

Firebird video script

In this activity you are going to draw a picture of a make-believe creature called a firebird.

This is not an ordinary picture of ordinary things. It is a picture that comes from your imagination. An exciting, bright and colourful picture, using your own ideas and all of your imagination.

You have crayons and pastels to work with. Try to use them so that the colours and shapes are really strong, bright and exciting.

You will need to think which colours will make your firebird bright and exciting. You can mix your own special blend of colours on the paper by using different crayons and pastels over the top of each other. Use both the pastels and crayons for your picture.

Now let's think about the first bird. This is a time for thinking about your own ideas and getting ready to use your imagination.

Think of your firebird being a huge creature that lives in the night sky among the sparkling stars and planets.

Think about the shape of its body. Will it be round and fat, or long and sleek, or streamlined?

What shape will its wings be? And what will its feathers look like? Think specially about the bright colours and patterns of its feathers, and its wide wings as it swoops, glides and drifts through the twinkling darkness.

What about its eyes? Are they going to be wide and round, or narrow and penetrating? Will those eyes be alert or sleepy? Will they be bright and eager, or dull and tired?

Will it have a beak? Would the beak be long, sharp and pointed, or short and blunt. Would it be straight or curved? Long, or stubby?

And what are its legs and its claws or talons like as it swoops and dives brightly through the darkness. Do its claws help it to reach out and grab stars to stuff into its mouth?

Think about your beautifully bright and powerful fire bird. Fire birds are very patient. They wait - and then - when a shooting star appears - they zoom across the darkness - SNATCH with their talons and beak - and gobble up the fiery stars, sparkles, flashes, flames and all.

You've been thinking hard about your own special firebird and what it could look like. No one has ever seen a *real* fire bird, so no one could ever say that your drawing is right or wrong. It is entirely up to your own imagination to show what it *could* be like.

To start, make your fire bird as big as you can, so that it fills the paper. Once you have drawn the bird, you can add the smaller bits and the decorations.

You will have to work *quickly* to do as much as you can in 20 minutes.

You can start now - but remember: bright, exciting colours, and a big and beautiful firebird.

Firebird Pastel and Crayon Drawing

Approach: Independent task

Level: Year 4 & year 8

Time: 25 minutes

Resources: (each) 12 oil pastels; 12 large soft crayons; 1 sheet of B3 grey sugar paper; drawing board.

Description

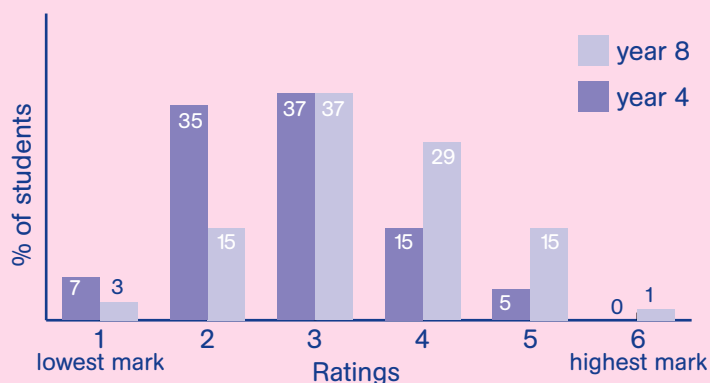
Before starting the drawing, the student watched a 3 minute stimulus video recording which contained a spoken script accompanied by continuously moving, brightly coloured spirals and musical sound effects. The reader did not appear on the screen, and the spiralling colour images gave no suggestion of form that might resemble the subject of the drawing — a firebird! The script included the following instructions on the opposite page.

Instructions

Apart from reminding students of the time available, the teacher administering the task did not give any further instructions.

Students were not penalised for incomplete drawings

Global ratings: Firebird pastel and crayon drawing



42% of year 4 students' work was given ratings of 1 or 2 compared with 18% of year 8 students. At the high end, 5% of year 4 students received ratings of 5 or 6 compared to 16% of year 8 students.

The smallest difference was in the mid range, with 52% of year 4 students and 66% of year 8 students receiving ratings of 3 or 4.

| Key attributes (1 low – 4 high) | Qualities | Mean score | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------|------------|
| | | year 4 | year 8 |
| expressiveness | image appropriate to task (bird, FIREbird, catching stars, etc.); strength, vitality, colour, movement, dynamism, imagination, avoidance of cliché. | 2.2 | 2.6 |
| composition | appropriate use of background; giving a context; arrangement of images; balance. | 2.1 | 2.6 |
| detail | finer features included; use of line, texture, pattern, colour blends. | 2.1 | 2.5 |
| use of media | technical control of media; exploiting a range of mark making. | 2.0 | 2.4 |
| Global Rating (1 low – 6 high) | | 2.7 | 3.4 |

Firebird exemplars

mid range



A believable bird, decoratively attired with blue plumage-like stars out the back of its tail. The eye form and the general shape of the round head tend to give it a very conventional feel and the little chicken feet echo an Easter egg kind of chicken. The stereotype stars and moon floating in a purple sky feel equally predictable. There is no interaction between the bird and the stars. The feet don't feel in anyway powerful. The most careful rendering and blending has gone on in the wing form, although everything has been somewhat halted by being outlined in black. This tidy drawing lacks qualities of occasion and dynamic movement.



An attempt at a magical bird form, in the sense that it is non-standard. There is a sense of heat haze around the bird itself where colours have spilled out beyond the boundary of the bird. The bird is located in space through stars and blackness. The pastel is not particularly assured or controlled and colour mixing is tentative. Rainbow coloured stripes are used to suggest a sense of magic, but the tail and the wing seem to separate out from the rest of the body with a consequent loss of unity. It is as though each part has been thought of separately.



A very imaginative bird shape presented as something of a monster creature with spines and multiple tails, multiple spiny wings, and specialised mouth parts. The forms fragment into a series of parts. The background in its strongly contrasting black and yellows further tends to break up the drawing with a consequent loss of the sense of integration. The one thing that starts to link the whole body is the use of pink all over. This connecting colour starts to make the picture look like one bird. This firebird is almost incoherent except as a flat design. It does carve up the drawing space into an interesting series of shapes, but it is so carved up that a sense of order is lost.

Firebird exemplars

A tentative use of pastel, with no real pressure applied to give solid richness to the colour. Decorative devices of zigzags, spirals and twirls have been used to fill in the form. It is essentially a rendering of a bird that is somewhat magical but doesn't give the feeling of power or a sense of movement or context. Rather, the opportunity has been used to explore decorative space filling within a simple bird form.



This is reminiscent of a number of works with its strong symmetrical, almost "gang-patch" symbolism. It is an aerial view looking down. The triple outlining around the outside draws our attention to the edges of the bird but leaves the middle feeling empty and weakened. There is an attempt to define different parts of the body with different textures, and although there are very powerful wing forms that almost look reptilian, the bird is considerably much weakened when we come to the shape of the head and the overall body form. It impresses as something akin to a passive, soft flower rather than some kind of devouring Venus flytrap. So although we have an exciting sense of energy at the edges, this dissipates as we look to into the centre. The whole thing is arranged symmetrically, but this symmetry doesn't render a sense of dynamism.



A rather symmetrical quiet bird, with each part of the body decoratively divided into a separate colour bands. There is a sense of solid control in the use of pastel media. While the image may suggest something of power it is not so well developed in terms of its expressiveness and movement. There is no attempt at colour blending, and the composition has very limited central organisation.



Firebird exemplars

lower range



high range

Firebird exemplars

