NOTE TO TEACHER
This first set of activities relates to the combination of human and animal features and attributes in the art of the ancient Americas. For example, the feline characteristics of the jaguar often intermingle with human features to imbue the human with the powers attributed to the jaguar. See the section on the Olmec in Chapter 1 or the material on ancient Peru in Chapter 2 for further information and examples.

PREPARATION
Show slides 1, 5, 10, 12, 13, and 17. Ask your students to identify the animal characteristics that ancient Americans used in combination with human characteristics and to consider why these choices were made. Research the animals depicted to determine the reasons for their importance to particular cultures.

EXERCISES
1. Choose one animal with whom you share (or would like to share) certain qualities. If you like to swim, you might choose the swift and playful dolphin; if you run fast or just like to run, you might choose a cheetah, the fastest land animal; if you see very well, you might choose an eagle or an owl, two birds of prey who rely on their long-range vision to hunt. There are many possibilities. Once you have decided which animal suits you, use any medium (pencil, paint, cut-out paper, etc.) to create a composition that combines your human qualities with those of the animal you picked.
   Variation: Execute your image on brown construction paper and roll the paper into a cylindrical form resembling an ancient American pot. See the Classroom Activity on pot rollouts. Make papier maché pots along the lines of slides 13, 15, 16, and 17 and adapt the designs to the form of the pot.

2. Create a “history” wall mural that depicts the rulers, warriors, and deities of the ancient Americas. Ask each student to make an emblem which depicts a human - animal combination. Each student’s emblem should be cut to the same size. Glue each emblem to a background that has been made to look like stone by using chalk or paint applied with a sponge and pencils. To complete the activity, have each student discuss his or her emblem and explain who it represents and the significance of the animal attributes.
   Variation: Follow the same steps, but focus on contemporary America and include celebrities, sports stars, government officials, even teachers!

3. Research another country and time in history. Determine who the prominent leaders were and what symbols of leadership they used (crown, sword, staff, etc.). Next, find out what the most important animals were in the culture you’ve chosen (i.e., the most feared, the scarcest, the most beloved). Create a composition for an emblem, sculpture, or painting combining these elements in a way that symbolizes the stature of a respected leader through animal traits. For example, the Asante of Ghana often depict crocodiles in the regalia of their leaders because a crocodile is an animal who can traverse both land and water and is, therefore, powerful.
   Variation: After conducting your research, tell of your findings in a poem, a song, or a story. Students may tape record their compositions in combination with music or write them, using illustrations of their own making.
4. Make up your own creation story, explaining how a human/animal deity came into being and/or how the world was created and by whom. You may use one of the creatures created in Exercise 1 or 2, a deity from an ancient American story like the *Popol Vuh*, or use your imagination. Include a description of the deity and a narrative telling the tale of the creation. Older students can write the story while younger ones can tell it.

Variation: Reading existing stories before conducting this exercise is a good way to set the stage; refer to the Bibliography for Younger Students at the end of this manual for suggestions.