

# Owls in the Family

Grades 4-6

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Illustrated by Ric Ward

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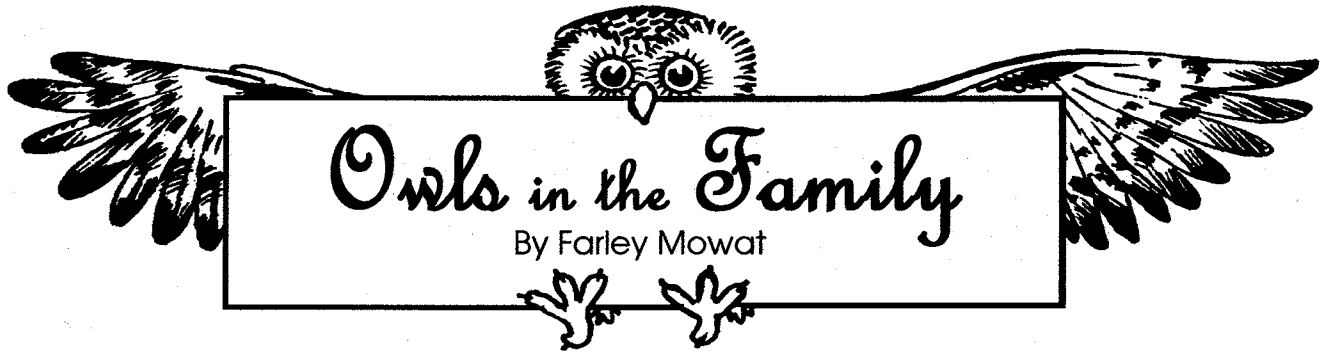
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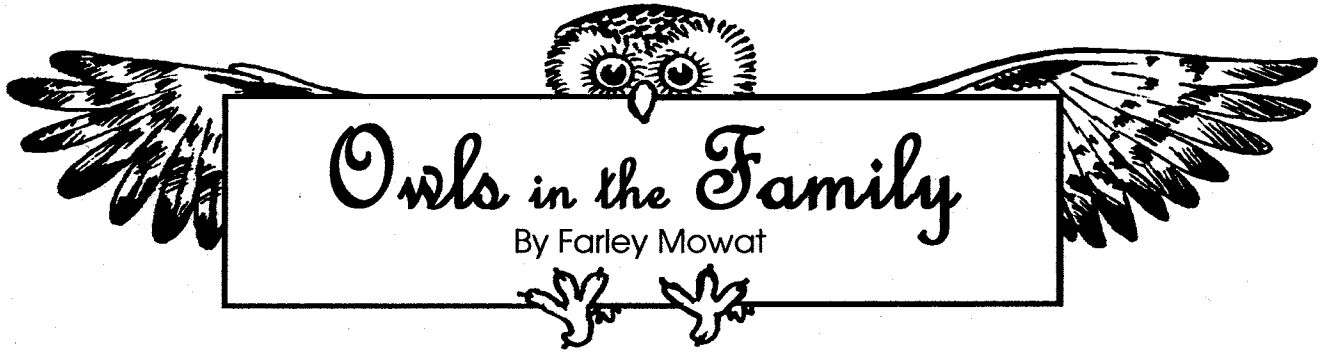
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## Expectations

1. The students will read and study the writings of a famous Canadian author.
2. The students will develop an appreciation of humor used in his writings.
3. The students will strengthen their reading comprehension skills and writing skills.

## Story Summary

### Owls in the Family

To a family that already has its pets - gophers, rabbits, pigeons, rats, garter snakes and a dog - come two owls. This is a humorous and affectionate story of Wol and Weeps - two owls that turn a household upside down by their mere presence. They terrorize the neighborhood and outwit Mutt, the dog who is part of the family. Readers soon find out how Wol and Weeps came to be house pets in the first place and their encounters that take place with the minister, the postman, a skunk, prairie chicks, family and friends.

## Author Biography

### Farley Mowat

Farley Mowat was born at Belleville, Ontario in 1921. He grew up in Saskatoon where he began his writing career at thirteen with a newspaper column on birds. He graduated from the University of Toronto in 1949. Farley Mowat has traveled throughout Canada and to many remote places around the world. He writes about nature, native life and Canada's north. Many of his books have been translated into French and Spanish. He writes for adults as well as children and gained fame with his first book "People of the Deer" in 1952. Excitement, adventure, suspense and humor are the trademarks of his writing. Among his most popular humorous stories are "Owls in the Family" (1961) and "The Dog Who Wouldn't Be" (1957). Farley Mowat received the "Vicky Metcalf Award" in 1970 for his children's books. Three of them are adventure stories. They are "Lost in the Barrens" (1956) which won the Governor General's Award, its sequel "The Curse of the Viking Grave" (1966) and "The Black Joke" (1962). Farley Mowat is a natural storyteller and a brilliant stylist and has earned a world-wide reputation as a writer.



# Owls in the Family

By Farley Mowat

## List of Vocabulary

### Chapter One

Haversack, shinny, scuttled, thistle, cowing, doomed, slough, bluff, owl

### Chapter Two

summerhouse, snares, whisk, twine, shudder, swooshing, stub, hatchet, blind, peeve

### Chapter Three

pelting, fury, chinook, clutch (of eggs), down (of bird), loping, orphan

### Chapter Four

fascinated, plopped, persuaded, scrunch, whack, hunched, sidled, waddled, mottled, squawk, scuffle

### Chapter Five

eventually, swipe, penned, terror, mauling, ruckus

### Chapter Six

sponsor, convincing, exhibition, snared, critter, whimpered, rumped, clack, smeared, Zulu warrior, bronco, bucking, yowling, pedigree, stampeded, merchandising, skittering, bur, britches, cutback

### Chapter Seven

scuttling, pestered, ornery

### Chapter Eight

headquarters, hobos, smokestack, crate, backwater, zooming, tormented, slithery, waddled, skylarking, deliberately, anxiously, roughnecks, collapse, resign

### Chapter Nine

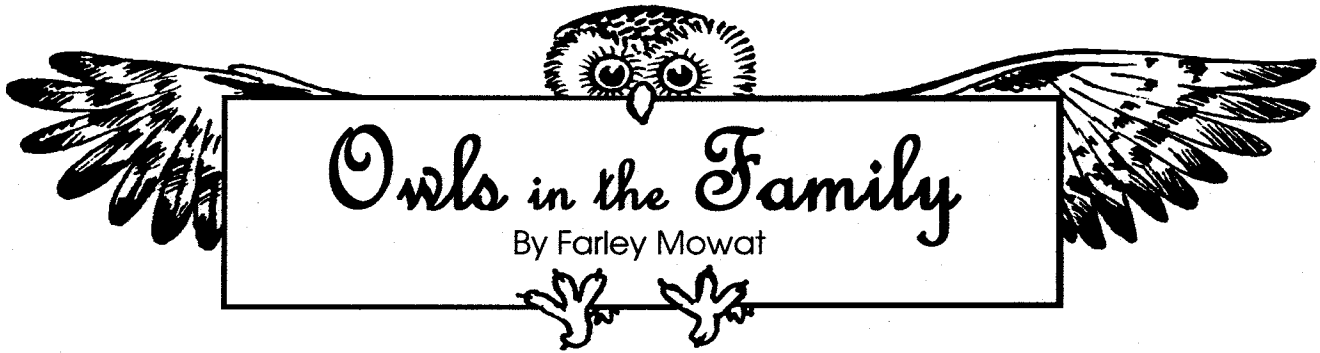
occasion, minister, expedition, clomped, furious, plumped, ructious, pastime, particularly

### Chapter Ten

slough, bitterns, coots, grebes, mallard, pintails, shovelers, caravan, schooner, convertible, rumble-seat, goggles, mummies, scuttled, abandoned, crow-call, cautious, ammunition, reed

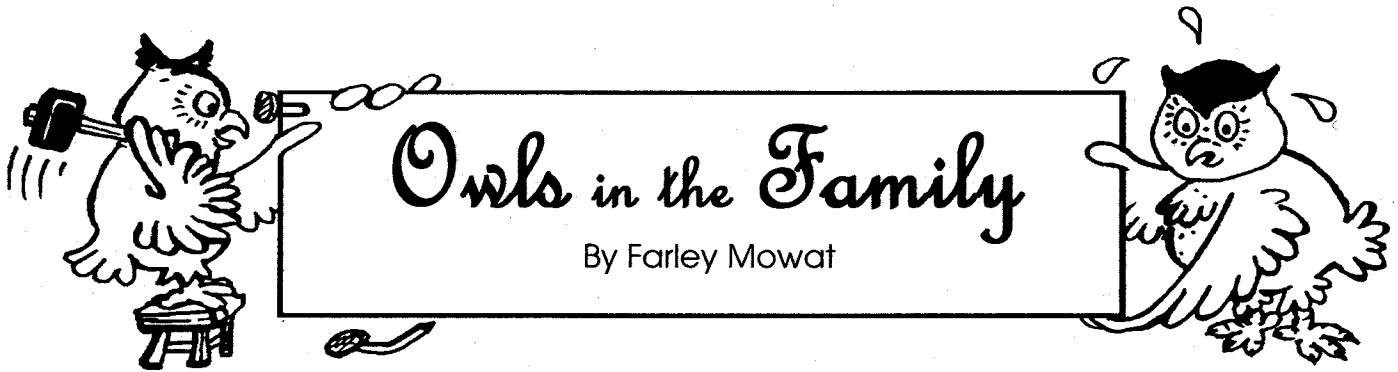
### Chapter Eleven

cayuse, suspect, suspicious



### Teacher Input Suggestions

1. The novel study for "Owls in the Family" was designed to be used in conjunction with the unit called "Owls" (SSB1-67) that is also published by S&S Learning Materials. This unit can be used as part of your reading program or independently as a Science unit.
2. Set up a learning center with pictures, posters, books, magazines and other reference materials that pertain to owls.
3. Films, filmstrips and videos may be shown on owls to study the different types, their characteristics, habits, homes and their food.
4. Make a chart comparing the "Great Horned Owl" with various other types of owls such as the burrowing owl, snowy owl, elf owl, etc.
5. Distribute the novels to your students. Allow them time to examine the cover and have them make predictions about the story. Record their predictions on a chart or on the chalkboard.
6. Display other books written by Farley Mowat. Encourage your students to read them as well. Perhaps the Teacher-Librarian could display the books in the Resource Centre and discuss the author and his writings.
7. The Author Biography information could be used to better acquaint the students with Farley Mowat.
8. Plan a trip to a local Science Museum which offers a program where students are actively involved in learning about birds (particularly owls) and their environment.
9. Have the students collect owls from home such as stained glass owls, wooden carvings, stuffed toy owls, figurines, etc. and display them in the classroom.
10. Have the students create a model of Wolf and Weeps using paper maché, clay, playdough or a material of their choice.
11. Perhaps a curator from a local museum could visit the classroom to discuss owls with your students.
12. Create a bulletin board display on pictures and articles about owls.
13. Plan a visit to a local zoo or wildlife park. Call ahead to make sure that they have a number of owls to view and a guide to tell the students about the various owls and to answer students' questions.
14. As a culmination to the novel study show your students a movie version of one of Farley Mowat's other books such as "Never Cry Wolf". Have them compare the two stories for similarities and differences in the setting, the characters and the plot etc.



## Chapter One

### Part One

1. The story takes place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Write a paragraph describing the setting. Mark Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on the map of Canada.

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2. What is a prairie? What are the prairie provinces? List their names and then neatly print them on the map of Canada.

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