

***White Owl, Barn Owl* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Michael Foreman**

Walker Books (978-1406365443)

In this picture book in the Nature Storybooks series, a child and her grandfather watch a family of barn owls nesting in a box that they have placed in a tree to help protect them from predators, as the trees and barns where they usually make their homes have been destroyed. Their close relationship is evident in the way the grandfather gives explanations at the same time as encouraging the child to make her own observations. The central narrative is from the child's viewpoint. Additional facts about barn owls appear on each spread in a different font. The main text and some vignettes appear on a sepia background while Michael Foreman's signature palette of shades of blue is perfect for the night time scenes portrayed in the larger illustrations.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence:

- To enjoy an increasing range of poetry, stories and non-fiction texts
- To know that information can be retrieved from a variety of sources
- To develop understanding through reading and responding to non-fiction texts
- To sustain listening, responding to what they have heard with relevant comments and questions
- To ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- To use spoken language to communicate for a range of purposes to a range of audiences.
- To identify some effective features of non-fiction texts
- To use language structures and vocabulary influenced by books in talk and in their own writing
- To write for meaning and purpose in a variety of forms

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 1 or Year 2 class and was initially developed as part of a vocabulary, grammar and punctuation course.

Overview of this teaching sequence

This teaching sequence is approximately 5 weeks long if spread out over 25 sessions. The book and teaching sequence supports teachers to teach vocabulary, punctuation and grammar in a rich context as well as supporting intertextual links and response to a wide range of authentic non-fiction texts. The sequence is designed to model ways to introduce and rehearse grammatical concepts in Key Stage 1 and how to make controlled choices in writing, specifically that of non-fiction. This text offers young readers an engaging stimulus for creative response to a text, a model for their own writing with a focus and stimulus for non-fiction writing.

This teaching sequence provides opportunity to meet the following National Curriculum 2014 Statutory Requirements:

Reading: Word Reading

- continue to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words until automatic decoding has become embedded and reading is fluent

- read accurately by blending the sounds in words that contain the graphemes taught so far, especially recognising alternative sounds for graphemes
- read words containing common suffixes
- read further common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word
- read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered
- re-read books to build up fluency and confidence in word reading.

Reading: Comprehension

- Develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
 - being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences
 - becoming very familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their particular characteristics
 - recognising and joining in with predictable phrases
 - learning to appreciate rhymes and poems, and to recite some by heart
 - discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known

 - listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary and classic poetry, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
 - discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related
 - becoming increasingly familiar with and retelling a wider range of stories, fairy stories and traditional tales
 - being introduced to non-fiction books that are structured in different ways
 - recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry
 - discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary
 - discussing their favourite words and phrases continuing to build up a repertoire of poems learnt by heart, appreciating these and reciting some, with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear
- Understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
 - checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
 - discussing the significance of the title and events
 - making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
 - predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

- participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say
- explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them

- drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
- checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
- making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
- answering and asking questions
- predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

- participate in discussion about books, poems and other works that are read to them and those that they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say
- explain and discuss their understanding of books, poems and other material, both those that they listen to and those that they read for themselves.

Writing: Composition

- write sentences by:
 - saying out loud what they are going to write about
 - composing a sentence orally before writing it
 - sequencing sentences to form short narratives
 - re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense
- discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils
- read aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher.

- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)
 - writing about real events
 - writing poetry
 - writing for different purposes
- consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
 - planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about
 - writing down ideas and/or key words, including new vocabulary
 - encapsulating what they want to say, sentence by sentence
- make simple additions, revisions and corrections to their own writing by:
 - evaluating their writing with the teacher and other pupils
 - re-reading to check that their writing makes sense and that verbs to indicate time are used correctly and consistently, including verbs in the continuous form
 - proof-reading to check for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation
- read aloud what they have written with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear.

Speaking and Listening:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Participate constructively in discussions, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

Cross Curricular Links:

Science:

- Within the context of studying this text, children will have opportunity to engage in deepening their knowledge of the natural world and engage in the science curriculum, with foci including living things and their habitats, plants and seasonal change.

Geography:

- Conducting associated geographic and environmental studies of their local area and those further afield; in the UK and across the world, for example map work connected with the natural habitats of the barn owl, the impact of single use plastic on the local and global environment.

Art and Design:

- Children will use artwork to support their observations of wildlife as well as in expressing themselves and responding to the text and illustrations in the book. They will also use photography to support their field work.

Technology:

- In creating their own non-fiction texts, children will be engaging in a range of writing and have opportunity to engage in digital media platforms as well as publishing through paper engineering and bookmaking.

Music:

- Children can listen to and respond to music that has been inspired by birdsong by the composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992):

- [Oiseaux Exotique](#) (1 min in with score)
- [Un Vitrail et des oiseaux](#), for piano, 17 winds, trumpet & 8 percussion. (First minute.)
- *Can the children identify the instruments and talk about why they think they sound like the birds? Can children compose their own birdsong pieces, inspired by Messiaen's work?*

Teaching Approaches

- Responding to illustration
- Reading aloud
- Re-reading and Revisiting
- Book Talk
- Role-Play and Drama - Freeze-Frame
- Using visual organisers
- Response through poetry
- Shared Writing
- Visualisation
- Freeze Frame
- Thought Tracking
- Dictogloss
- Writing in Role

Writing Outcomes

- Speech and thought bubbles
- Captions and sentences
- Free Verse Poem
- Non-chronological report
- Explanation text
- Instructions
- Persuasive (choice of form, e.g.: letter, poster, digital production, film script, etc.)
- Book Review

Links to other texts and resources.

A selection of other books by Nicola Davies

- *Surprising Sharks*, illustrated by James Croft (Walker)
- *Just Ducks*, illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino (Walker)
- *The Word Bird*, illustrated by Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *A First Book of Animals*, illustrated by Petr Horáček (Walker)
- *A First Book of Nature*, illustrated by Mark Hearld (Walker)
- *Deadly Animals*, illustrated by Neal Layton (Walker)
- *Protecting the Planet: Emperor of the Ice*, illustrated by Catherine Rayner (Walker Books)
- *The Magic of Flight*, illustrated by Lorna Scobie (Hodder Children's Books)

Books about owls

- *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson (Walker)
- *The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark* by Jill Tomlinson (Egmont)
- *The Owl Tree* by Jenny Nimmo (Walker)
- *Owl* by Emily Bone (Usborne Beginners)
- *Owl Bat, Bat Owl* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (Walker)
- *Owls* (National Geographic Kids Readers)
- *Saving Mr Hoot*, Helen Stephens (Alison Green Books)

Books on conservation and birds:

- *George Saves the World by Lunchtime* by Jo Readman and Ley Honor Roberts (Eden Project)
- *The World Came to my Place Today* by Jo Readman and Ley Honor Roberts (Eden Project)
- *A Wild Child's Book of Birds*, Dara McAnulty and Barry Falls (Macmillan)
- *The Journey Home* by Fran Preston-Gannon (Pavilion)
- *Dear Greenpeace* by Simon James (Walker)
- *The Little Gardener* by Emily Hughes (Flying Eye)
- *My Green Day. 10 green things I can do today* by Melanie Walsh (Walker)
- *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* by Melanie Walsh (Walker)
- *The Everything Kids' Environment Book: Learn How You Can Help the Environment By Getting Involved at School, at Home or at Play* by Sheri Amsel (Everything)
- *Starting a Garden (Gardening Lab for Kids)* by Renata Fossen Brown (Quarry Books)
- *The Great Big Green Book* by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith (Frances Lincoln)
- *Birds: Explore their Extraordinary World*, Miranda Krestovnikoff and Angela Harding (Bloomsbury Children's Books)
- *We Travel So Far*, Laura Knowles and Chris Madden (words and pictures)

Weblinks:

- Nicola Davies' website: <https://nicola-davies.com/>

Teaching sessions

Before Reading:

- Prepare a display space and/or class journal where you can keep records of class discussions, art work, photographs and writing that are produced as you work through the book.
- If you do not have the space for a working wall you could create a class 'reading journal' using large pieces of paper and use the pages of the journal to capture responses.
- You will also want to create a display, as part of your class reading environment, of related texts, as suggested above to support the children's ongoing research and in choosing books to read aloud to them. Ensure you provide a range of read aloud experiences so that the children can hear the tunes of different kinds of texts which will greatly support their own writing.
- In order for the sequence to work effectively you will need to 'keep back' the text from the children initially, including the cover of the book and title.

Session 1: Response to Illustration

- Copy the endpapers from the front of the book only (showing the landscape without two barn owls) on to A3 paper so that each group in the class can see it. You may also wish to display it on your IWB using a visualiser or similar device.

- Ask children for their initial reflections on the image with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls 'the four basic questions'.
- These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion: *Tell me...*
 - *Was there anything you liked about this story?*
 - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?*
 - *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
 - *Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen?*
- The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative 'Why?' question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the 'wrong' answer.
- As children reply it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings 'likes', 'dislikes', 'puzzles', 'patterns'. This written record helps to map out the group's view of the important meaning and is a way of holding on to ideas for later. Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions.
- Ask them to discuss the image in their groups and annotate the A3 paper with these initial thoughts or have them scribed. *Does it prompt any questions? Is there anything that puzzles them?*
- Draw the groups together to feedback their annotations more widely, comparing similarities or differences in perception, for example whether they consider the sun to be setting or rising at dusk or dawn.
- Display the annotated illustrations on the working wall. Take this opportunity to draw out and explore children's responses and vocabulary choices through explicit modelling; clarifying their own choices and enriching them by recasting and through extension. This might include words and phrases to describe particular features, colour palette, season, time of day or more sophisticated or even abstract descriptions that convey the sense of space, the mood and their emotional response. Support the children to describe their chosen aspect of the scene in sentences through modelling and recasting.
- This is an opportunity to teach the concept of sentences in the context of the rich reading experience that working with a high quality text such as this provides. Once the children have composed their sentences, it will allow you to assess what implicit knowledge they have gained from hearing language through talk and through having a wide range of texts read aloud to them.
- When children have grasped the concept of words combining to make sentences, they can begin to understand the effect that the choice of words, or their order, may have on readers; whether written by them or by established authors.
- When talking with children about the impact of sentences on the reader, and in developing reader response, it becomes appropriate to introduce terminology, such as noun, noun phrase, verb, adverb, past/present tense to support children to engage in writing conferences, response partnerships and in discrete grammar sessions, as appropriate. Rather than being introduced as an isolated set of rules to follow, the terminology entitles children to engage meaningfully in

metalinguage when responding to and evaluating sentences they read or have composed themselves.

- In pairs, ask the children to compose orally and write a sentence that they think best describes the aspect of the scene that most interests them. Encourage them to read aloud their sentence to a partner so that they can feedback their initial response – how it made them feel as a reader. Ask children to make simple revisions so that it makes sense as they intended. Support children to articulate what they were trying to convey orally to support their revisions, modelling how to form a complete sentence from ideas, add detail and make simple revisions.
- Display the sentences alongside the annotated illustrations and read a selection of them aloud, asking them to share their initial reader response. *How does it make them feel? What did the writer do to achieve this? Are there any words or phrases that they found pleasing or vivid to listen to or to look at in printed form?*
- Read aloud the sentences again, explicitly lifting the language off the page with intonation and allowing children to hear and compare the tunes or prosody of their own and each other's sentences. *Do they read aloud well? Why?* Revisit the words or phrases that the children find particularly vivid or enjoyable to listen to. You might want to explore the relationship between the individual words and phrases chosen, how they sound and how the sentence sounds as a whole, given its form or how it is structured – simple, compound or complex.
- Now, after concealing all the text including titles, show the illustration on the inner title page then that on the first spread in which the girl and her grandfather are carrying the bird box toward the tree as the sun rises. Ask the children to respond to the illustration, discussing their ideas about what may be happening and what more they are finding out. Encourage comparisons with their initial ideas from looking at the endpapers. Model comparative language and enabling sentence structures such as joining two clauses with conjunctions 'but' or 'and' to form a compound sentence.
- Promote the children's predictions and use of tentative language with well-chosen prompts containing model verbs, such as:
Tell me:
 - *Who could these people be? How might they know each other? What makes you think that?*
 - *Where could they be going?*
 - *I wonder what they are carrying. What could it be? What might they do with it?*
- Scribe the children's responses around copies of the illustrations – or have children record their ideas in groups – recasting into complete sentences orally and, if appropriate, in writing.

Session 2: Read Aloud, Book Talk and Looking at Language

In Key Stage 1, providing children with rich language and reading experiences of grammatical structures, such as the use of fronted adverbials, will allow them to absorb language in action. They don't need to know the label or terminology for this type of adverbial phrase or adverb. Through rich and repeated exposure to language in action, they will then come to possess it in their own spoken

language as well as their writing. Children that are using and talking about language confidently, will be best placed to take on board the terminology introduced later on. They can then engage more meaningfully in metalanguage during reader response and editing of writing.

- Show the children the book and read aloud the title, allowing children to share their initial responses to the illustration of the owl on the cover by Michael Foreman:
 - *How does this illustration make you feel? Why? Do you like/dislike it? Why?*
 - *What does the owl in this illustration remind you of? Why?*
 - *Have you ever seen an owl like this in stories or real life?*
 - *Why do you think that Nicola Davies has named the book *White Owl*, *Barn Owl*?*
- Ask children to consider what kind of book this is; whether they think it is fiction or non-fiction and why they think that. Scribe the children's ideas about what they think makes a book one genre or the other. Elicit from them the features that they consider essential for each type of book given their previous reading experience. The children will investigate this in more depth later in the sequence when they have engaged with a wide range of engaging non-fiction texts as a group.
- *Are the children familiar with the author or illustrator?* Draw on the book display you have created to establish the kinds of books the author and illustrator write and illustrate and whether the children have read them before, such as *Surprising Sharks*, illustrated by James Croft or *Just Ducks*, illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino (Walker), as well as other picturebooks in the Walker Nature Storybook collection. They may be aware of other Michael Foreman picturebooks, such as *One World* (Andersen Press)
- Now re-read the title and slowly reveal the pages that the children have already seen in the initial endpapers and title page. Read aloud the first page of the story text only. Children may notice and ask you to also read the non-chronological factual text in the 'handwritten' annotation. They will have chance to engage more deeply with it later in the sequence so take their cue. If they don't engage with it, leave it unread for now. Allow children time to explore the illustration and discuss what is happening.

Session 3: Read Aloud, Book Talk and Looking at Language

- Ask children to revisit their own sentences and ideas based on the endpapers and compare them to what has just been read and seen. *Is this what they were expecting; the characters, their activity and time of year? Why? Why not?*
- You could take the opportunity to look at the language chosen by Nicola Davies to start her story and set the scene: *'One frosty winter day...'* *How does this compare with their own language choices when describing the scene illustrated in the endpapers?*
- Re-read Nicola's first sentence and encourage the children to read aloud their own sentences so that they tune in to the sound of the voice as well as the words chosen for each. *How are they similar? How are they different?* You might focus on the use of descriptive language chosen, use or lack of dialogue and the tense employed by them and by Nicola.

- Read the page again and ask the children to revisit their ideas about what kind of book they think this is. Encourage them to justify their ideas, using their book knowledge and that of digital media, to make intertextual links. You might support and challenge their assumptions or ideas by reading aloud a range of picture storybooks and non-fiction texts so that they can tune in to the voices adopted in each, particularly the way in which they are opened by each author.
- Revisit the children's own writing. Some children will have written the sentence describing the endpapers in the **past tense** but others will have adopted the **present tense**. Talk to children about whether they have chosen 'past' or 'present' tense, using this terminology to support them to unpick the concept of time and how they convey that in their language choices. Some children may be ready to look more closely at the nuances within these tenses such as 'past' and 'present' 'perfect' and 'continuous' and how their use affects meaning and reader experience.
- Show and read aloud a sentence in which the present perfect tense has been adopted, for instance: *'The sun sets in the frosty field.'* Now offer an alternative in which the past perfect tense might be adopted *'The sun set in the frosty field.'* *How are they different?* Elicit from the children that when the present tense is adopted, the sun is setting now but when past tense is used, the sun has already set. It could have set yesterday or even last year. We don't know when.
- Provide more examples relating to the scene composed by you or the children in both past and present tense, allowing the children to compare their meanings and even re-write them to change it from one tense to the other.
- You might challenge more experienced language users to explore the different ways in which the past and present tense can be presented and why. Without initially burdening the children with terminology specifically relating to perfect or continuous tense, do engage the children in looking at the language, making commentary around how their choice of tense affected the meaning for you as reader. For example, if children chose present continuous, perhaps *'The sun is setting in the frosty field.'* talk to them about how it makes you feel as though the sun is setting right now but it is taking time to set. How does this feel different from the first sentence using present tense, *'The sun sets in the frosty field.'*? Perhaps that it is still happening now but it seems more complete. Compare past perfect and continuous sentences in the same way: *'The sun was setting in the frosty field.'* and *'The sun set in the frosty field.'*?

Session 4: Reading Aloud and Developing Enquiry

- Re-read aloud the first page of the text, without yet revealing the title of the book.
 - *Have they heard of barn owls before? What do they already know about them? What about owls in general? What stories, books or programmes have they read or watched that were about owls? Have they ever met a barn owl in real life? What was that like?*
 - *What would they like to ask grandpa? Who else could they ask?*
 - *How do they think grandpa knows about the barn owls? Where might they find answers to their questions?*
- To stimulate and help developing ideas for enquiry, the children might benefit from watching a film of a barn owl in action, such as:

- A Barn Owl quartering in a wildflower meadow: <https://vimeo.com/96470011>
- A Barn Owl in the evening: <https://vimeo.com/172225992>
- Encourage the children to look closely at the owl in action and its surroundings. *What does it look like? How does it move? What does it do? Where does it like to live? What might it eat?* You might discuss the similarities and differences between the barn owl and other owls with which the children may be more familiar.
- Encourage children to collaborate in small groups to compose statements and questions about barn owls on sentence strips. You may need to model this by scribing the children’s articulations as complete sentences.
- The children can place these on the first two columns of a group chart or you might have an enlarged version for the whole class on the working wall, such as:

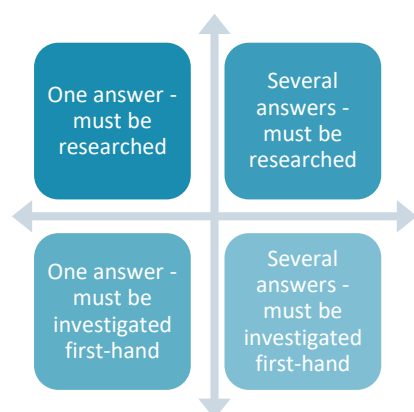
What we already know about barn owls:	What we want to find out about barn owls:	How we are going to find out about barn owls:	What we have found out about barn owls:

- Ensure the chart is accessible throughout the sequence so that children can continue to develop their enquiry as the sequence progresses and they find out more. This in turn will often inspire a further cycle of questioning. You may find it particularly beneficial to make the chart – or a copy of it – accessible to the children’s parents as it can lead to rich conversations at home, providing further opportunity for language to be absorbed and possessed by your children. This could include technical vocabulary specific barn owls but also the language and grammatical structures of sentences that shape the predictions, assertions and questioning of enquiry.

Session 5: Looking at Language - Evaluating Questions

- Revisit the enquiry chart as a class, reading aloud a selection of assertions and questions about barn owls. Choose a range of both open and closed questions that have been composed by the children or that you have added yourself in preparation for this session which involves an analysis of the questions and the type of enquiry involved. (At this stage, focus on the composition of the questions rather than the transcriptional elements such as punctuation. Model inflection appropriate to question sentences when reading aloud, adding missing question marks as appropriate without emphasising it unnecessarily. A question mark doesn’t make a question; it punctuates it to support reading. A well-structured question can make sense without this marker to an experienced reader). This session will support children to appreciate fully the role of questions in stimulating dialogue and their varying influence on the path an enquiry takes.
- Ask the children to consider the third column ‘How we are going to find out about barn owls’:
 - *How do the children already know what they think they do?*

- Does everyone agree with all the statements of ‘fact’ in the first column? If not, how can they check these assertions?
- Where do the children think they will find answers to their questions?
- Encourage the children to relate their ideas to previous experience of finding information from first-hand experiences, such as observation of birds or speaking to a wildlife expert like Nicola Davies herself, to a range of secondary sources such as: exploring various forms of non-fiction texts; engaging in websites or information books; watching television programmes or films. They may also have gleaned information from works of fiction, like *Owl Babies*, *The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark* by Jill Tomlinson or *Winnie the Pooh* by A.A. Milne and E.H. Shepard.
- Gather the children’s ideas and record this in the third column. Evaluate this list together, asking the children which kind of fact-finding activity appeals to them most and why. Many children would find the idea of being outside or meeting a real owl and its keeper particularly exciting; others might prefer to engage in research through a particular form of information text.
- Tell the children that they are going to look more carefully at the questions they have posed in the second column and sort them into groups so that you can help them plan and organise their enquiry more carefully and make it as enjoyable and engaging as possible for them, given their preferences.
- Create a large version of the following grid, either on group tables or marking out an appropriate floor space, using masking tape and labels:



- Take one question strip from the chart and read it aloud. Ask the children to reflect on whether they think it is going to be easy or difficult to answer. Some children may feel they already know the answer. Focus on how it could be checked and what kind of activity would best support this. Repeat this a few times, modelling your thought process through pole-bridge talking (thinking aloud) in which you might try out each of the quadrants and explore the possibilities before deciding on the most appropriate.
- Once the children understand each of the criteria, support them to work collaboratively to place their own question strips in the appropriate quadrant, based on the criteria provided. You may choose to have the children work in groups initially, with or without adult support, then invite them to bring their choices to the enlarged class grid once they feel confident to do so.

- Once the questions have been placed on the grid, re-evaluate them and check everyone agrees that they are in the most appropriate quadrant, revising choices if necessary.
- This provides meaningful opportunity to revisit and re-evaluate the grammatical structure of the questions, in the context of trying to vary them in order for a balanced and more engaging enquiry to take place. By analysing the question tags used and the structure of the composition, they can then be encouraged to play with it to see if the revised question would result in a more interesting line of enquiry, for example:
- Offer the children prompts to support this thinking:
 - *How are the sentences structured in each of the quadrants?*
 - *Do the questions start in similar ways in each of the quadrants?*
 - *Can they be rephrased to allow for interesting enquiry to take place?*
- As you revisit and re-evaluate the questions, ask the children which they would be most interested in and why. It might be related to a specific curiosity they have about an aspect of barn owls or related to the process involved in finding out - research or investigation - that appeals most. You might look even more closely at one or two questions, reflecting on whether they think it has only one answer or has many answers, the answer would be one word or we would use many words to answer. Maybe, they think the answer to a particular question could only be imagined or inferred which might inspire the children's curiosity.
- Provide the children with three dot stickers each and ask them to choose three questions that appeal to them most, either because they are keen to find out something in particular about barn owls or because they think they would enjoy the kind of activity involved in finding out; research or investigation.
- *How will we find answers to our chosen questions? Where will we look? Who could we ask?* Add further ideas to the third column.
- Use the revised chart as the basis for planning the children's scientific enquiry in terms of planning for who it will involve, teaching and learning sessions that support investigative work and the resources that you will need to prepare and make accessible to them to support their research.

Session 6: Freeze-Frame and Thought Tracking

- Read aloud the story from the beginning of the book until the girl and her Grandpa finally spot a barn owl for the first time... *'An owl! A White owl! A barn owl!'* (p,14)
- Revisit the illustration of the girl with her grandpa. *How do the children think they are feeling? How would the children feel in their position? Why? Have they ever waited and had to be patient for something to happen themselves? What did it feel like when it finally happened?*
- *What tells the children that the characters are excited or awestruck at the sight of the owl? What are they doing?* Revisit the previous illustrations of the pair as they waited patiently for the owl to arrive and compare them to this one; the difference in movement and energy shown in their body language, gaze and facial expression.
- Organise the children in pairs so that they can use the sequence of images to re-enact the scenes in role as either the girl or her grandpa. Encourage them to imagine and role-play potential

conversations between them. You might need to model talk this in action with another adult or child confident in imaginary play.

- Once the children have explored the characters' viewpoints through role-play, tell them that they are going to create a silent tableau in role of the moment that the owl's pale face emerged from the nesting box. On your signal - which might be re-reading from *'And then, one spring night...'* until *'...A barn owl!'* - the children need to freeze in exactly the position their character adopts at this awe-inspiring moment. Have the illustration of the owl peering out of the nesting box enlarged on the whiteboard to create a focal point for the children as they organise their body positioning and their gaze in that direction. Take photographs of the children in position to display and revisit later.
- Tap children on the shoulder, asking them to voice their inner thoughts in role as their chosen character. If children find it difficult to articulate their thoughts or express their ideas beyond incomplete utterances, support them by clarifying, repeating and recasting as well as taking the opportunity to extend and enrich vocabulary and develop thinking by engaging in dialogue with them in role, even interviewing them with well-chosen, open-ended prompts.
- This is a natural opportunity to model how simple ideas can be developed by linking clauses together with conjunctions like *'and'*, *'but'* and *'because'* as **compound sentences** as well as adding detail with adverbials in **complex sentences**. When modelled as part of natural dialogue, children will absorb these structures and precise language choices and appreciate why they are useful to them in articulating and expressing ideas.
- Once the children have had ample time to listen to each other's ideas and explore the characters' viewpoints, ask them to record their thoughts and feelings in role on paper provided, then draw around their writing with a thought bubble to be shared and displayed alongside photographs of the children frozen in role or a copy of the illustration from the book.

Session 7: Reading Aloud, Response to Illustration, Visualisation and Artwork

- Read aloud from the beginning of the story until *'I could have reached out to touch its velvety softness.'* (p.19) pausing to explore the accompanying illustrations.
- Re-read the illustrations and narrative text on pages 18 and 19 again from *'I just held my breath. The owl's whiteness gleamed and its face was like a pearly heart.'*... until... *'velvety softness.'* Ask for the children's initial responses to this part of the story: *How does it make them feel as a reader? Can they explain why?* Perhaps they feel excited as if they are sitting alongside the little girl or even seeing it through her eyes? Maybe they find certain words or phrases make them feel a certain way, remind them of something else?
- *How did the illustrations make them feel? Why?* Draw attention to the colour palette and ask the children to consider why Michael Foreman has chosen to paint the people in sepia tones and the owl in full colour. *What does the owl remind them of, peering out of the nest box and when shown in gliding through the air, white wings spread?* Children might make comparisons with angels or hearts. Record their responses around the illustrations.

- Read the same section of text again, this time asking the children to close their eyes and inviting them to try to visualise the owl in their mind's eye.
- Give the children chalk pastels and ask the children to draw the owl they are visualising. Re-read the section again several times while the children draw their pictures. Children will be able to draw on their exploration of Foreman's illustrations as well as the films they have watched to be able to draw a faint outline of an owl upon which they can add details of specific features as described by Nicola Davies. You might want to model live drawing a basic outline to get them going. It shouldn't be necessary to give them one in the form of a worksheet. The success of the drawings will depend on the emotional response of the audience as much as the accuracy of the labelled features. With her carefully chosen words, Nicola Davies intends to create a connection between us as reader and the barn owl as by the end of the book, we find out ways that we can help them as endangered animals. Foreman's illustrations and the children's drawings can also have such an impact on audience.
- After they have completed their drawings the children could annotate the pictures with key vocabulary or phrases from the text, which support their understanding or interpretation. Elicit from the children which words or phrases they find memorable or vivid; which help them to understand more about the owl or provide details of its features that they find interesting, for example Davies' use of expanded noun phrases: *'tiny ruff of feathers'*, *'speckled browns on its back'*, *'shine of its big dark eyes'*, *'velvety softness.'*
- Give the children time to share their work with one another and to compare and contrast their images. You might even conduct a gallery walk in which you invite children to comment on each other's artwork, adding any new descriptive language to the display as they do. *What is similar and what is different about the way each has illustrated the barn owl? Why do they think this is?*
- Through discussion, draw out from the children the way in which the author has made particular descriptive or precise language choices to support their understanding of the barn owl's specific physical features.
- At this point you may want to give the children printed copies of the text or have it enlarged so that you can highlight this language alongside the discussion. As well as the expanded noun phrases, Davies has made careful verb choices and used adverbs and adverbial phrases as well as simile to add precision to her description, thus enabling the children to make connections and to visualise and draw the barn owl accurately: *'It was so light, it hardly bent the twig it perched on.'*, *'...tiny ruff of feathers round its face, like stiff lace.'* and *'...speckled browns on its back.'*

Session 8: Looking at Language – Description & Scale of Intensity

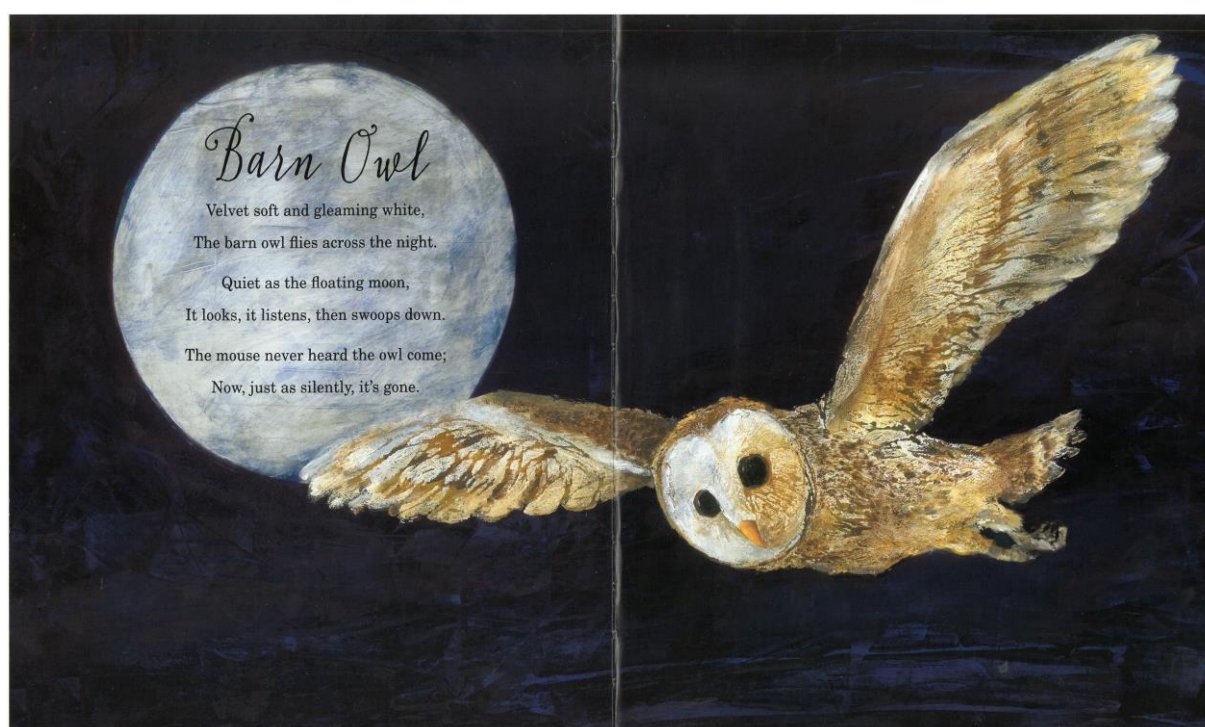
- Return to the gallery of owl drawings. *How do the drawings make the children feel individually? What is their impact as a collection?* Ask the children to consider the way in which Nicola Davies expresses the beauty of the owl and the way in which both girl and author feel about the owl; how their awe and wonder is articulated in both words and the illustration of the book; how that has been interpreted by the children in their own drawings.

- Consider the descriptive language being used and how the owl has been compared to precious objects and special fabric like pearly hearts, lace and velvet. It would be useful to have gathered a collection of old pearls or replica pearlised objects as well as stiff lace and velvet for the children to make observations and explore them on a sensory level. Scribe their responses and draw on them to support their understanding of the abstract concept that words can be chosen to support a reader's understanding and appreciation of a mood or even to elicit an emotional response from the reader toward the subject, in this case the barn owl.
- *Why do the children think that Nicola Davies want us to think of the barn owl as precious? Do they think of any other animals as precious? Why?* These animals may be pets that we love as well as animals that are precious in some other way, like those that are endangered.
- Ask children to consider what they are finding out about barn owls and how this links to ideas around endangered animals. If they have not pursued this line of enquiry, encourage them to deepen their research into environmental study which will be developed later on in the sequence.
- Read aloud from '*I just held my breath.*' until '*It was so quiet, all I heard was my own heart beating.*' Giving children time to respond and compare with the inferences that have already made about the girl's feeling at this point.
- You might use this as a springboard for children to engage with a range of authentic non-fiction texts to research why certain animals are becoming endangered and the conservation work to save them from extinction. You could link this to a geographical study of the human impact on wildlife in local area or further afield. This will support them in composing persuasive texts later in the sequence as they will then be experienced in hearing such voices beforehand.
- Make a display of quality fiction and non-fiction texts that the children can read and hear read aloud. Story books such as: *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, *10 Things I can do to Help my World* and *My Green Day* by Melanie Walsh, John Burningham's *Oi Get off my Train* and *Dear Greenpeace* by Simon James are excellent texts to support children to learn about environmental issues. Information books might include: *The Great Big Green Book* by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith and *The Everything Kids' Environment Book: Learn How You Can Help the Environment By Getting Involved at School, at Home or at Play* by Sheri Amsel.
- Re-read and revisit the story from the beginning until '*It was so quiet, all I heard was my own heart beating.*' Revisit the working wall, particularly their freeze-frame work in role as the girl or her grandpa as well as their drawings of the owl, asking the children to talk about what has happened so far and how the girl has felt throughout; from carrying the nesting box to sighting the barn owl.
- Prepare an enlarged image of the pair waiting with the tree ahead of them and the owl in the box at the top. A collage of the illustrations on page 12 and page 15 would be perfect. As the children suggest words to describe the girl's feelings at various points, write them on a post-it note and place it around the image.
- Children will often suggest 'happy' as a word to describe how they might feel (in this case when the owl appeared). Elicit from the children other words they might use which provide us with more detail, for example perhaps she felt 'excited' at this point but merely 'content' or 'hopeful' beforehand.

- Draw on words from the text (like 'patient'), their response to illustration, their in-role work, as well as children's own experiences when in similar situations. Children may be able to draw on known vocabulary or you may need to introduce certain words to their repertoire in which case these examples will ground them in context, enabling their assimilation all the sooner. You may choose to work with children in small groups in order to ensure all children have a voice and to enable you to assess their baseline more accurately in order to support progress.
- Take all suggestions and use the opportunity to increase the children's repertoire rather than being limited to a group of synonyms at this stage. Words might include 'worried', 'frustrated', 'calm', 'overjoyed', 'awestruck'. Once you have a range of words to investigate, children could be supported to group them into collections with similar meanings, using an age-appropriate thesaurus to develop the collection further. Throughout this process, ensure children are engaged in dialogue around these words, grounding them in meaningful experiences.
- Elicit from the children which group they think is most connected with the girl's feelings upon sighting the owl, for example 'happy'. Take the collection of words from this group and ask the children to place them in order of intensity from the waiting girl up the tree until the sighting of the owl itself. You might have the children negotiate the order in small groups before bidding for them to be placed accordingly on the class image of the tree. The discussion around these words that takes place during this activity will enable the children to begin to possess unfamiliar vocabulary more easily as well as deepen their understanding of known words as they discuss the nuances of meaning between them.

Session 9: Revisiting, Reading Aloud and Responding – Poetry

- Revisit and re-read the story text and illustrations on pages 21-23, eliciting their responses and asking of what else the barn owl reminds them. Watch a film showing a barn owl in flight with or without voice over:
 - Slo-mo barn owl in flight from BBC's Unexpected Wilderness:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlKo42iPslg>
- Ask the children to share their initial responses. Allow children to share any words that they didn't understand, such as 'apparition' or 'supernatural' linking them to words they are familiar with like 'ghost'. Reflect on what barn owls are compared with in this film – 'an apparition', 'supernatural', a 'ghost', 'like snow' – and why this might be, like Davies's likening with an angel.
- Explore Petr Horáček's illustration of a barn owl in Nicola Davies' *A First Book of Animals* without yet reading the text. To what do the children think the owl might be compared in this case? Draw connections with the moon and the earlier comparisons, eliciting children's observations of its whiteness as well as its ability to glide silently through the air.



- Read aloud Nicola Davies' writing about the owl. *How does it make them feel? Why? Is this what the children expected to hear? What does this writing sound like? Does it remind us of anything else?* The children may compare it to poetry they know as well as making connections with the author's poetic language about the barn owl in *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* and in the voiceover of the BBC film.
- Organise the children into groups and provide each with a strip of paper. Ask each of them to draw on what they have heard so far about barn owls and their own thought to write a word, phrase or sentence that they think best describes the barn owl. There should be plenty of vocabulary elicited on display in the class journal or working wall that they can access and refine for themselves.
- Once the children have composed their own line, ask them to decide as a group how to organise the strips so that they create their own free verse poem inspired by the owls.
- Give them time to make simple refinements, then ask them to text mark their poem to prepare for a performance reading. *Which words or phrases might they want to emphasise and how might they do this; using intonation, voice sounds, reading in canon or individually, with echo or sound effects or using actions?* You might provide sheer, white fabric to support their performance with movement and a selection of music to create mood and support the prosody and rhythm of the performance reading.
- Once the children have had time to prepare and rehearse, have them share their performance to with wider group, inviting the audience to share their responses and what made them effective. Discuss similarities and differences in each of the performances. Where there were similarities,

identify the structure or language of the poem that led this to happen. Discuss the poet's intent and the power of the words she has used.

- You might revisit the children's text-marked poems which could be pinned on the working wall, in order to support grammar teaching around sentences and how they are constructed with structural words and those that add description (lexical). It is likely that many of the lexical words – the verbs, adverbs and adjectives – are the ones the children chose to emphasise for performance and this could form the basis of further investigation.

Session 10: Reading Aloud and Book Talk

- Read aloud the story from the beginning until the end, allowing the children to make observations without breaking the flow. You might wish to give the children the experience of hearing Nicola Davies herself reading the story which can be found on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/23967967>
- Once the children have heard the whole story read aloud, the group can begin to explore their responses to it with book talk: *Tell me...*
 - *Was there anything you liked about this story?*
 - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?*
 - *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
 - *Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen?*
- You could also ask deeper questions such as: *What do you think the girl learned from this experience?* Or ones that allow children to apply their growing knowledge of barn owls like: *Why do you think grandpa feels so sure the owls will return next year?* This might allow children to make personal connections if they worry about being independent or doing new things.
- Show the children the final endpapers and encourage the children to respond and compare it to their own drawing, reflecting their initial predictions.
- Make *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* accessible for the children to revisit and explore so that they can deepen their knowledge of barn owls. *Has reading the book led to further questions about barn owls or owls, even other birds, in general?* Children might demonstrate a greater interest in one particular aspect of the barn owl or they may wish to broaden their enquiry.
- Allow time for the children to hear many good quality examples of non-fiction texts read aloud, including other titles by Nicola Davies (see linked texts and the [Nicola Davies](#) booklist on the CLPE website).
- This could be done as part of a group reading session, with each book being placed on a table and an enabling adult or older reading buddy reading the text to groups of children who are particularly interested in the subject matter being covered.
- You might also provide other film examples for children to learn more about the animals involved:
 - The CBeebies Series Our Planet has a useful clips bank at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006m9ny/clips>
 - The BBC Nature site has a wealth of films: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/uk>

- Age-appropriate BBC Bitesize documentary about different owls and their habitats: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zyj8q6f>
- Allow time for the children to watch the film or listen to the text being read or, to ask questions and to make notes as a group, of things they find pertinent or interesting. Give ample time for these books to be read and re-read, perhaps exploring particular sections individually, making and sharing group notes in between - on their mind maps or enquiry charts - before moving on.

Session 11: Looking at Language – Exploring Features of Non-fiction and Fiction

- In this session, children will have opportunity to explore the ways in which books and texts can be categorised, their language features and how experiencing a range and breadth of texts can help us learn about the world. By now, the children will have explored the range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts you have on display and they can be encouraged to make reference to these whilst comparing the two texts chosen. In making this intertextual comparison and looking specifically at the language used by both authors – and emotive techniques employed by each illustrators - we will continue to focus on the narrative text within *White Owl*, *Barn Owl*. However, this session allows opportunity to make observations about the other voices in the book; the non-chronological annotations throughout, the advisory note and the index at the end.
- Hold up copies of *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* and *Owl Babies* with which the children will likely be familiar. If they aren't, ensure it has been read to them prior to this session. Now re-read *Owl Babies* to all the children, allowing them to soak up the tunes and patterns of the book and recall the story. Take initial responses and engage in book talk briefly. *How did you feel about the family of owls? How did Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson achieve this?* Compare it to their responses to the owls in *White Owl*, *Barn Owl*. *What do the children think the books have in common? What is different about them?*
- As well as taking their suggestions regarding the subject matter of owls, encourage them to share their perceptions of the intended audience or readership, their purpose – why they have been written, what we gain from them – and the kind of books they are – fiction or non-fiction. Explore the idea that they are both stories although *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* contains facts and other information text. Prompt the children to first think about the purpose and audience of each kind of book:
 - *Why do we have stories and why information books?*
 - *What is their purpose? Why do we need them as readers?*
 - *Do only non-fiction books help us find information? Do only fiction books tell a story?*
- Ask children to justify their ideas and gently challenge any assumptions, bringing them back to the breadth of books they have experienced in this sequence.
- Now prompt them to consider the features of each kind of book:
 - *How do we know that they are one kind of book or another?*
 - *What do information books look like? How are they presented compared with fiction books?*

- *Do only story books have illustrations by an artist? Which kinds of books use photographs? What other kinds of pictures are used in different kinds of books?*
- *What do the words sound like in both kinds of books? Do we only learn new words from information books? Why do you think that?*
- Tell the children that they are going to investigate their ideas about what they think makes a non-fiction text and what makes a story book. Give the children time to explore a collection of books from the class display and general book stock so that they can have their assertions confirmed or challenged. It is worth thinking carefully about the breadth of texts that you provide so that they include picturebooks illustrated with photographs, like *Naughty Bus* by Jan and Jerry Oke and *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems, a range of illustrated nature storybooks as well as comics and magazines that reflect popular culture as well as those specifically relating to science or history as well as pamphlets, maps and other non-fiction texts. These might include:
 - *Messy Goes to Okido*
 - *Whizz Pop Bang*
 - Magazines produced by RSPB, National Geographic, BBC, etc.
- Support the children to record what they are finding out, helping them to organise their research on paper so that will feel confident in feeding back to other groups. They may want to take a few examples of books that either confirm popular ideas or challenge them and make annotations around a copy of selected pages. Or they could make a chart of features, expected and discovered, such as photographs: rich illustrations, interesting endpapers, diagrams; characters, plot; story language, technical words, contents page, index, captions, etc. You may wish to guide their intertextual investigation as part of group reading, especially when conducting less straightforward aspects, such as language analysis.
- Following their investigation, support the children to use their notes to feedback as a whole group. *What have they found out? Is this what they expected? Why? Why not? Where might you put them in the class library? How would you categorise them? Does it matter? How did information inside a story help us to remember facts? Is it the same as looking at a website? Should information books give us all the answers? Why? Why not?*
- Tell the children that we are going to look really closely at the way the stories might differ now. Re-read the *White Owl, Barn Owl* story again, this time asking the children to think about how it sounds compared with *Owl Babies*? Refer to their book talk around the latter, particularly reflecting on the repetitive pattern and shape of the story told in *Owl Babies* compared with a more straightforward retelling by Nicola Davies' girl.
- Ask the children to think about viewpoint and how dialogue is used in each story. The owl babies' utterances relate to their concerns to which we as readers respond emotionally, whereas the conversation between the girl and her grandpa is providing us with factual information about barn owls. She takes on an observational role and his is explanatory. He is using scientific words or technical vocabulary relating to owls rather than emotive language.
- Allow the children to look at this more closely. Provide pairs of children with copies of the spread on pages 10-11 as well as enlarging it on the whiteboard or using a visualiser. Fold the children's

copies in half so that they first explore only the illustration. Encourage them talk about what is happening; what Grandpa has in his hand and what they might be saying to each other. Children could role-play and create speech bubbles for each of the characters, recording their speech in writing on their copy of the illustration. Share a selection of these. Some children might use limited language, for example ‘poo’; others will have recalled or have knowledge of the technical word ‘pellets’.

- Re-read the story text on page 10 and ask the children to open up their sheet then highlight and share any scientific or technical words they can find in the story text, such as: *fur, bones, pellet, bones* and *skulls*. Return briefly to a selected page in *Owl Babies* to emphasise the difference between each of the stories.
- Do the children know what these words mean? *How could they find out more? Where would they look?* By now, children will be engaging with the non-chronological annotations throughout the book. Read this example aloud to the children, asking what further information it provided about owl pellets.
- Turn to the **index** on page 29. Read aloud the text explaining how to use it. Model how the index works, using ‘pellets’ as an example. Encourage the children to use the index to support their research, and observing how it helps them to find more specific information when adding to their mind maps.
- Revisit the note explaining how to use the index and talk about the two kinds of words Nicola Davies is talking about. *Why have they been presented in different fonts? Why make the annotations look like handwritten notes? Of what do they remind us?* Refer to the children’s own sketch books, if they have them, as well as observational field note guides by renowned bird artists like Frank Jarvis:



- Reflect on the similarities between the layout and presentation of her book and what you might find in field journals, which are created from first-hand observation. You may wish to learn about Nicola Davies herself and why her books are so authentic; that she is an expert on wildlife; that she engages in first-hand observation of all kinds of animals.
- Nicola Davies is passionate about wildlife and conservation and that children are able to experience the world first-hand. In her blog, she continues: ‘Writing non-fiction based on personal observation of the world around them hones children’s ability to look, and to question; it gives them something to write about and helps them to find the power of their voices as writers, speakers and human beings.’
- *What might she be encouraging us to do for ourselves with this story? What would we gain from making first hand observations of animals like the girl did in the book? Which kind of animals do we think we would find in the school outdoor environment or locally? What about plants?*
- You might want to provide the children with their own field notebooks as part of their wider cross-curricular science learning. *What kind of information you would want to collect when making notes in our field journals?* Support their ideas by looking at a range of examples, books and guides for children, such as:
 - *RSPB Children's Guide to Birdwatching* (RSPB)
 - *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt Adventure Field Guide* (Walker)
 - *A Little Guide to Trees* by Charlotte Voake (Eden Project)
 - *A First Book of Nature* by Nicola Davies (Walker)
- Both RSPB and the Woodland Trust have excellent resources that the children can use to support them to identify and label what they observe:
 - RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids>
 - The Woodland Trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/>

Session 12: Retrieving Information from a non-chronological text and Looking at Language – Exploring Explanatory Voice through ‘Dictogloss’

- A ‘dictogloss’ involves children being able to listen for retrieval, to create and combine notes and to collaborate so you will need to ensure that they have enough experience in these kind of literate acts beforehand. It may be more appropriate for children with little experience to learn and practise these skills during small group reading whilst engaging in a range of non-fiction texts, perhaps watching a film on barn owls, such as the film on the Barn Owl Trust website: <https://youtu.be/ohqEquNnzfU>
- You might want to use what the children have already found out through the story and research to establish some useful strands of information that they could listen out for:
 - *What do barn owls look like? Why?*
 - *Where do barn owls live? How do barn owls live?*
 - *What do they eat? How do they find food?*
 - *What do they do at night...during the day?*
 - *What do we know about barn owl families? How do they care for their young? What*

are the roles and responsibilities of each parent?

○ *What is special about barn owls?*

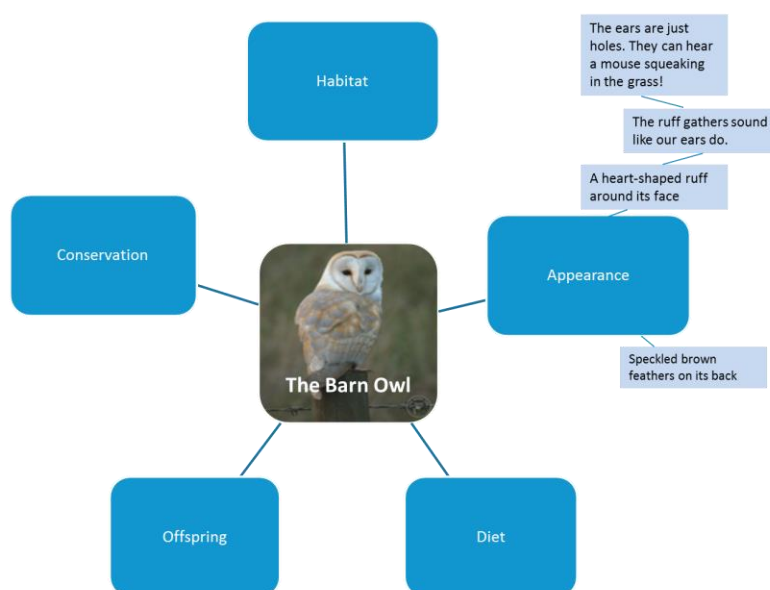
- Read and make notes on this information, from a range of non-fiction texts, so that the children have one thing to say about each of their chosen prompts. This could be through a dialogic reading and note taking activity to show children how to summarise information effectively.
- Once the children have gained enough experience and are confident in recording and sharing information retrieved through talking, drawing or note-taking they can engage in 'dictogloss' to support the class in gathering more information about barn owls. You may still choose to scribe for some children, as appropriate.
- The non-chronological 'handwritten' annotations throughout *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* are perfectly suited to be the text chosen to read aloud; authentic, providing rich but age-appropriate language models and enabling the children to tune in to explanatory voice. When reading aloud, read in the order the facts appear in the book. Organise the children into small groups and provide them with paper and pencil each as well as extra paper on the tables.
- Once organised, ask the children to do the following:
 1. Listen to the text being read aloud.
 2. Listen to text being read aloud again.
 3. Listen to the text being read aloud and write down some key points and phrases that you hear.
 4. Share your notes with a partner. Work together to write a new version of your individual notes.
 5. One set of partners join with another set to form a group of four. Work collaboratively to improve what you produced in your pairs.
 6. Rewrite the text on a large sheet of paper.
- After children have had a chance to complete their collaborative writing, ask what they have learnt during this session. *What do we now know about barn owls that we didn't know before?*
- Ask children to read aloud their group writing or model doing this for them so they can hear what their writing sounds like. Note the children's choice of descriptive or technical language and compare it to the authors. Why were some parts more memorable to us than others?
- After this session, in read aloud time or in guided group work, refer to a series of high quality non-fiction texts. Access to these texts will support the children in becoming increasingly familiar with the authentic voice and format of this type of writing. Examples of potential texts might include:
 - *The Emperor's Egg* by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Jane Chapman (Walker Books)
 - *Big Blue Whale* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Nick Maland (Walker Books)
 - *Tigress* by Nick Dowson, illustrated by Jane Chapman (Walker Books)
 - *Otters Love to Play* by Jonathan London, illustrated by Meilo So (Candlewick Press)
 - *My Little Book of Animals* by Camilla de la Bédoyère (QED Publishing)
 - *Puffin* by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Jenni Desmond (Walker Books)

Session 13: Book Talk and Organising Information

- Revisit the writing from the dictogloss session as well as returning to the large class enquiry chart. Ask the children to share facts about the barn owl that they have found particularly interesting.

Why did this aspect of the barn owl particularly appeal to them? Consider whether it relates to what the creature eats, what they look like or where they live?

- How could we share all of this new information with other people? Explain that we are going to be creating our own texts all about barn owls which we'll be able to post, send home or share with other classes to share our new knowledge and fascinating facts. What type of information might we want to include?
- Support the pupils in classifying what they know so far under a series of headings, perhaps by adapting the information collated to create a barn owl mind map:



- Do some sentences relate to what the creature eats? What they look like? Where they live? As this is a scientific text, think about technical language which could describe these categories, such as: Habitat, Appearance, Diet, Offspring and Conservation. Discuss and clarify the meanings of this technical vocabulary, continually grounding meaning as children make choices.
- Discuss how to organise the information so that facts are categorised to help the reader learn about barn owls. Revisit the text read aloud from *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* during dictogloss. Do they need to be read in the order they appear? Would they still make sense if they were jumbled up? You could copy each fact separately and give them to children as a set of fact cards to test their hypothesis. Why do these facts make sense read in any give order but the story text would not? What is the difference? You might explore the use of **conjunctions** to move the narrative on in a story as well as the use of past and present tense in each.
- Revisit the authentic texts, films and websites that the children have been using to support their research, and explore how they have organised and presented their information:
 - RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/barn-owl>
 - The Barn Owl Trust: <https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-facts/>

- Compare how the author or script writer has presented and sequenced the information.

Sessions 14-15: Shared Writing, Drafting, and Publishing a Non-chronological Text in a Chosen Form – ‘The Barn Owl’

- Tell the children that they are going to use what they have found out to write an explanatory text to tell others about the barn owl.
- Give children time to compile their own fact files. This could be an individual, paired or group writing task.
- Give the children a variety of materials and choices about how they might want to present their fact files. Some may want to create large, interactive posters; others may want to use ICT to create a presentation, a film documentary, or poster; some may want to write a non-chronological report.
- Provide ideas for formats through looking at a wide variety of ways that information texts can be presented using words and pictures. Model the process of thinking about how to present and organise information and the style, language and formality of non-fiction writing through Shared Writing.
- Give plenty of time for the children to draft their writing before reading aloud to check for sense and meaning, editing for spelling and punctuation and then write up for presentation in their chosen format.

Session 16: Reading Aloud, Book Talk and Retrieving Information – ‘Protecting The Barn Owl’

- Watch Nicola Davies read aloud her story again and think about the way she feels about barn owls: <https://vimeo.com/23967967>
- Afterwards, engage in Book Talk: *Do we feel the same? Why? Why not? How have she and others helped us create a connection with the barn owl? Why is this important? Why should we care?*
- Turn to the back of the book and read ‘A Nest-box Note’ on pages 28-29. Invite the children to share their initial response to what they have heard. They may have learned in the course of their research into this owl more about how they and their habitats can be protected. They may have visited websites of wildlife protection organisations and be able to direct you to these as well as other books in which they have found out more.
- Open The Barn Owl Trust’s website: <https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/>. Show the children how they might navigate the site so that it doesn’t overwhelm. Perhaps start with ‘nestboxes’, using the appropriate tab as see if what they advise confirms and adds details to what they have just heard.
- Re-read the first paragraph of Davies’ advisory note on page 28. Use the site to explore this in more depth. They suggest reading the ‘Wings of Change’ story by Nick Baker to the children and using the accompanying images to support them to understand the changes that are happening in

the countryside and farmland that the barn owl relies upon for survival:

<https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/owl-facts-for-kids/barn-owl-trust-lesson-plans/>

- Support the children to find out as much as they can about barn owls, linking it to a geographical study of the physical, environmental and human features of areas of the UK. Ask them to add their findings and any new questions thrown up to their mind maps or enquiry chart.
- Once the children have found out more about protecting barn owls, ask them what they think they should do about it themselves? *How could they help?* Many schools will not be in an area that could support the safe introduction of barn owls due to inappropriate environment – woodland or urban or that they present dangers to the owls such as traffic death. *If building a nest box is inappropriate, would other course of action be advised?*
- Agree with the children that you could write a persuasive letter to a local member of parliament or to one in an area where barn owl numbers are dwindling. Model appropriate persuasive tone, thinking aloud your language choices as you compose the letter from the children’s suggestions. Create the letter without overburdening the children with terminology, rather model an assertive tone and persuasive techniques, drawing on the Nest-box Note on pages 28-29 and other texts that they have heard read.
- Once the letter is complete, remind the children that their intended outcome is to encourage and persuade the MP to support farmers and landowners in conserving barn owls by telling them what you know. Re-read the letter to check that it is clear and assertive in its message and it is persuasive enough through use of model verbs and rhetorical questions. *Is it polite and formal enough for this purpose, given it is not a note to a good friend but somebody we have not met?* Send the letter off to the intended reader and await a response.

Session 17: Looking at Language – Exploring advisory and persuasive voice

- Given that the children’s ability to protect the barn owl will likely rely on other people, you will want to use this topic as a stimulus to consider ways in which children might be able to be involved more actively in raising awareness of local conservation issues. In readiness for this session, you will want to make accessible and read aloud a range of book which deal with themes of conservation, including: *Oi! Get off our Train* by John Burningham, *The Journey Home* by Fran Preston-Gannon, *Leaf* by Sandra Dieckmann, *Ten Things I can do to Help my World* by Melanie Walsh, *Dear Greenpeace* by Simon James, etc.
- Read aloud the poem ‘*Treasures*’ by Clare Bevan to the children which is in the *Poems to Perform* anthology, edited by Julia Donaldson and is featured on CLPE’s [Poetry website](#). Check the children know of the animals then elicit their initial responses: *How does the poem make them feel? Why? How has the poet achieved this response? What does it inspire us to do or think?* Discuss the message the poet is trying to convey. *Why is it a child keeping the treasures safe rather than an adult?*
- Discuss what might happen if we don’t look after our world and its precious things. Share ideas and opinions about harmful things people do and their effects on the world. Note them in the class journal around the printed poem.

- From the notes, ask the children to find the things that they feel they could change quite easily; things that happen in their own local community or by people they might be able to influence such as parents, teachers, neighbours, shopkeepers and community leaders.
- Hone in on littering which may have been suggested by the children earlier. Provoke a discussion amongst the children by suggesting that *a tiny toffee sweet wrapper you might drop is hardly going to make a difference to the huge wide world we live in*. At this point, you might want to show children images of the impact of our litter on wildlife in our locality but also much further afield than they may expect, such as images or this CBBC Newsround film showing what happens to single-use plastic waste that ends up in our trees, our natural areas and the world's oceans: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/42646301>
- You and one or two more confident children can start a debate by presenting arguments to the class for and against dropping the sweet wrapper with the rest of the children then joining in appropriately. Model listening respectfully to others, answering points relevantly and using the language of debate to challenge or support viewpoints, offer opinions or counter arguments effectively.
- Ask a child to go into role as someone walking down the street eating something messy. What do the children think s/he should do with the sticky paper?
 - *What might make someone throw their rubbish down in the street?*
 - *What might you say that would persuade them not to do this?*
- Put the children into two columns: one line's role is to try and persuade you to throw the rubbish down and the other column is to try and think of arguments for why you shouldn't. Now ask the child to walk between them. How convincing can the children be? When the child has walked to the end of the alley, ask him or her to decide what to do, based on the most persuasive argument given.
- Take groups of children for a walk around the local area looking for the places that they think are well cared for and for the places that aren't. Suggest children take photographs of these and record a commentary on what they find using a device such as an MP3 player. Ask them to consider the impact on wildlife in the area and how this could be prevented.
- When the children return to school, allow them time to explore a range of age-appropriate, persuasive texts that deal with conservation issues. This could include, letters, posters, pamphlets, pages in books or magazines, documentary films, a digital presentation, blog entries, vlogs or web pages. Explore with the children, perhaps in small groups, the way in which the different kinds of texts are presented, their layout, and the kind of language that their author's choose. *Which are most effective in persuading us or grabbing our attention? Why? Why not?* Compile a list of effective features that the children feel they may want to draw on when composing their own persuasive text.

Session 18-20: Shared Writing, Drafting and Publishing or Performing a Persuasive Text in a Chosen Form – A script for a 'televised' nature documentary or speech, a letter, pamphlet or poster

- Tell the children that they are going to draw on both photographs and sound files collected on their field trip to make a persuasive text of their choice.
- Support the children’s language and grammatical choices by modelling writing alongside them as well as discussing their own writing choices throughout the drafting process. You may wish to partner children with those that will provide supportive response as well as providing opportunity to share successful elements of children’s writing with other children.
- Children may feel best supported in creating their texts in a group. They may want to create a script for a film documentary about the issue of littering and having a team would be most appropriate in this case.
- Ensure that, in modelling and guiding this piece of writing with children, they are shaping the content of it with the purpose and audience in mind. Support them to read aloud their texts to check for sense and meaning as well as to ensure it sounds as they intended for the audience they have in mind. Once the writing has been drafted, provide a range of digital resources and bookmaking materials that the children can use to present and publish their persuasive text.
- Share the published pieces with each other, commenting on effective aspects as well as offering suggestions for refinement. Once final revisions have been agreed, have the children share their texts with the appropriate audiences and evaluate the response. *Could their work lead to a project to clean up an area in their local community and create a more nature-friendly environment?*

Session 21-22: Looking at Language – Exploring and responding to instructional voice – ‘How to make a nest box’

- Revisit *White Owl, Barn Owl* and think about her ‘Nest-Box Note’ and what we have learned about the conservation of barn owls. As well as canvassing those that can make a difference to the protection of barn owls, we could also look at what we can do for wildlife in our own back yards. Many children will live in areas that would be unsafe to attract barn owls, for example by a road, but they could look at ways to attract other kinds of wildlife.
- Ask the children to refer to their drawings and notes in their field journals to relate their observations of local plants and animals. Ask children to think about where they saw them and the kinds of habitats or diet they think they need. They could research this further and engage in conservation projects for the plant or animal that interests them most.
- Tell them that we are going to start by making a bird feeder and keep track of the different birds that arrive. We could then think about getting several different feeders with various types of bird seeds or fruit to see which birds like different types of food.
- Show the children the film: How to make a simple bird feeder for kids by ‘The Little Wood House’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtclnI5ABg>
- Re-run the film and discuss the required resources and steps we need to take. Talk with partners and take basic notes in the class journal. Note, the vlogger addresses the audience as ‘you’ rather than adopting a more formal imperative form of sentence. This is commonly used to create a

connection with the audience. In writing, imperative sentences work well for this purpose and audience; they are concise and each step can be re-read and revisited more easily than rewinding and re-running each one in the film. Using an advisory form of sentence in the film buys the audience a little more time to follow each instruction.

- Watch the film again, and ask the children to look out for anything they need to be especially exact about or careful with in any of the resources or steps, such as: *'A small container that you can roll your toilet roll back and forth.'*; *'Carefully squeeze some of your honey...'*; or *'Once it has had time to dry...'*
- With the children's help, gather and check the resources and begin to follow the instructions. You might want to take a tablet or laptop to watch the film outside as you make the bird feeder.
- Provide a digital camera for the children to record each step. This may need modelling.
- When the bird feeder is finished, talk about what we did and how the children found the task. *How easy was it to follow the instructions on the film? What did they need to do to help them create their bird feeder successfully? Perhaps, they draw on their preparatory notes more than the film? Why? Maybe they had to pause and re-run several instructions on the film? Were some instructions easier to follow well than others? Why?* Note, some of the instructions were lengthier than others which the children may have found overwhelming, others were more concise. Transcribe these for the children so that they can see them in written form to be revisited later.
- Hang the bird feeders in the garden to attract a range of garden birds. Leave a bird feeder log book (alongside bird spotter reference books and posters) for the children to record observations through drawing and annotation. Leave occasional notes from the birds, thanking the children for the food and providing occasional 'bird facts' or questions to which the children can find answers.
- Children could go on to create bird spotting or wildlife spotting kits to support their scientific observations which could include a checklist and simple instructions attached to key resources like microscopes, digital cameras or binoculars.

Sessions 23-24: Shared Writing, Drafting and Publishing Instructions - 'How to make a nest box'

- Show the children a finished bird feeder and explain that there are children in another class who would like to learn how to make a bird feeder. How can we help them? If they didn't have internet access what would we do? Elicit ideas about how we could instruct them? What if we weren't there to teach them?
- Return to the transcribed sentences the children drew out of the film when relating which steps were easier to follow than others. For example, ask them to compare the first three steps:
 - *'First take your bird seed and pour it into your container. Try to get it as flat as possible.'*
 - *'Pull up your roll and your honey and you want to carefully squeeze some of your honey all over your toilet roll'.*

- *'Here comes the sticky part. Take your finger and start moving it all around. You want the honey to coat the toilet paper roll all the way around.'*
- Elicit from the children which elements of each they consider to be effective, especially in their experience of following the instructions. When did they need more detail? Which information might have been unnecessary?
- Show the children the written form of instructions on websites, such as:
 - CBeebies: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/makes/bird-feeder>
 - RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/games-and-activities/activities/make-a-recycled-bird-feeder>
- *How are these instructions similar to or different from the ones in the film? How are they similar to the preparatory notes the children made with you after first watching the film? Draw attention to the concise nature of the imperative sentences employed in these instructions compared with advisory ones that address the reader as 'you', for example in the CBeebies' 'How to Make a Fruit Loop':*

Step 1

Ask a grown-up to cut cubes of apple and cheese.

Step 2

Be very careful and ask a grown-up to help you thread fruit and cheese onto the wire like a necklace.

Step 3

Make a hoop with the wire and tie it to some string. Ready!

- Once the benefits of recording in writing has been established, discuss what we would need to tell the other children; the information they require and that which is unnecessary. Talk about and recount each step, using the children's photographic records to support their recollections. Recast sentences orally to include useful time markers and other adverbial phrases that help to sequence or add precision.
- Through shared writing, model writing a set of instructions – 'How to Make a Bird Feeder' – using the photographs taken as a stimulus for oral rehearsal and writing each step. Mirror the adverbial phrases used in the recount and model the explicit use of imperatives, demonstrating the difference between helpful instructions, telling the children what to do for themselves rather than telling them what we did, how it felt, etc.
- Once the instructions have been drafted, give the children bookmaking resources so that they can layout and present them clearly as a published piece of writing for others to use. This may include illustrations or photographs or digitally produced text. Take them to another class to learn how to make bird feeders too and ask these children to evaluate their effectiveness alongside the authors.
- Read a thank you card from the garden birds for passing information on to others, reiterating why feeding them is so helpful to the world.

- Some children may be very interested in and had experience of vlogging, in relation to their interests at home. They may prefer to create an alternative vlog showing how to create a bird feeder which they could upload safely on the parent area of the school website. In this case, talk about how vloggers know what to say when they are showing their audience how to do things.
- Elicit from the children how they know what to say when performing in a school play and the benefits of learning or following a script. Children can then be supported, as above, to create a more concise set of instructions that will serve as a script for them to follow when being filmed demonstrating making a bird feeder. You might talk about how digital production of writing can reach a wider audience than those published in writing and the benefits this would have to wildlife conservation in this case.

Session 25: Book Talk and Book Review

- Re-read the story in *White Owl*, *Barn Owl* and revisit any parts of the book the children particularly enjoyed or found fascinating.
- Review children's responses to the book, using the 'Tell Me' grid:
 - *What did you like and/or dislike?*
 - *Did anything surprise you? Why?*
 - *Did you find anything particularly interesting or effective? Why?*
 - *Did the book remind you of anything else?*
- Ask the class to consider why the book was so important for the class and what they have learned from their subsequent research. *How has the book affected the way we think about the world?* Share writing a brief class review of the book, taking the children's ideas and shaping it compositionally to suit a child browsing in the library. Invite children to write their own book reviews for this book or one that had a particular impact on them in the course of this sequence.
- Revisit the children's learning journey since the early sessions in the sequence:
 - *Have we answered our questions?*
 - *How did the book help us?*
 - *What else did we do to find answers?*
 - *Which were the best information books or websites? Why do you think that?*
 - *Is there more we would like to find out?*
 - *What might we do next? Who can we involve?*
- Through shared writing, write a few sentences that captures the children's ideas, reviews their learning, and reflects the impact the book had on them.
- Decide as a class what action you could take as a class to help protect precious wildlife like the barn owl or conserve the habitats they rely upon. Choose one idea to carry out for a set period of time. The children might decide, for example, to create conservation areas in the school, use both sides of the paper for drawing as much as possible, to recycle the class's rubbish or to grow plants and sell them for the class fund.
- Display this and other class work prominently as part of a drive to engage the school community in helping conserve local wildlife.

Use and Application of Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation from the National Curriculum Year 1 and 2 programme of study:

There are opportunities to teach grammar, punctuation and spelling through this text, some specific ideas are mentioned during the sessions listed above.

Other areas you may wish to consider when studying the text, depending on the needs of the class, are:

Use and Application of Phonics and Spelling

The following words could be used to exemplify learning at phonic phases:

Basic code (starting sounds):

big, box, it, but, in, will, on, at, get, rid, and, can, sun, went, lots, an, did, catch, ruff, back, got, up

Basic code (all sounds):

Wait, see, for, barn, owls, wooden, grandpa, across, farm, tree, high, oak, how, seen, night, look, under, pellet, again, them, out, fur, teeth, need, birds, sure, winter, hard, down, mouth, loud, sound, join, long

Consonant Clusters:

Just, nest, trunk, left, blobs, spit, spot, kept, spring, pink, hand, grass, held, bent, twig, stiff, hunt

Complex Code:

Alternative graphemes:

/ai/ make, they, shape, case, pale, face, stay, straight, same, safe

/ee/ carried, field, squeaky, gleam, hardly, velvety

/igh/ like, pile, dried, size, fly, miles, times, sky, white, quite, eyes

/oa/ bones, close

/oo/ chew, poo, food, flew, huge, too

Common Exception Words:

I, my, a, one, the, to, he, said, asked, we, where, there, any, they, put, here, was, were, have, come, their, you, be, do, find, kind, behind, when, as, by, could, so, all, are, know, old, why, what, his, your, people, both

Compound words:

something, lookout, anything, sometimes

Contractions:

what's, it's, aren't, don't, can't, they'll, didn't, we'll, we'd, that's

root word	'-ed' suffix				'-ing' suffix		
	simply + 'ed'	double consonant then +'-ed'	-e then + '-ed'	change y to i then + '-ed'	simply + '-ing'	double consonant then + 'ing':	-e then + '-ing'
help	helped				helping		

smile			smiled				smiling
carry				carried	carrying		
ask	asked				asking		
dry				dried	drying		
whisper	whispered				whispering		
gleam	gleamed				gleaming		
shape			shaped				shaping
speckle			speckled				speckling
reach	reached				reaching		
land	landed				landing		
perch	perched				perching		
raise			raised				raising
drop		dropped				dropping	
plough	ploughed				ploughing		
protect	protected				protecting		
hold	held – irregular spelling				holding		
fly	flew – irregular spelling				flying		
build	built – irregular spelling				building		
sit	sat – irregular spelling					sitting	
hide	hid – irregular spelling						hiding
beat	beat – irregular spelling				beating		
pounce			pounced				pouncing
squabble			squabbled				squabbling

Suffixes:

‘-est’ suffix added to root word: weirdest, biggest (double the consonant), smallest

‘-er’ suffix added to root word (take off ‘e’ add ‘er’): safer, closer, rarer

plurals: perches (add ‘es’), bodies (change ‘y’ to ‘i’ then add ‘es’)

Contextualised Grammar Opportunities:

Adjectives: velvety, speckled, tiny

Adverbial phrases: ‘on its back’, ‘the shine of its big black eyes’, ‘tiny ruff of feathers’

Simile: ‘raised wings like an angel’

Punctuation for effect (exclamation marks, ellipses, question marks, use of capital letters, parenthesis), such as:

Command sentences: Wait and see. Look up the pages to find out about all these barn owl things.

Question sentences: What’s it for, Grandpa?, How do you know there are barn owls here?, Will the owl come to our box tonight?

Exclamation sentences: Look! Look, Granpa! It’s caught something!