

# Art and Nature

For millions of years, humans have created artwork inspired by the natural things around them. From the ancient cave paintings of bison and deer created in the stone age, to more modern pieces of art, such as 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa' by Japanese artist, Katsushika Hokusai. The natural world has inspired paintings, **tapestries**, music and the written word throughout human existence. Let's explore how nature could inspire you to create your own masterpiece:

## Nature Inspiring Music

Italian **composer**, Antonio Vivaldi, created a piece of classical music entitled 'The Four Seasons'. 'The Four Seasons' is split into distinct sections and the sound of each section tries to represent the season it is named after. The sound of bird calls inspires 'Spring', the hum of swarms of wasps inspires 'Summer', the horns of hunters inspire the sounds of 'Autumn' and the chattering of teeth inspire 'Winter'. Why not listen to it for yourself; can you hear what Vivaldi was inspired by?

Take a walk in your local park or sit in your garden at different times of day. Close your eyes and listen to the different sounds that could inspire your own music. Think about the instruments you could use to make those sounds and the range of pitches you can hear. Can you use your body to mimic the sounds of morning birdsong?



The great wave off Kanagawa by Katsushika Hokusai is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

## Nature Inspiring Sculpting

Andy Goldsworthy is an award-winning environmental artist. He uses natural materials, such as fallen leaves, branches, pebbles and stone, to create unique land sculptures.

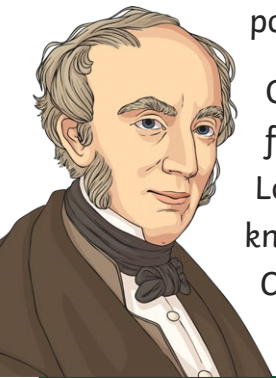
Andy created one sculpture, which he named 'Spire', from the trunks of 37 trees. Which natural materials could you use to create your own sculpture? You could collect and arrange different coloured leaves to create a pattern, weave twigs and branches together to form a structure or stack pebbles in an interesting way.

## Nature Inspiring Poetry

William Wordsworth was a British poet. Many of Wordsworth's famous poems were inspired by nature.

One poem, called 'Lines Written in Early Spring', talks about flowers and plant life blooming and thriving, whilst birds hop and play nearby. Another piece, called 'To the Cuckoo', talks about the chirps and calls of a cuckoo.

Which plants or animals could you write poetry about? You may wish to describe the sights and sounds of your garden or the crunching beneath your feet on a chilly day could inspire you to write an autumnal poem full of exciting adjectives.



One of Wordsworth's most famous poems is 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud', often simply known by the title 'Daffodils'. Can you see how nature inspired this poem?

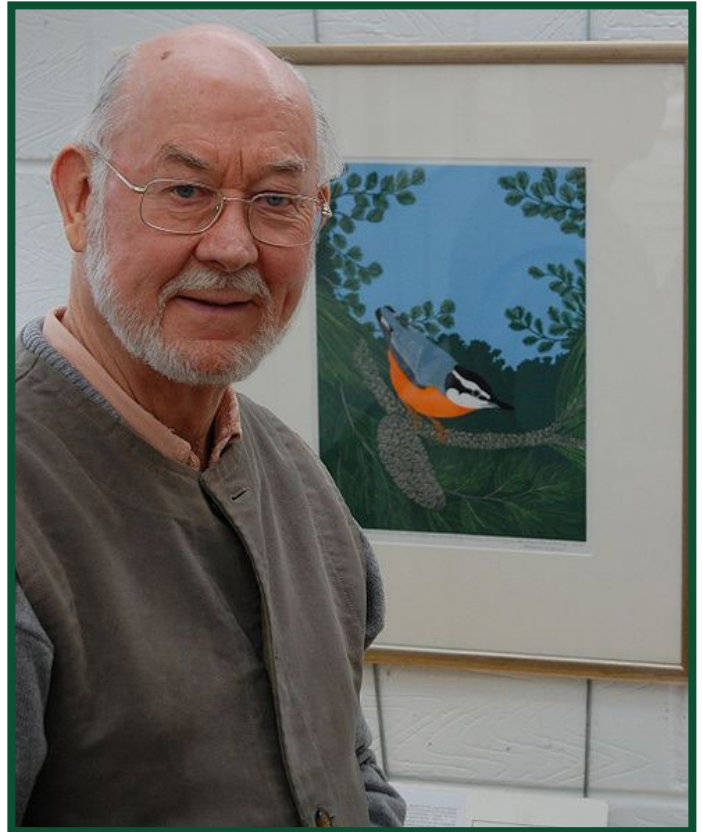
An Extract From

### **I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.



Robert Gillmor Photograph by Pigsonthewing is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

## Nature Inspiring Artwork

Robert Gillmor is an **ornithologist**, artist and illustrator. As a child, Robert spent many hours watching his grandfather – artist Allen W Seaby – creating woodblock prints in his workshop. Just like his grandfather, Robert began creating prints inspired by birds.

Which animal would you love to become an expert on? Why not research your chosen creature online or visit a local nature reserve? Spend time watching them in their natural habitat. How do they move? What colours, patterns and textures can you see? Think about how you could recreate these using different brushstrokes, materials or equipment.







"Goldfinch in Flight" by Clive Brown

### Be Inspired!

Inspiration for your own art based on nature is all around you. Birds circling in the bright sky may inspire an abstract piece of art using charcoal on a blue fabric. Materials you find during a springtime walk, such as feathers, leaves and twigs, could be used to make a natural collage. Take a camera to your local park and capture a colourful bird in flight or a busy minibeast. The possibilities are endless: why not explore your local environment and use the colours, sounds and textures of nature to create some artwork of your own?

### Glossary

**composer** A person who writes music.

**ornithologist** A person who studies or is an expert on birds.

**tapestry** A piece of fabric with pictures or designs sewn onto it.

# Questions

1. Which artist created the piece entitled 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa'? Tick one.

- ☐ Robert Gillmor  
☐ Katsushika Hokusai  
☐ Antonio Vivaldi  
☐ William Wordsworth

2. Join the boxes to show the type of art created by each artist.

Robert Gillmor	sculptures
Andy Goldsworthy	poetry
William Wordsworth	prints

3. Which Italian composer created 'The Four Seasons'?

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4. Find and copy the name of **two** poems written by William Wordsworth.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is Robert Gillmor's artwork inspired by?

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6. Give one way in which William Wordsworth and Robert Gillmor are similar and one way in which they are different.

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7. Summarise the section entitled **Nature Inspiring Poetry** in 30 words or less.

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8. Using information from this text, fully explain what 'Spire' is.

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9. Comment on **two** things which may have inspired Robert Gillmor to become an artist.

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