

## Creative Creatures

In this lesson, students will practice critical and creative thinking skills such as looking closely, imagining possibilities, seeing from multiple perspectives, and trying multiple solutions to design a creature that fits the environment they imagine in a work of art.

### Grade Level

Grades 1–5

### Common Core Academic State Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1-5.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1-5.7](#)

### Pennsylvania Academic Standards

- [3.1.1-5.A2](#)
- [3.1.1-5.C2](#)
- [3.4.1-5.C1](#)
- [9.3.1-5.A](#)



*Person in the Presence of Nature, 1935*

Joan Miró (Spanish)

Oil and aqueous medium on cardboard

29 3/4 x 41 5/8 inches (75.6 x 105.7 cm)

Framed: 31 1/2 x 43 5/16

The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950  
1950.134.149

### Art Images Required

Click on the title below to view high-resolution photographs on the Philadelphia Museum of Art website. Images that are also available in the Artstor Digital Library are indicated by an ID number or search phrase.

- [Person in the Presence of Nature, 1935, by Joan Miró](#)  
Artstor: 1950-134-149

### Lesson Objectives/Essential Questions

1. How does a visual artist communicate sensory information such as temperature, smell, sound, etc.?
2. What types of characteristics does an animal need to survive in its environment?
3. What are good strategies for solving a problem?

### Materials Needed

- Screen for projecting images
- Leftover materials such as recyclables or art room scraps
- Student handout cut in half-sheets (see Appendix 1)

## Lesson Process

### PART 1: DEFINING THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Project the Miró painting for the students to observe. Introduce the lesson by telling them that they will be using their imaginations to analyze the painting as a place where creatures could live.
2. Distribute Appendix 1 to the class and instruct students to complete it, individually or in pairs. Before students begin working on the handout, you might have the group brainstorm a few answers together. Additionally, you might want to clarify that students could use the “feel” category to describe either what they feel on their skin, what they feel inside, or both.
3. Invite students to share their ideas in each sensory category. At each suggestion, prompt students to elaborate and describe what they saw in the painting that made them think that. Allow for conflicting suggestions, clarifying that each student is free to imagine the environment exactly as they see it.
4. On the reverse side of the handout, have each student brainstorm the characteristics of a creature that would be ideally designed to thrive in the environment they have defined. It may be helpful to share examples from nature of different environments and adaptations.

### PART 2: DESIGNING YOUR CREATURE

1. Review your selection of scrap materials and, based on your students’ abilities, consider any limitations you might set in place to design an appropriate challenge. For example, if you are providing them with wire, pipe cleaners, or other flexible connectors, you could create a rule that they should not use any adhesives such as glue or tape.
2. Challenge your students to design a creature, based on their brainstorming notes and within the material limitations you set, that would thrive in the environment they imagined in the Miró painting. Prompt them to consider the basic needs of their creature, what is available, and how the creature might have adapted to the challenges of the environment.
3. Have students present their creatures, holding them up to the screen to show where they would be in the environment. During their presentation, they should reflect on the design process as well as on their final creature.

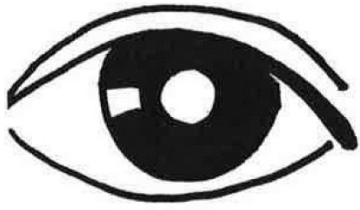
## Assessment

Have students write up their reflection on the project, responding to the following questions and prompts:

- Describe the characteristics of your creature.
- What are the basic needs of your creature and how is it adapted to survive in the environment of the painting?
- Describe your design process. Did your first idea work or did you have to consider other solutions? What was the most challenging thing that happened and how did you solve it?

### Enrichment

- Compare the Miró painting to other landscapes and abstract paintings. Have students select another work of art and create a presentation where they describe why it would or would not survive in the new place.
- Select the real world biome most similar to the environment you imagined in the painting. What kind of creatures thrive in that habitat? How have they adapted to their surroundings?



I See

---

---

---

---



I Hear

---

---

---

---



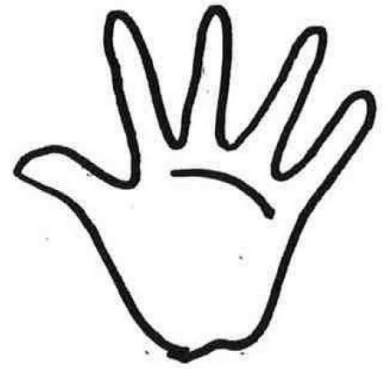
I Smell

---

---

---

---



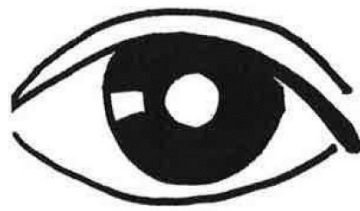
I Feel

---

---

---

---



I See

---

---

---

---



I Hear

---

---

---

---



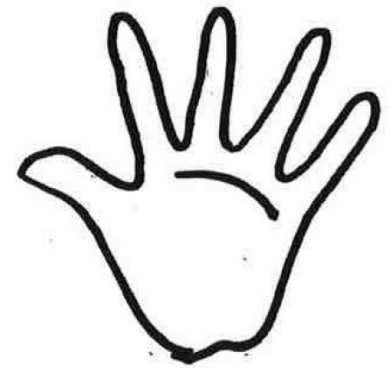
I Smell

---

---

---

---



I Feel

---

---

---

---