

LESSON PLAN

LEO CARRILLO HISTORY & ART PROGRAM

Project Title: Patterned Peacock Feather

Theme: Ranch Wildlife

Age Range: 9-10 years old/Fourth Grade

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Students will create a work of art capturing a close-up, or zoomed in, view of a peacock feather. Students will consider the shapes and lines they notice in the natural feather, and design an abstract, decorative interpretation using patterns and color.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (read or discuss)

At the Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park in Carlsbad, California, Leo Carrillo created a retreat that was reminiscent of the ranchos of his childhood. Leo fondly remembered peafowl wandering his uncle's ranch, so Leo brought them here to his ranch in Carlsbad. The descendants of those original birds are the ones that ranch visitors see today.

For thousands of years, peacocks have been prized throughout the world as ornamental birds. They were often a symbol of wealth and prestige. Although commonly called peacocks, the proper term for these birds is peafowl. Peacocks are the colorful iridescent blue males, and the more neutral toned females are peahens. Wondering why the females don't have magnificent feathers like the males? Peahens are the ones who nest and set on the eggs. Brown or neutral feathers make it easier for them to blend into their surroundings while nesting, making them less of a target for predators.

The most decorative feathers of the peacock are his tail feathers, called a train. Peacock feathers accounts for 60 percent of the bird's total body length and with a wingspan measuring 5 feet, it is one of the largest flying birds in the world. The color of the peacock's tail varies every time you look at them from a different angle. The feathers on the tail possess eye-like beautiful spots with red, golden, and green feathers surrounding the eyespots. The feathers possess microscopic 'crystal-like structures', which tend to reflect various wavelengths of lights based on their spacing. The tiny crystal-resembling structures are the ones that create the fluorescent colors.

Males display their long feather train by raising it into the characteristic fan shape. Surprisingly, the peacock's long feather train does not interfere with its flight. The beautiful feathers of the male's fantail, looking like a hundred open eyes, are shed every summer, after mating season, and they begin growing back a new set for the next year soon afterward.

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What would you imagine a peacock feather to look like if you were to look at it zoomed-in, or up-close? What details would you see?
- If you were going to recreate, or enhance the peacock feather, what design elements would you add to make it meaningful to you?

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VOCABULARY:

Peacock- a male peafowl, which has very long tail feathers that have eye-like markings and can be fanned out in display

Feather - any of the flat appendages growing from a bird's skin and forming its plumage

Pattern - a repeated decorative design

Repetition - a recurrence of a particular line, pattern, shape, or other visual element

Line – a mark that spans a distance between two points that can be thick or thin, long or short, can go in different directions, can be curvy or straight

Shape - a flat, enclosed area created through lines, textures, colors, or an area enclosed by other shapes

Color – element of art that refers to reflective light, color has three main characteristics: hue (red, green, blue, etc.), value (how light or dark it is), and intensity (how bright or dull it is)

Zoomed-In - to view an image up close so it seems bigger, where more details are noticed

Composition - the placement or arrangement of visual elements in a work of art

Balance - refers to the sense of distribution of perceived visual weights that offset one another

PROJECT MATERIALS:

- White Paper (any size will work)
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Black Sharpie or Marker
- Colored Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Begin by reading or having a brief discussion about the peacock and peacock feather. If students develop questions about peacocks that aren't answered here, have them research and look up the answers online to learn more. Students will investigate the zoomed-in picture of the peacock feather (Fig. 1-D) and ask the Artful Thinking (see/think/wonder) and Studio Habit of Mind-Looking Closely questions.

2. Students will consider the different parts of a peacock feather (Fig. 2) and create their own zoomed-in peacock feather work of art using patterned designs that are meaningful to them.

3. *Drawing the Peacock Feather:*

- Have students begin with their white paper, pencil and eraser. Students will lightly draw the egg-shape (outside of the "eye") on their paper, considering the size and where in their composition it will be placed

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(in the center? off to one side? at the top or bottom?). The egg shape should be quite large on the paper to give the impression of it being up-close.

- Next, students will draw the inside contour line within the egg shape, in the same shape. They will add the horizontal oval within their egg shapes, and the upside-down heart shape (or circle with a triangle notch cut out) within the oval. From the bottom of the larger egg shape, students will draw both sides of the stem of their feather, that will extend off the edge of the page.
- Students will add upward curvy lines starting from the top of the larger egg shape and down along both sides of the stem, spreading outward to the edges of the paper (these represent the barbs of the feather). Experiment with different widths of space between the lines, having some closer together and some further apart (this is the area students will add patterning).
- Students will go over their penciled lines with their black sharpie or marker. They can erase any pencil lines that are showing.

4. *Add patterning:* Using their black sharpie or marker, students will fill the space between the feather lines, or barbs, with patterning. Come up with your own personal designs, or refer to the patterning images (Fig. 3) for inspiration. Students should consider using images and shapes that are meaningful and inspiring to them. Students should leave some of the spaces between the lines blank, creating some negative space in their composition. Students should consider balance and try not to put extremely bold and solid pattern designs next to each other in their layout.

5. *Add Color!* Once the student is happy with their peacock feather composition and design, they can use colored pencils to add color to the separate spaces. When applying color, students should consider color relations and contrasts; color intensity (how bright or dull the colors are) and color value (how light or dark the colors are). Encourage students to title and sign their work of art.

6. When students have completed their artwork, have them reflect and share:

- What do you like best about your artwork?
- Why did you choose the patterned shapes you did?
- What do you want people to notice about your work of art?
- What did you learn from creating this work of art?

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

Artful Thinking:

Questioning and Investigating – See/Think/Wonder

- What do you see?
- What do you think about what you see?
- What do you wonder about?

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations based on what they see. By separating the two questions, What do you see? and What do you think about what you see?, the routine helps students distinguish between observations and interpretations. By encouraging students to wonder and ask questions, the routine stimulates curiosity and helps students reach for new connections.

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Studio Habits of Mind:

Observe: Looking Closely

Sample Questions:

- What is the first thing you notice about the peacock feather?
- What colors do you notice?
- Describe what shapes you see?
- What different types of lines do you see?
- What do you think the peacock feather would feel like if you could touch it?

Express: Finding Meaning

Encourage students to put meaning into their work of art to make it personal. What images do they connect with that they might include in their peacock feather design? How will their artwork represent them, or what they want to say, by image and color choice? The meaning of their artwork can change and grow as the student develops it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Leo Carrillo Peacock Brochure:

<https://www.carlsbadca.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=44346>

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ART INSPIRATION:

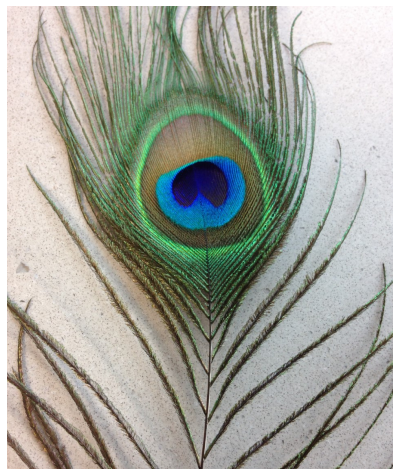
Fig. 1 - Zooming in on a Peacock Feather



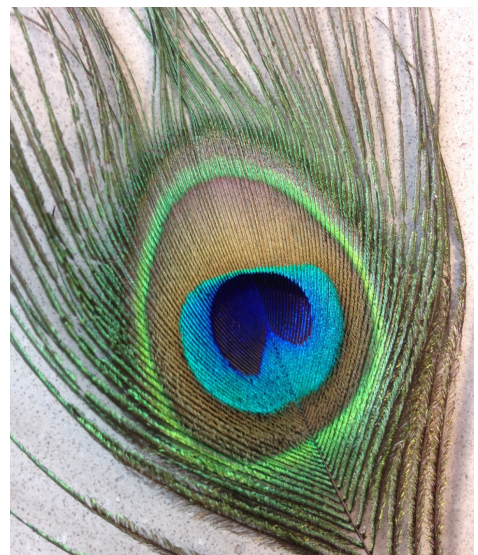
A.



B.



C.



D.

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Fig. 2 – Parts of the Peacock Feather

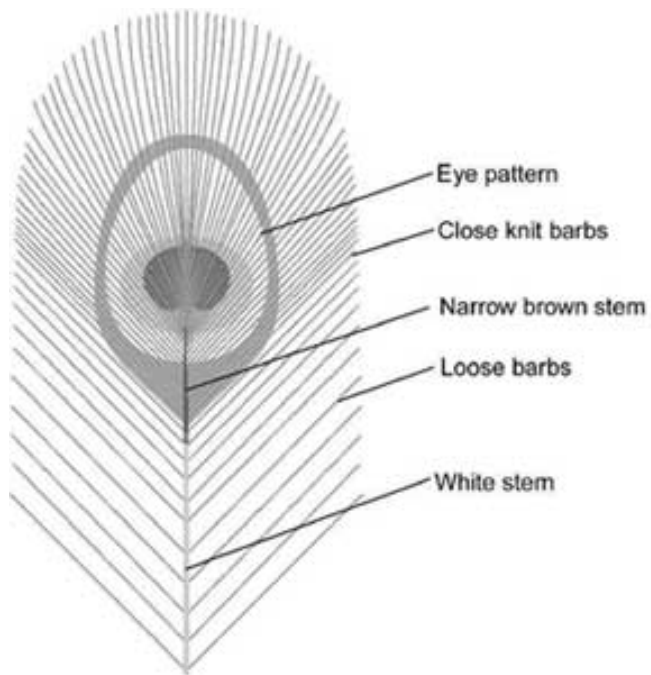
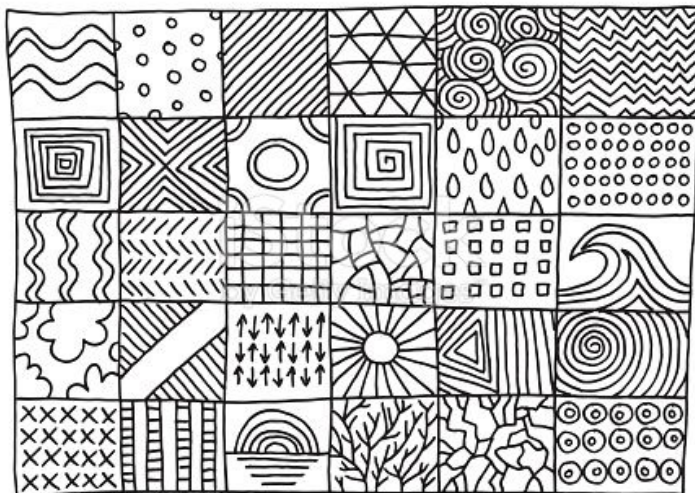


Fig. 3 - Patterning Inspirations



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Fig. 4 – Visual Step-by-Step

1.



2.



3.



4.

