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# Introduction

The pack aims to provide creative teaching ideas to support children in the development of reading comprehension skills. Each of the ten sequences contains two structured sessions made up of a starter activity, main teaching activity, plenary activity, and further support/extension/homework suggestions when appropriate.

Each unit contains its own set of Teaching Notes which includes background information to the unit of work and will help you with your teaching preparation. Each of the sessions within the units includes pupil activities which are designed for children to carry out independently, either as a whole class or in groups.

An assessment sheet is provided as a means of monitoring and assessing the children's skills and knowledge for each unit.

Please note that, at the time of publishing, all external links referenced within the pack are fully functioning. However, Teachit Primary cannot take responsibility for the maintenance of external websites.

We hope you enjoy using this pack. If you have any questions, please get in touch: email [support@teachitprimary.co.uk](mailto:support@teachitprimary.co.uk) or call us on 01225 788851. Alternatively, you might like to give some feedback for other Teachit Primary members – you can do this by adding a comment on the [Reading at KS1](#) page on Teachit Primary (please log in to access this!).

# Unit 3 – Using what you know

## Teaching notes

This unit provides some background information for children on birds of prey through non-fiction texts and the story *An Owl Called Alfie*. The outcome for this unit will be for children to use knowledge gained from these texts to answer questions on birds of prey.

## Session 1 – Birds of Prey

### Getting ready:

- **Book collection:** You may wish to collect together a range of topic books on birds of prey to use for background research alongside this unit.

### Getting started:

- **Brainstorm:** Display [Resource 1 – Birds of prey](#) on the interactive whiteboard. Ask children what the animals shown are collectively called. Do children know what is special about these particular birds? Elicit that they are birds of prey and find out what children already know about birds of prey, noting their ideas on the board.

### Getting into the detail:

- **Main teaching activity:** Play the short BBC Bitesize clip: What is a bird of prey? [www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z69c87h](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z69c87h). Ask children whether they have learnt anything new about birds of prey. What do birds of prey eat? What physical features do they have in common?
- **Pupil activity one:** Children label a simple diagram of an eagle using [Resource 2 – Golden Eagle: label the diagram](#). Ask them to tell a partner something about each feature e.g. 'eagles have sharp talons to catch and kill their prey'. Extend by asking children to write a sentence underneath each labelled feature.

- **Pupil activity two:** Divide the class into five groups. Each group will focus on a different bird of prey. Give each table a relevant fact card to read from [Resource 3 – Fact cards: birds of prey](#). You could provide additional sources of information for more able readers such as bird books, the RSPB children's website or clips of the birds in flight (available on YouTube). Encourage more able children to find out the definition of any unfamiliar words such as 'conservationist' by using a dictionary. Ask them to present their findings to the class in as interesting a way as possible using pictures, dramatic techniques and expressive reading.

### Rounding up:

- **Special features:** Children work in pairs to list as many birds of prey as they can on mini whiteboards. Ask them to choose one that they know plenty about and to share what they know with their partner. Finish by asking: 'What are birds of prey?' 'What special features do they have?'

### Taking it further:

- To encourage further research and reading on non-fiction texts children could be set the task of writing their own bird guides. The Woodland Trust and the RSPB provide many free resources for birdwatching, including spotter guides.

## Session 2 – *An Owl Called Alfie*

### Getting ready:

- **An Owl Called Alfie:** Read [An Owl Called Alfie – original text](#) to the class or allow them time to read the story themselves.

### Getting started:

- **British owls:** Show pictures of different types of British owls on the board ([Resource 4 – owl photos](#)). How do children know that owls are birds of prey? What special features do they have? What else do children know about owls?

### Getting into the detail:

- **Main teaching activity:** In pairs or individually, children attempt to match pictures of British owls that you have printed and cut out from [Resource 4 – owl photos](#) next to name labels cut from [Resource 5 – owl labels](#). Ask children how they made their decisions. What visual clues helped? (The owl photos, from left to right and down the page, show; short-eared owl, little owl, barn owl, long-eared owl and tawny owl.)
- **Pupil activity one:** Children should each read the owl fact cards to themselves ([Resource 6 – fact cards: owls](#)). Then, in pairs, children should pick an owl description and read the owl facts to their partner who should try and identify the owl. They must remember to ensure they leave out any owl names!
- **Pupil activity two:** Children utilise their knowledge of owls and birds of prey in general by reading *An Owl Called Alfie* – original text and answering the comprehension questions ([Resource 7 – comprehension questions](#)).

### Rounding up:

- **What would you do?:** Ask children what they would do if they came across an injured owl. What kind of place could they take it to? What is the name that we give to birds of prey?

### Taking it further:

- **Change the story:** Change details in the story *An Owl Called Alfie* so that Alfie becomes a different bird of prey e.g. a golden eagle. Children will need to alter the habitat, physical details and diet, for example.
- **Further reading:** Read other books about owls, both fiction and non-fiction. For instance, *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark* by Jill Tomlinson and *Owls for Kids* by William Widman.

Teachit Sample

Name: .....

Date:.....

### *An Owl Called Alfie*: original text

There was once a long eared owl called Alfie who lived in a wood. Alfie lived in a nest in a tall pine tree. The nest was made of feathers, moss, twigs and grass. It was warm and he had it all to himself.



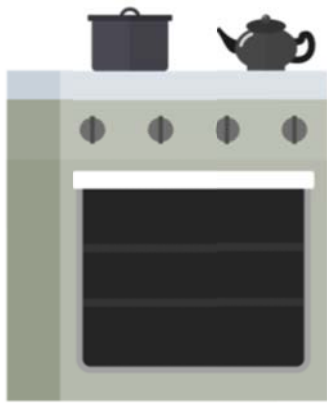
Every evening Alfie went out to search for yummy voles. He was very good at catching and killing voles because, even though he was just a few months old, his talons were strong and sharp.

One evening Alfie woke up to go out hunting. He saw that the sky was darker than usual and he heard a deep rumble. Alfie stuck his head out of the nest and felt a strong breeze. He had never known weather like this. He was a bit worried about leaving the pine tree but his tummy was rumbling. Alfie stretched out his wings which were the length of a roll of wrapping paper - one day they would be over a metre long! He swooped off into the dusky wood. The breeze was starting to get stronger. Feeling hungry Alfie carried on. If he couldn't catch a vole tonight then a mouse would have to do. Suddenly a sharp gust of wind threw Alfie against a tree trunk. He tumbled to the ground bouncing from branch to branch, before hitting the damp ground with a thud.

The next day dawned, bright and sunny. Alfie lay hidden in the undergrowth. An old man with a flat cap and walking stick was taking a morning walk with his dog. The dog bounded off out of sight, pleased to stretch its legs after a good night's rest. Suddenly it stopped. Something was lying at its feet. The dog barked loudly. The man set off after the dog pushing away leaves with his walking stick. 'What have you found Stella?' he called. 'Not a rabbit again, I hope?' The man caught up with the dog who was barking at a mound of leaves.



The man bent down to take a closer look. There in the crunchy autumn leaves was a little bundle of tawny brown and speckled feathers. The old man pushed away the leaves. There was an owl about the size of a small duck with a long, thin body. He gently touched the feathers and found that the owl was still alive.



He picked it up, minding its sharp, curved beak and pointed talons. The old man took Alfie home to his little house. He put Alfie in a box of straw next to the kitchen fire. A little bit later he heard a rustling sound coming from the box. He went to have a look. Alfie's feathers fluttered and his deep orange eyes began to open.

Birds of prey



Golden eagle



Buzzard



Kestrel



Sparrowhawk

Name: .....

Date:.....

Golden eagle: label the diagram

Instructions

Label the picture below using the following words:

eyes

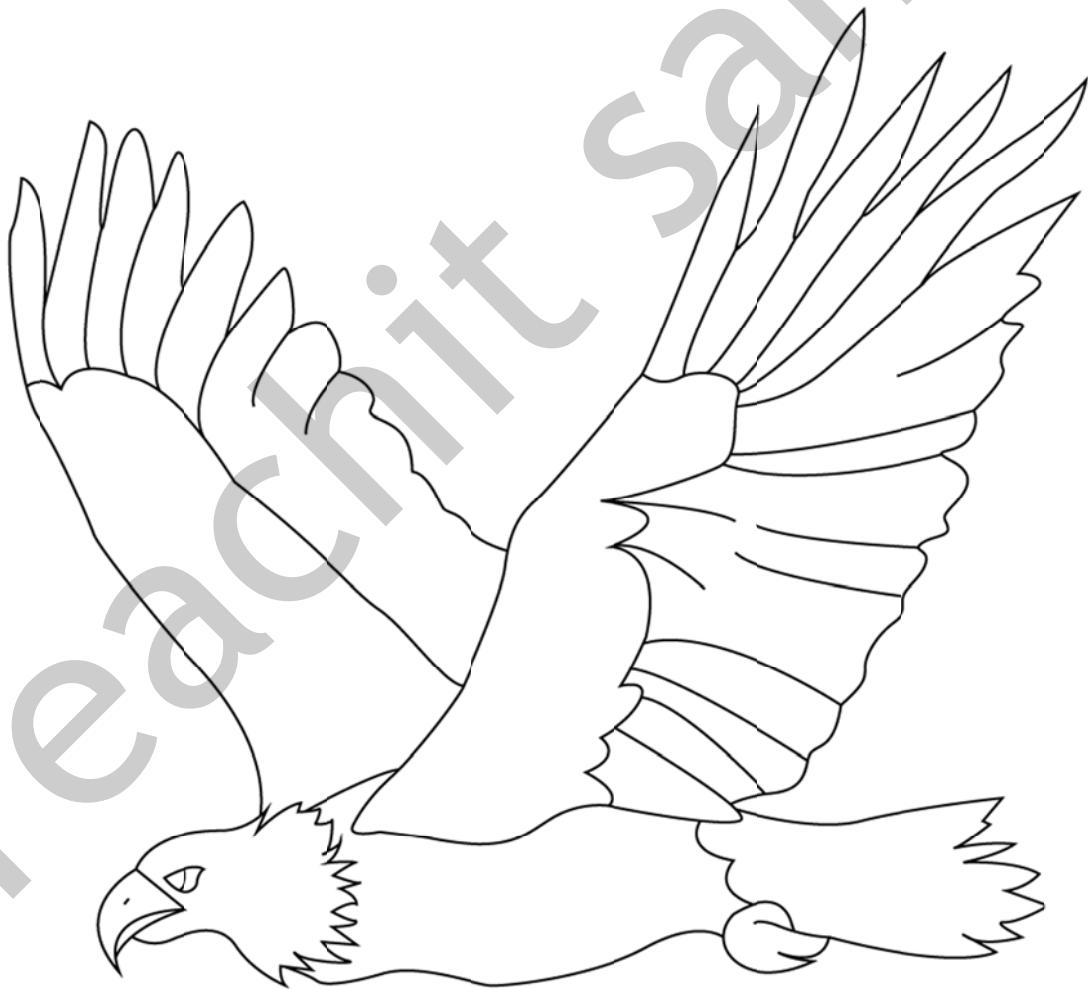
beak

feathers

talons

wings

tail



## Fact cards: birds of prey

### Hawk

There are two types of hawk living here in the UK: sparrowhawks and goshawks. Both were on the brink of extinction, which means that they were disappearing. They are doing well now thanks to the hard work of people called 'conservationists'. The female hawks tend to be bigger than the males. Females are the size of a pigeon and males are nearer to the size of a thrush. Hawks live in gardens, woodlands and open countryside feeding on other birds and small mammals. They can be seen all year round but especially on fine days in winter and spring.

### Eagle

Eagles live in wild places where there aren't many people. They are found in Scotland and the British islands. They can be seen flying across wild moorlands, mountains and coastal areas. If you are in the right place you can see eagles all year round especially on fine days in winter and early spring. They like to eat other birds and also fish. There are different kinds of eagle in the UK: the golden eagle and the white-tailed eagle. The white-tailed eagle is the largest bird of prey in the UK.

### Buzzard

Buzzards can be seen in towns, cities and the countryside. Most of the time they like to eat animals that are already dead. Sometimes they will catch and kill small mammals like rabbits and even the odd, tasty earthworm. Buzzards make a funny 'mew' sound.

### Kestrel

Kestrels eat mice and voles that try to escape by hiding in long grass. They also eat other small mammals and birds. You can sometimes spot kestrels perched on telephone wires looking for food. Kestrels can be seen all year round.



Owls



Owl labels

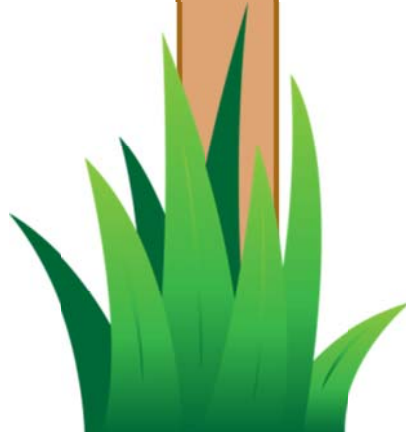
Short-eared owl

Long-eared owl

Tawny owl

Little owl

Barn owl



## Fact cards: owls

### Short-eared owl

This owl can be seen in coastal marshlands, wetlands and moorlands mostly in northern England and Scotland. It is a declining species, which means that there are fewer and fewer around. You are more likely to spot a short eared owl in winter. Although it is mostly nocturnal it can still be seen during the day when it is hunting for food. It likes to eat small mammals like voles and some birds.

### Little owl

Although it mostly hunts at night, the little owl can be seen during the day, perhaps perched on a tree branch or telephone wire looking for small creatures to eat. It eats insects, little reptiles, earthworms, birds and frogs. You can see little owls all year round mostly in southern and eastern England in farmland, copses, parks and orchards.

### Barn owl

The barn owl is a nocturnal bird, which means that it comes out at night. You can see it all over the UK. If you want to spot one then you will have to go out at dusk. If you're lucky you might catch a glimpse of one hunting for mice, shrews, voles, bats and small birds. The barn owl can be found in open countryside, roadside verges, riverbanks and fields.

### Long-eared owl

Long eared owls can be seen at any time of the year. They like to eat small birds and mammals. They live in places where there are lots of bushes, grasses and trees. There are lots of long eared owls living in this country. They are called 'nocturnal' birds because they come out at night.

### Tawny owl

The tawny owl can be found all over Great Britain. As it's nocturnal (which means that it comes out at night) you are unlikely to spot it. It likes to sleep in woodlands, hiding in tree trunks and nestling amongst ivy leaves. Tawny owls eat worms, fish, frogs, small birds and mammals.

*An Owl Called Alfie*: comprehension questions

Read and answer each of these questions about An Owl Called Alfie. Write your answers in your book, remembering to number each answer.

1. What kind of owl is Alfie?

2. Where does Alfie live?

3. Why does Alfie go out hunting in the evening?

4. What is Alfie's favourite kind of prey?

5. What other kind of prey will Alfie eat?

6. How wide are Alfie's wings?

7. How wide will Alfie's wings be when he is fully grown?



8. What colour are Alfie's feathers?

9. What shape is Alfie's body?

10. How big is Alfie?

11. What are talons?

12. Why does Alfie have sharp talons?

13. How did the old man save Alfie?

14. What do you think will happen to Alfie next? Continue the story.

**An Owl Called Alfie – comprehension answers**

1. **What kind of owl is Alfie?**  
Alfie is a long-eared owl.
2. **Where does Alfie live?**  
Alfie lives in a nest in a tall pine tree in a wood.
3. **Why does Alfie go out hunting in the evening?**  
Alfie is nocturnal, which means he hunts at night and sleeps in the day.
4. **What is Alfie's favourite kind of prey?**  
Alfie's favourite type of prey is voles.
5. **What other kind of prey will Alfie eat?**  
Alfie will also eat mice. (Children may also know that they also eat small birds)
6. **How wide are Alfie's wings?**  
Alfie's wings are as long as a roll of wrapping paper.
7. **How wide will Alfie's wings be when he is fully grown?**  
Alfie's wings will one day be over a metre long.
8. **What colour are Alfie's feathers?**  
His feathers are tawny brown and speckled.
9. **What shape is Alfie's body?**  
His body is long and thin.
10. **How big is Alfie?**  
Alfie is about the size of a small duck.
11. **What are talons?**  
Talons are sharp claws. (Children may need to refer to reference books to answer this if they do not already know this information.)
12. **Why does Alfie have sharp talons?**  
Alfie is a bird of prey and he needs sharp claws for catching prey.
13. **How did the old man save Alfie?**  
The old man took Alfie home and put him in a box of straw near to the fire.