Owls In The Family

By

Farley Mowat

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
# Owls in the Family

*By Farley Mowat*

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions and Expectations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis / Author Biography</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Checklist</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproducible Student Booklet</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer Key</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**About the author:** Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites [www.reedpublications.org](http://www.reedpublications.org) and [www.novelstudies.org](http://www.novelstudies.org).

---

Copyright © 2015 Nat Reed
All rights reserved by author.
Permission to copy for single classroom use only.
Electronic distribution limited to single classroom use only.
Not for public display.
Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *Owls in the Family* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

**Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)**

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
c) compare and contrast two characters;
d) determine how characters... respond to challenges;
e) drawing inferences from the text;
f) determining a theme of a story... and many others.

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A *portfolio cover* is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A *Student Checklist* is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include owls, keeping wild animals as pets, wildlife of North American prairies, family and friendship, bullying, loyalty, personal growth.
Owls in the Family
By Farley Mowat

List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating alliteration
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify personification.
7. Identify anagrams
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create similes
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a time line of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify cliffhangers
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip
Owls in the Family
By Farley Mowat

Synopsis

Every child needs a pet – no one could argue with that. But what happens when your pet is an owl, and your owl is terrorizing the neighborhood? In Farley Mowat's exciting children's story, a young boy's pet menagerie grows out of control with the addition of two troublesome pet owls. The story of how Wol and Weeps turn the whole town upside down is warm, funny, and bursting with adventure and suspense. [The Publisher]


Author Biography
Farley Mowat

Farley Mowat was born in Belleville, Ontario, in 1921. He served in the Second World War from 1940 to 1945, and began writing for a living in 1949 after spending two years in the Arctic. He was the bestselling author of forty-two books, which have been published in translation in more than twenty languages in more than sixty countries. He died in May 2014. [The Publisher]
Owls in the Family
By Farley Mowat

Student Checklist

Student Name: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Owls in the Family

By Farley Mowat

Name: ____________________________
Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Owls in the Family* is Billy, a young boy from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who has a keen interest in wild animals. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>burrows</th>
<th>haversack</th>
<th>bluffs</th>
<th>snuffling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sardines</td>
<td>sloughs</td>
<td>pellet</td>
<td>doomed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. On the prairies they call lakes and ponds ____________.
2. An owl will spit out a ball of hair and bones, which is called an owl ____________.
3. Bruce lost his brother's ____________ somewhere out on the prairie.
4. A wood gopher came ____________ along through the cottonwood snow.
5. My mother put a can of ____________ in with my lunch.
6. The ____________ rose high above our heads and seemed to blot out the setting sun.
7. Joanne was ____________ to live in her older sister's shadow.
8. The gophers lived in shallow ____________.
Questions

1. What is the **setting** of the story for much of the first chapter?

2. Why were the boys looking for an owl's nest?

3. **Investigate:** Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is an important city in central Canada. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate Saskatoon, and record three interesting facts about the city.
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

4. Describe Bruce's misadventure with the crows' eggs.

5. Crows and owls generally hate each other. **True** or **False**

6. How did the boys know that they had found an owl's nest? (Please give two reasons.)

7. Why didn't the boys climb the tree to see if there were any owlets in the nest?
A. Anagrams

An anagram is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word WAS can also form the word SAW. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of Owls in the Family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sweat</td>
<td>___ not, want not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snow</td>
<td>Possesses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lost</td>
<td>A small entrance for a coin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desert</td>
<td>Relaxed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nest</td>
<td>A monetary unit of Estonia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crash</td>
<td>Sears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoot</td>
<td>Sounds an owl might make.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good to Know ~ The Great Horned Owl

Also known as the tiger owl or tiger of the air, the great horned owl is native to the Americas. Its primary diet seems to be rabbits, rats, mice and voles, various birds, reptiles and amphibians. It is one of the earliest nesting birds in North America, often laying its eggs weeks or even months before many other birds. Its closest American cousin is the snowy owl.
B. Even Shakespeare liked to write Quatrain Poems.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following famous quatrain was written by the great writer, William Shakespeare, and is taken from *Sonnet 18*.

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*
*Thou art more lovely and more temperate:*
*Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,*
*And summer's lease hath all too short a date.*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – A – B**  Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first chapter of our novel.

**The Quatrain Poem**

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

**Title:** ________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line 1</th>
<th>Line 2</th>
<th>Line 3</th>
<th>Line 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Many authors enjoy using alliteration – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here’s one such example: from Chapter One: … like warm sun shining on soft mud.

Using your imagination, create your own examples of alliteration from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A rooster's crow.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A loud sneeze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. A simile is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: … and there you were – free as the gophers.

~ What is being compared in this example?

Invent your own similes comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) the Incredible Hulk

b) the sound of a cricket

c) your choice
Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1

2

3

4

5

6