

Exploring Value and Texture with Feathers

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Total time: 90 minutes

Intended for a 3rd grade class

Concepts:

- Understand how artists use value to create pattern and shape
- Understand importance of observational drawing and painting for science illustration
- Observe patterns in feathers and the natural world and discuss their purpose

Objectives:

- Identify values (light and dark) in color
- Create a value scale with clay and watercolor, with distinct shades going from light to dark
- Use value and mark making to create patterns
- Use pattern and value to observe and paint a feather

Vocabulary:

- Value – lightness and darkness of color
- Tint – dark values
- Shade – light values
- Highlight – Areas of an object where light is hitting
- Shadows – Areas of an object where light doesn't hit
- Monochromatic – using one color, and possibly black and white

Materials:

- Crayola Model Magic clay in white and black
- 2 pieces of watercolor paper, one with value scale printed on it, one blank
- Feathers for each student to work from (I used natural Quail and Guinea Fowl feathers because they had interesting patterns)
- Pencil
- One neutral color of watercolor paint (ie brown or black)
- Palette for mixing paint on
- Watercolor brushes
- Paper towels
- Cups for water
- Magnifying glass for looking at details (optional)

Hook:

Have you ever wanted to draw something so that you can pick it up off the page? I work as a science illustrator where it can be very important to make realistic

drawings and paintings. Today I'm going to show you how I use value to make something look real, even though it is a drawing.

Instruction Sequence:

- Introductions
- Make value scale with clay: Hand out a blob of white and black clay to each student and the value scale to reference. Have them put a dot of black and white clay at each end of the scale. Then have students mix various shades of grey. Discuss how to get a lighter or darker shade by adding more white or black.
- Make value scale with watercolor. This is similar to what was just done with clay but instead using watercolor. Instead of white add more water to get a lighter value. Use more paint and a little bit of water to get a darker value. It is best to work from light to dark. Students can mix individual values one at a time or work with layers of washes. If they go too dark, they can use paper towel to blot up extra paint. While they are waiting for the paint to dry they can practice making different marks and shapes in the space at the bottom of the page.
- Feathers – Step by step drawing for shape of feather (see steps below). Once the students have drawn their feathers have them observe the values in the patterns on the feather. Are there any shadows? Have them work from light to dark to paint the patterns on the feather. Add the darkest details last.
- Clean up and conclusion

Conclusion

- Go over vocabulary
- Look at student work and discuss how they used value to make the textures they saw on their feathers
- Extension- Talk about animal adaptations and why feathers or other animals would have patterns like those observed

Assessment

- Ability to make different values on the value scale
- Ability to talk about values while observing a pattern
- Ability to follow steps for drawing feathers
- Use of multiple values in final painting of feather

Drawing a feather step by step:

1. Think about how big you want to make the feather and try to use the whole page. Make tick marks on your paper to show how tall and wide the feather will be:



2. Look at the shape and curve of the rachis (the main shaft that runs down the middle) and draw a line to represent it on the page:



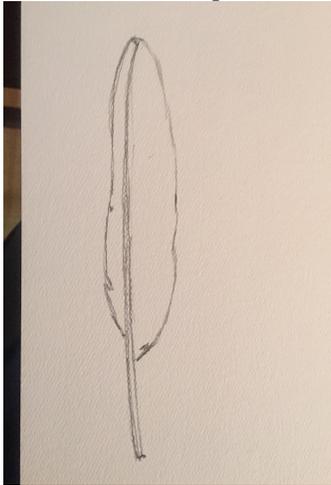
3. Look at how far down the barbs go and make tick marks where they will end:



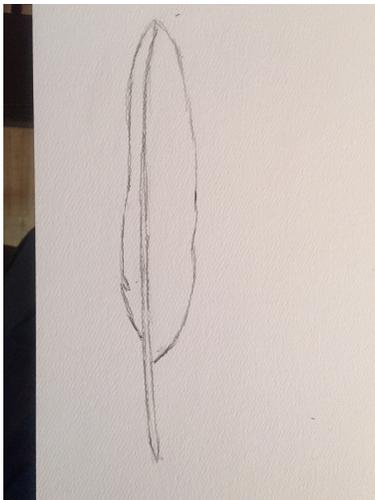
4. Look carefully at the shape of the feather barbs and draw in each side using tick marks



5. Draw in the shape of the rachis paying attention to where it is thick and thin:



6. Check the shapes in your drawing and correct anything that needs to be corrected:



7. Lightly draw in the main shapes of the patterns in your feather to use as a reference for painting. Be careful not to get too detailed here. You don't need to capture every speck.



8. Start painting working from light to dark:

