

This homeschool activity is appropriate for grades: 3 through 6

Happy Halloween!

It's almost Halloween!
To celebrate the
holiday, let's learn
about some creatures
people sometimes find
scary!

The Spined
Micrathena Spider
is common
throughout the
autumn months.

This white-tailed
deer skull is easy to
identify by its
large eye sockets
and huge antlers.

Could there be a snake
hiding among the leaves?

For more visit:
FairfieldCountyParks.org





Activity
1

Halloween Creatures: Animal Myths

There are many creatures people find scary. Usually it is because these animals are misunderstood. Here are some common myths and the truth behind them. Share the facts with your friends to help make these animals seem a little less scary!

The Myth	The Facts
Snakes are poisonous.	Technically, some snakes are <i>venomous</i> , not <i>poisonous</i> . There are only three <i>venomous</i> snakes that call Ohio home- the Northern Copperhead, the Eastern Timber Rattlesnake and the Eastern Massasauga. All are considered uncommon to rare throughout the state.
All spiders make webs.	Only some spiders spin webs. All spiders make silk using their <i>spinnerets</i> , but this silk is not always for web making. A spider will also use silk to wrap an egg sack, form a mounting platform, or even create a drag line. Instead of using a web, some spiders hunt using a silken funnel or trapdoor burrow.
Snakes are slimy.	Snakes, being reptiles, have a cold, dry skin. They are covered with smooth scales. Don't confuse a reptile's scales with an amphibian's slippery skin. Many amphibians, like frogs, toads and salamanders produce a mucus from their skin. Reptiles, like snakes, do not do this.
Bats are blind.	Bats can see- in fact, some species can even see better than humans. Bats do not rely on vision while hunting. Instead, they use <i>echolocation</i> . Echolocation uses sound to navigate.

Are there any creatures you find a little scary? Research one of those animals and write down something you learned about it.

Halloween Creatures: Mammal Skulls



Large, orange front teeth
(incisors)

**Eastern Cottontail
Rabbit**

**American
Beaver**

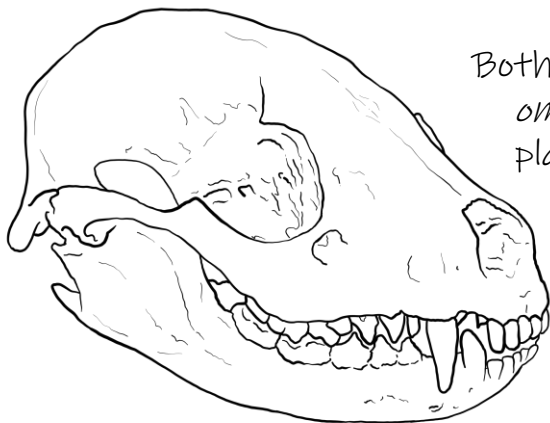


Two sets of front
teeth, one set is
much smaller than
the other!

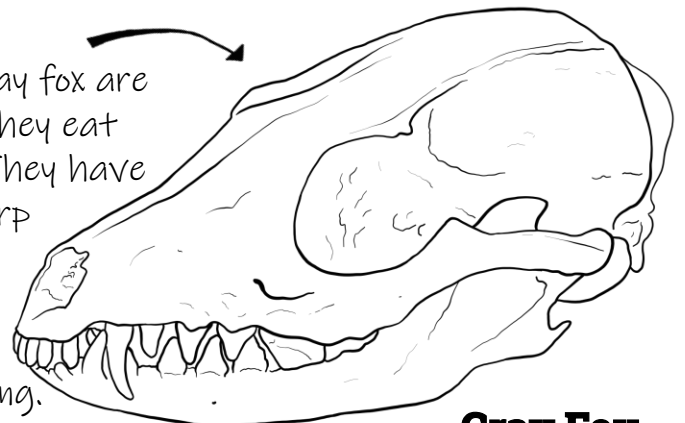


Male white-tailed deer grow
new antlers every year.
Female deer do not normally
have these bumps on their
skulls, while males usually do.

**White-tailed
Deer**



Both the raccoon and gray fox are
omnivores, meaning they eat
plants and animals. They have
a mix of both sharp
teeth for killing
and cutting, and
flat teeth for
chewing and grinding.



Gray Fox

Very tiny skull with sharp,
pointed teeth

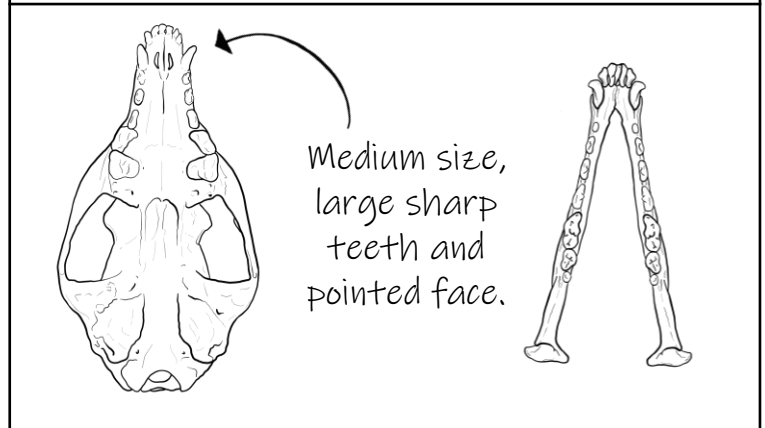
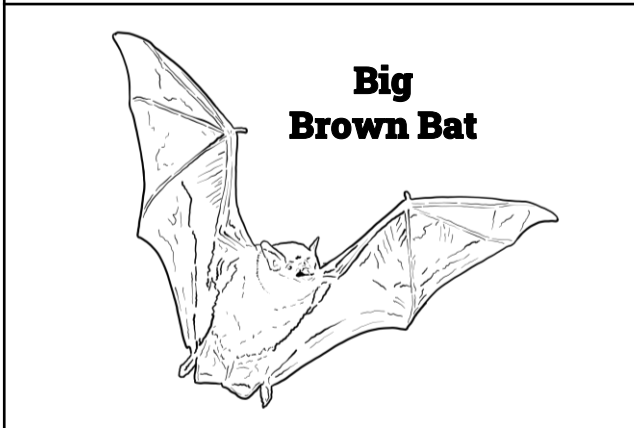
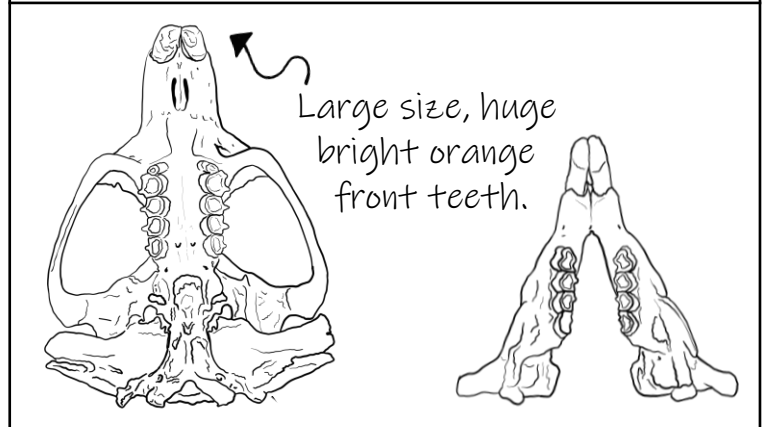
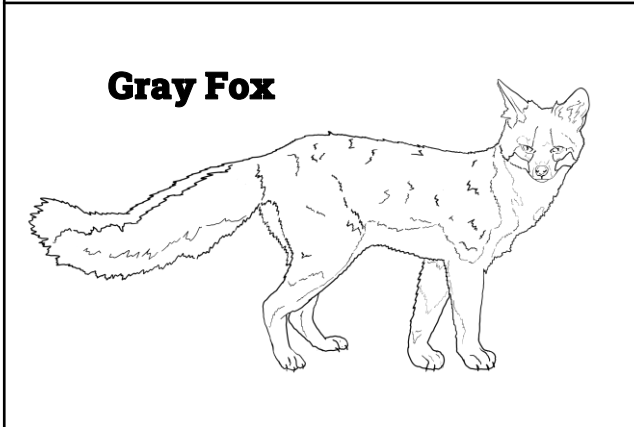
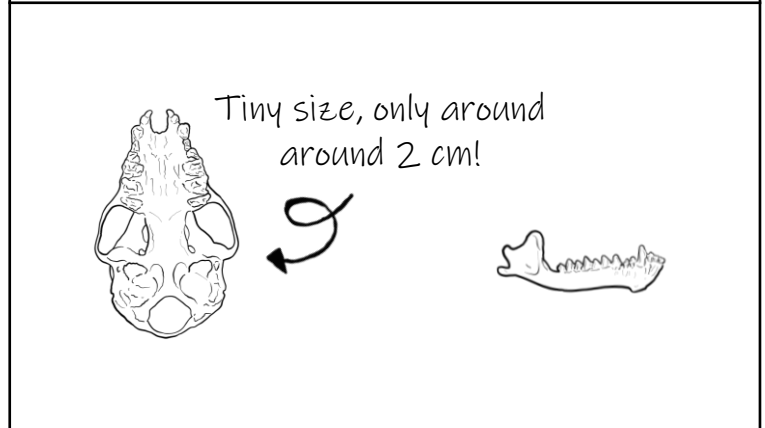
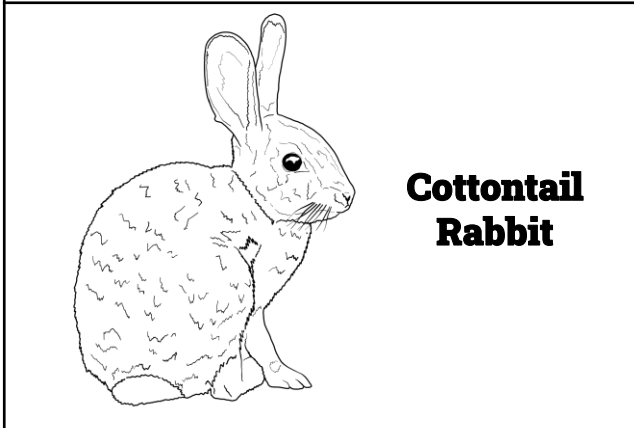
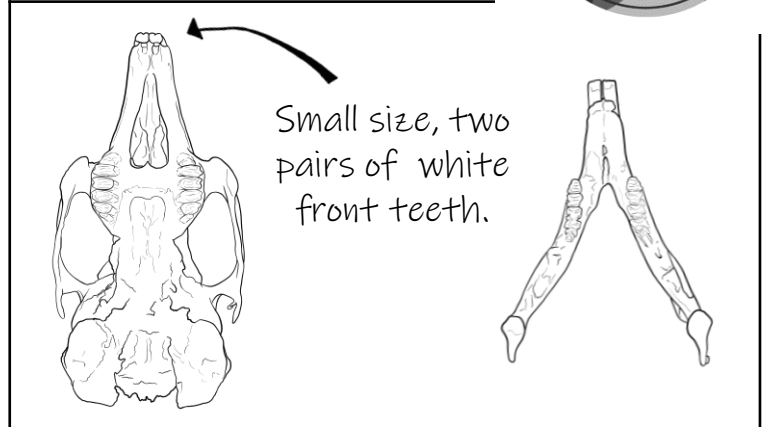
**Big
Brown Bat**



Halloween Creatures: Skull Matching



These skulls are all mixed up! Can you find which skull belongs to what animal? Draw a line from the mammal to its matching skull.

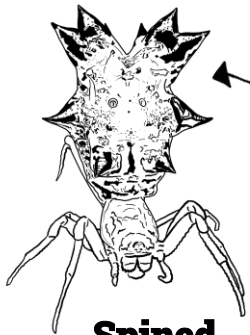


Activity
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Halloween Creatures: Ohio's Common Spiders



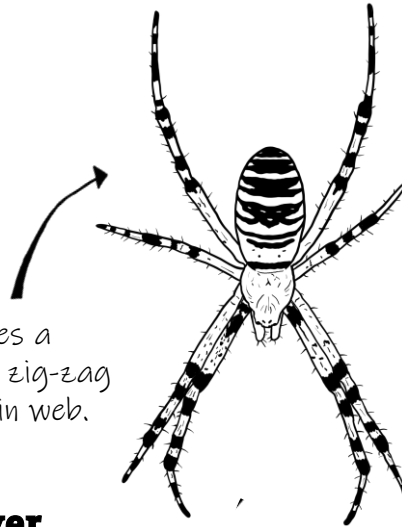
Spiders are found nearly everywhere. Just here in Ohio there are over 600 known species! These creatures play an important role in the ecosystem.



**Spined
Micrathena**

Size: 1/8" to 3/8"

This spider often builds its webs directly across wooded trails.



**Black-and-Yellow
Garden Spider**

Size: 1/4" to 1 1/8"

Often found in gardens and fields around late summer and early autumn.

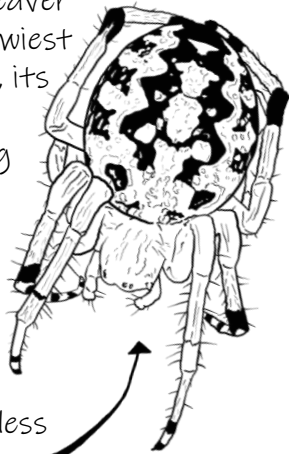
Creates a distinctive zig-zag pattern in web.

Marbled Orbweaver

Size: 1/4" to 3/4"

The Marbled Orbweaver is among Ohio's showiest spiders. In summer, its abdomen is pale yellow, slowly turning yellowish-orange by autumn. Some think their appearance even resembles a carved Jack-o-Lantern!

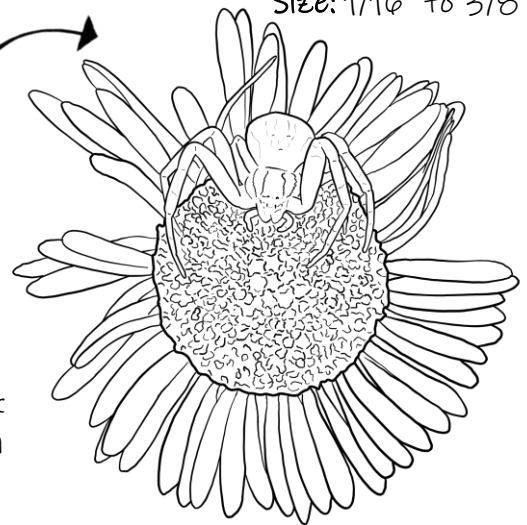
This spider is harmless to humans and pets.



**Red-banded
Crab Spider**

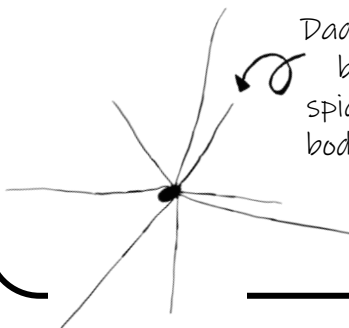
Size: 1/16" to 3/8"

This spider can change color to match its background. They can be yellow, white, or even pink depending on which flower they are lurking.



What is a Spider?

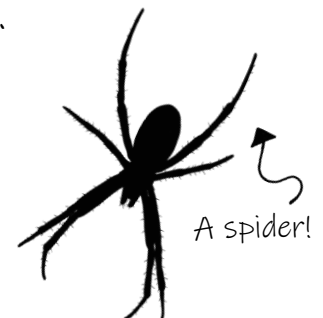
Spiders are not insects, instead they belong to a group known as *arachnids*. Insects have six legs while arachnids have eight. Other animals, such as mites, scorpions, ticks, and "daddy-long-legs," are also considered arachnids. What separates spiders from other arachnids is that spiders have two body segments.



Daddy-long-legs and tick are both arachnid, but not spiders. They only have one body segment while spiders have two.



This ladybug beetle has six legs, spiders have eight.



Spider Observations

First find a spider and its web. Then use this worksheet to make some observations on what you found.



Drawing of Web:

Drawing of Spider:

Species Name (if known):

Date:

Habitat:

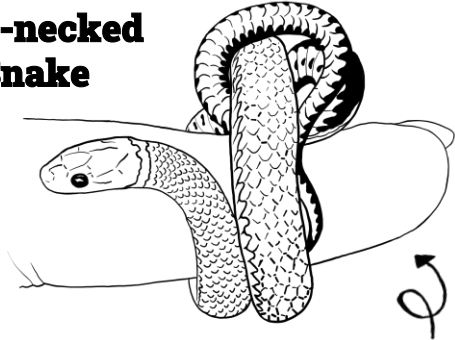
Notes:

Activity
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Halloween Creatures: Ohio's Common Snakes

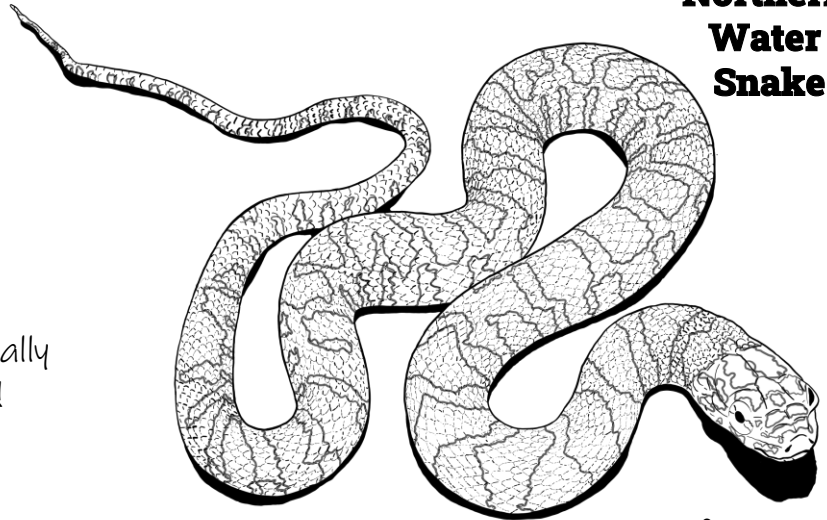
Many harmless snake species live throughout the state of Ohio. There are only three venomous snake species that call Ohio home- the Northern Copperhead, the Eastern Timber Rattlesnake and the Eastern Massasauga. All are considered uncommon to rare throughout the state.

Ring-necked Snake



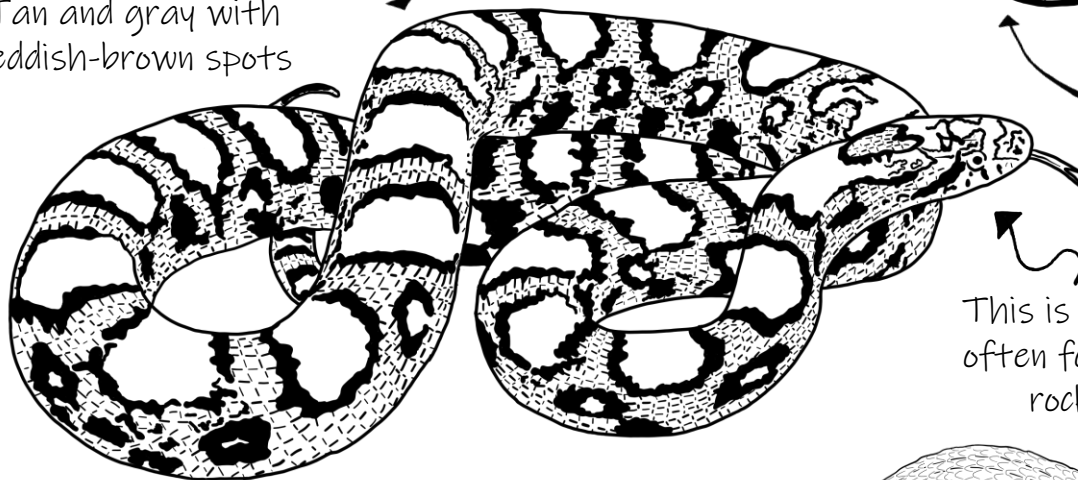
These snakes are tiny, typically between 6-10 inches long!

Northern Water Snake



Often misidentified as a copperhead or rattlesnake!

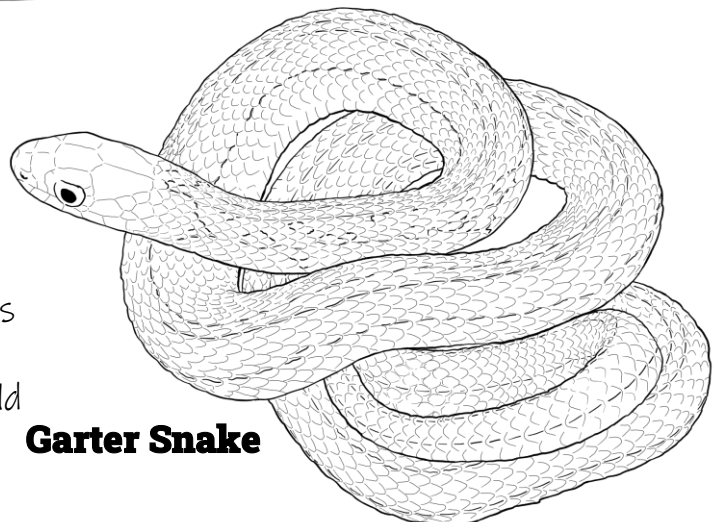
Tan and gray with reddish-brown spots



This is a secretive snake, often found beneath logs, rocks and boards.

Eastern Milk Snake

Often miscalled a "garden snake." This reptile is named for it's bold stripes, which resemble the garter used to hold up one's socks.



Garter Snake

Halloween Creatures:



Cold Blooded vs. Warm Blooded

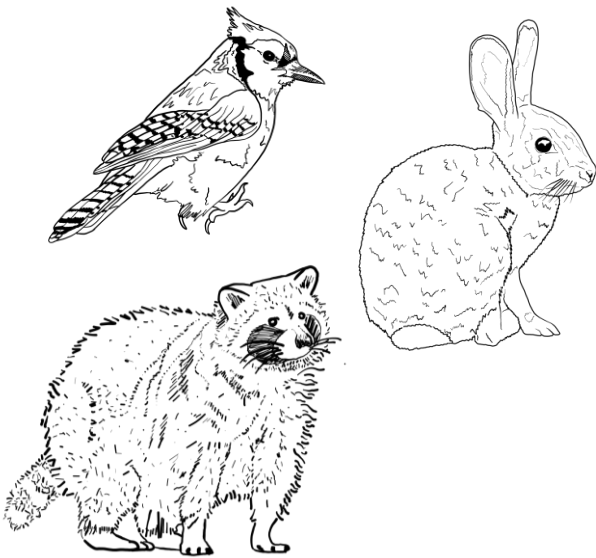
Some animals, like snakes, fish and frogs, are considered *cold blooded*. This means the animal's body temperature changes depending on its surroundings. For example, a turtle may sit in the sun to warm itself.

Warm blooded animals, like humans, make their own body heat, even when it is cold outside. Whether it is hot and sunny, or cold and snowy- a warm blooded animal's body always stays about the same temperature.

Draw in a couple warm blooded and cold blooded animals.

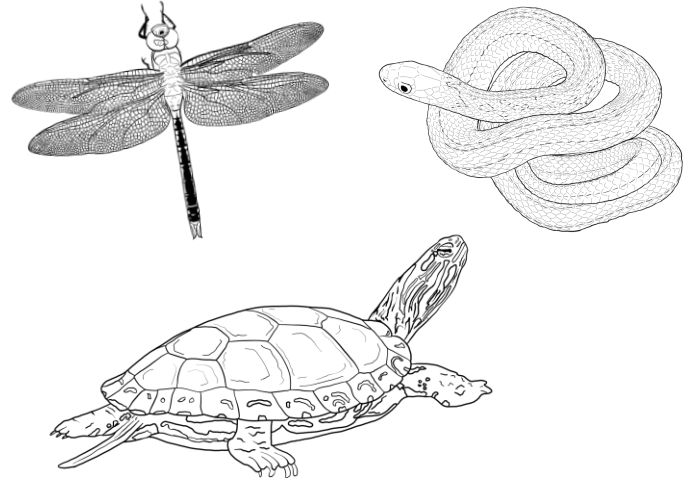
Warm Blooded Animals

Body temperature stays about the same, whether it is hot or cold outside.



Cold Blooded Animals

Body temperature depends on whether it is hot or cold outside.





Activity

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Halloween Creatures: Indigenous Folklore

Hundreds of tribes of Indigenous people once lived in North America, dozens in just the Ohio area. Among the many tribes who once occupied the mid-Ohio valley were the Shawnee, Chippewa, Wyandot, Iroquois, Ottawa, and Seneca. Indigenous cultures have a long history of storytelling. Long before books and movies, people would gather to tell each other stories. These legends would often attempt to explain parts of the world they did not yet understand.

Creatures from Indigenous Folklore

The Mesingw

Tribe Associations: Shawnee, Lenape, Munsee and others

Pronunciation: MUH-SEENG

A powerful mask spirit, the Mesingw is a protector of the forest and maintains the balance of nature. He guards the animals of the forest, especially deer. The masked spirit rides through the forest on a deer. The mask is colored half red, half black.

Draw the Mesingw

Thunderbird

Tribe Associations: Sioux, Shawnee, Ojibwe and others

Thunderbirds are widespread in indigenous mythology. They are described as enormous birds with huge talons- large enough to carry a whale! They are responsible for the sound of thunder, and sometimes even lightning.

Draw a Thunderbird

The Nūnnē'hi

Tribe Associations: Cherokee

Pronunciation: NUN-NAY-HEE

The Nannehi are elf-like creatures, friendly to humans. They are strong, brave and usually invisible unless they choose to show themselves. In some legends they are described as "little people."

Draw the Nūnnē'hi

Keywords:



Abdomen	The part of the body containing major digestive organs.
Arachnid	A creature in the class <i>Arachnida</i> , like a spider, tick or scorpion.
Cold Blooded	An animal whose body temperature depends on whether it is hot or cold outside.
Echolocation	Finding the location of objects using sound. Dolphins and bats both use echolocation.
Garter	A band worn to hold up a sock.
Indigenous People	People who were native to and lived in an area hundreds to thousands of years ago.
Incisor	A narrow tooth at the front of the mouth, used for cutting.
Mucus	A slimy substance.
Omnivore	An animal that eats both plants and animals.
Poison	A substance that can cause illness or death. Poison is ingested (eaten) or absorbed through the skin.
Spinnerets	A special organ that produces silk.
Talon	A claw belonging to a bird of prey.
Warm Blooded	An animal whose body temperature stays about the same whether it is hot or cold outside.
Venom	A substance that can cause illness or death. Venom is injected through a sting or bite.