



for birds
for people
for ever

String birds – teachers' notes

Background information

Discuss the birds in the silhouettes and find out which birds the children have seen, where, and if they know what colours the plumage are. Look at books to see how the feathers lie. Use words like 'straight', 'curved', 'pointed'.

Some birds change their plumage in the spring when they look for a mate. Ask the children why brightly coloured feathers and special feathers, such as a crest, may appear. Ask the children why it is often the males that have this plumage, and why the females tend to be drab colours (the male colours attract the females, and warn other males to keep off the territory, while the drab colours of the female give some camouflage when on the nest). This links with the 'Living Things' aspects of the Science curriculum (how animals are suited to their environment).

Resources

Reference books on birds

Copies of the silhouettes (pdf downloads)

Card (or pre-cut shapes for children who can't use scissors)

Paper

Scissors and glue

String (hard, but not too thick)

Wax crayons

The activity

1. Allow each child to choose a bird silhouette and make sure they remember the name of the bird. Give them the silhouette to cut out. Avoid small silhouettes because it will be difficult to stick string onto them.
2. Children glue the silhouette on to card and then cut it out. It is more practical to cut around the legs as if the two were one.
3. Cover with glue, and begin to lay on the string in the chosen directions, to entirely cover the black area, with the strings closely touching. Separate the legs at this point. Allow to dry.
4. When dry, practise taking rubbings from the string bird by placing paper over the bird and rubbing hard with the side of a wax crayon. Practice is needed to keep the paper in position, and to find out how hard to press with the crayon.
5. Decide on a format for the final piece.
6. Discuss the finished work. Get the children to suggest ways of improving their work and developing their ideas.

Extension activity

Use the string as a stencil to paint around, forming a repeated design.