define “shape” versus “form” using simple examples. Display slide 10 to show some whimsical ways people have created complex forms (animals and a tractor) by assembling simpler (stones, seashells, tanks and hay bales) forms.

Introduction to Assignment: Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by creating an animal vessel that combines the form of a traditional functional vessel with the forms of an animal.

Slide 11 shows examples of traditional, functional vessels.

Slide 12 illustrates similarity between forms in a vessel (teapot) and an animal (elephant).

Slide 13 shows an animal vessel that meets the requirements of the assignment.

Step-By-Step-Instructions: Display slides 14-18 to show steps in making an animal vessel.

Slide 14: View photographs of animals looking for similarities of forms to traditional, functional vessel.

Slide 15: Sketch plans for combining vessel and animal forms.

Slide 16: Look for ways to simplify animal forms.

Slide 17: Build simple clay forms to be assembled to create your animal vessel.

Slide 18: Bisque fire and glaze your animal vessel. (Slide 23 shows the finished work.)

Review Handsbuilding Techniques: Show slides 19-21 for review.

Slide 19 reviews scoring and application of slip when attaching clay pieces.

Slide 20 reviews simple geometric forms (and shapes) combined to create an animal vessel.

Slide 21 reviews wet clay storage, use of hand wheel and natural sponge.

Review and Sample Work: Display slides 22 and 23 for a review of the assignment and samples of completed high school work.

In-Process Feedback: When students have completed their planning sketches, ask them to partner with one or two classmates to seek feedback on selection of forms and building challenges.

Self-Evaluation: Ask students to complete a self-evaluation carefully analyzing how they integrated animal and traditional vessel forms both in words and in a sketch. Also ask them to reflect on the difficulty of particular parts of the assignment and to evaluate any additional criteria you have established or general expectations, such as writing, creativity, craftsmanship, surface decoration or use of class time.

Vocabulary

two dimensional
three dimensional
shape
form
square
cube
triangle
cone
circle
traditional
functional
vessel

fire, bisque fire
score
slip
glaze
incise
spherical
semicircle
cylinder
leather hard

Extension Ideas

MATHEMATICS: Students will discuss geometric primitives (cone, cylinder, box, wedge, sphere and torus) and use these as a way to simplify animal forms.

LITERACY: Students will complete a self-evaluation including a series of reflective questions. Answers must be complete and include any vocabulary in context.

BIOLOGY: Collaborate with a biology teacher to study animal forms and their functions.

Assessment Guides

OBJECTIVE 1: Students will be able to assemble simple forms to make a more complex form.

Exceeds Expectations: The finished piece is a well-crafted, complex form built by successfully assembling/attaching several smaller forms that complement each other visually.

Meets Expectations: The finished piece is a complex form built by successfully assembling/attaching several smaller forms.

Approaches Expectations: The finished piece includes at least one small form successfully assembled/attached to a larger form.

Fails to Meet Expectations: The piece is unfinished or smaller part/s is/are not successfully assembled/attached.

OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be able to integrate natural forms (inspired by animals) with traditional functional forms.

Exceeds Expectations: On the self-evaluation, the sketch of the animal vessel quite accurately represents the actual vessel and accurately identifies both animal and vessel parts with specificity.

Meets Expectations: On the self-evaluation, the sketch of the animal vessel clearly represents the actual vessel and accurately identifies both animal and vessel parts.

Approaches Expectations: On the self-evaluation, both animal and vessel parts are identified in a sketch and in words or are evident in the finished piece.

Fails to Meet Expectations: On the self-evaluation, either animal or vessel parts are identified without specificity or clarity either in a sketch or in words and are not evident in the finished piece.

Alternative Lesson Three

This alternative lesson using paper is designed for secondary students. Lesson Three, *Simply Animals: Clay*, is appropriate only for secondary students who already have had some experience with hand-building techniques. Lesson Four: *Simple Animal Shapes* is appropriate for elementary students.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to assemble simple forms to make a more complex form.
2. Students will be able to integrate natural forms (inspired by animals) with traditional functional forms.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 302: Make and explain revisions in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 302: Develop and revise plans for his or her own artwork and select the best option.

CREATE: Materials, Tool and Techniques: PO 302: Demonstrate purposeful use of a range of materials, tools and techniques in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements and Principles: 302: Solve complex compositional problems in his or her own artwork.

Preparation

Preview *Simply Animals: Paper* PowerPoint. If you are considering a ceramic project and believe your students may have sufficient ceramic hand-building skills, you might preview *Simply Animals: Paper* PowerPoint to see sample high school students' work.

Resources and Supplies

[Simply Animals: Paper PowerPoint](#)

Student access to the internet and a printer or, alternatively, a collection of printed images of animals in books, magazines or Internet printouts.

Undecorated paper or cardboard containers (small boxes, shopping bags, paper cups, cupcake cups, etc.)

Scissors

Transparent Tape

Sketch paper and pencils

Activities

Review: Review the theme in life: "Throughout human existence people have lived around and with animals." Review the theme in art: "Many artists have chosen animals as their subject matter." Also review the unit's three key questions: 1) How can I get ideas for my art from the natural world? 2) How are complex shapes and forms made up of smaller, simpler shapes and forms? and 3) How can I transform a traditional, functional object into a lively new one?

Introduction: Display the first six slides of *Simply Animals: Paper* PowerPoint to illustrate simple and complex shapes of animals.

Definitions and Examples: Display slides 7-9 to define “shape” versus “form” using simple examples. Display slide 10 to show some whimsical ways people have created complex forms (animals and a tractor) by assembling simpler (stones, seashells, tanks and hay bales) forms.

Assignment: Display slide 11 to show everyday paper/cardboard containers. Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by creating an animal form that combines the form of an everyday paper or cardboard container with the forms of an animal.

Step-By-Step-Instructions: Display slides 12-14 to show steps in making an animal container.

Slide 12: View photographs of animals looking for similarities of forms to everyday paper/cardboard containers. Look for ways to simplify animal forms.

Slide 13: Sketch plans for combining container and animal forms.

Slide 14: Cut, fold, or curl paper to create simple forms held in place with transparent tape. Assemble the paper forms to create the form of an animal.

Additional Samples: Show slides 15-18 to show steps in constructing a rooster and slides 19-24 for a more complex antelope constructed from a cupcake cup.

Review Assignment Details: Display slides 25.

In-Process Feedback: When students have completed their planning sketches, ask them to partner with one or two classmates to seek feedback on selection of forms and building challenges.

Self Evaluation: Ask students to complete a self evaluation carefully analyzing how they integrated animal and everyday containers both in words and in a sketch. Also ask them to reflect on the difficulty of particular parts of the assignment and to evaluate any additional criteria you have established or general expectations, such as writing, creativity, craftsmanship or use of class time.

Vocabulary

two dimensional
three dimensional
shape
form
square
triangle
circle
cube
cone
angular
simple, simplify
hemisphere, hemispherical
cylinder
rectangle
elongate

Extension Ideas

MATHEMATICS: Students will discuss geometric primitives (cone, cylinder, box, wedge, sphere and torus) and use these as a way to simplify animal forms.

LITERACY: Students will complete a self-evaluation including a series of reflective questions. Answers must be complete and include any vocabulary in context.

BIOLOGY: Collaborate with a biology teacher to study animal forms and their functions.

Assessment Guides

OBJECTIVE 1: Students will be able to assemble simple forms to make a more complex form.

Exceeds Expectations: The finished piece is a well-crafted, complex form built by successfully assembling/attaching several smaller forms that complement each other visually.

Meets Expectations: The finished piece is a complex form built by successfully assembling/attaching several smaller forms.

Approaches Expectations: The finished piece includes at least one small form successfully assembled/attached to a larger form.

Fails to Meet Expectations: The piece is unfinished or smaller part/s is/are not successfully assembled/attached.

OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be able to integrate natural forms (inspired by animals) with traditional functional forms.

Exceeds Expectations: The drawing shows an animal form that incorporates both a paper/cardboard container and additional simple forms most of which successfully suggest three-dimensionality.

Meets Expectations: The drawing shows an animal form that incorporates both a paper/cardboard container and additional simple forms, at least one of which suggest three-dimensionality.

Approaches Expectations: The drawing shows an animal broken into simpler 2D shapes.

Fails to Meet Expectations: Drawing or sketch is submitted.

Simply Animal Shapes

(Elementary)

Lesson Four

This lesson is appropriate for elementary students. Lesson Three, *Simply Animals: Clay*, is appropriate for secondary students who already have had some experience with hand-building techniques. Alternative Lesson Three, *Simply Animals: Paper*, involves simple paper construction.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to use the natural world (animals) as a source for their subject matter in art.
2. Students will be able to assemble simple geometric shapes to make more complex shapes.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 101 and 201: Contribute to a discussion of ideas for his or her artwork.

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 203: Develop plans for his or her artwork.

CREATE: Materials, Tools and Techniques: PO 102 and 202: Use materials, tools and techniques appropriately in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements and Principles: PO 101: Identify, select and use elements and principles in his or her own artwork.

Preparation

Preview *Simple Animal Shapes* PowerPoint. Decide whether you will ask you students to make construction paper images of animals or animal masks and whether you will use sticky foam.

Resources and Supplies

[Simply Animals: Shapes PowerPoint](#)

Collection of printed images of animals in books, magazines or Internet printouts

Pencils or markers

Construction Paper

Glue

MASK PROJECT

Paper masks or small paper plates with cut-out eye holes

Self-adhesive Foamie sheets or pre-cut shapes (OPTIONAL)

Activities

Review: Review the theme in life: “Throughout human existence people have lived around and with animals.” Review the theme in art: “Many artists have chosen animals as their subject matter.” Also review the unit’s first two key questions: 1) How can I get ideas for my art from the natural world? and 2) How are complex shapes and forms made up of smaller, simpler shapes and forms?

Introduction: Display the first eight slides of *Simply Animals: Paper* PowerPoint to illustrate simple and complex shapes of animals.

Assignment: Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by creating an animal (or animal mask) from simple shapes.

Step-By-Step Process: Display slides 9-19 to show how a simple, geometric shape can be found in the complex shapes of a butterfly (9-11) and a chicken (12-19).

Animal Shape Project: If you choose to ask your students to make complex animal shapes by combining simple geometric shapes, slide 16 reviews steps in the assignment and is the last slide you will display.

Animal Mask Project: If you choose to ask your student to make an animal mask, skip slide 16.

Samples: Display slides 17-28 to illustrate steps in making an animal mask. Slides 18-23 show steps in making a lion mask using construction paper. Slides 24-28 show steps in making an antelope mask using Foamie sheets.

Detailed Assignment: Display slide 29 to review the steps of making an animal mask using Foamie sheets.

In-Process Feedback: When students have finished drawing simple shapes they find in the complex shape of an animal, ask them to partner with one or two classmates to seek feedback on of their choice of simplified shapes.

Presentation: Display completed animal images or masks. Lead a discussion with the following questions: Point to a classmate's animal or mask that you believe you can identify. What animal do you believe your classmate made? What can you see in the animal or mask that makes you believe this? What geometric shapes can you see in one of your classmate's animals? Describe other simple shapes you see in your classmates' animals.

Vocabulary

complex

variety

triangle

oval

circle

similar, similarly

simple, simpler, simplify, simplifies

forehead

mane

pattern

antelope

arrange

Extension Idea

MATHEMATICS: Collaborate with classroom teacher(s) to address geometric shapes.

Assessment Guides

OBJECTIVE 1: Students will be able to use the natural world (animals) as a source for their subject matter in art.

Exceeds Expectations: The student's photograph of an animal is marked with simple geometric shapes indicating defining characteristics of that animal.

Meets Expectations: The student's photograph of an animal is marked with simple geometric shapes indicating defining characteristics of that animal.

Approaches Expectations: The student's photograph of an animal is marked with outlines of some shapes.

Fails to Meet Expectations: The student submitted a photograph of an animal with marks.

OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be able to assemble simple geometric shapes to make more complex shapes.

Exceeds Expectations: The student carefully arranged and glued simple geometric pieces of paper on a background (or pieces of Foamie sheets on mask) in a way that creates a complex, animal-like shape.

Meets Expectations: The student carefully arranged and glued pieces of paper on a background in a way that creates a complex, animal-like shape.

Approaches Expectations: The student glued pieces of paper on a background (or pieces of Foamie sheets on mask) in a way that suggests an animal-like shape.

Fails to Meet Expectations: The student submitted pieces of paper glued to a background (or pieces of Foamie sheets on mask).