

Look closely: a historic finch

A printable observation activity for a small museum's family-learning table. Original prompts turn one reusable historic image into an object visitors can discuss, sketch and question. This is one prototype, not a finished product line.

What is inside

Page 2: an 8.5 x 11 inch art-and-observation sheet.

Page 3: a low-ink response sheet.

Page 4: the source, rights and production note for the buyer.

The value added

A clear visitor task, space to respond, discussion prompts, a source credit and a distinction between visible evidence and assumptions. The underlying image is freely available; we cannot promise exclusive ownership of it.

Before anyone pays

Test the activity with a museum educator and families. Print-test on an ordinary printer. Confirm the museum wants this format and whether a higher-resolution master is needed. No claims of classroom standards alignment or educator endorsement.

What do you notice?



Look before reading. Find two shapes, two colors and one repeated pattern. Where does your eye go first?

Look at the border. How does it differ from the bird and plant at the center? Which details look decorative?

Ask a question. What would you need to know before treating this picture as scientific evidence about a living bird?

Historic title: Crimson fronted Purple Finch. Drawing attributed in the catalog to John James Audubon. Library of Congress, item 2014646350. A historic illustration, not a modern field guide.

Observe, sketch, question

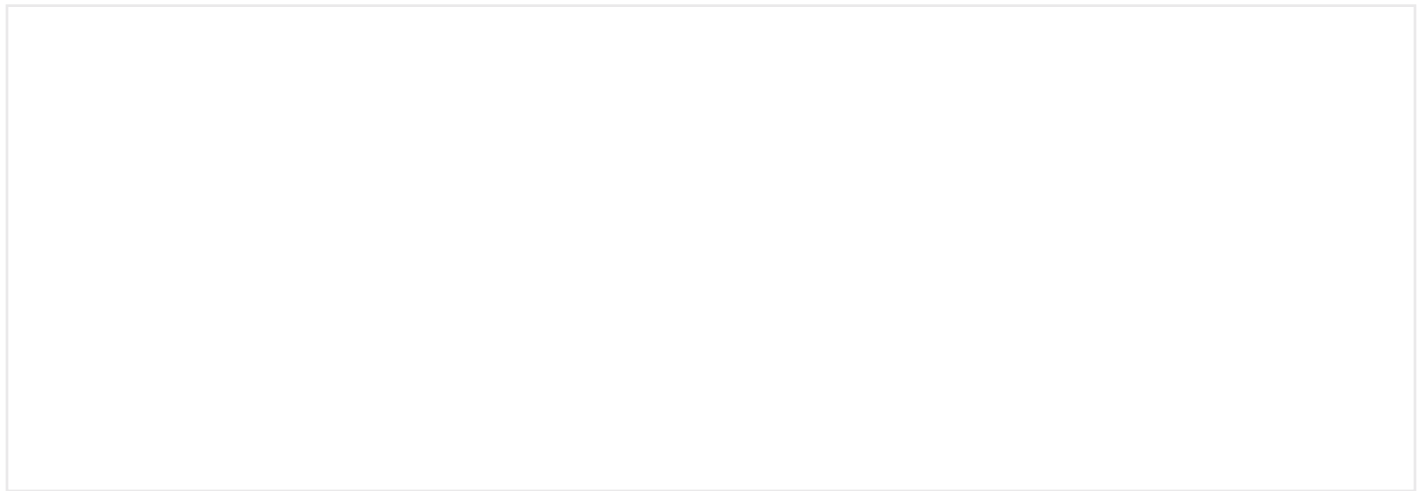
Name (optional): _____ Date: _____

1. I can see...

Write two observations that another visitor could check in the picture.

2. A detail worth drawing

Choose a feather, flower or piece of the border. Sketch what you see, not what you expect.



3. My question is...

What is uncertain? Who or what source could help you check it?

For the facilitator: there is no single correct interpretation. Invite visitors to point to the evidence for each observation. Do not infer species, sex, behavior or habitat solely from the historic caption.

Rights and production note

Source item

Crimson fronted Purple Finch / Drawn from nature by J.J. Audubon, F.R.S.F.L.

Library of Congress item 2014646350.

Catalog date: [between 1840? and 1860?]. The uncertain date is retained, not narrowed.

Rights evidence checked October 21, 2026

The item record states: "No known restrictions on publication." The work is attributed to John James Audubon (1785-1851) and dated in the nineteenth century. This supports this US private reuse prototype; it is not a worldwide clearance warranty. The Library explains that users must determine rights for their planned use. No endorsement is implied.

Changes and authorship

Original learning prompts, layout and response sheet were created for this sample. The archival image is reproduced at its original proportions without retouching or altered color. Binding edges, aging marks and the decorative border remain visible. No claim of exclusive rights in the underlying image.

Print specification and limits

US Letter, 8.5 x 11 inches. Print at 100% / actual size. Image uses the 833 x 1024 pixel public JPEG at about 193 pixels per inch on page 2. Suitable for a review proof, not a claim of premium fine-art print quality. A TIFF master is listed by the source but has not been downloaded. Printer margins and a physical print have not been tested.

Source links

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2014646350/>

<https://loc.gov/legal/understanding-copyright>

Image JPEG: [tile.loc.gov / ds/05500/05512v.jpg](https://tile.loc.gov/ds/05500/05512v.jpg)