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?

**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.

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.
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?

Springwatch Wild Academy Challenge!
Make sure you have watched the Springwatch Wild Academy show on Art and Nature before you try to answer these questions:

1. Artist Rob Gillmor drew the logo for which famous bird society?
2. What colour is an avocet?
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’?

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

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

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

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’?
   Antonio Vivaldi created The Four Seasons.

4. Find and copy the name of two poems written by William Wordsworth.
   Accept any two of the following: Lines Written in Early Spring; To the Cuckoo; I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud.

5. What is Robert Gillmor’s artwork inspired by?
   Robert Gillmor’s artwork is inspired by birds.

6. Give one way in which William Wordsworth and Robert Gillmor are similar and one way in which they are different.
   Pupils’ own responses, such as: William Wordsworth and Robert Gillmor are similar because they both have been inspired by birds in their work. They are different because Wordsworth creates his art with words and Robert creates his art with pictures.

7. Summarise the section entitled Nature Inspiring Poetry in 30 words or less.
   Pupils’ own responses, such as: British poet, William Wordsworth, wrote poetry inspired by nature, which included birds, plants and flowers. I could write nature poetry describing the sounds in my garden.
8. Using information from this text, fully explain what ‘Spire’ is.
   Pupils’ own responses, such as: Spire is a sculpture created by Andy Goldsworthy. It is made from the trunks of 37 trees.

9. Comment on two things which may have inspired Robert Gillmor to become an artist.
   Pupils’ own responses, such as: Robert Gillmor may have been inspired to become an artist because his grandfather created prints and he wanted to be like him. He may have also been inspired by the beauty of the birds he loved to watch.