



AT HOME TEACHING AND LEARNING  
**BIRD STUDY:  
OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING**

WITH EMMA HEWETT-SMILES

YEAR LEVELS: 6 - 7

**OVERVIEW**

This activity is centred around building skills in observational drawing with a focus on shape and proportion.

**ART ELEMENTS & PRINCIPLES**

Shape, Tone

**CROSS-CURRICULUM /  
CAPABILITIES LINKS**

Science



## DISCUSS

Look at the reference images of birds provided or find images of birds in a book or online.

Discuss shape and proportion.

What is shape? What is proportion? How can these elements affect our drawings?

Demonstrate a successful observational drawing:

(1) Take time to firstly observe shapes of object and how this will work on your page.

(2) Press lightly to create basic shapes – no erasing! (Mistakes help us get it right, erasing means we're back to square one)

(3) Refine the shapes: Go over correct lines, and now we can erase the lines we don't need.

(4) Apply tone to create form.

(5) Apply detail and texture. (It is important that this is done last! We cannot put in windows and carpet when the walls aren't up yet, can we?)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

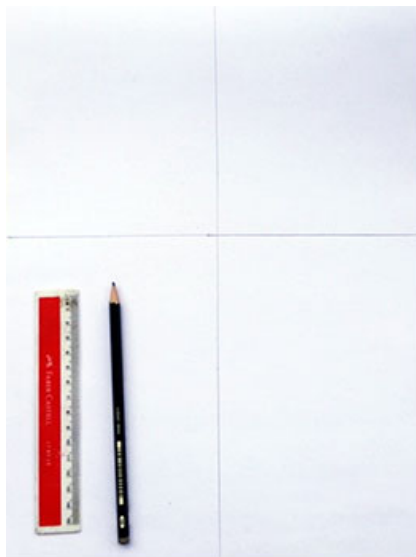
Students will:

- Make drawings from observation to create realistic shape and tone
- Define:

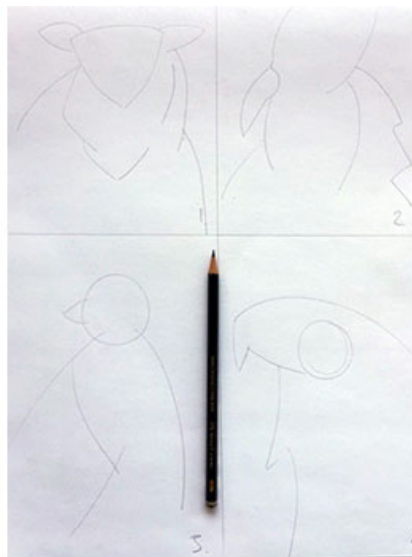
**Tone** (an art element that refers to the light and dark shades of a colour)

**Texture** (an art element that describes the surface of an object)

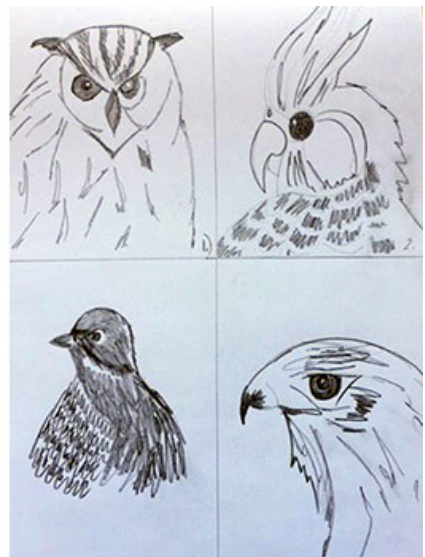
**Proportion** (an art principle that refers to the relative size of parts of a whole)



Step One



Step Two



Step Three

## MAKE

**Step 1:** Students begin by dividing one page in their visual diary or paper into four equal sections using a ruler and greylead pencil.

**Step 2:** In each section, students are to draw a different bird using the photos to observe shape and proportion.

**Step 3:** Students draw their four different birds from observation using the reference images of birds. You may find it easier to print the bird photos if possible, or draw directly from a computer/device screen.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Choose your most successful bird drawing to complete again, this time adding colour using oil pastels.

## DISCUSSION / REFLECTION

- How can the technique of drawing from observation support art creation?
- How can the art elements and principles be manipulated to enhance artworks?
- Reflective thinking exercise: Students reflect and write notes under / next to each drawing in dot-point; What techniques did they use? Describe how you used shape? Describe how you used tone? How did you make the work (describe the process)? How could each drawing be improved? Discuss the importance of reflecting on work in order to improve.
- Revisit key words and learning intention. Did we meet our learning intention?

## MATERIALS

- Paper / Visual Diary
- Greylead Pencil
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Reference Images (Birds)
- Oil Pastels (*optional for extension activity*)

## INSPIRATION

### RELATED ARTWORK, LINKS & SOURCES

Bird images sourced from Wikimedia Commons

Bird image 1 By Benjamint444

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2848935>

Bird image 2 By Fir0002

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1535942>

Bird image 3 By JJ Harrison (<https://www.jjharrison.com.au/>)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=86320370>

Bird image 4 By JJ Harrison (<https://www.jjharrison.com.au/>)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=83889267>