

Spotted Owlets

TEACHER'S NOTES

by Victoria Miles, illustrated by Elizabeth Gatt

In *Spotted Owlets* the characteristics of spotted owls are explained in a format and language that is appropriate for primary students. We learn how owlets climb back up the tree if they fall out of their nests, how both parents care for their young, and how owlets prepare themselves for independent life. The spotted owl's habitat is shown clearly in full page illustrations.

Teachers will want to read this book aloud and then make it available for independent reading. The simple story provides much information about spotted owls and an introduction to the concept of habitat and species preservation. The treatment of the information is very appealing to young children.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Language Arts—listening for information, reading for information, research, vocabulary development, story writing, discussion

Science—owls, old-growth forest habitats, conservation of species

P.E./Drama—creative movement

Art—drawing, painting, dioramas

Music—writing new lyrics for familiar tunes

Healthy Living—families

SPELLING/VOCABULARY LIST

moonlight	ancient
forest	beneath
branches	giant
Douglas-fir	trunk
owlets	spotted
peer	shadows
hunting	waiting
calling	young
stretches	tumbles
flapping	watching
swoop	dizzy
moment	high
clings	talons
forward	nest
anywhere	grips
climb	upwards
climbing	tired
bark	bracing
easier	beak
perch	sharing
family	sweeps
passes	excited
divides	between
gulps	disappear
flight	limbs

BEFORE YOU READ

Brainstorming

Before reading the book aloud, brainstorm with your students and use the chalkboard or chart paper to record information under the following headings: “What We Know About Owls” and “What We Want to Know About Owls.” Locate other sources of information about owls to answer questions not addressed in *Spotted Owlets*.

Spotted Owlets

Tell your students that you will be reading about spotted owlets. Ask them to imagine what a spotted owlet might look like. Refer to the Brainstorming chart for information about owls’ appearance. Ask them to draw and colour pictures to illustrate their conceptions.

Museum Collection

Encourage your students to bring owl artifacts (pictures, models, games, post cards, t-shirts, books, games, puzzles, posters, figurines) to your class “Owl Museum.” Create a display in your classroom and invite other classes to visit.

Owl Museum	
Please look, but do not touch.	
Item	Donator

AS YOU READ

What We Learned About Owls

As you read new information about owls in *Spotted Owlets*, add to the brainstorming chart that you started before reading, or compile a new list of statements under the heading “What We Learned About Owls.”

Information from Illustrations

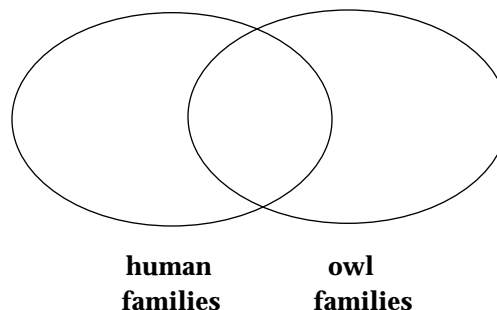
Ask your students to pay attention to the illustrations as you read, to find additional information about owls and their habitat.

Vocabulary Development

Reread *Spotted Owlets*, stopping to discuss vocabulary that might be new or poorly understood. Compile a vocabulary list that can be used for spelling skill practise or creative writing.

Discussion – Families

Discuss how the spotted owl family is similar and different to the children’s families. Compare the spotted owlet family to other bird or animal families. *Do both parents care for their young? How long do the babies stay with their parents? How are the babies fed?* Use a Venn diagram to chart the comments



Date _____ Name _____

Spotted Owlets

Two _____ wake from their nap. Father owl is _____ for the family. One _____ owl stretches his wings, _____ forward and tumbles _____ to the _____ floor.

His sister clings to the edge of the _____ with her _____. She steps forward and falls to a _____. They have left the _____ and will _____ go back inside again. Brother owl uses his _____ and _____ to climb the tree. Father owl sweeps down to _____ owl. He passes the _____ he has brought from his _____ to hers. She _____ the meal between the _____. The owlets _____ and _____ their wings — getting ready for their first _____

AFTER YOU READ

LANGUAGE ARTS

Cloze Activity

After reading *Spotted Owlets* several times, distribute copies of the Cloze exercise provided. This could be an individual or group activity. Copies of the book could be provided for reference.

Writing Conversation

Ask your students to rewrite the story, adding the conversation that might have been overheard if owls could talk. Use this opportunity to teach the conventions of punctuating dialogue.

Research Writing

Locate resources that give information about other kinds of owls. Ask your students to choose one to read about and report to the class. These reports could be given orally, in writing, on posters, etc.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Owls Around the World

Label a map of the world with the names of owls that live on different continents.

MUSIC

Song Writing

Brainstorm familiar tunes that all your students can sing (e.g. *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, *London Bridge*). Choose one and write a new song about owls. Do this first with the whole class to model the process, then divide the class into small groups and repeat. Perform the songs for another class or at a school assembly.

ART

Seed Owls

Materials:

- cardboard or heavy paper
- a variety of seeds and beans
- glue

Procedure: Draw an outline of an owl on the cardboard. "Colour" the owl by gluing on seeds and beans. Use different colours and textures to define the owl's features.

Paper Bag or Paper Plate Owls

Materials:

- brown paper lunch bags
- paper plates
- construction paper scrap box
- glue

Procedure: Invite your students to create a paper bag or paper plate owl using their knowledge about owls and the scrap paper available in the scrap box. These owls could be representations of real owls or products of your students' imaginations.

Mural/Collage

As a group activity, create a mural depicting the habitat of a species of owl that lives in your province. Glue natural materials (ferns, leaves, moss, etc.) on to the mural to create a realistic picture.

SCIENCE

Guest Speaker

Invite a vet with a special interest in wild birds, a naturalist, a member of a local bird watching group or another qualified member of the community to visit your classroom to speak about owls, preservation of bird habitats or a related topic.



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Date _____ Name _____

Spotted Owlet

_____ *owlet*

_____ *owlet*

Where do you live?

I live in a _____

I see a _____ *looking at me.*

.....

One owlet on the _____

Two owlets in a _____

Three owlets by a _____

Four owlets under a _____

OWLS

Owls live all around the world. They are found on every continent except Antarctica. They live in cold climates and hot climates. They live in dry deserts and rainy jungles. Some like to be hidden in forests, and others like wide open spaces.

There are more than one hundred different kinds of owls. Some owls are not much bigger than a robin and others measure nearly one and a half metres from wing tip to wing tip.

Female owls are usually larger than males. Baby owls, called chicks or owlets, stay with their mothers and fathers for about three months. Then they find their own hunting territories. Owls can live to be about twenty years old.

Owls have round faces, big eyes and sharp hooked beaks. Many owls have feathers sticking up on their heads that look like ears. These are called ear tufts. Most owls have a thick covering of feathers on their legs and feet. This protects them from being bitten by their prey. When it attacks, an owl spreads all eight of its toes as far as they will stretch and grabs its prey with sharp talons.

Owls have excellent hearing and the best night vision of any creature on earth. The feathers on an owl's wing have soft edges. This makes it possible for the owl to fly very quietly and to get close to its prey without being heard. It hunts at night, flying close to the ground. It listens and watches for small animals like mice, rats, snakes, squirrels, rabbits, and birds. Some owls eat mostly fish.

Owls usually swallow their prey whole—teeth, bones, fur and all! Everything that cannot be digested is packed into pellets and spit out. If you carefully take owl pellets apart, you can tell what the owl has been eating.

The survival of some kinds of owls is in danger because the forests they need for nesting and hunting are being cut down. People can help save endangered owls by preserving wilderness areas. We can also stop hunting owls and poisoning the rodents that owls hunt for food. We all need to work together to protect these amazing birds!

Source: Zoobooks June 1992

Date _____ Name _____

1. *On which continent do owls not live?* _____

2. *How many different kinds of owls are there?* _____

3. *Are all owls large birds?* _____

4. *Are male owls or female owls usually larger?* _____

5. *What are the two names given to baby owls?*

6. *How long is the natural lifetime of most owls?* _____

7. *How many toes does an owl have?* _____

8. *What are the claws on an owl called?* _____

9. *What two senses do owls use for hunting?*

10. *Why can owls fly more quietly than most other birds?*

11. *What do owls eat?* _____

12. *What is in an owl pellet?* _____
