With his silly stuck-out tongue, this jaguar might look friendly but beware! The jaguar is the largest cat in the Americas and a dangerous predator. Rulers of ancient cultures like the Mayas would add “Jaguar” to their name and might even wear jaguar fur to show their power. This artifact comes from the Mixtec people of Mexico. It was made over 800 years ago around the year 1200.

What do you think this vessel held?

What animals do you think are powerful? Can you find any animals on your cups, plates, or other items in your house? Why do you think people use animals to decorate things they own?

Think about the animals you believe are powerful. Design a vessel like a cup, jar, or bowl in the shape of that animal.
Jaguar Head Vessel, Pre-Columbian, 1200,
Earthenware, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., 78.525