



MCIEA Task: Fantasy Birds

Course/subject/grade level: 1st grade literacy + science

Context/prerequisite skills: computer skills, letter recognition

Note: While this task is grounded in the creation of a fantasy bird, it can be used to assess introductory knowledge of adaptations more broadly. Task instructions can be modified to create any fantasy animal.

Performance Assessment Quality Criteria

High-quality performance tasks should:

- Align to high-leverage learning goals (competencies, learning targets, standards, transferable skills, etc)
- Be open ended and relevant to the real world
- Require application and transfer using higher-order thinking
- Be fair and culturally responsive
- Outline clear criteria for success in a rubric
- Result in original products, performances, or solutions

Learning Goals

What is being assessed in this task? This includes competencies, standards, learning targets, transferable skills, etc. Remember - application and transfer of high-leverage skills are a hallmark of performance assessments.

Standards for Assessment:

- **1 - LS1-1:** Use evidence to explain that (a) different animals use their body parts and senses in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water, and air.
- **1 - W1-2:** Write informative/explanatory texts that name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
- **1 - W1-4:** Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



Task Summary

Describe the essence of the task. What authentic role is the student taking? Who is the audience? What is the problem they are trying to solve?

Students will combine their knowledge of birds and adaptations with their imagination to create new a new bird that has adaptive features. Students will start by thinking of a home for the bird and imagine a bird that can survive in the home that the student creates. Some questions they will consider in the creation of the new bird include:

- What special body parts does your bird need to survive in the home?
- What special features does your bird need?
- How does your bird compare to other birds we have studied?

Although this task was designed as part of a unit study regarding birds, it can be modified for the study of any animal.

Essential Questions

What challenging and open-ended questions are students exploring in this task? How does this assessment engage students in tackling the essential question?

How do animals use their body parts and senses to survive?

Quality Output

What original product or solution will students produce as a result of this task? Describe what a quality output looks like, sounds like, feels like.

- Students will use Google classroom (or other comparable online program)
- A quality product will include (a) either a computer-generated or hand-drawn image of an imagined bird with special adaptations that have been labeled by students, and (b) a text that includes a title, description of the bird’s features (both what the features are and how they contribute to the bird’s survival), and connections to other (real) birds.

Quality Process

Without being overly prescriptive, what will students actually do as they complete this task? Describe the flexible quality process learners will engage in to produce the output.

- Step 1:** Introduction (20 minutes) + independent creation/writing
- Step 2:** Creation + Writing (independent)
- Step 3:** Peer Editing
- Step 4:** Revisions
- Step 5:** Presentation of fantasy bird & text



To adapt this task for your classroom, click [here for an editable version](#).

Original task created by Henry Grew Grade 1 Teaching Team.

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Resources/Materials

What do all students need to have access to in order to complete the task?

Google classroom

Drawing materials (including colors)

[Student Chart for Comparison](#)

Possible Accommodations

Understanding that accommodations will always need to be adapted for student's individual needs, what are some accommodations that may be provided for this task?

Reading accommodations: Teacher can read instructions to students at the beginning of the task. Teachers can read simple sentences on student instructions to help guide students in their bird creation.

Writing accommodations: Teacher can provide sentence starters for learners who struggle with emergent writing and graphic organizers to help students organize their thoughts.

Fantasy Bird

Student Instructions (Teacher Prompt to Read)

Teacher Prompt: This unit, we have learned a lot about bird's body parts and how they are used for survival. We have also learned a lot about the structure and purpose of informational text and text features.

The First Grade will be creating their own *fantasy* bird book. Your task is to create your own bird and page for the book. Your entry will show your understanding of the importance of different body parts and senses, and your understanding of non-fiction text features.

Part 1:

- a. Decide on a home (desert, forest, Arctic, pond, ocean, mountains, city)
- b. List what body parts, special functions, and senses a bird would need to live in that home.
- c. Name your bird and its home.
- d. Compare and contrast your bird to another bird we have studied.

Part 2: Now, you are going to draw your bird and label it with its name, special body parts, and home.

- a. Using your description of the bird's home and body parts and special features, draw a picture of your bird.
- b. Label your bird's body parts.
- c. Also, include the name of your bird and its home on the drawing.

Part 3: Take your notes and picture of the bird, and write 2-3 sentences about the bird.

- a. Remember to describe your bird, its home, and its body parts and features.
- b. Be sure to include text features in your writing and illustration.

Part 4: We have created our birds and our pages about our birds. Our final step is to share our birds with the class. Each of you will show your bird and tell the class about the special body parts and home of the bird.

Name: _____

Fantasy Bird: Part 1

1. Where is your bird's home?

2. What are some body parts your bird needs in this home? What do they do for the bird?

3. Name your bird.

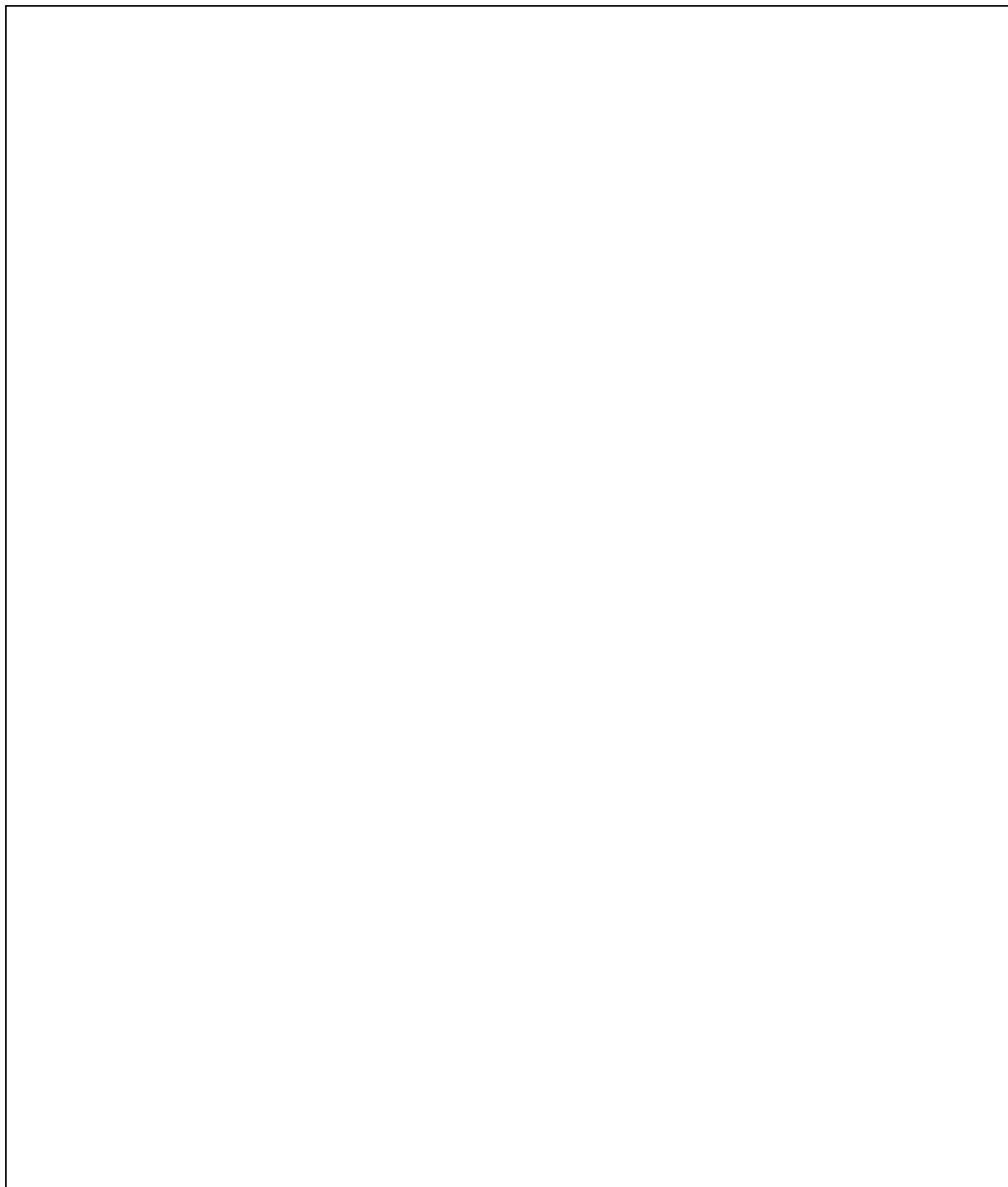
4. Name your bird's home.

5. Compare and contrast your bird to another bird we have learned about:

Name: _____

Fantasy Bird: Part 2

1. Draw your bird.
2. Label your bird (name, body parts, and home)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw and label their fantasy bird. The box occupies most of the lower half of the page.



MCIEA Fantasy Bird Rubric

	Exceeds	Meets	Not Yet
<p>Use Evidence 1-LS1-1: Use evidence to explain that (a) different animals use their body parts and senses in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water, and air.</p>	<p>I selected strong evidence and applied it in original and/or creative ways.</p>	<p>I selected and applied evidence in a way that makes sense.</p>	<p>I still need to work on:</p>
<p>Informative Writing W1-2: Write informative/explanatory texts that name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.</p>	<p>I chose a clear topic, used facts to develop my points, and have a clear ending statement or section.</p>	<p>I chose a topic, used facts, and had an ending.</p>	<p>I still need to work on:</p>
<p>Text Features W1-4: Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. In this task: Labels,</p>	<p>I used text features to organized my task in a way that helps the reader to easily understand my work. In this task: Labeling and heading.</p>	<p>I used text features appropriate to the task. In this task: Labeling and heading.</p>	<p>I still need to work on:</p>



MCIEA Rubric Guiding Principles

The following outlines the MCIEA way of thinking about rubric design. While MCIEA shared rubrics will generally be designed with the following principles in mind, you may decide to design your locally developed rubrics in a different way. We share the following details to both guide you in understanding the format and coherence behind MCIEA shared rubrics as well as to share our current understanding of best practices for the design of high-quality rubrics.

- **Task Neutral** - MCIEA rubrics will be aligned to learning goals (competencies, standards, high-leverage skills, learning targets), rather than aligned to the task. This means that the items that go into the leftmost column are a description of what you want students to understand and be able to do, rather than a description of different elements of the task. Rubrics designed in alignment to tasks tend to read like student directions, rather than a tool for assessment and feedback. Anything you want students to do can be added to student directions as a checklist. Further, task neutral rubrics can be used across multiple tasks, meaning that teachers are not designing rubrics every time they create a new task and, more importantly, students develop metacognition around the idea that they are building a consistent set of high-leverage skills and understandings across multiple learning experiences.
- **Selection of Learning Goals** - These are important considerations when selecting items for the leftmost column. The principles below may lead teachers to combine groups of smaller standards (sometimes called power standards).
 - **Appropriate Type** - Rubrics are the opportunity to highlight the most high-leverage learning goals. The goals should be important enough to be built over time and applied/transferred to new contexts.
 - **Appropriate Number** - Brain science tells us that students can reasonably focus on between 2-5 high-leverage learning targets at a time. Said another way, just because an assessment can assess something, doesn't mean it has to.
 - **Grain Size** - Also known as the "Goldilocks Principle", learning goals should not be so broad that students have little information on what they are trying to do, but should not be so narrow that they form a checklist. Additionally, items should all be of a similar grain size, so that you avoid having something as important as critical thinking take up as much space (in student's minds) as something like neatness.
- **Performance Levels** - Our rubrics are designed with 3 performance levels (Exceeds, Meets, Not Yet). We place them in that order from left-to-right to put the highest performance level in student's view first. The following list is in the order which we suggest you develop rubrics. We find that many bad practices develop when performance levels are designed to produce scores consistent with traditional grading systems.
 - **Meets** - The student has satisfactorily demonstrated that they are on level in this learning goal.
 - **Exceeds** - There are many ways to approach the development of this category, the important consideration is that you decide on a coherent system for developing your exceeds category and apply it consistently. For MCIEA, we tend to look at the deepening of the skill or understanding in the following grade level and design our exceeds category from there.
 - **Not Yet** - We do not include an approaching category as teachers tend to spend undue time agonizing over what this level means, often only to find that it wasn't very meaningful when they get student work back. Rather we invite teachers to leave space in the Not Yet category for written feedback. As a rule, when the performance level increases, the skill or understanding gets more nuanced, rather than there just being more of the previous level. We avoid entirely the language of *never*, *sometimes*, *all the time*.

Fantasy Bird

Bird we studied	What is the same about these birds?	Your Fantasy Bird