



Birds

How do birds move?

Age: 7-14

Topic: Dance and PE

Time: 1 hour



What should learners already know?

- While we might associate birds with flying, birds actually move in many different ways; and there are lots of flightless bird species.

What equipment will I need?

- Large outdoor space
- Optional: CD player and speaker for music

How can we show the learning?

- Talk to children about all the different types of movement they came up with. Which were easy and which were difficult? Which were best to put into a dance?
- How do birds move? Lots of different ways!
- Birds can move around in the air, on the land and in the water.
- We often focus on flight because it's something we as humans cannot do, so is extra interesting to us - but the other ways birds move around are very interesting too!

How will learners explore this?

1. As a whole class, get the children to call out the different ways in which birds move, then encourage the children to practise this form of movement. Some ideas are:
 - Flying - either flapping your arms quickly like a hummingbird, or flapping slowly to soar like an albatross.
 - Running - the fastest running bird is the ostrich. Run with wide stride and pointed feet.
 - Waddling - like a penguin. Keep your knees together, and take tiny side-by-side steps.
 - Hopping - lots of birds hop, particularly the passerines (blue tit, sparrow etc). Take short hops, being careful to keep the rest of your body still.
 - Swimming - like ducks and swans. Keep your upper body upright, and extend your arms slightly behind yourself. Take small steps, flapping your foot up and down, to simulate how these birds swim.
 - Diving - penguins, gannets and many fish-eating birds. With your hands behind your back, lay on your front on the floor and use your feet to push yourself along.
 - Any more? Encourage children to be creative with thinking up ideas of how to simulate bird movement!
2. Once the whole class has practised bird movement, place children into small groups (4 or 5).
3. Get children to create a short dance (2 minutes or less) which displays two or more types of bird movement.
4. This dance can be set to music of your choosing, or without music. They could be telling a story (i.e. a swan flying through the air then landing on a pond and swimming, or a penguin waddling to the ice edge and diving into the water). Encourage children to be as creative as possible!
5. Finish the activity by getting children to perform their dances to one another.



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