

**Mini Art Lesson:**  
*Baleen Whale Mask*

This Mini Art Lesson honors Native American history and culture through the work of the Kwakwaka'wakw—Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest Coast of the United States. This mask tells the story of why whales live deep in the ocean and involves a strong, persistent whale character. In this lesson, kids ages 2–6 will use their favorite tale to create a story “chain,” while kids ages 7 and up will craft their own paper puppets.



**FOR AGES 2–6:**  
**LET'S PLAY**

The Kwakwaka'wakw whale mask was likely worn along the back of a chief, covering their entire body. In the spirit of this, we'll be creating a story chain for your child to wear.

**Step 1:** Talk to your child about their favorite story. For this lesson, Chloe chose *Dear Girl* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Jason Rosenthal, and her younger brother, Davis, chose *Where Oliver Fits* by Cale Atkinson. (A)

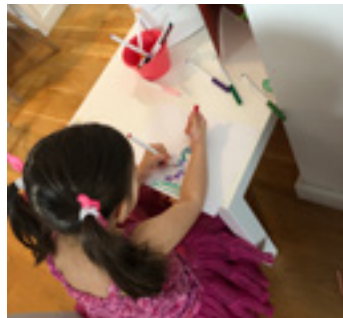
**Step 2:** Discuss the story's main events and have your child retell them by drawing individual scenes. (B)

**Step 3:** Arrange the drawings from top to bottom, in chronological order, and then tape the story together in that sequence. (C)

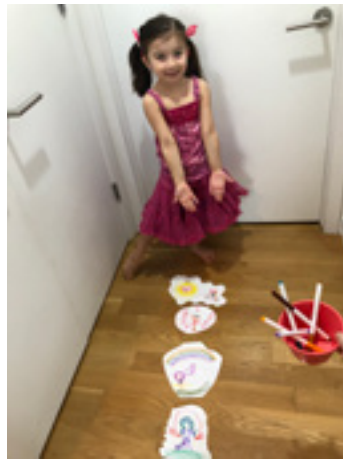
A



B



C



FOR AGES 2-6:  
LET'S PLAY (cont.)

**Step 4:** Have your child wear the chain of drawings along their back, and then tell the story back to your child using their pictures as a visual. (D)

Thanks to Maria, Chloe, and Davis for their help on this project! We hope you enjoyed your stories and artworks as much as we did. (E)

D



E



FOR AGES 7+:  
LET'S CREATE

**Step 1:** Think of a story that means a lot to you. Do you have a favorite book? Or a story from your family? For this lesson, we'll be using the Kwakwaka'wakw origin story.

**Step 2:** Make a list of all the characters in the story. (A)

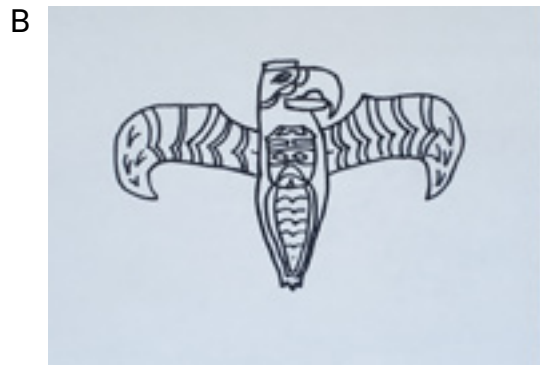
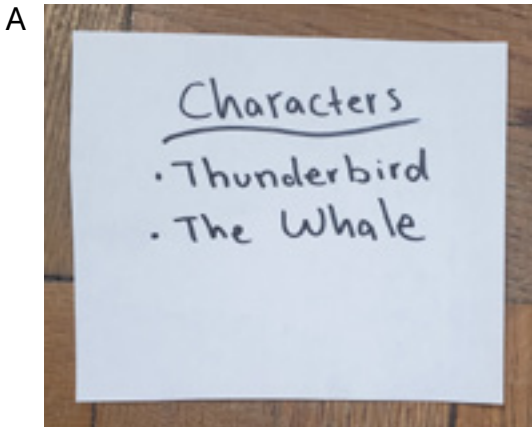
**Step 3:** Sketch out what these characters look like on paper and color them in. (B)

**Step 4:** Cut out your drawings so each character is on its own sheet of paper. (C)

**Step 5:** Roll up a new piece of paper and tape it so it stays rolled up. You can also use Popsicle sticks or cardboard to hold up your puppet.

**Step 6:** Tape your paper or stick to the back of your character. (D)

**Step 7:** Now, put on a puppet show to tell your story! (E)



From top: Kwakwaka'wakw. *Baleen Whale Mask*, 19th century. Cedar wood, hide, cotton cord, nails, pigment. Brooklyn Museum; Museum Expedition 1908, Museum Collection Fund, 08.491.8901. Creative Commons-BY. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum); For ages 2-6 (Photos: Maria Leto, Brooklyn Museum); For ages 7+: (Photos: Noé Gaytán, Brooklyn Museum)