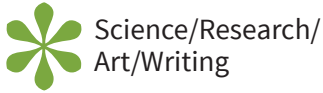


Of Sabrewings, Sicklebills, and Red-billed Streamertails



What do hummingbird names say about hummingbird species?

Objective

Students will use the colorful, descriptive names of hummingbirds as a jumping-off point for researching different species and their adaptations, habits, and habitats.

Students will need:

- Field guides and books about hummingbirds
- Internet access
- Paper, pencils, pens, paint, markers
- “Hummingbird Profile” reproducible one for each pair of students or one for each student



Suggested time:

Two to three class periods to research hummingbirds, plus time as needed to create images and text

What to do:

1. Before introducing your students to the project, take some time to look at the hummingbirds found at Audubon’s online guide to North American birds (https://www.audubon.org/bird-guide?field_bird_family_tid=61&field_bird_region_tid=All) and the comprehensive list of hummingbird species names here (<https://www.thespruce.com/hummingbird-species-list-387107>). Glean some colorful, descriptive names from your sources to share with students. Ask them what they might instantly know about the birds simply by hearing their names (e.g., that it has a long, sharp bill; brilliant markings on its throat; feathers the color of a particular gem). Have students look at books, field guides, and websites about hummingbirds, too, and note the descriptive names.
2. Tell students they will be working in pairs to make a class book that is a field guide to some of the species of hummingbirds found across the Americas. (If desired, the book can include only species that migrate to the United States, but consider opening the selection to species found in Central and South America, too.) Have students either select birds they would like to research, or select species in advance on your own and have them draw names from a hat.
3. Student teams will research their given species, using the reproducible as a guide to get them started. They will explain why their species has the name that it does. (Note that many names are descriptors, but some have cultural or historical origins; e.g., who is the “Anna” in the Anna’s Hummingbird’s name?)
4. Each team will then create a page for the class field guide using the reproducible and present their work to the class. Introduce the term “field marks” and encourage them to point these out on their bird pictures.
5. If you wish, you can have children work independently on this project, thus doubling the number of species included. You might also extend this activity by having students use media of their choice to make a picture of their species. This artwork could then be used to make a mural or wall display about hummingbirds that includes maps showing where they live.