

Name _____

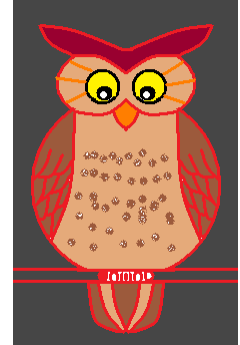
Date _____

Learning About Owls

Reading and Discussion

An owl is a bird of prey, or a **raptor**. Along with other raptors, like eagles, owl have **talons**, on their feet. Talons are sharp claws used for catching prey. Owls also have hooked beaks for tearing prey apart.

Did you know that there are about 145 different types of owls in the world? The smallest is the **Elf Owl** which lives in the South West United States. He is only about 6 inches tall. The largest owl is the **Great Grey Owl** which lives in **Canada** and **Alaska**. He grows as big as 30 inches tall and has a wingspan of up to 60 inches. Find a measuring tape and see how long that is.



Owls are **solitary** creatures. That means they usually live on their own. They are also **nocturnal**, which means that they are awake and hunt at night. Although they can see during the day, their eyesight is very good in the dark.

Owls also have very good hearing. Most owls hunt small mammals like mice, rats and voles which they can hear rustling in the grass. Big owls may also catch rabbits and squirrels. They eat the whole animal and then cough up **pellets** of bones, fur and feathers which they are unable to **digest**. You can find these owl pellets underneath their nests or where they roost.

Most birds have eyes on either side of their head. Because the owl's eyes are in front (like ours), he has to turn his head to see to the side. Luckily he has special neck muscles which enable him to turn his head so far that he can see behind him! Because of this, there is a **myth** that owls can turn their heads right around – that isn't true.

Because the owl is such an interesting bird there are many other myths about him. For example, some people say that owls are very wise, and that it is bad luck if you hear one. Of course, these myths are not true either.

Name _____

Date _____

Activities

Activity A: What do you know about owls? Here are some facts about owls. Some are true (T) and some are false (F). Can you put a circle around the correct answer?

1. An owl is a raptor. (T) (F)
2. The smallest owl is the elf owl. (T) (F)
3. The largest owl is the great black owl. (T) (F)
4. Owls usually hunt in pairs. (T) (F)
5. Owls are nocturnal, that means that they hunt at night. (T) (F)
6. Owl pellets are full of bones, fur and feathers. (T) (F)
7. An owl can turn his head right around in a circle. (T) (F)
8. Owls have eyes on the sides of their heads. (T) (F)
9. Owls can hear very well. (T) (F)
10. The call of an owl means bad luck. (T) (F)

Activity B: How would you like to be an owl?

Pretend that you are an owl. Write a short story about one night in your life. Try to use some of the facts that you've learnt about owls in your story. When you're finished, draw a picture of an owl to illustrate your story? Then you can put all the stories up on the wall so that everyone can read them.

Name _____

Date _____

Answer Key

Activity A

1. An owl is a raptor. (T)
2. The smallest owl is the elf owl. (T)
3. The largest owl is the great black owl. (F)
4. Owls usually hunt in pairs. (F)
5. Owls are nocturnal, that means that they hunt at night. (T)
6. Owl pellets are full of bones, fur and feathers. (T)
7. An owl can turn his head right around in a circle. (F)
8. Owls have eyes on the sides of their heads. (F)
9. Owls can hear very well. (T)
10. The call of an owl means bad luck. (F)

Activity B

This activity draws on the child's imagination and, therefore, there are no right or wrong ways to write the story. However, any details included should be factually correct.