Title/Author: *National Geographic Kids Bird Guide of North America* by Jonathan Alderfer

Suggested Time to Spend: 4 Days (At least 20 minutes per day)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, RI.1.5, RI.1.6, RI.1.7, RI.1.10; W.1.2, W.1.8; SL.1.1, SL.1.5, SL.1.6, L.1.4

Next Generation Science Standards: LS1.A

LS1.A: All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water and air. Plants also have different parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) that help them survive and grow.

Lesson Objective:

Students will listen to an informational piece to complement the work of Owl Moon by Jane Yolen (see companion teachers’ guide/lesson). Students will use their skills (reading, writing, discussion, listening) with attention to text-features and vocabulary to learn scientific facts about owls.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students**. This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

* What are the unique features of the Great Horned Owl? One key takeaway is that The Great Horned Owl is the biggest owl in North America. He has horns that are actually feathers, excellent hearing, huge yellow eyes to catch its prey, and he only comes out at night.
* What can we learn from reading about the Great Horned Owl and how it survives? One key takeaway is that The Great Horned Owl has many features that help it survive in nature. These include the eyesight, excellent hearing, talons, the ability to fly quietly and sneak up on prey, and the fact that its head can swivel.

Synopsis

*National Geographic Kids Bird Guide of North America* was written by Jonathan Alderfer as a companion to the best-selling *Field Guide to the Birds of North America.* Pages 62-63 focus specifically on the Great Horned Owl and are the focus of this guide. The text includes pictures of birds, information concerning their habitats, and information about bird-watching.

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes this Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the sources of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Hint: You may want to copy the questions, vocabulary words, and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*
3. Consider pairing this series of lessons on *National Geographic Bird Guide* with a text set to increase student knowledge and familiarity with the topic. A custom text set can be found[here](https://achievethecore.org/page/2424/national-geographic-kids-bird-guide-of-north-america-with-companion-text-set)[.](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B66A6Ds77LpiU3dIZVFxMFFkLUk) *Note: This is particularly supportive of ELL students.*

*Note to teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs): Read Aloud Project Lessons are designed for children who cannot read yet for themselves. They are highly interactive and have many scaffolds built into the brief daily lessons to support reading comprehension. Because of this, they are filled with scaffolds that are appropriate for English Language Learners who, by definition, are developing language and learning to read (English). This read aloud text includes complex features which offer many opportunities for learning, but at the same time includes supports and structures to make the text accessible to even the youngest students.*

*This lesson includes features that align to best practices for supporting English Language Learners. Some of the supports you may see built into this, and /or other Read Aloud Project lessons, assist non-native speakers in the following ways:*

* *These lessons include embedded vocabulary scaffolds that help students acquire new vocabulary in the context of reading. They feature multi-modal ways of learning new words, including prompts for where to use visual representations, the inclusion of student-friendly definitions, built-in opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary through discussion or activities, and featured academic vocabulary for deeper study.*
* *These lessons also include embedded scaffolds to help students make meaning of the text itself. It calls out opportunities for paired or small group discussion, includes recommendations for ways in which visuals, videos, and/or graphic organizers could aid in understanding, provides a mix of questions (both factual and inferential) to guide students gradually toward deeper understanding, and offers recommendations for supplementary texts to build background knowledge supporting the content in the anchor text.*
* *These lessons feature embedded supports to aid students in developing their overall language and communication skills by featuring scaffolds such as sentence frames for discussion and written work (more guidance available* [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion)*) as well as writing opportunities (and the inclusion of graphic organizers to scaffold the writing process). These supports help students develop and use newly acquired vocabulary and text-based content knowledge.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| **FIRST READING:**  Pull the students together or use a document camera so that all can enjoy the illustrations, captions, headings, and other text features. Read aloud the entire two pages with minimal interruption.  Since this text was written by Jonathan Alderfer as a companion to the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds* *of North America* this source is reliable and full of many vocabulary words that may be new to students. As you read, stop at any of the following words and quickly define (fast-map) the word for students. | The goal here is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole. This will give them some context and sense of completion before they dive into examining the parts of the book more carefully.  **Note to teacher:** The term “fast-map” is a strategy used when one or a very few experiences with a new word can suffice for a child to enter it into his mental (list of words) and to represent some of its syntactic and semantic features. To “fast-map” a word in instruction would be to quickly provide a brief initial introduction to a word’s meaning. The term was originally coined by Susan Carey. |
| * **Silhouette** – the outline or general shape of something. * **Dusk/dawn** – when the sun first goes down at night/when the sun first comes up in the morning. * **Swallow** – to take into the stomach by drawing down through the throat. * **Rural** – in the country. * **Talons** – sharp claws on a bird of prey. * **Mammals** – animals that give birth to their young and nurse them with milk. * **Prey** – an animal hunted or captured to be eaten. * **Swiveled** – to turn around. * **Pellets** – a small rounded ball of food. * **Plumage** – the feathers covering a bird. | Because this is a companion lesson to *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen, you should introduce the text by letting students know that this text gives us more information on the Great Horned Owl, the owl that the girl and her Pa went into the forest at night to call. Alternatively, A teacher might also choose to read this book to  provide background information on owls before reading *Owl Moon.* |
| Activity No. 1:  Show students pictures of the Great Horned Owl and listen to the call of the Great Horned Owl at the Web sites listed. | You may want to share photos/video of winter scenes with students from the following links:    **Photo Gallery of Great Horned Owl** (the owl in *Owl Moon*)  <http://owling.com/Great_Horned.htm>  This first link is to show students the photos and, although it the same website, the second link goes directly to the audio.  **Audio recordings of Great Horned Owl**  [http://owling.com/Great\_Horned.htm#recordings](http://owling.com/Great_Horned.htm" \l "recordings) |

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| **SECOND READING:**  During this reading of the book (continuing to use the document camera if each child does not have a copy of the text), you will read specific paragraphs and draw students’ attention to the features of the text as follows: |  |
| Page 62  Look at the photo of the Great Horned Owl. How does the photo support what we learned about in the text?  Draw attention to the wording “like a round, wide barrel.” Explain how this language helps them visualize what the owl looks like. Draw students’ attention to the fact that figurative language can be used by authors in both fiction and nonfiction writing.  Tell students similes add to the voice of the writer. During the school day, have students practice using similes in their conversations. Model this by saying, “Line up as quietly as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” “Let’s walk to the library in a line as straight as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Have students practice similes by adding their own answers to the above examples. | In the text we learned that the owl’s silhouette looks like a barrel. The shape of his body does look like a round, wide barrel.  In the text, we also learned that the owl has soft feathers that  stick up on his head. We can see these in the picture, but the  text says they are soft feathers, not actually horns.  Since using similes adds to the voice of the writer, it is an important concept for students to learn. Perhaps here students can practice using similes throughout the next few days. “Line up as quietly as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “ (students supply different answers). Now we are going to walk to the library in a line as straight as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” |
| The last sentence of this page says that, “…not much escapes the clutches of its very sharp talons.” How does the photograph help us understand what makes the owl an effective hunter? | The picture of the Great Horned Owl shows the sharp claws,  or talons, that he is using to hold onto the branch. There is a picture of a Great Horned Owl in flight in the top  picture (page 63). This shows us how the owl would fly  down and grab the prey with his talons. |
| Have students note the side comment. Explain that this is a text feature. Tell students that this text feature tells the scientific name of the owl, the length, and its wingspan. You could also have string prepared string prepared and cut at these lengths to show students the size of the owl and its wingspan. |  |
| Page 63  The author uses several different types of text features on this page. First, the author used photos or pictures. What photos or pictures do you see and how do they help us learn more about the Great Horned Owl? | Pictures let us visualize what the author is saying. The first picture shows the Great Horned Owl in flight. This shows us how the owl would fly down and grab the prey with his talons. It shows how wide his wings can go and how strong his talons must be so he can catch his prey. He’s not a little bird. The second picture, also of the Great Horned Owl, shows us what the plumage or the feathers look like. Also, in this picture, we can see the “horns” or the soft feathers on the top of the owl’s head. The last illustration shows us what a pellet looks like that an owl regurgitates. They look like little rocks and if you look close you can see that there are parts of the remains of the animals that were swallowed whole. |
| Notice on this page some of the words, like “voice” and “food” are bigger and underlined. These are called headings and they tell us what the next piece of the text is about. What other headings can you see on this page? | Habitat and Range  A Closer Look  Down the Hatch and Up Again! |
| What kind of information might we expect to find under each heading? | Under each heading we should find more information linked to the title. For example, under the heading “Habitat and Range,” we might learn about where Great Horned Owls live, their habitat. |
| Sometimes authors use a caption to tell us what a picture is about. Do you see any of the pictures on this page that have a caption?  How do captions help us understand the information? | Yes. The first picture of the owl flying shows how wide his wings can go and how strong his talons must be so he can catch his prey. He’s not a little bird. Notice the caption says “Great Horned Owls weigh about three to four pounds but can catch prey up to about ten pounds-the weight of a house cat!”  Captions help us by giving more elaboration and facts about the topic. |
| On this page the author also used a text feature called a map and the map has a key or something that helps us understand the map. Where is the map on this page, and what does the key “year round” tell us about the Great Horned Owl? | This map shows us that the owl doesn’t move around. Some birds change where they live in the winter or summer, but owls stay in the same place all the time. |
| The author has used one more text feature(s) to help us learn more about the Great Horned Owl. A diagram is a drawing or picture that has lines that point to certain parts of the picture and words that explain what we are seeing. Do you see a diagram on this page? | There is a picture of the Great Horned Owl and lines that show us his horns, eyes, feathers, plumage, and talons. If we read the words at the end of the line and then look at the picture we can learn more about the parts of the Great Horned Owl. |
| What type of information does the diagram provide? | The diagram helps us see the parts of the Great Horned Owl.  More specifically, you see additional information on the owl’s horns, plumage, eyes, feathers, and talons. There is a picture of the Great Horned Owl and lines that show us his horns, eyes, feathers, plumage, and talons. If we read the words at the end of the line and then look at the picture we can learn more about the parts of the Great Horned Owl. |
| Activity 2  Have students use other informational books that are available in your classroom, or other pages of this book, such as pages 21, 23, 25, 27, 49, 53, 55, 57, etc. to find the text features and point them out to others. Students may work in small groups to identify text features in the text. Students could use sticky notes to mark what they have found to show other students.  Why are text features important for us as readers? | Text features give us much information about the message the author is trying to convey and they help us read informational text. As we get older, we read more and more informational text and the text features help us with understanding. |
| **THIRD READING:**  We’re going to read this piece of text on the Great Horned Owl one more time to see if we can highlight times in the text when the author teaches us about what helps the Great Horned Owl survive. When you hear me read something about the Great Horned Owl that makes him better able to live in the world, give me a “thumbs-up” and we will chart it together.  Use the t-chart as follows to help students find evidence in the text about their topic. See activity 3 sheet attached. (see next page)   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Great Horned Owl** | | | What we learned about the Great Horned Owl | How that helps him survive | |  |  | | See next page for example.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Great Horned Owl** | | | What we learned about the Great Horned Owl | How that helps him survive | | It can fly on silent wings. | This would help him sneak up on his prey. They can’t hear the owl, so they don’t hide or run away. | | It has huge eyes. | It can see its prey, even in the dark. So they can hunt at night. | | It has 3-D hearing. | The Great Horned Owl can hear small animals from far away. | | It has talons. | The Great Horned Owl’s sharp talons help it grab the food. When it flies, it doesn’t drop the food. | | The Great Horned Owl is camouflaged. | This helps it hide from predators. When it is camouflaged, predators cannot see it and don’t attack it. | |
| Page 62  The author says “like a spy plane, the Great Horned Owl flies on silent wings.” How does this help him survive?  How did the author use another simile?  The author tells us, “It has huge eyes that can see in the dark, and its head is like a radar dish that can swivel 270 degrees.” In your own words, what does this mean?  The author tells us, “The owl has 3-D hearing and can locate prey hiding under leaves or snow…” How would this help the Great Horned Owl?  What does the author mean when he writes, “…not much escapes the clutches of its very sharp talons”?  Page 63  “The owl has a very big mouth. Smaller prey get swallowed whole.” In your own words, what does this tell us?  The author showed us a Range Key Map. How would this information help us understand how the owl survives?  Why is it hard for other animals to find and catch the Great Horned Owl? | The author is comparing the Great Horned Owl to a spy plane, meaning it flies quietly. Because the Great Horned Owl can fly silently, he can sneak up on his prey.  The author wrote, “…like a spy plane.”  That means that the owl can see even at night and it can see behind itself too. So he can find animals to eat.  So it would be hard for small animals to hide from the Great Horned Owl. He would still be able to find them and eat them and stay alive.  Once the owl gets an animal in his talons, the animal can’t get away because he can use his claws or talons to hold on tight.  The owl can digest the animals even if he doesn’t chew them up. He can just eat them really fast before they run away.  The Great Horned Owl doesn’t have to fly south for the winter. He can just stay put and not be in danger. They must be able to live in hot and cold because they have warm feathers.  “Brown plumage with bars and speckles is good camouflage.” |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK - Culminating Task

What did we learn about the Great Horned Owl and about how it survives in nature? Write a paragraph or more about the Great Horned Owl and draw a picture. Use at least two text features in your illustration and show what you learned about the Great Horned Owl and how it survives in nature. See attached Culminating Activity sheet.

**Possible answers include:**

Students should be able to draw a picture of the Great Horned Owl and tell us how the owl survives in nature. More specifically, students should show in their illustration the features of the Great Horned Owl, the ears, eyes, talons, plumage, etc. (features unique to the Great Horned Owl). Students should use one or two text features to demonstrate facts about the Great Horned Owl. Students answers should include some of the following:

The Great Horned Owl has excellent eyesight to help him catch a mouse for his dinner. The Great Horned Owl has strong talons so he can swoop down and pick up a small animal to eat. The feathers or plumage of the Great Horned Owl help him to hide in the forest.

Vocabulary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/  processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students ) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part  of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with) |
| p. 62 - Silhouette – the outline or general shape of something.  p. 63 - Rural – in the country.  p. 62 - Talons – sharp claws on a bird of prey.  p. 62 – Swivel – to turn around.  p. 63 – Habitat – where an animal lives  p. 63 – Range – how far an animal travels from its habitat  p. 63 - Regurgitates – To vomit or throw back up in the mouth.  p. 63 - Pellets – a small rounded ball of food.  p. 63 - Plumage – the feathers covering a bird. | p. 62 – Clutches – to seize or grasp with hands or claws.  p. 63 - Mammals – animals that give birth to their young and nurse  them with milk.  p. 63 - Prey – an animal hunted or captures to be eaten.  p. 62 - Dusk/dawn – when the sun first goes down at night/when  the sun first comes up in the morning.  p. 63 - Swallow – to take into the stomach by drawing down  through the throat. |

Extension learning activities for this book and other useful resources

* This page, part of the National Geographic website, has pictures of winter scenes. This website can be used to show students what it might feel like to be in the forest on a cold, winter day:

<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/photos/avalanche-winter-general/#/environment-winter13-fly-fishing-colorado_27804_600x450.jpg>  
*Note: This is particularly supportive of English Language Learners.*

* Students could have an opportunity during Science time to take a closer look at owl pellets. Sample site where these can be ordered at: <http://pellet.com/product.aspx?id=13&gclid=CNqinJuBjrwCFQtqfgod9CgAnQ>

Note to Teacher

* Students should be challenged to talk through the ideas for their informational writing with a partner before they begin to write, thus continually developing speaking and listening skills.
* If you are lucky enough to have a museum or actuary close to you, students could participate in a field trip and learn more about many different types of birds.

Directions:

We will read this piece of text on the Great Horned Owl one more time to see if we can highlight times in the text when the author teaches us about what helps the Great Horned Owl survive. When you hear me read something about the Great Horned Owl that makes him better able to live in the world, give me a “thumbs-up” and we will chart it together. Use the t-chart as follows to help students find evidence in the text about their topic. This may be completed whole group or students can work with you on their own copy.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Great Horned Owls | | |
| What we learned about the Great Horned Owl | How that helps him survive |
|  |  | |

Culminating Activity

What did we learn about the Great Horned Owl? Write a paragraph or more about the Great Horned Owl and draw a picture. Use at least two text features in your illustration and show what you learned about the Great Horned Owl.

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**What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

\_850\_\_

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

The purpose is straight forward – to provide facts and details about the Great Horned Owl.

Example: “The Great Horned Owl is the biggest, baddest owl in North America.”

The text is informational and includes many text features including pictures, captions, headings, and a map, which is challenging for students.

Example:

Caption: “GREAT HORNED OWLS weigh about three to four pounds but can *catch prey* up to about ten pounds – the weight of a house cat!”

Vocabulary includes many challenges.

Tier II examples: silhouette, dusk/dawn, calling, swallow, rural, swivel, regurgitates,

Tier III examples: talons, prey, mammals, pellets, plumage

Students may not have any experience in seeing owls or reading about how they live in nature. Students may not have any schema on the food chain and the differences in urban and rural habitats and the balance of nature.

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

\*For more information on the qualitative dimensions of text complexity, visit <http://www.achievethecore.org/content/upload/Companion_to_Qualitative_Scale_Features_Explained.pdf>

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

*What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?*

Students will be challenged by the reading of informational text, the features of the text, the facts and details that they will encounter during the read aloud. In addition, much new vocabulary and science is introduced.

*How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?*

Knowledge about birds, nature, and the food chain helps children understand our responsibility and place in the world. The more they learn about science and the interconnectedness of animals and humans, the more they develop social responsibility.

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Knowledge about birds, nature, and the food chain helps children understand our responsibility and place in the world. The more they learn about science and the interconnectedness of animals and humans, the more they develop social responsibility.

1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in?

This book could be used a read aloud in first through third grade, but is partnered with Owl Moon and recommended for first-grade students.

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