FREE TEACHING RESOURCE / 6–8 / 33

Hybrid Wetland Creature Lab

TEACHER GUIDE • lesson design & facilitation

Grade band: 6–8 | 5–7 sessions, 45–60 minutes

Media: drawing, print, collage or approved digital media

The artistic problem

Design an invented organism with functional Louisiana wetland adaptations.

Essential question: How do observation and imagination make a creature believable?

Place-based cultural lens: Use coastal education sources to study adaptations without fictionalizing real data.

Learning targets

- Investigate the question: How do observation and imagination make a creature believable?
- Apply animal construction, texture, labeled features, habitat composition in a deliberate original composition.
- Use critique evidence to improve animal construction and name one next step.

Student-visible success criteria

- The final artwork solves this problem: Design an invented organism with functional Louisiana wetland adaptations.
- Artwork includes three researched inspirations and three functional adaptations.
- Process evidence shows three different options before selection.
- Visual decisions demonstrate animal construction and support the intended audience.
- Feedback results in at least one visible revision that the student can explain.

Standards & studio habits

Louisiana 5–8 cluster: VA-CE-M1, VA-CE-M3, VA-CE-M5, VA-AP-M1

Studio Habits of Mind: Observe, Envision, Engage & Persist, Reflect, Understand Art Worlds. These habits are developed interactively, not in a fixed rank or sequence.

Instructional alignment: Louisiana benchmark codes are official broad grade-cluster benchmarks; specific expectations are developed locally. The ten instructional stages come from the supplied Artistic Investigations framework.

Preparation & materials

- Drawing paper or sketchbook for idea studies
- drawing, print, collage or approved digital media
- Samples and images from reliable sources, with attribution
- Tools appropriate to local safety rules and grade level
- Choice of visual, oral, or written reflection tools

10-stage teaching sequence

01 / Engage Present the artistic question: How do observation and imagination make a creature believable? Give students two contrasting examples that do not dictate a finished product.

02 / Investigate Use coastal education sources to study adaptations without fictionalizing real data. Gather visual evidence and note what is observed rather than assumed.

03 / Skill Studio Demonstrate animal construction, texture, labeled features, habitat composition. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates.

04 / Generate Develop three possibilities for the challenge: Design an invented organism with functional Louisiana wetland adaptations. Change the focal point, material, arrangement or viewer perspective between drafts.

05 / Plan Compare sketches to the success check (three researched inspirations and three functional adaptations); choose a direction and state why it better communicates the intention.

06 / Produce Produce an original visual response using animal construction, texture, labeled features, habitat composition; conference on one technical choice and one contextual question.

07 / Critique Partners identify where the artwork communicates the intended idea and locate evidence of animal construction in the work.

08 / Revise Revisit the specific checkpoint: Three researched inspirations and three functional adaptations. Make one visible change after critique and preserve the initial view for comparison.

09 / Present Present with a title, medium, one key artistic decision and any needed credit or contextual limitation.

10 / Reflect Reflect: What evidence proves you improved animal construction? What will you try or investigate next?

Studio sessions & evidence checkpoints

Session	Teaching move	Capture evidence
Day 1	**Frame the question** How do observation and imagination make a creature believable?; Use coastal education sources to study adaptations without fictionalizing real data.	Evidence/interpretation log.
Day 2	**Studio technique** Demonstrate animal construction, texture, labeled features, habitat composition. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates.	Practice sheet with labels about choices.
Day 3	**Generate + commit** Sketch three meaningfully different outcomes.	Three proposals and criteria-based choice.
Day 4–5	**Sustained production** Build the work and conference about animal construction.	Process photos and source annotations.
Day 6	**Interpret + revise** Peer feedback related to Three researched inspirations and three functional adaptations.	Annotated first and revised states.
Day 7	**Present + reflect** Curate the work with evidence and ethical source credits.	Final artifact, rubric and next-step statement.

Key technique to model

animal construction, texture, labeled features, habitat composition

Access without lowering the artistic goal

Offer imagined habitats for students not familiar with wetlands. Offer physical samples, captioned images, accessible demonstrations, flexible planning modes, and alternate materials while retaining the common visual learning target.

Teacher coaching questions

- What is the visual problem you are solving?
- Which decision communicates your intended meaning most clearly?
- What does your reference prove, and what are you still imagining?
- What could a viewer misunderstand?
- What visible revision will strengthen your next version?

Cultural care

Identify hypothetical species clearly; do not depict them as scientific discoveries.

Stretch & explore

Create front and side views for a natural-history plate.

Design provenance: Original Studio Fieldnotes investigation developed for the 50-lesson library; informed by the teacher-supplied ten-stage Artistic Investigations architecture and reflective Studio Habits framework.