

# Owling 101 Pre Activity

## Whooooo Can See Like An Owl?

### Materials:

Crayons or colored pencils, masks, hole punch, tape or rubber cement, elastic, scissors and toilet paper tubes.

### Vocabulary:

**Predator:** an animal that hunts and eats other animals.

**Prey:** an animal that is hunted and eaten by a predator.

**Peripheral vision:** the ability to see objects out of the corner of your eye when looking ahead. Side vision.

**Nocturnal:** an animal that is active at night.

### Prep:

1. Print off one owl mask per student on copier paper.
2. Depending on the age of the students, you may want to cut out the eyes and punch the holes on the sides of the mask ahead of time.
3. Cut toilet paper rolls in half.

### Lesson:

Owls are nocturnal animals and have super senses that help them see in the dark. They have very good sight because they have large, forward facing eyes that make it easy to locate and hunt their prey. However, they do not have good peripheral vision or side vision like people do. Have your students test their own peripheral vision. Ask them to stand or sit still and look straight ahead. Can they still see some the desks or students to their right and left *without* moving their eyes?

Next, have the kids move their eyes left, right, up and down *without* moving their heads or bodies. Owls cannot move their eyes in the socket like this. In order to see side to side, owls have to move their heads. An owl can turn its head 270 degrees! This is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a circle! Demonstrate how far this is or draw it for your students. How far can people move their heads? Have your students stand up and turn their head as far as they can to the right, *without* moving the rest of their body. Then have them turn their head as far as they can to the left. People can turn their heads about 180 degrees or half of a circle. Owls are able to turn their heads so far because they have extra bones in their neck.

## Owl Mask

Have the kids color an owl mask with crayons or colored pencils. Using rubber cement or tape, glue the toilet paper tubes to the eye holes on the mask (you may need to cut short slits along the bottom to make flaps that can be glued or taped on the side of the mask). Tie elastic through the holes on the side of the mask. Once they are dry, the students can put their "owl eyes" on.

Have your students sit or stand still and remind them they cannot move their heads. Then ask:

1. Can you see the student to your right?
2. Can you see the student to your left?
3. Can you see the desk or floor?
4. Can you see straight ahead?

Remind them this how an owl sees. They do not have peripheral vision, but can see what is in front of them. Owls have to move their heads in order to see from side to side.

# Owling 101 Post Activities

## Owl Pellet Dissection

### Materials:

Owl pellets from field trip, tweezers or pencils to pick fur off bones, bone chart, magnifying lenses, trays or paper plate to dissect on, pictures of rodents (deer mouse), shrew, mole and small birds,

### Prep:

1. Print copies of the bone charts. You will need at least one chart per group.

### Lesson:

Divide the class into smaller groups. Give each group a paper plate or tray, tweezers or pencils, a bone chart, magnifying lenses and half an owl pellet (or some of the pieces from the baggie that was given to you at the end of the field trip).

Ask the groups to continue the dissection they started on the field trip. Remind them to dissect on the plate/tray and to carefully tweeze hair off the bones. Once all the hair is off, they need to find the bone it matches on the chart. Magnifying lenses can be helpful as many of the bones are very tiny. Remind them to take their time.

Once they have finished dissecting, ask each group what the owl ate for dinner (rodent, shrew, mole or bird) and show the pictures of each prey animal.

### Extension for older students:

1. Have each group draw a food chain using the information they have from dissecting the pellet. Remind them to think about what the mouse (bird, shrew or mole) eats. Where does the energy come from? They can present their food chain to the rest of the class.

## Whooo Are You?

Have the students learn more about one of the owls on the list below and present to the rest of the class. Encourage them to get creative. Ideas include: making a mask for the owl they are studying (like they saw on the field trip), making a poster, acting out a play about the owl, etc.

They should report on the owl's field marks (special markings on it's body that help identify it), its common call, habitat (where it lives), what it eats and other interesting facts.

Wisconsin Owls (many of these were on the name tags the students used on the field trip)

Eastern Screech Owl

Barn Owl

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Short Eared Owl

Great Horned Owl

Long Eared Owl

Northern Hawk Owl

Snowy Owl

Great Gray Owl

Boreal Owl

Barred Owl