

LESSON 1

BIRDS AND CULTURE



Students will analyze how historic cultures recognized and were influenced by birds through examining ancient art forms and creating their own motifs.



1

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will analyze how historic cultures recognized and were influenced by birds through examining ancient art forms and creating their own motifs.

Subjects

Science, Art History

Standards

Science as Inquiry

Life Science

Objectives

Students will:

1. Observe and trace bird motifs in various pictures of artifacts.
2. Theorize how cultures were influenced by birds by examining their symbolism.
3. Listen to bird stories.
4. Draw or create a model of a bird motif.
5. Discuss the influence and symbolism of birds on indigenous cultures.

Preparation

Make copies of bird motifs on **Master Page 1.5 - 1.8**; have available paper, drawing instruments, modeling clay (optional) and a teacher copy of historic bird stories on **Master Page 1.4**.

Time

Two 50 minute sessions

Vocabulary

archaeology, artifact, beak, claw, culture, motif, symbolism

BIRDS AND CULTURE

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historically, humans have inhabited the Santa Cruz River Valley since the fourth century. Inhabitants of three recent cultures, the O'odham, Spanish-Mexican and American, have created impacts on nature that have been preserved and recorded. Each culture utilized the natural resources of the habitat in distinct ways and left evidence of their everyday lifestyles in the form of art, tools, burial grounds, village buildings and through altering the natural landscape.

As a result of human settlement on and near the banks of the Santa Cruz River, the habitats needed by resident and migratory birds have been altered, in many cases severely. Therefore, we ask the question: What impact has this had on resident and migratory bird species?

By looking at historic records and art we are able to discern which species of birds lived or visited the Santa Cruz River Valley. By observing birds

today, we can compare which species have persisted over time.

It would be speculation to say that past cultures appreciated and enjoyed birds the way we do today. However, archeological sites world-wide reveal a variety of bird motifs, in such forms as petroglyphs and birds etched or painted on functional tools.

In what ways were ancient cultures influenced or affected by natural bird populations, the number of species, their migration patterns, their songs, colors and flight? And in what ways have human cultures affected bird species?

Evidence of the influence that birds have had on humans is revealed in ancient Native American designs in which bird motifs reflect the importance of this magical creature which soared between man's world and the realm of the spirits. Bird species we continue to observe today are represented on Anazazi and

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Mimbres pottery, Navaho rugs, cave art and rock etchings throughout Arizona. These species include the Red-winged Blackbird, eagle, Great Blue Heron, Greater Roadrunner, Northern Cardinal, Vermilion Flycatcher, curlew and Turkey Vulture.

Other art forms such as stories, songs, dances and clothing also incorporate birds and demonstrate the effect and influence of birds on past cultures.

The Santa Cruz River valley is a long, narrow oasis in a otherwise dry, hot and inhospitable desert. Both humans and birds have sought refuge along the rivers edge where there is shade, water, food and shelter. The humans and the birds, who used the same environment, were bound to impact each others lives.



Part 1

Introduction to Bird Artifacts

1. Make copies of ***Bird Motifs*** on **Master Pages 1.5 - 1.8**, enough for one page per workgroup .
2. Use the examples of the copied bird motifs to discuss with your class how birds influenced people and how different cultures viewed birds. Augment the pictures with examples from other cultures and artwork. (See Resources)
3. Divide your class into workgroups and give each group one page, varied, from **Master Pages 1.5 - 1.8**.
4. Encourage students to make casual obser-

ventions of the bird motifs, just having fun looking at the different pictures.

5. Hand out tracing paper and allow time for each student to trace over a bird motif of their choice.



Part 2

Cultures' Relationship to Birds

1. Copy on the board or make an overhead of the following chart:

COMPARING BIRD MOTIFS

Species	Bird Parts	Symbolism

2. While looking at bird motifs on **Master Pages 1.5 -1.8**, brainstorm and list any recognizable bird species or parts of a bird in the appropriate columns. Then, write symbolism or meanings generated from your lists.

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3. Using the teacher key below, augment information already listed by students.

(teacher key)

Species	Bird Parts	Symbolism
<i>Crow</i>	<i>Feather</i>	<i>Tombstone</i>
<i>Raven</i>	<i>Claw</i>	<i>Wisdom</i>
<i>Comorant</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Truth</i>
<i>Eagle</i>	<i>Wings</i>	<i>Mystery</i>
<i>Hawk</i>	<i>Feet</i>	<i>Good/ Evil</i>
<i>Pigeon</i>	<i>Beak</i>	<i>Nature</i>
<i>Quail</i>		<i>Intelligence</i>
<i>Cuckoo</i>		<i>Angels</i>
<i>Falcon</i>		<i>Flight</i>
<i>Duck</i>		<i>Food</i>
<i>Owl</i>		<i>Adornments</i>
<i>Geese</i>		<i>Hieroglyphic</i>
<i>Vulture</i>		<i>National Icon</i>
<i>Ibis</i>		<i>Alphabet</i>
<i>Parrot</i>		<i>Legends</i>
		<i>Beauty</i>
		<i>Bravery</i>
		<i>Bad Luck</i>
		<i>Hunting</i>
		<i>Peace/ War</i>

Part 3

Creating Bird Motifs

1. Collect the handouts, (Master Pages 1.5 - 1.8).
2. Read stories related to birds (see Master Page 1.4), whenever possible integrating storytelling techniques.
3. Discuss and revisit symbolism as it pertains to the story.
4. Hand out colored pencils and paper, or modeling clay and ask students to create their own, original bird motif different from those on the handouts. Ask the students to keep in mind the symbolism of the motif they created.



*7th Grade Student Art
Calabasas Middle School*

4. Revisit the discussion (Part 1, #2) about cultures and birds. Can students augment information already discussed?

Enrichment

- Use replicas of artifacts instead of, or in addition to, photocopied motifs.
- Ask students to do a library/magazine search for prehistoric motifs. Utilize these in their drawings.
- Discuss current art objects, icons, advertisements, etc. that may function in a similar way to prehistoric motifs.

The O'odham Story of Ca Kai Choo and Bun As passed down to Nathan Allen

Tohono is the home of Ca Kai Choo (quail) and Bun (coyote). Ca Kai Choo often played tricks on Bun. One time they took some of his body fat while he slept. Bun awoke and was angry! He chased the Ca Kai Choo, but they flew to safety, into their little holes along the akimel (river). Bun went to the first hole and reached in. He grabbed the first Ca Kai Choo and growled, "Are you the one who did this to me?" A tiny peep, "No! try the next hole," was heard. And so Bun went from hole to hole until he came to the last one. "Was it you?" Again a tiny peep, "No! try the next hole." Bun stuck his paw into the next hole full of hanum (cholla)! Bun howled with pain as the Ca Kai Choo ran away with glee and laughter. Again Ca Kai Choo had gotten the best of Bun, their worst enemy!



How the People got Fire - An Apache Story (From Goddard 1918)

"There were people living here on the earth. Coyote, birds, or hawks were all people. There was no fire and the only ones who had fire would not give it away. The others, many people, were without fire. Martens, living in the tops of tall pine trees were the only ones who had fire but they would not give any of it away. Those who were living below them [asked] how they should get fire. They decided to play hide the ball and sent out invitations for everybody to come to the game. They gathered under the trees and shouted to the martens to come down and bring some fire [so they could] play hide the ball. They came down bringing the fire with them. They put wood on the fire at the camping place and stood around it in four lines so that there was no way anyone could run off with the fire. None of the people who didn't have fire were in the center of the circle."

"Coyote, who was lying down some way off, said he would get the fire and run off with it. They were playing and having a good time. Those who owned the fire were winning and they began to dance. Coyote had a torch prepared by tying bark under his tail. He got up and came to those who were dancing. 'Have a good time my cousins,' he said. 'My foot pains me. Dance for me. Separate and let me through to the fire.' They were dancing and having a good time [and ignored him]. When it was nearly daylight, Coyote said that he was going to dance. He told the others to dance vigorously, bending their knees. He urged them to do this repeatedly. Finally, he danced and switched his tail into the fire. They called to him that his tail was likely to catch on fire. He assured them that it would not."

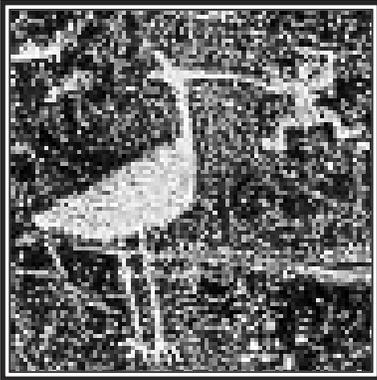
"Then day broke. He stuck his tail in the fire again and it took fire. 'Your tail is burning cousin.' He jumped over four lines of dancers who were in circles around the fire and ran off. The people who were stingy of their fire ran after him. Coyote passed the fire to Night Hawk who jumped on it and went with it. . . Night Hawk kept flying and jumping. Those who had the fire nearly caught him for he was exhausted. . . He gave the fire to Roadrunner who ran away with it. . ."

"Roadrunner ran on carrying the fire [and] those who were pursuing him nearly overtook him. He was exhausted. When they caught him, he gave the fire to Buzzard who flew away with it. [They chased Buzzard] until he was worn out. He gave the fire to Hummingbird."

"They saw the smoke of a fire arising in the distance from the top of a mountain. It was Hummingbird who had set the fire. There was a fire too on the top of another mountain. Everywhere, fires were burning. It was Hummingbird who had accomplished all this. Those who had owned the fire turned back saying it was now impossible to recover the fire."

"The People who had been without fire were now all supplied with it. They were happy about it and expressed their thanks to Coyote."

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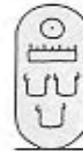
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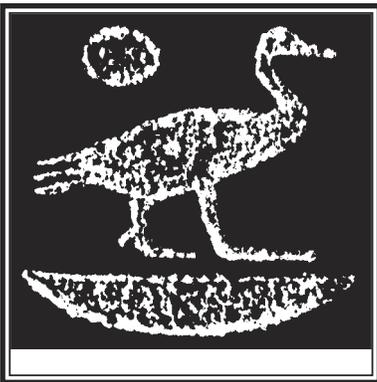
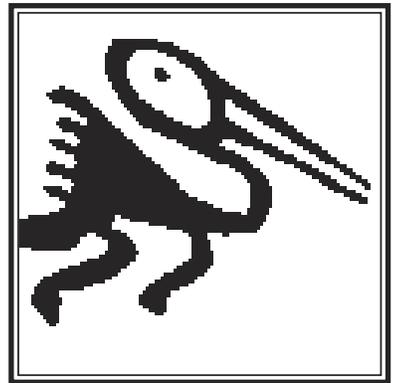
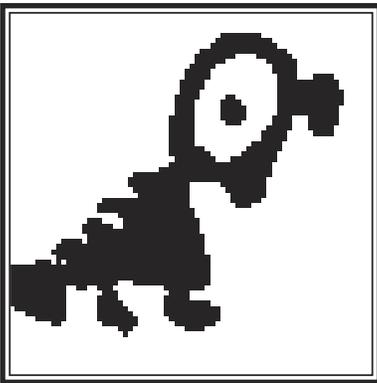
Khufu (Cheops)



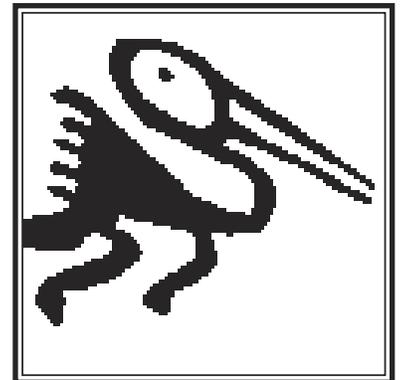
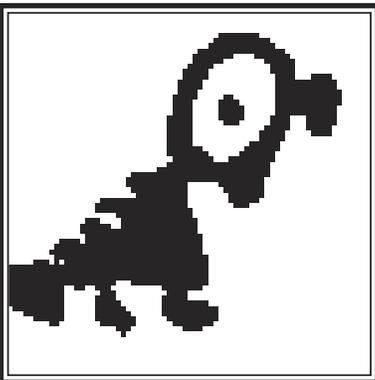
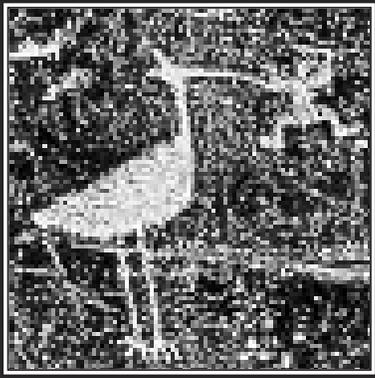
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Khufu (Cheops)



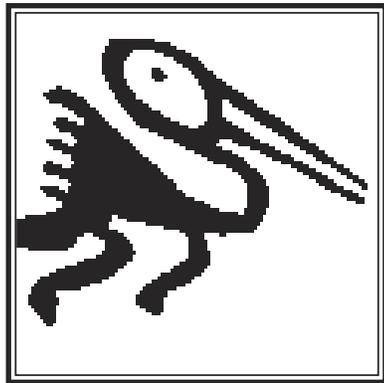
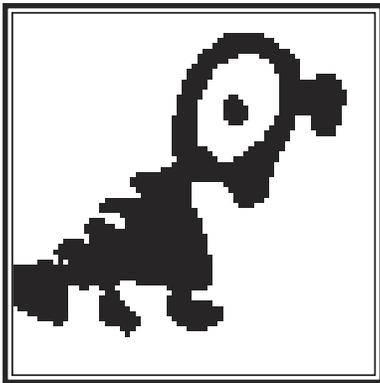
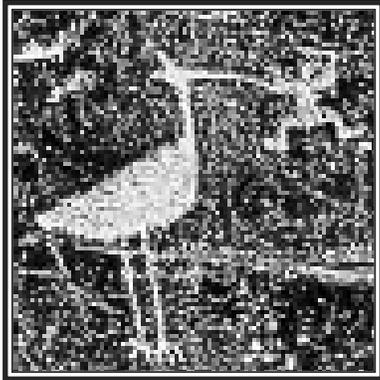
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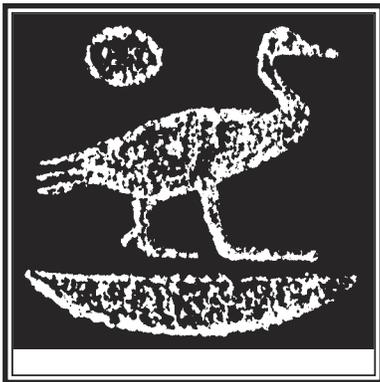
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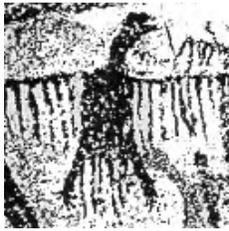
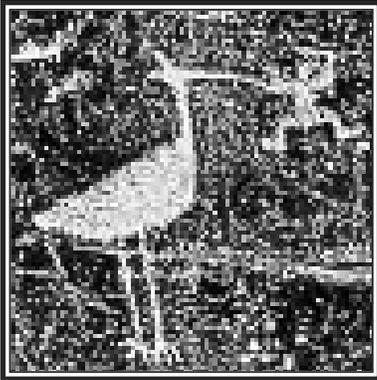
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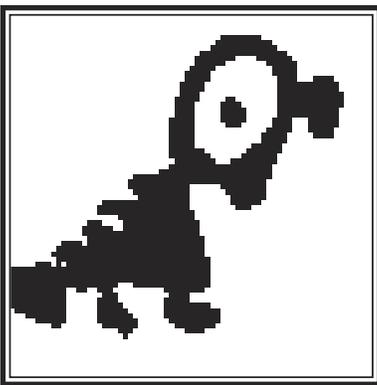
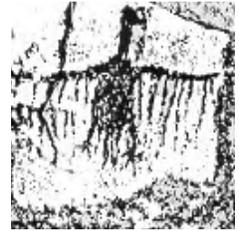
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Ramses II



Ramses III



Ptolemy I



Ptolemy

