



Arte Popular: Alebrijes

Activity Book

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Welcome to the Alebrijes Activity Book!
This book will build on the Arte Popular of Mexico presentation.

This activity book contains the following:

- Two reading comprehension worksheets
- How to do a visual analysis worksheet with examples
- Two images with questions to aid you at doing your own visual analysis
- Two worksheets that go over vocabulary words
- Three worksheets to use your creativity:
 - Coloring worksheet
 - Draw your own alebrije worksheet
 - Write a story about your alebrije worksheet
- I have included as examples, my own alebrije drawing and alebrije story to inspire you
- Answer Key

There is also a DIY for making your own alebrije out of paper-mache that you can check out after you are done with this activity book.



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Mexico's Arte Popular



Read the following paragraph and then answers the questions in complete sentences.

Mexico was established as independent from Spain in 1820. From that moment on, Mexico began a journey in figuring out who they were as a nation. Who was Mexico? What was something that united the people of Mexico? Mexico spent the next one hundred years trying to figure that out. It was very hard to figure out who the nation was since Mexico was so big. It was so big that in 1910, Mexico had a revolution. This revolution lasted 10 years and finally, it began to move towards connecting all the people in Mexico into one nation. Leaders decided to use art to help unify Mexico because art is good at connecting people. The art that they focused on was the art created by everyday people in outskirt communities. This art became known as arte popular or artesanias. It is not only paintings or sculptures, but it includes food, dances and clothes. Arte popular can be made out of all kinds of materials. Some communities create art with wax, palm leaves, ceramic, bark paper, pumpkins, silver, stone, coconuts, glass, and many more. The artworks come in all shapes and sizes and are unique to each community. Some communities will use specific colors and some will use specific brushes exclusive to their communities. This makes all arte popular original and unique, because every object is different no matter how similar they can look. Arte popular has become one of the many things Mexico is known for.

1. What year did Mexico gain independence?

- A. 1776
- B. 1910
- C. 1820
- D. 1920

2. What year did Mexico have a revolution?

- A. 1820
- B. 1776
- C. 1850
- D. 1910

Why do you think art can bring communities together?



Pedro Linares and His Alebrijes



Read the following paragraph and then answers the questions in complete sentences.

Pedro Linares was born in Mexico City, in 1906. He grew up to become an artist of paper-mache figurines. There are two ways of making paper-mache. One way is to cut strips of paper and glue them together. The second way is to boil paper in water and adding glue to the water to make a pulpy paste. Pedro Linares used these techniques to create figurines, animals or humans. However, in 1936, Pedro became sick. He was so sick that he spent days bedridden. During a fevered sleep, Pedro dreamt that he was being chased by strange, out-of-this-world creatures. They looked nothing like any animals he had ever seen. They were all different colors and covered in all kinds of patterns. The creatures were chasing him and shouting at him, “alebrijes! Alebrijes!” This dream stuck with him so much that it inspired his art. The moment that he was no longer sick, he went back to creating paper-mache figurines. This time, he began to create fantastical creatures of all kinds and he called them, alebrijes. His family also began to create these creatures and sell them. It became a Linares tradition, with his sons and grandsons continuing to make alebrijes even after Pedro Linares’ death in 1992. The alebrijes have become so popular that Mexico City has a parade every October where artists create huge alebrijes! Thanks to Pedro Linares, the world is a little more colorful and fantastical!

1. When and where was Pedro Linares born?

- A. Guadalajara, Mexico, 1906
- B. Mexico City, 1936
- C. Mexico City, 1906
- D. Monterrey, Mexico, 1936

2. Where did Linares get the idea to name the figurines alebrijes?

- A. From a book
- B. From a dream
- C. From a TV Show
- D. From a movie

3. Why do you think people like alebrijes?

Visual Analysis Example

1. Observations



Four horn-like poles sticking up. They are red with yellow stripes.

5 zigzag spikes in between the 4 red horns. The zigzag spikes are yellow, purple, and black.

These 2 cylinder shapes look like eyes sticking out. They are black, with yellow stripes, and blue band.

This red stick, could be a tongue or fire. There might be some yellow.

Pink and lilac/white zigzag lines. There are yellow/white dots.

Two arm-like sticks, each with four triangles that look like claws. They are painted white, with red tips.

This looks like a square, with rounded edges. It has green leaves and flowers with the colors orange and yellow. The rest is black. There seems to be white dots all over.

There are two wing-like shapes that stick out from the back. They are black, with yellow and pink flower shapes. There are also teal colored shapes that look like leaves.

A diamond shape sticking out from the head. It is black with yellow lines.

These triangles look like feet. There is red and grey colors right next to each other, looks like claws.

2. Analysis

In the analysis part, we use what we observe from the art and our own personal knowledge to make conclusions.

Example questions you can think about:

What can the colors tell us about the alebrije?

What can the patterns it is decorated with tell us?

What can the shapes we see tell us about the alebrije?

Examples of Analysis:

- I think the alebrije is breathing out fire because it has something red sticking out of its mouth, and fire is red.
- I think the creature can live in the mountains because it has two wings, so it can fly.
- I think the alebrije lives in a field of flowers because it has flowers painted on his body.
- I think the alebrije might be part fish because the yellow-purple spikes on its head look like fins.
- I think there is fire coming out of its head because the four spikes sticking out are red and yellow.
- I think the pink zigzags around its neck are gills because they are on its neck and they can make it easier to breath underwater.
- I think the alebrije is active at night because its body is a dark color and can camouflage it at night.
- I think the red pins sticking up look like needles like on a porcupine They are sticking up and are pointy.
- I think the alebrije must have great eyesight because the eyes are sticking out of its head.
- I think the alebrije might eat plants because it is decorated with leaves and flowers.



Visual Analysis: What do you see?



Photograph: Frank C. Müller, Baden-Baden / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)

Observations

What colors do you see? What shapes do you see? What patterns?

Analysis

Based on what you see, what conclusions can you make about the alebrije?
example: what kind of animal is it? where do you think it would live?





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Vocabulary

Alebrije-

Mexican sculpture of a fantastical creature made out of wood or paper-mache

Arte popular –

art that is created through traditional methods in Mexican communities

Artesania –

art created by hand and through traditional methods

Analysis -

a careful study of something to learn about what they do and who they are

Observation –

the act of paying close attention, watching and listening to get information

Paper-mache -

a material that is made of paper mixed with water and glue

Community –

a group of people who live in the same area (like a neighborhood or town)

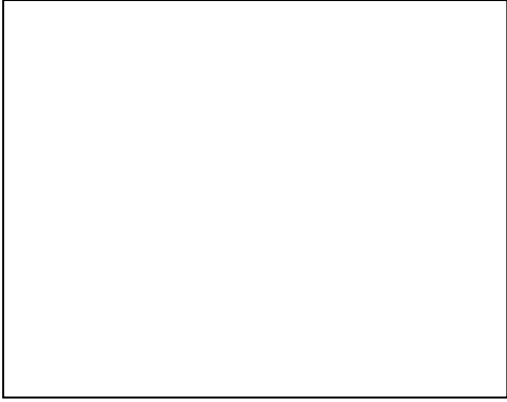
Tradition -

a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by a group of people for a long time

Complete the following sentences with one of the vocabulary words.

1. My family has a _____ we have been doing every year since I was born.
2. When my family went to Mexico City, we saw all kinds of art, including _____ and _____.
3. We like to go trick-or-treating around our _____.
4. I made an _____ out of _____.

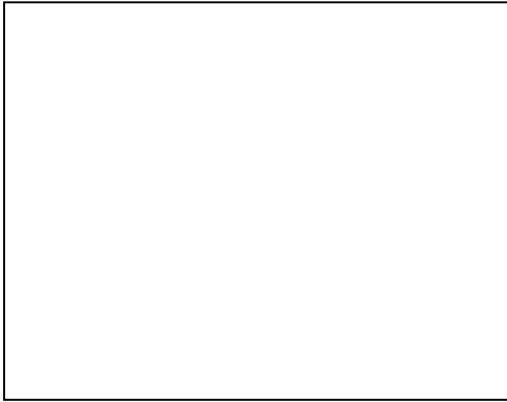
For each box, choose a vocabulary word and draw something that is related to its definition.



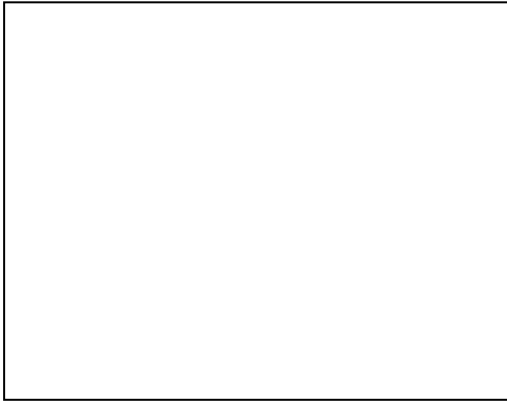
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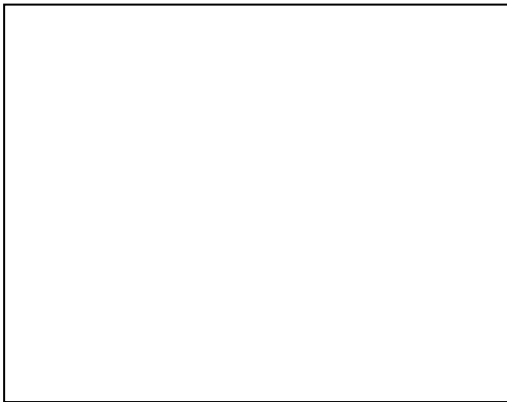
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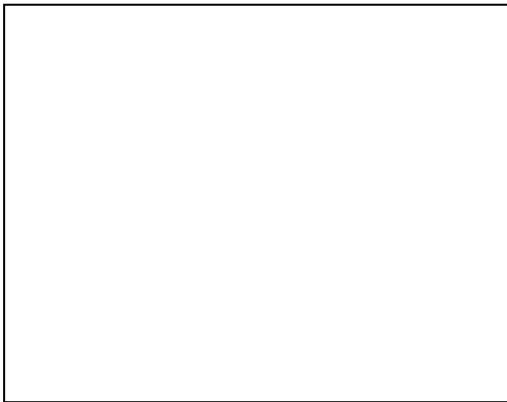
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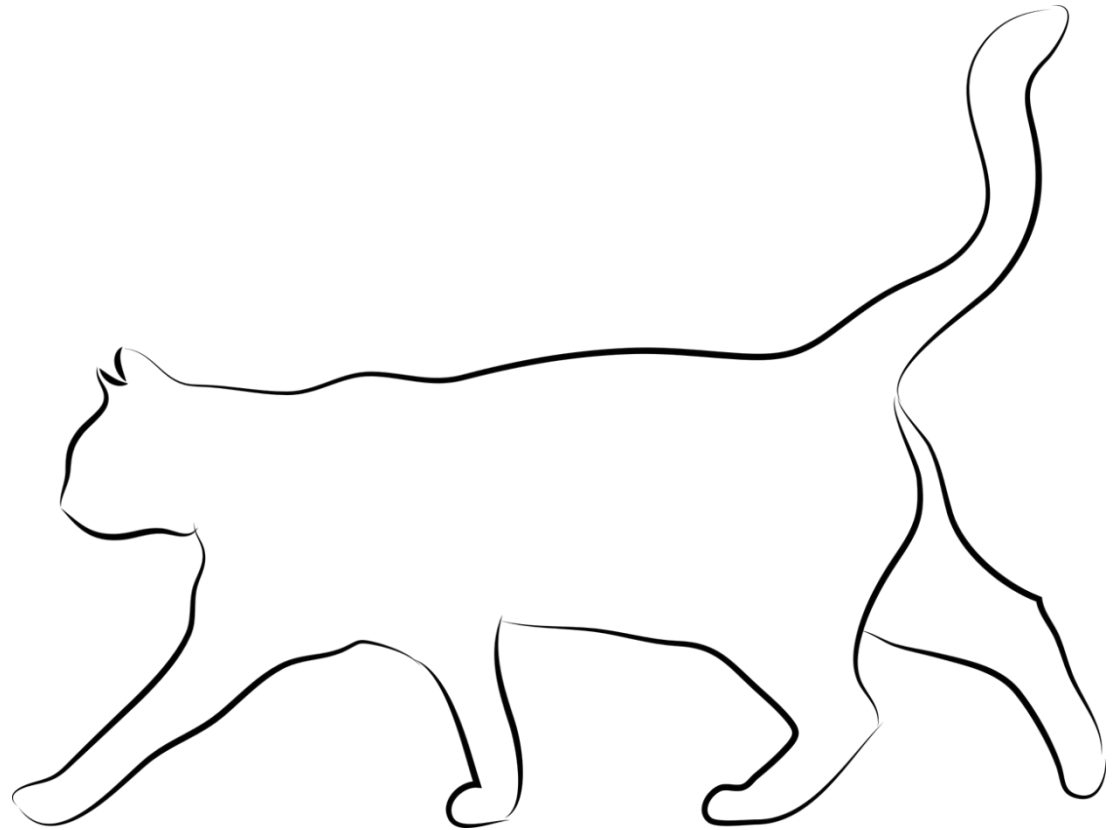
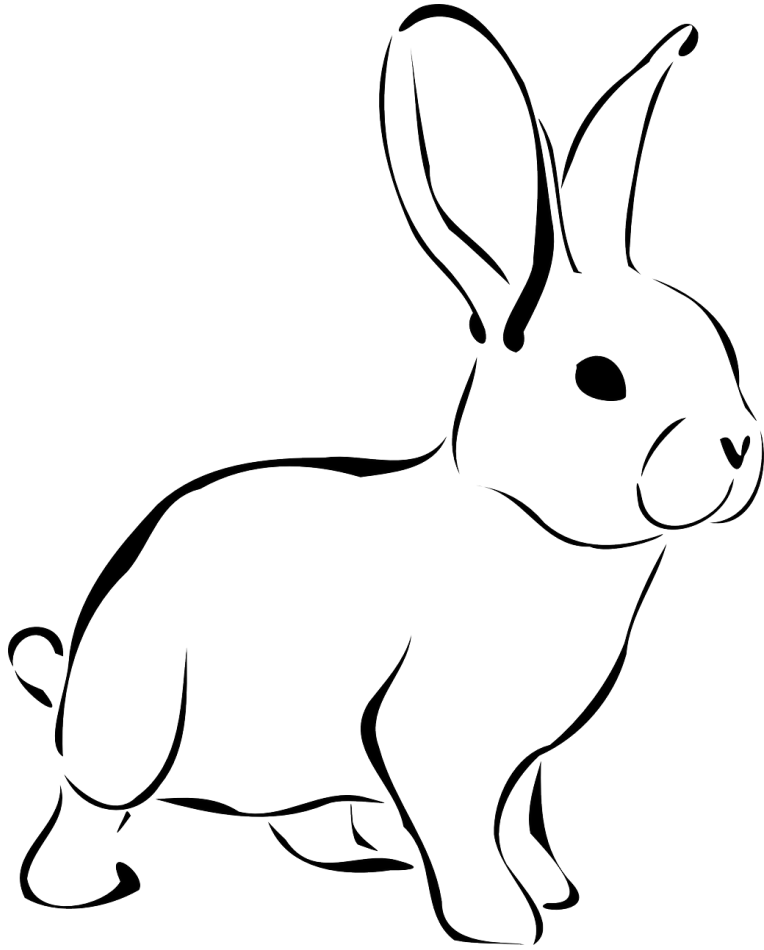
Making Everyday Animals into Fantastical Creatures

Alebrijes are creatures that are not seen in the real world. Go ahead and make these two animals into something from your imagination.

You can add wings, horns, spikes, more ears or tails.

You can use all the colors you have, give them spots, stripes, stars, any shapes you want.

Make them out of this world.





Draw your own fantastical creature



Now it is time to draw your alebrije!

Remember, there is no set animal it has to look like. This is all from your imagination, you can combine different animals together, a lizard and a bunny. You can color them bright orange with purple triangles. This is your companion! Let your imagination run wild.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a fantastical creature.



An Adventure with your alebrije

Think about your alebrije, picture it in your mind. Now, what kind of adventures would you two go on? Maybe fly over mountains? Swim across an ocean? Find a treasure? Go ahead and write your story!



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An Adventure with your alebrije

Think about your alebrije, picture it in your mind. Now, what kind of adventures would you two go on? Maybe fly over mountains? Swim across an ocean? Find a treasure? Go ahead and write your story!

It was early in the morning when I woke up to the sound of a loud siren. It was so loud, I could feel my head pounding. I got up from my bed and made my way to the window to look out at the dock. There were people rushing out of their houses in confusions. The ships that were making their way to pier to dock seem to have stopped in confusion. I could not see anything strange, but determined to figure out this mystery, I dressed and rushed out of my house.

I made my way down the street, weaving around people to get to the tower that was letting out the loud siren. I called out to the men up there but all they could do was point out towards the sky. I looked up, wondering what they were looking at. I stared and stared. Finally, I saw what they saw. There was a creature circling the town. It had long wings and a long tail. I had no idea what it could be. Finally, I heard it let out an extremely loud roar. It began to get closer and closer to the ground. The rest of the townspeople finally saw it and began to scream in fear. I was afraid as well. I knew I needed to find cover but as the creature got closer, I saw that there was something stuck to one of its wings. It was hurt!

“Wait!” I called out to everyone around me, “It is hurt!” I said, pointing at the creature as it got closer. It was not roaring in anger but in pain. It was crying. The people around me noticed the same thing as me. There was something stuck to his wing. Slowly, the creature landed by the loud tower and stared at all of us, before whining and motioning to its wing with its head. Slowly, I approached the creature. It was beautiful with blue scales on its head and green scales along its body. Its wings were a gorgeous and vibrant yellow. Carefully, I approached it and began to tug out the spear out of its wing. Finally, the creature was free and flapped its wings in happiness. It let out a loud chirp in happiness. It nuzzled its head against my arm and from that day on, we have been inseparable!





Answer Key

Pedro Linares and His Alebrijes

1. C
2. B
3. Answers will vary

Mexico's Arte Popular

1. C
2. D
3. Answers will vary

Vocabulary Sentences

1. tradition
2. arte popular, artesanias
3. community
4. alebrije, paper-mache

