



# MOLA ART

## GRADES

5-6

## DURATION

6 HOURS

## LANGUAGE AIMS

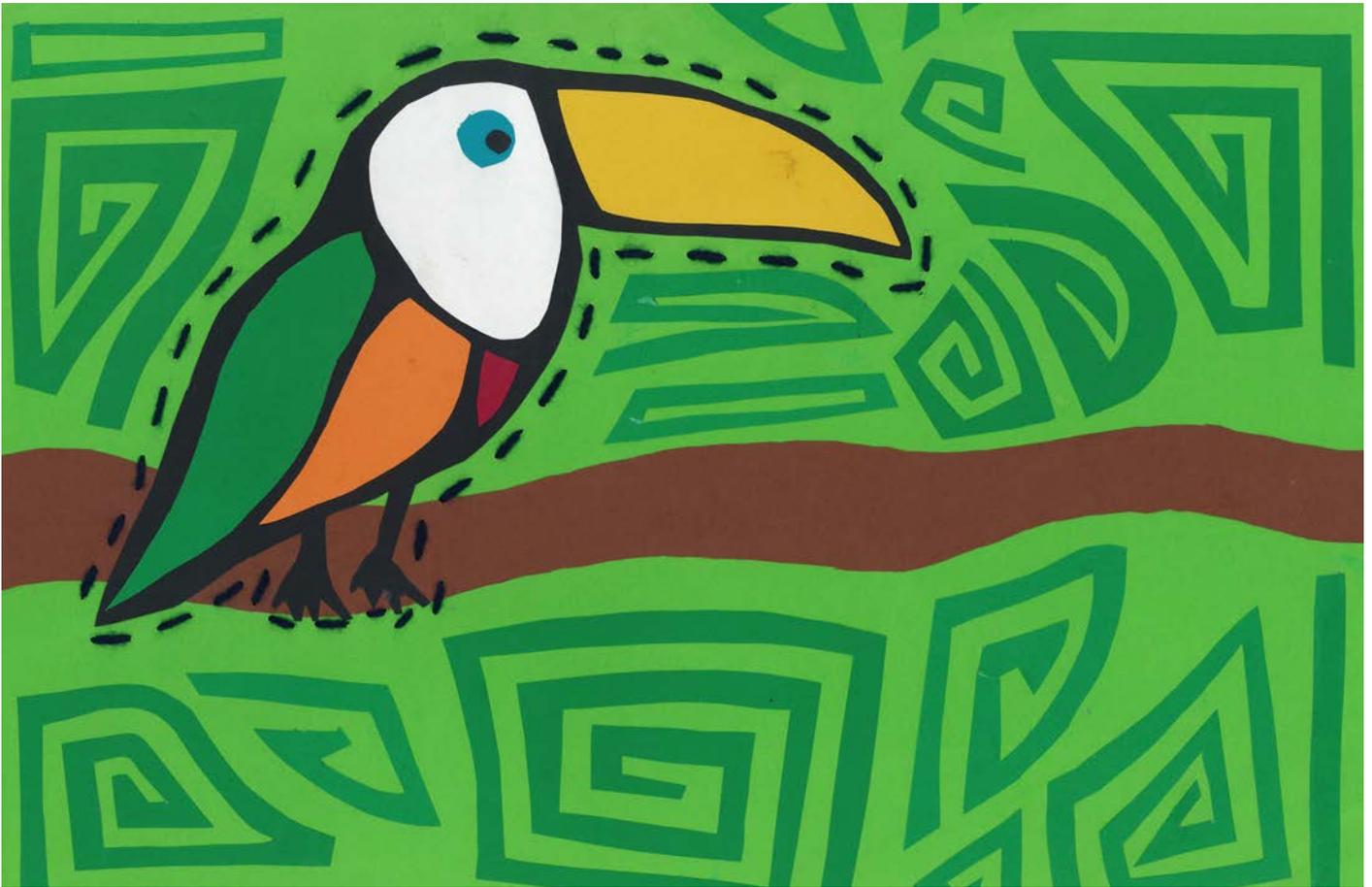
animals, habitats, animal features, action verbs, can/can't, prepositions of place

## ART TECHNIQUES

drawing, collage, sewing



# MOLA ART ANIMALS



## Art

- I can draw inspiration from "Mola art" to make my own collage of an animal.
- I can use a running stitch to sew around a drawn shape.

## Vocabulary

### ANIMALS

parrot, sloth, snake, turtle, monkey, etc

### HABITATS

sea, ocean, river, forest, jungle, rainforest, desert, city, garden

### ANIMAL HOMES

nest, cave, web, hive, tree hollow, burrow

### ANIMAL FEATURES

beak, crest, wings, tail, claws, snout, spines, feathers, beard, shell, etc.

### ACTION VERBS

walk, run, hop, jump, fly, swim, swing, slither, stomp, climb, roar, talk, etc.

## Grammar

### TO LIVE + PREPOSITIONS

#### Where do sloths live?

Sloths **live in** the jungle.

Whales **live in** the ocean.

### ACTION VERBS + PREPOSITIONS

The toucan **sits on** the branch.

The crocodile **swims in** the river.

The fox **burrows under** the ground.

### DESCRIBING YOUR ANIMAL

#### What do turtles look like?

The turtle **is** small / Turtles **are** small.

It **has** / They **have** a shell.

### CAN / CAN'T

#### What can monkeys do?

Monkeys **can** climb trees.

Fish **can** swim but they **can't** walk.

Jaguars **can** run fast.

**Can** penguins fly?

No, they **can't**!

# How to teach the language

As this is a long unit you will need many different games to introduce and revisit the language while keeping students engaged. Here's an outline of how to structure the language content throughout the unit.

## Lesson 1: Animals from Panama and Colombia

Print or display photos of animals native to Panamá and Colombia (where Mola art originates) and label in L2. Play “**Animal Groups**” (Game 1) to encourage students to start using the vocabulary in L2 for different animals and begin familiarising themselves with the animals they could depict in their artworks (art step 1).



## Lesson 2: Habitats

Introduce the verb “to live” and demonstrate how to use it in a sentence. Write an example on the board: “*Jaguars live in the jungle.*” Show a flashcard of an animal and ask: “*Where do whales live?*”. Encourage students to answer using the same sentence structure: “*Whales live in the ocean.*” Play “**Habitats Race**” (Game 2) to reinforce the vocabulary. You can use the **Habitats** and **Animals from around the world** flashcards in **Language Resources**. Students should pick a coloured paper for the background of their art project that will match the habitat of their chosen animal (e.g. blue for the ocean).

## Lesson 3: Animal features

Display **Animal Features Poster** or **Flashcards** on the board. Demonstrate how to write a sentence to describe an animal using the verb *to be* or *to have*: “*Elephants are big*” or “*Elephants have a trunk*”. Use the **Animal Features Memory Cards** to play **Animal Features Memory Game** (Game 4) or play “**10 Questions**” (Game 3) to practise the vocabulary. For their art projects, students should make patterns with paper that evoke the features of their chosen animal.

## Lesson 4: Toucans can fly

Ask students: “*Can sloths fly? No, they can't.*” Use the cards in **Toucans can fly** to demonstrate how to use *can / can't* in a sentence. Print a few copies and have students make sentences in pairs. As an extension, you can ask students to add an adverb (cards in green) at the end of their sentences.

### Habitats flashcards



### Animal Features

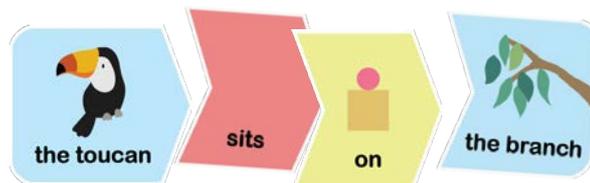


### Toucans can fly

## Lesson 5: Animals and prepositions

During this lesson we will look at action verbs and prepositions of place. Print out and attach a few scattered cards from **Animals and Prepositions** on the board. Try to make a sentence as a class, e.g.: “*the toucan sits on the branch*”. Pay special attention to the prepositions of place (the little drawings on the cards can help students decide which one to use). Print enough copies for students to work in pairs or small groups and create new sentences.

### Animals and Prepositions



## Lesson 6 onwards: Review

Play **Animal Riddles** (Game 5) or **Animal Quiz** (Game 6) to revisit the vocabulary we saw throughout the unit. You can stick their Animal riddles on the back of their work to make the language visible. Use students' artworks to play Animal Quiz to share their artworks with the rest of the class. The kids will love seeing their work on the screen!



## Traditional Molas



Original mola from Bogotá

This project is inspired by Mola Art, a traditional technique used to make women's clothing by the indigenous people from Panamá and Colombia. Molas are usually made with two to seven layers of different-coloured cloth; the design is then formed by cutting away parts of each layer and exposing the layers underneath, a technique called *reverse appliqué*. Most molas feature local fauna and flora and use geometrical patterns inspired by ancient body painting. The shapes inside the animal represent its internal structure, a good opportunity to introduce the vocabulary for animal features, body parts and the verbs *to be* and *to have*.

Students will use coloured paper instead of cloth, and they will sew in paper to imitate the original qualities of the molas. This project takes time but the results are always awe-inspiring, particularly striking when the artworks are displayed all together.

### Game 1

#### Animal Groups



Give each small group of students a bunch of cards containing different animals (you can use the flashcards in **Animals from around the world**). Get students to sort them into groups, but don't tell them what criteria they should follow. Some ways to sort animals could be:

- farm animals, pets, wild animals
- reptiles, mammals, birds, amphibians, etc
- animals that live in the ocean / on the ground.
- animals that have spots or stripes
- animals from different regions

#### Art materials



- greylead pencil
- A4 sketching paper
- A3 coloured paper
- scissors
- glue sticks or Mod Podge
- colourful thick cotton thread or thin wool
- medium-large needle (embroidery needle)

### Game 2

#### Habitats Race



Prepare large signs of different animal habitats (*ocean, river, forest, jungle, desert, farm, city*, etc) and spread them around the classroom or the yard. Then, call out a random animal ("Cow!"). Students run to the sign of the habitat in which the animal lives. Ask a student: "Where do cows live?". They reply using the verb *to live* ("Cows live in the farm!"). Continue with different animals and habitats.

### Game 3

#### 10 Questions



Students play against the teacher or another student to guess the secret animal. They are only allowed to ask *yes / no* questions. Demonstrate and write on the board some examples of questions students might use before starting the game: "Does it have scales? No, it doesn't; Does it live in the sea? Yes, it does. Is it a dolphin? Yes, it is!".

Students can only ask up to 10 questions. Keep a running tally of the questions they have asked on the board. If they go over 10 questions, the game is over and the person who picked the secret animal wins.

# How to teach the art



**Lesson 1.** Choose an animal from Panamá and Colombia. Draw the silhouette of the animal on white A3 paper, without paying too much attention to the details inside the animal, because they will not show later. The animal will be the main focus of the work so it should take up most of the A3 paper.



**Lesson 2a.** When you are happy with the silhouette drawing, cut out your drawing and trace it onto another A3 coloured paper. It doesn't have to be the exact colour of the animal, as Mola art often uses very bright and abstract colours. Cut out the silhouetted animal.



**Lesson 2b.** Glue your animal in the middle of another A3 coloured paper for the background. Glue showing the side with no pencil for a clean look. Think of the habitat of your animal to decide which background colour to use. You can add additional elements for the background such as a branch or a leaf.



**Lesson 3-4.** Add patterns inside the animal by cutting and pasting bits of coloured paper. Use bright colours and leave a gap around each piece so you can see the body colour underneath. Think of the features of your animal to get inspiration for the patterns: does it have feathers, spots, stripes, scales?



**Lesson 5.** Using a needle, poke holes around the animal about 1 cm apart and 0.5 cm away from the animal. Choose a colour for the thread that contrasts with the background colour. Start stitching from behind, taping the end of the thread to the paper. Stitch all around the animal and tape again when finished.



**Lesson 6.** Fill the background with spirals similar to the ones used in traditional mola art. These might seem daunting, but once you get the hang of them they are quite easy to make! You will need to demonstrate the steps a few times but it's well worth it. See "**How to make a paper spiral**" for details.



#### Game 4

### Animal Features Memory Game

Print and cut out enough sets of **Animal Features Memory Cards** for students to play in small groups. Alternatively, you can print a class set to play as a class on the whiteboard or on the floor. Ensure the cards are printed on thick paper to prevent students from seeing through them.

To begin, students shuffle the cards and place them face down in front of them. The first player turns over two cards, aiming to find a match: a combination of an animal card and one of its body features (e.g. zebra and tail). If a player discovers more than one matching feature card, they can collect those as well. When students make a match, they must make a full sentence using the verb **to have**: "Zebras have a tail." If the sentence is formulated correctly, they can keep the cards on their pile. The game finishes when all matches have been made, and the student with the most cards in their pile is the winner.



### How to make a paper spiral



To make the spirals for the background, first choose a coloured paper that will complement the habitat of your animal (e.g. different blues for an ocean). Cut out an irregular shape of paper that fits around the animal.



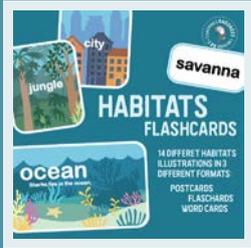
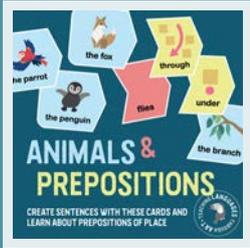
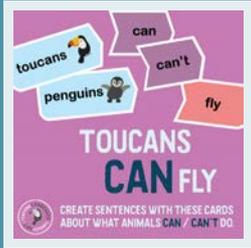
Cut this shape into a thick (approx. 1.5cm), sharp-angled spiral.



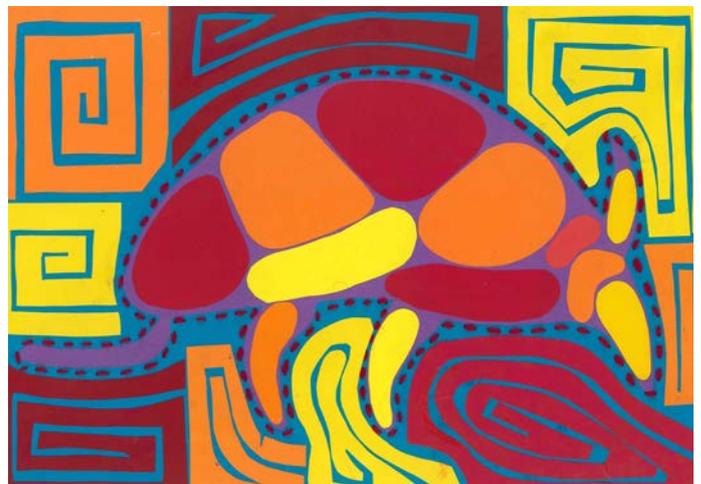
To make the gaps within the spiral, trim approx. 0.5cm from the outside of each length of the spiral.



# Project Resources



Download **Animals from around the word flashcards**, **Animal Features**, **Toucans can fly** and **Animals & Prepositions** from *Language Resources > Animals*. You can find the **Habitats flashcards** under *Language Resources > Landscapes*.



## Game 5



### Animal Riddles

Use a simple table like this to jot down some words that describe your animal. Students may use word banks, posters (ex. colours) or dictionaries. When they have one or two words for each column, demonstrate how to write full sentences: "I am grey and soft, I can climb trees, I eat leaves, I live in the forest." Finish the riddle with the question "What am I?". This is a good game to play at the end of this project because they will need to use all the grammar structures we saw during the unit. Have students quiz each other or use their riddles to play Animal Quiz (Game 6). Stick their riddles on the back of the artworks or display them next to the art.

ANIMAL	COLOUR	SKIN	WHAT CAN IT DO?	WHAT DOES IT EAT?	WHERE DOES IT LIVE?
Koala	grey I am grey	furry soft I am furry and soft	climb trees I can climb trees	leaves I eat leaves	trees I live on trees

## Game 6



### Animal Quiz

Take photos of your students' artworks to make a multiple choice quiz. There are several online platforms where you can upload media and make your own quiz games (e.g. Kahoot). It is a very fun way to practice or review vocabulary or grammar concepts, and students will love seeing their work on the screen! Students can answer the quiz as a class or, if you have access to several devices, compete against each other or in little groups.

Some quiz ideas:

- **Make a quiz about animals' body features:**  
"Monkeys have: a. a long tail b. a fin c. ears d. stripes".
- **Make a quiz about what animals can / can't do:**  
"Jaguars can: a. swim b. run c. climb d. all of the above".
- **Make a quiz about animals' habitats:**  
"Whales live in: a. the jungle b. the ocean c. the desert d. the wetland".
- **Choose an adjective from a list:**  
"Turtles are a. fast b. slow c. pink d. tall".

