

# John J Audubon Drawing Exercise

## Teacher Script

“All right, artists, today we are continuing our study of **line, shape, and composition**– the building blocks of every beautiful piece of art. We’ve learned that **lines** create form, **shapes** help us see structure, and **composition** is how we decide where things belong on our page.

This month, we’ve also been learning about a very special artist– **John James Audubon**. Audubon was a naturalist and painter who loved studying birds. But before he ever picked up his brush, he *watched*. He studied. He waited. He paid attention to the tiniest details– the way a bird’s wing curved, the pattern of its feathers, the angle of its head, the branch it perched on.

Audubon didn’t rush to draw. He spent hours out in nature, quietly observing, learning from what he saw, and capturing the beauty of God’s creation with patience and care.

Today, we’re going to draw like Audubon did. We’re going to slow down, observe carefully, and use our knowledge of **line, shape, and composition** to bring a bird to life on our page.”

*(Pause and lower your voice slightly for effect.)*

“Before we begin, I want you to close your eyes. Imagine you are walking through a quiet forest early in the morning. The air is cool, and you can hear the wind whispering through the trees. Maybe there’s a rustle of leaves or a soft chirp above you.

You’re holding your sketchbook just like Audubon did. You’re walking slowly, quietly, listening carefully. You’re watching for movement in the trees or along the water. You want to find just the right bird to study.

Keep your eyes closed– you haven’t seen it yet. Take a deep breath. Listen. Somewhere nearby, there’s a sound– maybe a flap of wings or a curious call. You turn your head...”

*(Softly)*

“Now open your eyes and flip your page over.”

*(Pause and let them look at their bird.)*

“You’ve found it! This is the bird you discovered on your adventure. Take a moment to really look– not just glance, but *study* it, just like Audubon would.

What do you notice first? The color of its feathers? The shape of its beak? The way it's standing or looking? What kind of lines do you see– curved, straight, short, or long? What shapes make up its body– circles, ovals, triangles?"

"Before you start drawing, trace the bird's shapes in the air with your finger. Feel the rhythm of its form– the gentle curve of the wing, the strong line of the beak, the smooth oval of the body."

*(After a pause)*

"Now, using your pencil, begin your drawing. Start with light lines– gentle and simple. Draw the main shapes first, just like a map that will guide you. Don't rush; Audubon took his time to capture what he saw.

Once your bird begins to take shape, add the smaller lines that show its feathers or markings. Then, think about your **composition**– where does your bird live? Is it standing on a branch, resting on the water, or perched on a rock? Add those details carefully."

*(Encouraging tone)*

"Now add color, just as Audubon did when he painted. Notice where the colors change, where shadows make the feathers darker, and where the light makes them shine. Use your crayons or colored pencils to bring your bird to life."

*(Pause as students work, then close gently.)*

Look at what you've created– a moment in nature, captured through your careful observation and your artist's eye. That's exactly what Audubon did, and today, you followed in his footsteps."