



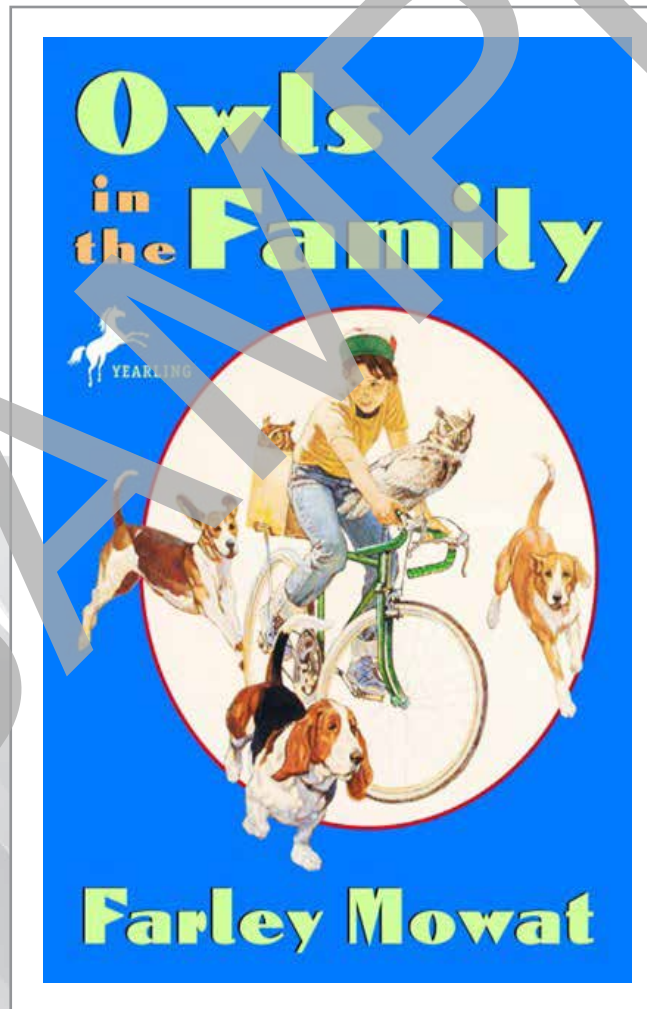
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Owls in the Family

Farley Mowat



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Owls in the Family

Farley Mowat

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, evaluating,
analyzing details

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot,
figurative language

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,
analogies

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect, inference,
comparison/contrast

Writing

Directions, narrative,
descriptive, letter

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion,
drama, role play

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- Initiating Activities:**
1. If possible, view and discuss a film or filmstrip on the Canadian prairie. Consider what the environment is like, and what it would be like to live there.
 2. Setting the purpose: Ask—Based on the title and cover illustration, what do you predict the story will be about? Where will it take place? How old do you think the boy in the picture is? What can you tell about him? What can you tell about the animals?

Read *Owls in the Family* to find out about some of the trouble the owls cause.

Chapter 1-2
pp. 1-18

Vocabulary:

bluffs 2	haversack 2	shinny 2
poplar 4	slough 8	snare 10
shuddered 12	accordion 15	blind 15

Vocabulary Activity: Locate or draw pictures of the following: bluffs, haversack, poplar, accordion, snare, blind (for nature observers or hunters).

Discussion Questions:

1. Why were Bruce and the narrator in a hurry to get into the prairie? (*They were looking for owls.*)
2. Why did Bruce put the crows' eggs in his mouth? (*So he could carry them down out of the tree.*) What do you think he would have done with them if he hadn't broken them?
3. List some of the animals the boys saw on the prairie that spring day. (*jack rabbit, crows, gophers, mallard ducks*)
4. Why did the boys think that there would be an owl near the crows? (*Crows hate owls; the boys thought the crows might be cawing at an owl.*)
5. Have you ever seen an owl pellet? What is it? (*The remains of whatever the owl has eaten, which he spits out in a ball.*)

-
6. Why did the boys go to get Mr. Miller instead of climbing the tree to look for baby owls themselves? (*Owls can be pretty fierce.*)
 7. Why didn't Dad want the narrator to bring home owls? Why did he change his mind? (*The boy already had many other animals—gophers, rats, snakes, pigeons, and a dog; Dad realized that the owls might eat some of the rats and rabbits and gophers...*) Compare the narrator's father with yours using the T-chart form below.

Your Father	Narrator's Father

8. Why did Mr. Miller shudder when he said, "Saw the owl sitting on it" (p.12)? (*He was a teacher; he was horrified by Bruce's improper grammar.*)
9. How did Mr. Miller lose his hat? (*When he began climbing the tree, the owl swooped down and took the hat.*)
10. What problem was the blind supposed to solve? Why did Mr. Miller say that "Any blame fool who says owls can't count is a liar"? (*Mr. Miller thought that by building a tent in a nearby tree, he could hide until the owl thought everything was safe and take pictures; the owl must have been aware that only two people left the blind, because when the boys left, the owl came over and ripped the flap off the tent.*)

Prediction:

Will the boys capture the three young owls? Why not, or how?

Activity Sheet:

Literary Analysis:

Comparisons: The author makes many comparisons to help us imagine better what he is describing. Explain what two things are being compared in each of the comparisons below, and how they are alike.

p. 1—"...there you were—free as the gophers."

p.1— "...it looked as if the fields had yellow measles."

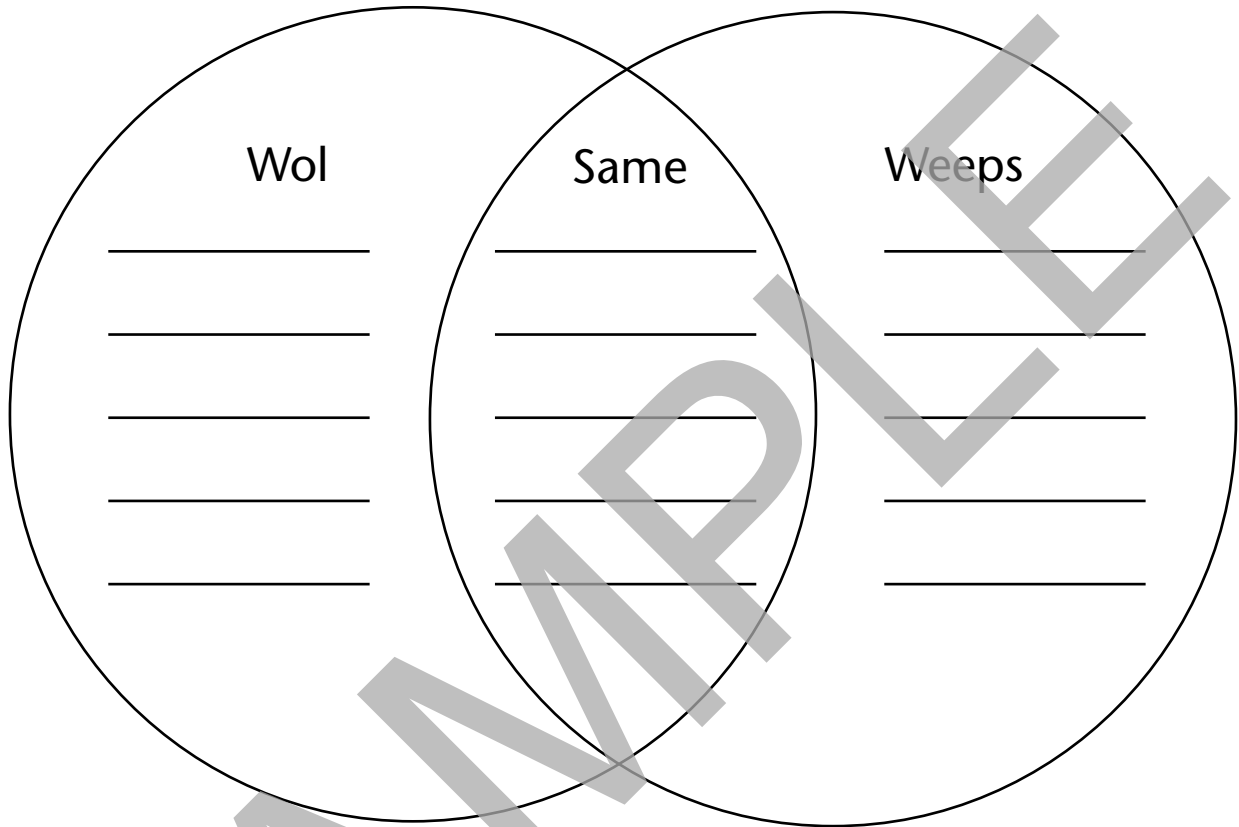
p. 5—"The sun was as bright as fireworks and the sky was so clear you could look right through it — like looking through a window."

p. 5—"It looked as if the bluff was on fire and filling the sky with black smoke—that's how many crows there were."

p.15— "His Adam's apple was going in and out like an accordion."

Discussion Questions:

1. How were Wol and Weeps similar? How were they different? Compare and contrast using the Venn-diagram form below.



(Weeps was much more timid, didn't fly, smaller, brown, a more picky eater; both liked each other's company, would eat a gopher, acted as bodyguards.)

2. How did Wol finally learn to fly? *(Stuck in a tree, hungry, he finally teetered off the branch and spread his wings.)*
3. Why was the narrator, Billy, bothered by Wol's trick of tearing holes in the chicken wire of his cage? Why did he stop worrying? *(He was afraid Wol would get loose and be caught by a cat or dog; Wol killed a cat and kept the dogs at a distance after mauling a German Shepherd.)*