

**Intended for Grades:** 4-6      **Estimated Time:** 50-60 minutes

**Lesson Title: THE ANIMAL IN ME**

**Lesson Purpose:** Students will:

- \* Gain knowledge and understanding how different cultures relate to the attributes of different animals.
- \* Learn how our observations of these different animal attributes may teach us about our own attributes.

**Background Information:** See reading below.

**Materials & Preparation:**

- \* *What is a Totem?* Reading (see below)
- \* Animal Symbols Sheet (see below) - multiple copies to share
- \* Scissors, tape
- \* Index cards, one per student
- \* Pencils; colored markers & pencils
- \* Long strips of construction paper 5 inches wide, long enough to create totem poles.  
(You can do more than one totem, depending on amount of students)

**Steps:**

1. Share lesson reading: *What is a Totem?* Have students take turns reading as a class and discuss and clarify what was learned (5 min.)
2. Break into small groups. Go over questions (See below), and look at Animals and their Characteristics Sheets (pgs. 3-7). Encourage students to pick an animal. (10 min.)
3. Distribute *The Animal In Me* handout. Ask students to list 5 of their animal's attributes, and then list 5 things about them self that may relate to their animal. (10 min.)
4. Facilitate Totem Activity (20-30 min)
  - a. Distribute index cards, pencils, and colored markers
  - b. Ask students to draw the head or front view of the animal that represents them.  
Have them describe the strengths of that animal on the back.
  - c. Have students share their animal and their strengths.
  - d. Tape the heads to the construction paper "totem pole".

**5. Reflection Questions**

*How might this activity teach us about ourselves?*

*What is something you learned?*

*How can it teach us about others?*

*How can it remind us about working as a group?*

**Resources:**

<http://www.animal-symbols.com/>

<http://crystal-cure.com/article-totems.html>

## What is a Totem?

A totem can be the symbol of a tribe, clan, family or individual. Native American tradition provides that each individual is connected with nine different animals that will accompany each person through life, acting as guides.

Different animal guides come in and out of our lives, depending on the direction that we are headed and the tasks that need to be completed along our journey.

Native beliefs further explain that a totem animal is one that is with you for life, both in the physical and spiritual world. Though people may identify with different animal guides throughout their lifetimes, it is this one totem animal that acts as the main guardian spirit.

### Animal Symbols

Here are some questions to ask yourself if you're wondering what your animal totem is:

- \* Have you ever felt drawn to one animal or another without being able to explain why? This could include birds and insects.
- \* Does a certain kind of animal consistently appear in your life? This might be a physical appearance, or on a card, in dreams, on television, or actually having the animal show up.
- \* When you go to the zoo, a park, wildlife area, or forest, what are you most interested in seeing?
- \* Are there any animals that you find to be extremely frightening or fascinating?
- \* Is there a particular animal that you see frequently when you're outside?
- \* Have you ever been bitten or attacked by an animal?
- \* Have you ever had a recurring dream about a certain animal, or a dream from childhood that you have never been able to forget?
- \* Are you drawn to figurines or paintings of a specific animal?

### Animals and their Characteristics

<b>Alligator</b>	Maternal, revenge oriented, quickness, aggression, and basic survival instincts.
<b>Ant</b>	Group minded, determination, patient, active, and industrious
<b>Anteater</b>	Lethargy, curiosity, nosiness.
<b>Antelope</b>	Active, agile, jumpiness, and willing to sacrifice
<b>Armadillo</b>	Safety oriented, grounded, and has boundaries
<b>Badger</b>	Courage, aggressive, healer, having problems relating to others, and energy conduit
<b>Bat</b>	Rebirth, longevity, secrecy, initiation, good listener, and long life
<b>Bear</b>	Industrious, instinctive, healing, power, sovereignty, guardian of the world, watcher, courage, will power, self-preservation, introspection, and great strength.

<b>Beaver</b>	Determined, strong-willed, builder, overseer, and protector
<b>Bee</b>	Organized, industrial, productive, wise, community, celebration, fertility, defensiveness, obsessive nature, and enjoys life
<b>Boar/Pig</b>	A very powerful totem - prosperity, spiritual strength, organized, self-reliant, fearless.
<b>Buffalo</b>	Sacredness, life, great strength, abundance, gratitude.
<b>Bull</b>	Insight into the past, fertility, rushing into things without proper preparation.
<b>Butterfly</b>	Metamorphosis, transformation, balance, grace, ability to accept change
<b>Camel</b>	Survival, positive, accomplishments
<b>Caribou</b>	Traveler, mobility, preference to be nomadic, adaptability to adversity
<b>Cat</b>	Guardianship, detachment, sensuality, mystery, magic, and independence
<b>Cheetah</b>	Swiftness, insight, focus
<b>Cougar</b>	Leadership, loyalty, courage, taking responsibility, foresight
<b>Cow</b>	Swift, insightful, and focused
<b>Coyote</b>	Trickster, intelligence, stealth, wisdom and folly, guile and innocence
<b>Cobra</b>	Swift and decisive
<b>Crab</b>	Good luck, protection and success
<b>Crane</b>	Solitude, justice, longevity, independent, intelligent, and vigilant
<b>Crocodile</b>	Ensuring your emotions are displayed accurately/appropriately
<b>Crow</b>	Justice, shape shifting, change, creativity, spiritual strength, energy, community sharing, and balance
<b>Deer</b>	Compassion, peace, intellectual, gentle, caring, kind, subtlety, gracefulness, femininity, gentleness, innocence, and seller of adventure
<b>Dog</b>	Noble, faithful, loyal, teaching, protection, and guidance
<b>Dolphin</b>	Kind, salvation, wisdom, happiness, playfulness, prudent, capable of deep emotion, and happy.
<b>Dove</b>	Cross-world communication, spirit messenger, peace, gentleness, love
<b>Dragon</b>	Longevity, richness, prosperity, infinity, wisdom, power, and fiery
<b>Dragonfly</b>	Flighty and carefree, strong imagination, higher aspirations.
<b>Duck</b>	Water energy, helper of seers, can clearly see/deal with emotions
<b>Dolphin</b>	Kind, salvation, wisdom, happiness, playfulness, prudent, capable of deep emotion, and happy.
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<b>Eagle</b>	Divine spirit, sacrifice, connection to creator, intelligence, renewal, courage, illumination of spirit, healing, creation, freedom, and risk-taker
<b>Elephant</b>	Strength, power, affection, loyalty, royalty, and wisdom
<b>Elk</b>	Strength and agility, pride, majestic, independence, purification, strength, and nobility
<b>Falcon</b>	New beginnings, adventure, passionate, and leadership
<b>Fish</b>	Graceful, slyness, open-minded, quick to change one's mind
<b>Flamingo</b>	Heart healing, psychic, people person, flirtatious
<b>Fox</b>	Cunning, agility, quick-witted, diplomacy, wildness, feminine magic of camouflage, shape-shifting and invisibility
<b>Frog</b>	Water energy, cleansing, rebirth, sensitivity, medicine, hidden beauty, peace, adaptability, poor character judgment and power
<b>Gazelle</b>	Aggressive
<b>Giraffe</b>	Communication, intuition, attaining the unreachable, seeing the future
<b>Goat</b>	Surefootedness, stubbornness, independence, diligence, lack of foresight
<b>Goose</b>	Self-demanding, reliable, prudent, rigid, vigilance, parenthood, and productive
<b>Gorilla</b>	Family-oriented, intelligence, strength, environmental protector, keeps peace through aggression
<b>Grasshopper</b>	Good luck, abundance, forward, progressive
<b>Hawk</b>	Messenger, intuition, victory, healing, nobility, recollection, cleansing, visionary power, and guardianship
<b>Heron/Egret</b>	Aggressive, self-determined, self-reliant, multi-tasking, balanced
<b>Hippopotamus</b>	Power, creation, imagination, healing
<b>Horse</b>	Freedom, stamina, mobility, the land, travel, power, and freedom.
<b>Hummingbird</b>	Messenger, timelessness, healing, and warrior
<b>Jaguar</b>	Chaos, shape-shifter, aggressiveness, power
<b>Kangaroo</b>	Forward, balance, creative, stamina
<b>Lion</b>	Family, strength, energy, courage, guardian and protector
<b>Lizard</b>	Conservation, vision, self-protection, hidden defenses
<b>Llama</b>	Comforting to others, secure
<b>Lynx</b>	Keeper of secrets, guardian, listener, and guide
<b>Mole</b>	Sensitivity, guidance, searching
<b>Monkey</b>	Ability to change the environment, health, success
<b>Moose</b>	Headstrong, longevity, steadfastness, and wisdom
<b>Mouse</b>	Scrutiny, order, organizer, and an eye for details
<b>Octopus</b>	Intelligence, camouflage, nocturnal

<b>Ostrich</b>	Grounded, practical
<b>Otter</b>	Playful, friendly, dynamic, joy, helpfulness, and sharing
<b>Owl</b>	Deception, clairvoyance, insight, messenger
<b>Ox</b>	Sacrifice, chastity and self-denial
<b>Panther</b>	Protection, hidden emotions, introspection, caution, careful decisions
<b>Parrot</b>	Communication, beauty, guide for wisdom, mockery, thinking before speaking
<b>Peacock</b>	Immortality, dignity, and self-confidence
<b>Pelican</b>	Resilient, unselfish, rising above.
<b>Penguin</b>	Self-discipline, grace, self-confidence, spiritual
<b>Porcupine</b>	Innocence, companionship, and trust
<b>Prairie Dog</b>	Swiftness, industrious, constructive, preparedness
<b>Quail</b>	Group-work, team play, creator of harmony and group tolerance, protectiveness (especially toward children)
<b>Rabbit</b>	Fear, timidity, nervousness, humility, rebirth
<b>Raccoon</b>	Curiosity and cleanliness
<b>Ram</b>	Stoic, sensitive, persevering, curious, imaginative
<b>Rat</b>	Fertility, stealth, scavenging, intelligence, enjoys luxury
<b>Raven</b>	Introspection, courage, self-knowledge, magic
<b>Rhinoceros</b>	Wisdom, solitary, insightful, solid
<b>Roadrunner</b>	Mental agility, speed, opportunistic
<b>Rooster</b>	Vanity, likes to be showered with gifts and attention, early riser, settling for nothing less than the best
<b>Salmon</b>	Proud, intense, confident, wisdom, inspiration
<b>Scorpion</b>	Transforming, strong, inspiring, chaotic, passionate
<b>Seagull</b>	Versatility, loud, easy-going nature, creativity, laziness
<b>Seahorse</b>	Confidence and grace
<b>Seal</b>	Love, longing, dilemma, active imagination, creativity
<b>Shark</b>	Hunter, survival, and adaptability
<b>Skunk</b>	Reputation, presence, and strength
<b>Snail</b>	Protective, aware, solitary
<b>Snake</b>	Impulsive, shrewdness, rebirth, transformation, initiation, and wisdom
<b>Spider</b>	Balance, wisdom, creativity, communication
<b>Squirrel</b>	Planner and gatherer
<b>Stag</b>	Lord of the forest, masculine power of regeneration, signs.
<b>Swan</b>	Grace, balance and innocence, soul, love, beauty, of the self

<b>Tiger</b>	Strength, valor, power, and energy
<b>Toad</b>	inner strength, luck, self-examination
<b>Turkey</b>	Generosity, life-giver, and sharer
<b>Turtle</b>	Nurturer, shy, and protecting
<b>Unicorn</b>	Purity, innocence, dreamer, personal power, gentle
<b>Weasel</b>	Strength, energy, ingenuity and stealth
<b>Whale</b>	Wisdom, provider, intelligence, and kindness.
<b>Wolf</b>	Loyalty, perseverance, success, intuition, and spirit
<b>Woodpecker</b>	Sensitive, protective, and devotion
<b>Zebra</b>	Agility and individuality

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

My animal:

\_\_\_\_\_



*\*Attribute = quality, trait, or characteristic*

**Step 3 – What are your animal’s attributes\*? List 5:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Describe your attributes:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Why do you relate to this animal? (Write your reflection.)**

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