

Trend Task: Bird Battle



Approach:	Independent	Year:	4 & 8
Focus:	Students can compose a picture by creating, selecting and assembling shapes, colours and textures in ways that give expressive impact.	Time:	40 mins
Resources:	Video on laptop computer. Per student: 1 sets of 6 papers, 1 pair scissors, 1 gluestick, 1 base sheet.		

Questions / instructions:

This activity uses the computer.

Put one set of papers, a base sheet and a pair of scissors at each student's independent workspace. Do not put out glue sticks yet.

In this activity you are going to make a picture by cutting, tearing and arranging different pieces of paper. Your picture is to show a couple of birds fighting to get the few scraps of food. Try to imagine two very excited and extremely hungry birds as they fight and battle to get a share of the food scraps.

We'll watch a video to help you think about what your birds might look like — and how they will be behaving.

Click the *Bird Battle* button.



[No voiceover; sound of screaming seagulls only]

Your birds don't have to look the same as the ones you saw in the video. You don't even have to show the whole bodies of the birds. Instead, you might choose to focus on the parts of their bodies — like their hungry, screaming heads, their pushy shoulders, grabby legs, flapping wings and ruffled feathers. You may want to show hungry expressions, and how desperate they are for food as they poke, flap, scratch and scabble.

Try to make your birds interesting and active. Just think what they will look like — how badly they are behaving — and the terrible screeching noises they would be making as they rudely and roughly grab and snatch at the food scraps.

Remember to use your papers in interesting ways — by cutting, tearing, overlapping and arranging.

Don't make too many little pieces of paper or it will take too long to stick them down. And please don't make any scenery — just the birds. Make them as big as you can.

10 minutes before the end of this activity I will give you a glue stick so that you can glue your picture into place.

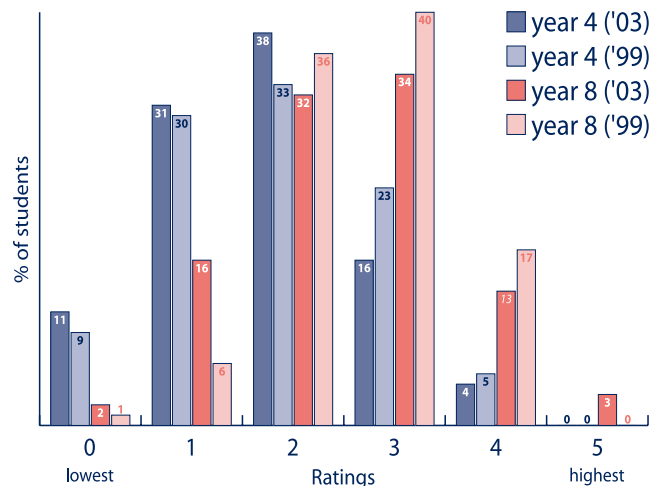
You have **30 minutes** altogether to make your picture.

After 20 minutes give out the glue sticks and tell the students they have 10 minutes to finish off.

Encourage students to use all of the available time.

When 30 minutes is up, prepare to collect in students' work.

Global Ratings: Bird Battle



Key attributes: (0 low – 3 high)

expressiveness: image relevant to the task; expressiveness, fantasy, imagination

composition: unity; balance but not necessarily symmetry

detail: finer features included; variety of shapes; use of textural and tonal contrast (e.g. torn/cut, textured/plain, light/dark, narrow/wide, delicate/bold)

use of media: edge quality; use of overlap, overlay, folding, crushing, 3-dimensionality

Global rating: (0 low – 5 high)

	Mean Score 2003 ('99)	
	year 4	year 8
expressiveness:	1.35 (1.28)	1.79 (1.85)
composition:	1.41 (1.49)	1.92 (2.04)
detail:	1.24 (1.32)	1.65 (1.96)
use of media:	1.15 (1.26)	1.57 (1.80)
Global rating:	1.71 (1.84)	2.49 (2.65)

Commentary:

In this trend task, the work produced by students in 2003 was compared with a carefully selected sample of the work produced by students in 1999. Both sets of work were assessed by the same team of teacher markers. Overall, there was little difference in mean scores on analytic and global ratings across the four-year period for year 4 and year 8 students respectively, although some growth of skill from year 4 to year 8 was apparent in both 1999 and 2003. For example, the work of 16% of year 8 students compared with 4% of year 4 students in 2003 was given a global rating of 4 or 5 on a six-point scale. The wide range of work produced by students showed that most were able to make a good attempt at constructing visual images with defined materials to depict a prescribed event (birds competing for food).

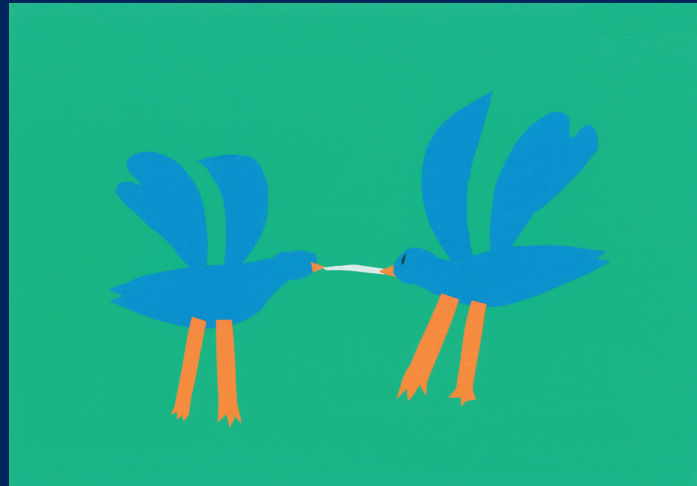
EXEMPLARS –

Key criteria: expressiveness, composition / space / shapes, details, media skills.

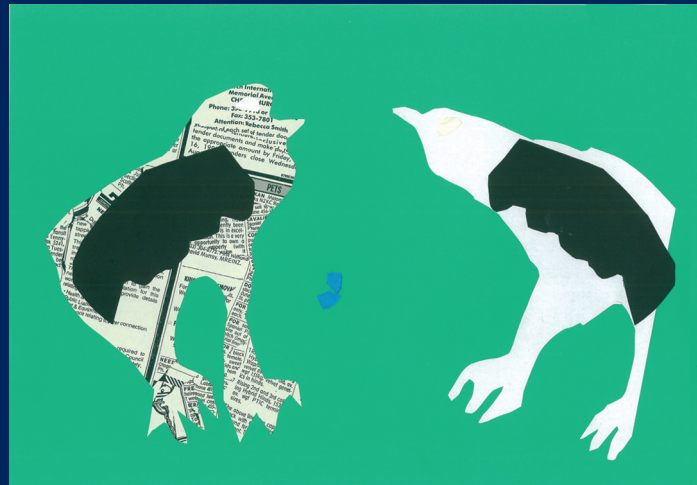
MID RANGE EXEMPLARS:

The text offers possible answers to two diagnostic questions a teacher might pose:
What can the student do? Where to next?

Here our squabbling birds are shown as a tug-of-war between a neat matching pair. Our attention is drawn to the white strip of food tugged between their beaks. A common feature of mid-range work is that the drama of the moment is reduced by a concern for symmetry and a standardized symbol for "bird". By paying attention to the differences between individuals in both shape and movement, more could have been expressed. Collage lends itself to exploration before sticking down. Placement of each part on the page could have been explored to suggest who might be the victor in the battle.



This student has developed refreshingly unique symbols for "bird", capable of expressing rebellious defensiveness and haughty dominance through movements emphasising leaning back and thrusting forward. They have been identified through posture and colouring. The two main characters are so caught up in their drama that the small morsel of food seems temporarily forgotten. The wings hug the bodies and the white eyes disappear in a loss of contrast when placed on light coloured heads. More could have been made of including the wings and eye glance into the drama.



Big bird, little hunched bird, minimalist food scrap. The use of feather, beak, leg elements to build differences in the birds is effective but becomes a little confusing when similar dark colours and shapes are used for the bird's body and leg. The student had access to white paper as well but chose not to include this possibility in the image. The characters are on stage but there is too much intervening space to establish a squabble yet.



MID RANGE EXEMPLARS CONTINUED:

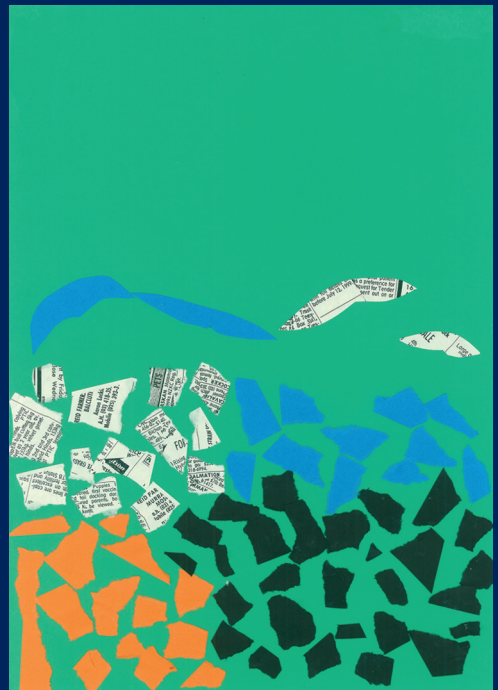
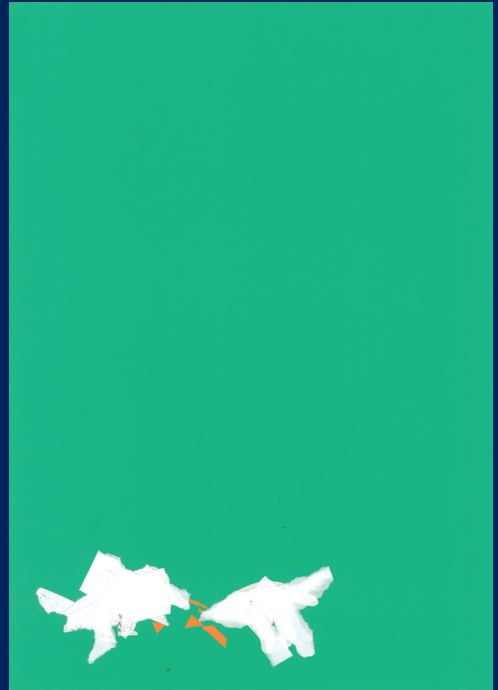


These two wonderfully tangled creatures strain upwards, flap and wrestle together to reach the food scraps. Their separate shapes take some sorting out as both birds have a grey fringe of feathers on their wings. The student could have chosen the newsprint texture to help separate out the characters. Often students working in collage at this level initially expect a cut scissor line to behave like a drawn line – hence the fringing which works conceptually but not visually. Most of the drama is happening in the wings and the head, but we lack a clear symbol for moveable beaks because of the view taken. The legs feel uninvolved at this stage. Perhaps the student’s approach to cutting out the whole bird in one piece was a strategic decision but this meant fewer options when it came to moving parts around for dramatic effect.



There is no doubting the source of the squabble. The three food scraps hold an immobile centre stage while beaks and webbed feet descend. There is something heraldic about the symmetrically placed webbed feet. They tend not to have any sense of threat by either shape or placement. The student has chosen an interesting close-up with shapes that have both torn and cut edges. But with close-up comes the need for detail and a logic of the parts attaching themselves outside the picture frame. Without those cues the viewer is left slightly puzzled as to what bits belong to whom.

LOW RANGE EXEMPLARS:



HIGH RANGE EXEMPLARS:



Top

