

Bird Art Inspired

An activity of "A masterpiece that captures the beauty of birds".

Read "A masterpiece that captures the beauty of birds" (page 16, *What's Up* June 2026). The article is about a rare and precious book. It is part of *The Birds of America* by John James Audubon. An ornithologist and artist, he showed how art and science could work hand in hand to help people appreciate birds.

1. Visit the website of the "John J. Audubon's Birds of America" collection at:

➤ <https://www.audubon.org/art/birds-of-america>

Look at the bird illustrations carefully. As you browse, take note of the following:

- Which bird catches your eye most?
- Which one has the most interesting / unusual pose?
- Which bird has very striking colours / patterns?
- Which bird seems to have a story behind it?
- Which bird would be interesting to write about?

2. Choose TWO birds that you find interesting.

Bird 1: _____ Bird 2: _____

In the table below, write down the interesting things you observed about them.

My observations	Bird 1	Bird 2
Colours		
Shape of body		
Features (beak, eyes, claws, wings, tail)		
Pose or movement		
Background or setting		
One detail I find interesting		
One question I have about this bird		

3. Under each bird illustration at the website, there may be a formal description of the bird. Read the descriptions and write down two facts you learned about each bird.

Fact	Bird 1	Bird 2
1		
2		

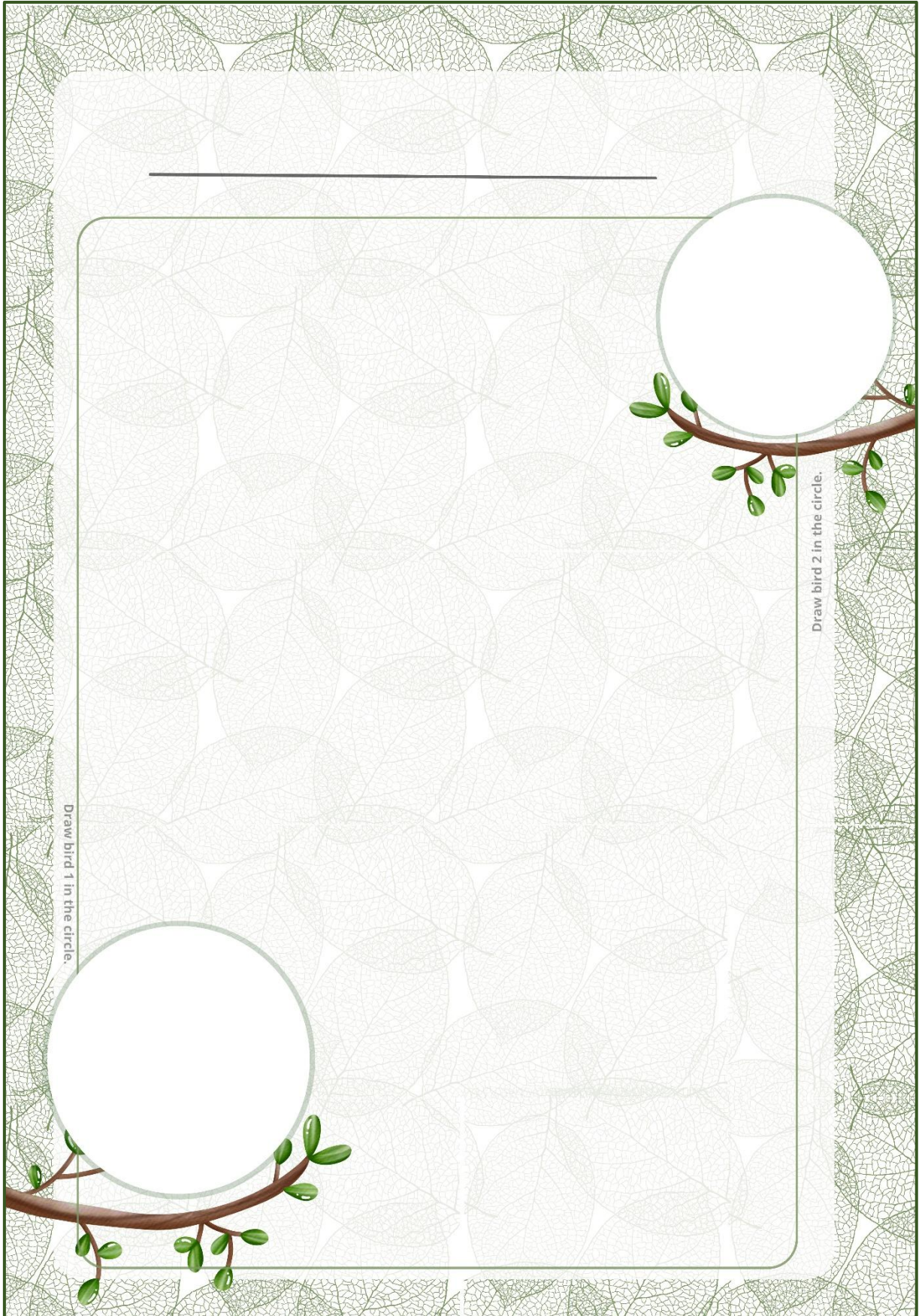
4. Scientific language is usually clear, factual, and precise. Poetic language often uses imagery, feeling, and imagination. Both are useful. Scientific language helps us gain knowledge about birds. Poetic language helps us to feel, hear, and picture it more vividly. Try rewriting the following in the other version from what is given here.

Scientific detail	Poetic version
The bird has orange feathers.	
	Its claws grip the branch like tiny hooks.
The bird's wingspan is 1 metre.	
	It tilts its head curiously as if asking a question.

5. In the following template, write a free-form poem inspired by your two chosen birds. It can be written as one poem about both birds, as a conversation between two birds, as if you are speaking to the birds or any other imaginative style. It does not need to rhyme.

Your poem should include:

- at least two details for each bird
- colour
- movement
- sound / silence
- mood / feeling
- something you imagine about the birds' lives.



6. Share your poem with your class!