Cultures throughout the world have created fantastical creatures with the features of many different animals, making the resulting being especially powerful. People in these cultures have used images of these beasts to give themselves more power. Helmets with features of mighty animals, for instance, make their wearers feel stronger.

What else might these imaginary creature features have represented? Let’s look at three examples of imaginary creatures in the Museum to find out.

**Fangs, claws, wings, and beaks!**

What would you do if you had the claws of a lizard, the fangs of a crocodile, and the wings and beak of a mighty bird?
Pretend you are a young boy from the highest ruling class in ancient Peru. According to tradition, your ears are pierced when you are young, so you can wear earflares like these. As you get older, you wear larger and larger earflares to stretch the holes in your ears.

Each earflare shows a winged runner with the head of a bird (or wearing a bird mask) and the body of a person, holding a bag of beans. Bags of dried beans with markings on them have been found in tombs in Peru. The marks might have been a kind of writing, so these runners could be carrying special information or messages. And their wings may help them move faster. What kind of information might need to be delivered in a hurry?

How many different colors were used to decorate the earflares? Name four:
____________  __________
____________  __________

Purple, red, white, gold

How did the ornaments stay in place? The hollow part in the back (the post) balanced the part in front. Originally, they would have been held in place with a material like string or metal.

Next, leave the Treasury the way you entered. Make a right and walk past the set of three doors on your left. Stop at the second set of large glass cases on your left, and find this African helmet mask.

Start in The Jan Mitchell Treasury in the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas galleries on the first floor. Find the large ear ornaments below. They are in one of the small, square cases in the center of the gallery.

This mask combines features of at least three different animals. Can you find them? Why do you think these animals were chosen? Draw a line to match the animal with its feature:

- Boar
- Curly尾
What parts of animals can you find in this creature? He has the head, neck, and body of a horned snake; the front legs of a lion and the hind legs of a bird of prey (like a hawk). His front legs represent the strength of a lion. How could these and his other features help him? Name two ways:

This dragon can’t fly like some others you might have seen, but he’s still pretty forbidding. Have you seen pictures of dragons from other cultures? How were they different from or similar to this one?
Creative Creatures

Now that you have seen some of the creatures in the Museum that are made up of different beings, create a creature of your own! What kinds of features will you give it? What powers will those features have?