

Transform a Turkey!

This is a fun way to visually demonstrate the characteristics of a turkey.

Objective: to become aware of the characteristics of a wild turkey, to understand the purpose of the wild turkey's characteristics.

Background:	The wild turkey was Benjamin Franklin's choice as the national bird. It lost to the eagle. A "turkey" has become synonymous with "loser". This could not be further from the truth. Over hunted for years, the turkey almost became extinct. In the past fifty years it has made a dramatic comeback.
Skills:	The participants should be able to name and recognize various parts of the turkey.
Age:	Grades 1 – adult
Materials:	See activity sheet for the household items that are needed to complete this activity.
Activity:	Pick one volunteer to "transform" into a turkey. Have the other participants name important parts of a turkey. As they do, place the representative item, in the appropriate place, on the volunteer.
Discussion:	Be sure to explain the characteristic and how it assists turkeys to adapt to their environment. The depth of the discussion depends on the age and interest of the participants.

Activity sheet

ITEM	CHARACTERISTIC	FUNCTION
Fake beak (make out of tag board)	Beak	Designed for plucking seeds and insects
Food grinder or pepper mill	Crop	Grinds ingested food for digestion
PVC pipe or tube from gift wrap paper	Hollow bones	Decrease weight to aid in flight
Camouflage jacket	Contour feathers	Heat retention, camouflage protection
Whirligig	Flight feathers	Gives birds helicopter like flight; up to 55mph in short bursts
Feather duster or Oriental fan	Tail feathers	Steering; males use for mating display
Gaudy tie	Wattle/dewlap	In males, display for mating
Bathing or shower cap	Bald blue head	To attract mate
Saturday Night Fever Tape or other appropriate music	Turkey strut	To attract mate
Googly eyes	Sharp eyesight	Turkeys are visually oriented
Fake beard	Beard	All males and 0-15% of the females have one (purpose not known)
Squeeze ball horn	Turkey call	Used for danger, attracting mate
Large tennis shoes	Running legs	Turkeys can move fast!
Garden digger	Scratching toenails	Digging
Spurs or clip-on clothes pins	Spurs	Fighting