



What's Your Bird Name?

Imaginative Scientific Illustration



What's in a name? Animal common names often tell us key information. Using bits of real bird names and information about yourself, create a brand-new bird name unique to you. Use this name to inspire a scientific illustration of your imaginary bird species.

Suggested Age - Middle School +

Guiding Questions -

- How do we describe how animals look? What words are specific to birds?
- Why is it helpful to use really specific color and body part names in the species common name?
- What other information do bird common names provide?
- What differences are there between the body shapes of different kinds of birds? Why might this be?

Materials - What's Your Bird Name key, paper, drawing utensils

Activity Instructions -

- Use the What's Your Bird Name key to create your bird name using information about yourself.
- Use the bird shapes and colors on the back side of the key to help you draw your bird species to match its common name.

Extensions -

- Create a complete profile of your bird. Where does it live? (Is there a hint in its name?) What does it eat? Do males and females look the same? Look up what is normal for that type of bird or come up with your own ideas!
- Think of a bird with a common name that doesn't tell you about its appearance, like crow or mourning dove. What would you add to its name to help people identify it by appearance?

Extra Information -

- Sometimes common names can cause confusion because different regions use different common names. Sometimes the common name describes the animal in a confusing way. For example, the red-bellied woodpecker has a bright red head, and there is another species called the red-headed woodpecker. That is why scientists use scientific names. Those are the Latin names that have two parts and are written in italics. We are *Homo sapiens*. Scientific names often give information about the species (in Latin) and help to organize living things in a consistent way.