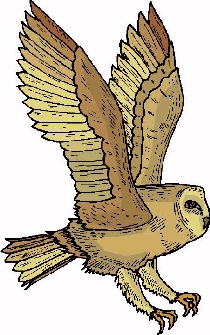
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| **Owls** |  | http://www.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/edhelp1.gif |

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**Directions:**  Fill in each blank with the word that best completes the reading comprehension.  
  
     As night falls, this bird slowly emerges from its daytime sleep. It rests on a tree branch in the dark and uses its acute hearing to pick up sounds made by prey. It *(1)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   turns its head three-quarters of the way around to look for its next meal. Once a victim is *(2)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  , it launches a surprise *(3)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   by approaching the prey in silence. This skillful hunter is an owl!  
     There are over 200 different types of owls. They can be found in all places except for the *(4)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   of Antarctica. Most owls are active at night. However, there are a few species of them - such as snowy owls living in the Arctic - that hunt in broad daylight. Owls usually live alone or in pairs. *(5)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   the mating season, *(6)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  , owls may gather in groups. A group of owls is called a parliament. Owls are the *(7)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   "birds of prey" because they eat living animals like lizards, birds, fish, or insects. Birds of prey share several common features that make them great predators - they have hooked beaks, sharp claws, and keen eyesight. Eagles, hawks, and falcons are other *(8)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   of birds of prey.  
     Owls have large, round heads with big, forward-facing eyes. Like our eyes, theirs can see objects in three dimensions (height, width, and depth), and can *(9)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   distance. Unlike our eyes, theirs cannot roll or move in their sockets. To make up for this *(10)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  , owls have 14 vertebrae (bones) in their necks allowing them to turn their heads 270 degrees and almost upside-down!  
     Owls rely as heavily on their hearing as on their eyesight to catch prey in a pitch-dark *(11)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  . Covered by feathers, the ears of owls are behind their eyes. Eagle owls, together with several other species of owls, have ear tufts on their heads. These ear tufts are actually just feathers sticking out from both sides of their heads, and they have nothing to do with hearing! Interestingly, many owls have asymmetrical ear openings - one ear is slightly higher than the other. This special feature enables them to tell if a sound comes from left or right, from up or down. For *(12)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  , barn owls' left ears are higher than their right ones. If a sound is from the left side of a barn owl, its left ear hears the sound before its right ear. Similarly, if a sound is from below, it reaches a barn owl's right ear first, because the right ear is slightly *(13)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   than the left one. As a barn owl turns its head around, its brain processes all the *(14)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   and creates a "*(15)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   image" of the space to *(16)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   the sound *(17)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  .  
     Once owls pinpoint the location of their prey, they fly straight toward it. Even if their prey moves around, owls are able to change their directions in mid-air. When owls fly, they do so in silence. The feathers near the tips of their wings have comb-like fringes. These fringes effectively muffle the sound of the air rushing over the wing surface so owls can fly quietly. As owls come closer to their victim, they bring their feet forward and spread their claws wide - this is their ready-to-strike posture!  
     Owls swallow their prey whole because they, like other birds, cannot chew. To get rid of the indigestible parts of their prey (furs, teeth, bones, or feathers), owls first compress these indigestible parts into small balls, called pellets. Pellets may stay inside owls' bodies for up to 10 hours before being regurgitated (thrown up). Because pellets take space, owls cannot hunt and swallow new prey unless they regurgitate the stored pellets from their stomachs first. Therefore, regurgitation often means that owls are ready to eat again!

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1. | What is a group of owls called? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  A parliament http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  A bunch http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  A school http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  A flock | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 2. | Which of the following statements about owls is true? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Owls use their asymmetrical ear tufts to determine the location of sound source. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Owls can see objects in three dimensions but cannot judge distance. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  A barn owl's right ear hears the sound first if it comes from the right side. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Owls have seven vertebrae (bones) in their necks. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 3. | Which of the following statements about owls is true? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Owls can be found in all parts of the world. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Owls have forward-facing eyes. Their eyes do not move in their sockets. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Owls rely on their noses to detect the smell of their prey. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  If their prey moves around, owls must stop and figure out again where the prey is. | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 4. | Owls and eagles have several things in common **EXCEPT** for which one below? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Both owls and eagles are birds of prey. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Both owls and eagles hunt during the day. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Both owls and eagles have sharp claws. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Both owls and eagles have hooked beaks. | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 5. | Ear tufts are feathers. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  False http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  True | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 6. | Other than acute hearing and keen eyesight, what is the third factor that makes owls great predators? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Their ability to fly in silence http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Their ability to chew food http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Their ability to digest animals' bones and feathers http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Their ability to regurgitate pellets from their stomachs | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 7. | A pellet is a compressed ball of indigestible parts of owls' victims. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  False http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  True | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 8. | Why do owls throw up? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Owls throw up if they are sick. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Owls throw up if they have stomachaches. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Owls throw up to make rooms in their stomachs for the new prey. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Owls throw up if they do not like the taste of their prey. | |