

Lesson Plan 1: Introduction and Preliminary Model

Unit Question: What role does the California condor play in the California ecosystem, and how do changes in the ecosystem impact condors over time?

Science and Engineering Practices:

- Developing and Using Models
- Obtaining Evaluating and Communicating Information

Lesson 1: *(one class period)*

1. Engage: Show the Condor Feeding Frenzy Video [\(1\)](#)

- (Optional videos: [\(2\)](#)-Condor Eats Deer Heart [\(3\)](#) -Condors Eating a Pig [\(4\)](#) -Condors Supplemental Feeding in Central California
- Have students watch the video once.
- Show the video a second time. Have the students share out what they notice or see in the video. Have the students share out what it makes them think about or reminds them of. (This could be done as a See – Think – Wonder: [Directions](#) - [Worksheet](#))
- Questions - ask the students to write questions that they have on Post-Its (one question per post-it). Then have students share their questions with a partner or small group. Students should generate more questions together and write the questions on Post-Its (one question per Post-It).
- Have students share their questions with the class. Teacher should save the questions on a piece of poster paper called the “Question Board.” – Students will return to these questions throughout the unit and add to the Question Board.

2. Create a Preliminary Model

- **Example Model**
 - Ask the students how do you interact with your school environment? (Example answers: with other kids, teacher, food, bathroom, benches, desks, water fountain).
 - As a class, draw an example model on the whiteboard of a student interacting with their school environment. Include arrows, pictures (symbols), and written explanations.
- **Create a [preliminary model](#) of how the condor interacts with its environment**

In small groups, students will create a model of how they think the California condor interacts with its environment in California. Each student should create their own model within the groups.

- Model should include arrows, words/sentences, drawings, etc.

- Students will share their models with their group.

- Model should have similarities to the example model (biological, social, travel)

*Teacher note: this is a preliminary model, so students do not need to have any background knowledge about the condor. You can use this to evaluate what students know.

3. Gallery Walk

- Have the students do a gallery walk (or you could do class presentations) of the preliminary models.

4. Revise models

- After the Gallery walk (or presentations), students can work in small groups, or independently, to add to or revise their models based on what they saw during the gallery walk.

5. Introduce the project (Unit)

- Explain to the students that they will be taking on the role of condor biologists, and they will be studying what role the California condor plays in the California ecosystem, and how changes in the ecosystem impact condors over time.
- They will do this by “adopting” a condor to monitor over the next 4 weeks
- Assign groups of students a condor from the [CACO Photobook](#)
 - Assign the same condor to at least 2 groups in separate classes; you can use the datasets as rubrics for each other
- They will be responsible to check on their condor, assess its behavior, and discover scientific facts about its role in the environment.
- Students can add any additional questions to the Question Board.

Condor links and videos at [CondorKids.net](#)