

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## An Introduction to Bats

### Reading/discussion

Bats are creatures of the night, associated with Halloween and scary movies. But are we being fair to them? What type of animal is a bat? First of all, it's a mammal. Just like any other mammals bats are covered with hair, bear their young alive and feed them on milk produced in their mammary glands. But they differ from all other mammals in one very important way – they are the only mammals capable of *sustained*, or continuous, flight (mammals such as the flying squirrel can only glide). We often think of bats as rodents with wings. But bats are far from being flying rats, in fact, they are a completely different class of animal: their scientific name is **chiroptera**.

Chiroptera means hand-wing. The name reminds us that a bat's wings are very different to a bird's wings. The wings of a bat are made of a thin layer of skin and muscle stretched between their *elongated*, or very long, fingers. Bats sleep by hanging upside down in their roosts. When they hang, special tendons in their legs lock their toes around their perch which keeps them from falling.

There are about 850 species of bats, which are divided into two groups: **megabats**, which look a little like flying foxes, with large eyes and quite small ears, and **microbats** which have small eyes and large ears. Most of them are found in tropical areas where there is plenty of food for them to eat. Some bats only eat insects, other eat small animals, like frogs, and most megabats eat fruit or nectar. Vampire bats live up to their names, drinking animal's blood!

There is a saying: 'blind as a bat', but in fact, most bats can see pretty well. They also have a good sense of hearing and when microbats hunt their prey in the dark they use a method called **echolocation**. Short **pulses** made through their noses and mouths bounce off objects and tell them where there are obstacles they must avoid, and help them capture their food. So there goes another myth – no self-respecting bat would ever get caught in your hair!









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## An Introduction to Bats Questions

### A. True and false.

Let's see what you can remember. Read the following sentences and either circle T for true or F for false.

-  Bats are mammals T/F
-  Bats are related to rats T/F
-  Bats are related to birds T/F
-  Chiroptera means hand-wing T/F
-  Bats are blind T/F
-  Bats navigate by means of echolocation T/F
-  Bats sleep upside down T/F
-  There are 3 species of bats – megabats, microbats and cricket bats T/F

### B. Make your own bat.









Make your own bats using the template on the last page of this lesson plan. Paint a wooden clothes peg black and then cut out the bat's wings on the template and paste them onto the clothes peg as indicated. String a piece of cord across your classroom and you can hang all your bats upside down on it!

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## An Introduction to Bats Answers

### Activity A.

-  Bats are mammals  T  F
-  Bats are related to rats  T  F
-  Bats are related to birds  T  F
-  Chiroptera means hand-wing  T  F
-  Bats are blind  T  F
-  Bats navigate by means of echolocation  T  F
-  Bats sleep upside down  T  F
-  There are 3 species of bats – megabats, microbats and cricket bats  T  F

### Activity B.

This is a simple creative activity to use to close the lesson.

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## Template

