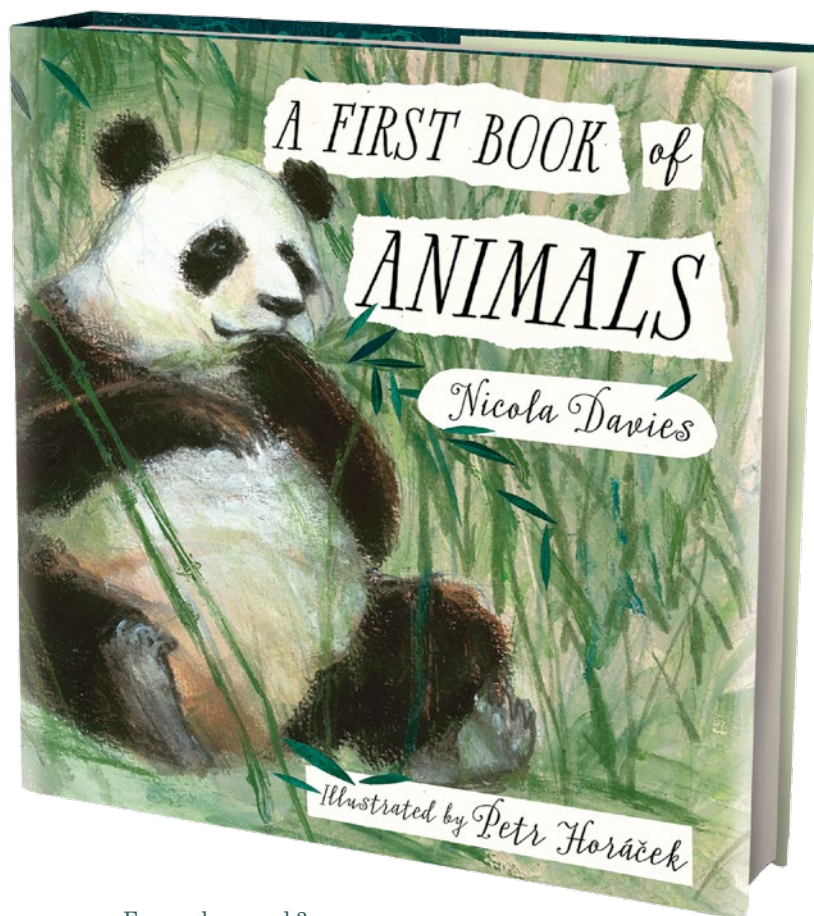


WALKER BOOKS

## TEACHERS' NOTES

# *A First Book of Animals*

By Nicola Davies and Petr Horáček



For readers aged 3+  
9781406359633 • Hardback • £14.99

The discussion points and activities are deliberately open-ended to encourage the development of pupil independence and problem-solving. Talking and writing partners are recommended for many of the tasks in order to build pupil confidence.

Please visit the websites of the author  
and illustrator:  
[www.nicola-davies.com](http://www.nicola-davies.com)  
[www.petrhoracek.co.uk](http://www.petrhoracek.co.uk)

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# Generic Activities

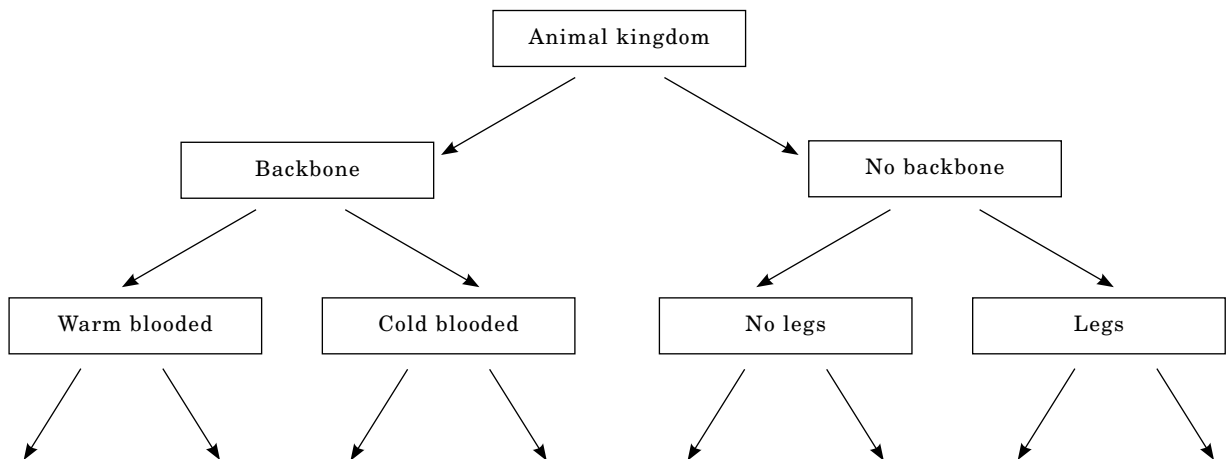
## SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM DISPLAY

**Global search:** world map and key to locate the animals' habitats, differentiating between continents and countries. Pupils can develop a key and indicate locations on the map as they read about and research each animal.

**Classification chart:** mammals/birds/reptiles/amphibians/fish/invertebrates (including insects, arachnids, gastropods, etc.)

Mammals	Birds	Reptiles	Amphibians	Fish	Invertebrates

### Animal sorting key



**Endangered animals chart:** critically endangered/endangered/vulnerable/lower risk (these categories can be simplified for younger pupils).

Critically endangered	Endangered	Vulnerable	Lower risk

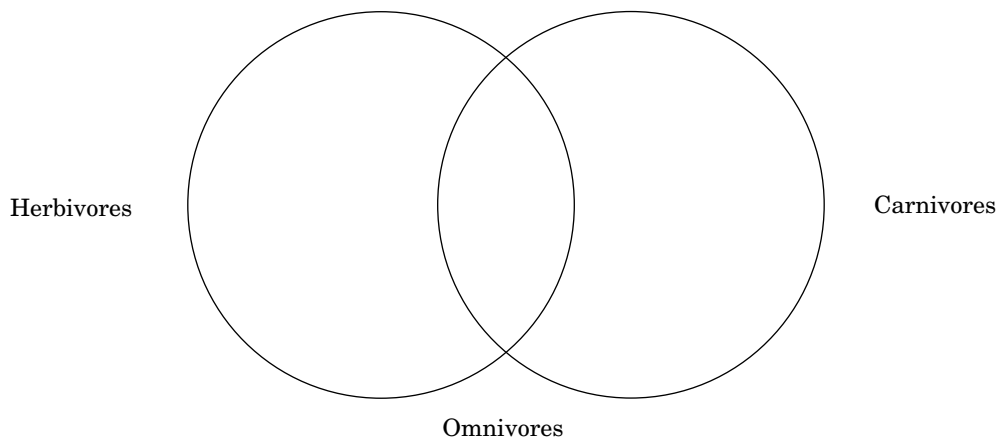
**Habitats display,** where pupils can place pictures or names of animals to be found there. The background can reflect the type of habitat.

The following can be simplified for younger children:

Ocean	Wetland	Desert	Polar	Rain forest	Forest	Woodland	Savannah/ grasslands

### Herbivores, carnivores and omnivores Venn diagram

Place pictures or names of animals in the correct area of the diagram (see next page).



**Class books** – for poetry, information reports, stories, plays, art – in a variety of formats: e.g. e-book, audio book, concertina book, portfolio, big book.

**Thought and speech bubbles** to attach to the illustrations, allowing the children to compose sentences for each of the creatures, developing recall and inference.

**Alphabestiary** – a compilation in poetry or prose for an A to Z of animals.

## INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

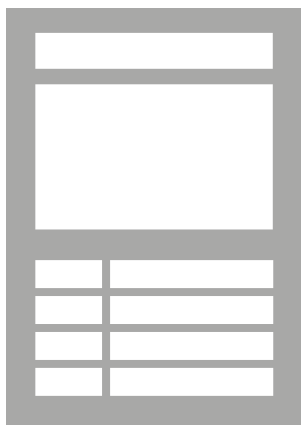
### Fact files on animals

Animal name:	
Features	
Habitat	
Diet	
Family	
Interesting facts	

Ideally, these could be completed electronically to enable import of photographs.

### Trump cards

Using research information and their fact files, pupils can agree to the categories and collectively produce a set of cards electronically, allowing the import of photographs, which can then be printed off, laminated and used.



Examples: <http://hubpages.com/games-hobbies/printable-trump-card-game>

**Puppets** – to use in poetry performance, monologue, duologue, plays, stories.  
Stick, string, shadow, hand, sock, finger puppets.  
Use of green screen filming could provide the correct habitat background.

**Sketch pad** to compile observations, ideas and sketches. Ideally, look at illustrators' sketchpads (many examples are on the internet) to see how they gather ideas and play with them.  
*'For me, a sketchbook is like a kind of a portable laboratory ...a space to ... capture the immediate, to experiment; a memory warehouse to which I can return whenever I am searching for an idea'*  
(Pep Cario, illustrator)

**Infographics:** a helpful activity to decide on key facts and use of pictures and diagrams.  
<http://visual.ly/angered>

**Life cycles** – for each of the animal classes: e.g. blue whale, hummingbird, crocodile, frog, seahorse, monarch butterfly.

**Word clouds:** (e.g. Wordle app) designs incorporating the words collected by the children relating to the animals, encouraging them to think about word choice, synonyms, colour and design – a good way to encourage spelling accuracy!

# Big and Small

## BLUE WHALE

### Thesaurus chorus:

#### *Big*

- using a thesaurus, find as many synonyms for big as you can
- choose your favourite
- when the 'conductor' counts to three, say your word in a BIG voice.

#### *Small*

- as above, but using a small voice.

### Mexican word wave

- sit in a circle
- choose your favourite word (for big/small)
- select the starting point in the circle
- that person says their word, followed by the person on their left, moving clockwise
- extra challenge: if a word is repeated, both people stand up. Which are the most popular choices?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Which words make you think about the sounds blue whales make? Why do they work so well?

### Size wise

- Find out how high a house is.
- Measure out the size of a whale's breath punch in the playground with chalk.
- Find out how long a blue whale is and measure this out with chalk too.
- Estimate how many breaths would fill the length of the whale.
- Measure and check your estimate.
- Guess how many breaths it would take you to fill a balloon.
- Blow up a balloon and count. Was your estimate correct?

### Research

- Use the internet to research extra information on the blue whale and make notes. (How can you check the reliability of the sites?)
- Read Nicola Davies' book, *Big Blue Whale*. What extra information have you discovered? Compare the illustrations with the ones in *A First Book of Animals*.
- Find short whale videos on the internet and listen to their songs. Choose your favourite.

### Creative commentary

- Working in pairs, turn the sound down on the video you have chosen and create your own commentary to accompany the video and record this.
- Additional challenge: create your own introductory musical accompaniment using a variety of percussion instruments/your voices/music making app, such as *garageband*.

### Illustration conversation

- What do you notice about this picture?
- How do you think the artist, Petr Horáček, created it?
- Where do you think he started?
- What do you think of the picture – how does it make you feel?  
Using the colour charts, try to find the colours in the painting. Do you think Petr Horáček had to mix colours? Collect the names of the colours.  
<http://www.winsornewton.com/uk/discover/resources/colour-charts/professional-acrylic>
- Additional challenge: find out about how some of these paints were made by artists in the past.
- Try to create paints using natural substances – soil, leaves, vegetables.

## SONG OF THE BIGGEST AND THE SMALLEST BIRD

### Global Search

- Using a globe or atlas, find Africa and Cuba. Do further research to find out where in Africa the ostrich lives so that you can show the area on your class map.

### Size wise

- Find out how big an ostrich is and chalk an ostrich outline on the wall.
- Draw a hummingbird 'just bigger than a bee,' and fit it inside your ostrich's eye.
- Find out about other animals the same size as the hummingbird. Choose one and make a drawing/painting/collage of it, showing its actual size.
- Create a class display. Think about the overall design and plan how to arrange it. You might consider:
  - o Colour
  - o Habitat
  - o Animal class

### Thought bubbles

- Choose either the ostrich or the hummingbird, or both, and write what you think they might be thinking in a thought bubble.
- Develop this into a conversation between the two birds, using speech bubbles.
- Additional challenge: create a play script of the conversation and act it out. You could use green-screening to film so that each 'animal' appears in their own habitat.

### Mime Time

- Move in the way you think an ostrich would. Think about how it would use its wings.
- Now move like a hummingbird.

### Vivid vocabulary

- What words could you use to describe these movements – a thesaurus might help!

### Rapid research

- Find out five facts about one of the following, and how different birds use them in different ways:
  - o Feathers
  - o Beaks
  - o Wings
- Design either:
  - o An information card
  - o An infographic
  - o An IT presentation which you can use to deliver a one minute talk to your class.

### Illustration conversation

- Which illustration do you like best? Why?
- How is this spread different from the *Blue Whale* spread.

## THE BUMBLEBEE BAT

### Vivid vocabulary

- Spot the simile. Why do you think the poet chose this simile? What is the effect?

### Talk for thought

- Why is she *the smallest of all mammals – until she has a baby*?
- List the facts you now know about a bumblebee bat.
- When does the bat hunt?

## Research

- Where does the bumblebee bat live?
- What is another name for this bat? (Kitti's hog-nosed bat). Which name do you prefer and why?
- Find out more fascinating bat facts and share them with the class.
- Compile a bats infograph or poster.

## Scientific investigation

- Find all the words in the poem relating to the body.
- Why do creatures need these – what function do they perform?

## Poetry

- Look at short films and pictures of bats.
- Create three of your own similes.
- Choose your favourite.
- Combine your different ideas, in small groups, or as a class to create a poem.
- Think carefully about rhythm and alliteration and try the lines out loud to see which order works best. Poems don't have to rhyme!
- Practise and perform.
- Added challenge: create a film or electronic presentation (e.g. Photo Story) of your poem with a musical introduction and exit. You could do a talk-over, using photographs

## Creative challenge

A backdrop for your poems or a cover for a poetry book

- Paint a black and dark blue watercolour sky.
- Sprinkle rock salt on it before it dries to create the effect of stars.
- Cut out leaf shapes or paint and cut out leaf shapes to apply across the bottom of your picture for the tree tops.
- Design a life-size bumblebee bat and stick on to your picture.

## GIRAFFES

### Talk for thought

- Why does the giraffe see the sunrise first?
- Why do the giraffes *vanish* when the sun has risen?

### Vivid vocabulary

- What does *dappled* mean?
- Create a sentence, using the word *dappled*.

### Research race ([www.ngkids.co.uk/animals](http://www.ngkids.co.uk/animals))

Find out:

- How tall a giraffe is.
- How many bones there are in the neck of a giraffe.
- How tall a new-born baby giraffe is.
- How giraffes sleep and for how long.
- Look at pictures of different giraffes. What do you notice?
- How long is a giraffe's tongue?
- Can you guess what the Latin name for a giraffe *giraffe camelopardalis* means? (Camel marked like a leopard)

### Poetry

Either

- Thinking about all you have learned about giraffes, write your own poem using prepositions:  
Above .....  
Across .....  
Below .....  
Beneath .....

Or

- **Kenning**

A Kenning is a two word phrase describing an object often using a metaphor. A Kennings poem is a riddle made up of several lines of kennings to describe something or someone. It consists of several stanzas of two describing words. It can be made up of any number of Kennings.

- o Brainstorm all you know about giraffes and create two lines:

- E.g. High-muncher

- Leaf-cruncher

- o Share your ideas in groups or as a class to create a poem.

### **Illustration conversation**

- Why is the giraffe by the tree small?
- Go into the playground and place two children of a similar height side-by-side.
- Measure with hand spans how tall they are.
- Ask one to walk away, down the length of the playground or field. You remain in the same place.
- How tall do they look in terms of hand spans now?
- Take a photo of the child in the distance with your hand span in the photo.
- What has happened?

## **ELEPHANTS**

### **Talk for thought**

- What do you notice about the text in the first line of the poem?
- Who do you think is talking and where do you think they are?
- Which elephant do you think is African and which do you think is Asian?

### **Rapid research**

- Find out interesting facts about both types of elephant.
- What are the similarities and differences?
- Show these in a diagram.
- Find out how many elephants there are of each type and why they are endangered.

### **Play time (drama!)**

In pairs:

- Using the information about the two different types of elephant, devise a conversation as if you are at the zoo.

### **Illustration conversation**

- What materials do you think Petr Horáček used to create this illustration?

## **BIG LIONS**

### **Vivid vocabulary**

- Look carefully at the words Nicola has chosen. Why do you think she made these choices?
- Which words linger in your mind after reading the poem a couple of times?

### **Talk for thought**

- How does this poem make you feel?

### **Playtime**

- As the poem is read aloud, act out the part of the lion.

### **Rapid research**

- Find out five fascinating facts about lions.
- Decide how you are going to share these with your class.



### Illustration conversation

- How is this illustration different from the earlier ones?  
(The entire page is filled with the animal's head).
- What materials do you think Petr has used?

### Creative challenge

- Create your own short poem to capture the atmosphere of a pride of lions on the prowl.
- Use a thesaurus to extend the range of vocabulary choices.
- You could start with the line:  
*Muscles ripple under their golden coats ...*

## LITTLE LIONS

### Talk for thought

- Why do you think the creators of this book decided to position this poem at this point in the book?
- What sort of animals do you think tamarins are?
- Why do you think they are called *golden lions*?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Why do you think Nicola Davies starts with *Teacup small*, instead of: *These little monkeys, teacup small*.

### Creative challenge

- Choose an animal and write a line, using a metaphor or simile to describe them – their size, colour or movement perhaps.
- Play around with the order of the words to create the most striking effect. See what other people think.

### Creative commentary

- Watch the National Geographic video without the sound on:  
[http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/tamarin\\_goldenlion](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/tamarin_goldenlion)
- Watch again and, with a partner, create a commentary.
- Watch again, with the sound on. What new facts have you discovered?

### Global search

- Find out where the golden lion tamarins live and mark it on the class map using the key.

### Creative challenge

- Using bark rubbings and leaf prints, create a rainforest scene. How can you add a three-dimensional effect?
- Add a family of golden lion tamarins.

## CUTE AS A NEWT

### Talk for thought

- What is the mood of this poem?
- Why do you think nobody notices newts?
- Which do you prefer, frogs or newts? Why?
- How does Nicola Davies feel about newts? Try to use words that she hasn't used in her poem.

### Vivid vocabulary

- Which words stay in your mind after you have read the poem and why do you think this is?

## KOMODO DRAGON

### Talk for thought

- Why do you think this animal is called the Komodo Dragon?

- How do you think you would feel if you met this animal?
- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28FzV5OHqMU>

### **Vivid vocabulary**

- Spot the simile.
- Find the metaphor.

### **Performance poetry**

- In pairs, rehearse and perform this poem.
- Think about which words should be LOUDER, quieter, faster, slower.
- Add movement to your performance.

### **Rapid research**

- Find out and mark on the world map where Komodo dragons live.

### **Illustration conversation**

- What similarities and differences are there between the newt and Komodo Dragon?

## **ANTS**

### **Vivid vocabulary**

- Why do you think Nicola Davies uses the metaphor '*a stream of ants flowing to the food and back to the nest*'?
- What picture does this paint in your mind?
- Can you find the *river* in the illustration?
- Why do you think the poet uses ellipsis in the second verse?
- Why is the queen *hidden*?

### **Talk for thought**

- What does the world look like when you are as small as an ant?
- Using a cardboard tube to look through, examine a patch of ground outside. What would this look like if you were ant-sized?
- How high would a stone or bank of earth have to be in order to appear like a mountain to an ant?

### **Scientific observation**

- Find ants outside and sit and observe them quietly.
- What do you notice about their behaviour?

### **Illustration conversation**

- What habitat do these ants live in?
- Where else do ants live?
- What time of year do you think it is in the illustration? Why do you think this?

### **Creative challenge**

- Draw an enlarged diagram of an ant, labelling all the body parts.
- How much bigger do you think your drawing is than an actual ant?

### **Poetry**

Ant haiku

- Create a little poem of three lines for a little creature:
  - o Line 1: 5 syllables
  - o Line 2: 7 syllables
  - o Line 3: 5 syllables

Line 1 – could evoke the season or time of day

Line 2 – could be about sound

Line 3 – could be about what can be seen

E.g.  
Autumn afternoon,  
Silence in the deep, still woods.  
But look ... ants scurry!

- This could be extended into a tanka by adding two extra lines, each of seven syllables. (But don't worry too much about being exact with the syllable count if the poem works well!)

E.g.  
Autumn afternoon,  
Silence in the deep, still woods.  
But look ... ants scurry,  
Busily transporting food  
To feed a hidden army.

Or you might decide to write something else which would capture the world of the ant.  
Haiku look particularly attractive when written over the top of a watercolour illustration of the poem's subject.

## WHALE SHARK

### Vivid vocabulary

- Spot the simile.
- What do the markings of the whale shark remind you of? Think of a different simile.
- How is the whale shark's movement described?
- What does that suggest about his character?
- Why do you think the whale shark is so called?

### Thesaurus chorus

- Look at images of whale sharks on the internet.
- Collect some adjectives to describe the whale shark.
- Cruising round the room, whisper your chosen adjectives as you pass each other and see if you can collect new ideas.

### Sharks String Song

- A collaborative poem, where each group works on one line. The first and final lines are repetitions of the subject of the poem.

Sharks, sharks, sharks!  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ sharks  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ sharks  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ sharks  
Sharks, sharks, sharks!

- Work in groups to find the best words in the best order for your line.
- You could choose:
  - o Alliterative words (words beginning with the same sound)
  - o Words with the same number of syllables
  - o Words ending in *ing*.
  - o Names of types of shark.
- If you work using sticky notes, you can play around with the word and line order, chanting the song aloud, to find out which words work best.

### Size wise/Research

- Find out how large a whale shark is.
- Measure it out in the playground and compare it with the blue whale measurement.
- Watch [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_B8qiqeDrI0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B8qiqeDrI0)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHqXRfhwTxc>
- What new facts have you discovered?

- How many of you fit along the length of the whale shark and the blue whale that you measured in the playground?

#### **Illustration conversation**

- Why do you think the publisher used a two page spread for such a short poem?
- How many different colours can you see in the illustration?
- Why is the sea blue?

### WHAT AM I?

#### **Scientific classification**

- Create a large classification chart on the wall, grouping spiders, insects and crustaceans together under *Invertebrates*.
- Make sure there is a clear definition for each class of animal.
- Collect pictures, or draw pictures to display in the correct columns.

#### **Illustration conversation**

- How are these illustrations different from the others?
- Why do you think Petr Horáček decided to use this particular style?

#### **Creative challenge**

- Choose a creature which interests you and make a series of pencil sketches.
- Look carefully at shape and detail and try to convey texture in the way that Petr does.

# Colours and Shapes

## BEETLES!

### Number Cruncher

- Write in numerals, three hundred thousand.

### Scientific investigation

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbvUrrSamg8> and jot down any interesting facts or thoughts.
- Which part of the classification chart do beetles belong to?
- Find out some of the amazing names that different beetles have. Write the name of your favourite beetle in a style and colours which suit the beetle and its name.
- Find out five fascinating facts about one that you find particularly interesting.

### Size wise

- Find out the size of the smallest and the largest beetles.
- What is the difference in size?

### Creative challenge

- Create a concertina book of class beetles to display your beetle facts, diagrams and art.
- Use different coloured foil to create a beetle collage or model.

## TIGER, TIGER, ORANGE STRIPED

### Vivid vocabulary

- What do you notice about the final word in each line?
- Find more words that fit this sound pattern and sort them into spelling groups: *ight*; *ite*
- Use a rhyming dictionary to discover any other words.

### Performance poetry

- Listen to the first verse of *The Tyger* by William Blake, read by Tom O'Bedlam on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMwNvzRKX64>. How does it make you feel?
- In a small group, practise reading *Tiger*, *Tiger*, *Orange Striped* aloud and perform to the class. Make it as dramatic as possible!

### Writing activity

- Decide which rhyming words you found earlier could be a possible choice in a verse about tigers and create your own rhyming couplet (two lines of rhyming verse of the same length), with a seven syllable beat if possible.
- Add them on to Nicola's poem and perform!

### Creative challenge

Tiger kaleidoscope

Either:

- o Look at images of tigers' faces in books or on the internet. Do they look the same? Are they perfectly symmetrical?
- o Using a paint programme, create or import a tiger's face and experiment with reversing and rotating it, creating a pattern of multiple images.

Or:

- o Using thick orange, brown and black paint and a folded piece of paper, paint half a tiger's face.
- o Fold the image whilst still wet and press firmly all over.
- o Unfold carefully.
- o Create a class kaleidoscope display.

Or:

- o Use a paper plate to create a tiger mask, either using paint or collage techniques.

Or:

- o Tiger shaving cream marbling print which you can use to create a tiger cut out: <http://playcreateexplore.blogspot.co.uk/2013/04/tiger-shaving-cream-marbling-craft.html>

Or

- o Design a tiger face on orange paper and cut out the shapes which would be black and glue on to black backing paper or card.

## FLAMINGOS THINK PINK

### Talk for thought

- What do you think Nicola Davies means when she says '*they feed upside down in mud*'?
- Make a word cloud of the words in the poem, including the title. Think about the colours you use and the orientation.
- Compare designs and decide which most closely reflects what the poem is saying.

### Rapid research race

- Find out what food turns flamingos pink.

### Physical challenge

- Watch the flamingo video at the bottom of the web page (which has lots of interesting facts) - <http://easyscienceforkids.com/all-about-flamingos/>
- In a group, create a synchronised flamingo dance.
- Watch the video again to see if you can add more detail.
- Work out how you will know when to turn – what secret sign will you give? Who is the leader each time you turn?
- Practise and perform.
- Film and give feedback on each other's performances.

## GIANT LEAF INSECT

### Talk for thought

- Count the number of lines in the poem and how many times Nicola Davies has used the word *somewhere*.
- Why do you think she has used it so often?

### Global search

- Find out where giant leaf insects live and mark it on the key and map.

### Writing - descriptive detail

- Find images of a giant leaf insect.
- In pairs, describe to each other what you see.
- Use a thesaurus to extend the range of words you might use.
- Write a short, detailed description.
- Check your work carefully and see if there are any improvements you can make.

### Illustration conversation

- How many different colours have been used in the illustration?

### Art

- Create a shade card with as many different hues of green as you can.
- Experiment on rough paper first!

## CHAMELEON SONG

### Talk for thought

- How many facts have you learned about the chameleon from the poem?
- What does the line, '*Eyes that move on turrets*' suggest to you?
- What is a word which means '*blend in*'?

### Rapid research/global search

- Find out five more fascinating facts.
- Show on the class map where chameleons live.

### Description ditty

- Using the list below, add more detail to create a poem of your own by adding words before and after these:
  - tail
  - feet
  - eyes
  - tongue
  - colour
- Use powerful words to create a vivid picture.

## WHY ARE ZEBRAS STRIPY?

### Talk for thought

- What do you notice about the way this poem is laid out?

- What patterns can you find in the words?

### Writing – questions, questions.

- Work in pairs: one is the zebra, one is the questioner.
- The questioner asks: ‘Why are you stripy, zebra?’
- The ‘zebra’ thinks of three different reasons, as crazy as you like!
- Jot your ideas down and play around with them to find the best order.
- Swap roles.

### Research/global search

- Locate and show the zebra habitat on your class world map.

### Illustration conversation

- Are any two zebras the same?

### Design time

- Create a black and white striped design: you could use paint, pencil, marker pens, paper collage.

## BLUE MORPHO BUTTERFLY

### Talk for thought

- What does the first line suggest to you?
- Re-read the first two verses.
- Close your eyes and listen to the sounds of the rain forest, imagining that you are there:  
<http://www.rainforestlistening.com/>
- How do you feel?

### Magical music

- Create a short piece of music to evoke the atmosphere of the rainforest. You could use instruments, objects, your voice, a music making app.
- Introduce a different sound/set of sounds to indicate the blue morpho butterfly appearing and disappearing through the forest.
- Record your piece and share with the class. You might want to make alterations, if people come up with useful suggestions, as you will be using the piece of music in a short performance piece.

### Creative challenge

- Watch Austin’s Butterfly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqh1MRWZjms>
- Find images of the blue morpho butterfly and create a butterfly puppet.
- You could:
  - o Paint the outline in black and mix colours for the wings.
  - o Draw a template on black card, cut out the areas which will be blue and back with blue and turquoise papers.
  - o Remember, the underside is a different colour.
  - o Build up the body with layers of paper or papier mache, add antennae (wire) and eyes (buttons).
  - o Suspend from a stick, using two strings.
- Try moving the puppet as you play a recording of your rainforest music, closing and opening the wings in time with the music.

### Poetry

- Listen to the rainforest sounds as you think.
- Create a poem:
  - o Verse 1: describe the whole forest
  - o Verse 2: describe the sounds
  - o Verse 3: describe the colours
  - o Verse 4: describe how you feel.
- Use a thesaurus so that you have a wide range of words to play with and choose from.
- Practise and perform, deciding whether you want to use a background of rainforest sounds, your music and your butterfly puppet.

## CAMELS AND THEIR HUMPS

### Talk for thought

- Why does Nicola Davies say ‘Sizzling days, freezing nights’?

### Paired poem

- In pairs, choose an animal.
- One is the questioner, one gives the answers.
- Innovate on the *Camels and their Humps* poem.
  - o Lines 1 and 2: describe where the animal lives

- o Line 3: question and answer
- o Line 4: question and answer
- o Lines 5-8: more fascinating facts
- Play about with the order and rhythm of the words to create the best effect.

#### **Illustration conversation**

- Spot the differences (apart from the obvious ones!)
- Find images of a Bactrian and a Dromedary camel.
- Using careful observation, see if you can spot other differences.

#### **Rapid research**

- Does your reading about the two types of camel back up the observations you made?
- Have you found out anything surprising?

## **BIRDS OF PARADISE**

#### **Talk for thought**

- Re-read the poem and tell each other the image which remains in your mind.
- What does the final line tell you?

#### **Vivid vocabulary**

- Pick out the words and phrases that you think are most effective and say why.
- Why do you think Nicola Davies uses the phrase '*visitors from outer space*'?
- Close your eyes as you listen to the poem again.
- What colours do you see?
- Create a rainbow of colour words, using a thesaurus and paint charts for more adventurous ideas.

#### **Dance design**

- Watch a video of birds of paradise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7QZnwKqop0>
- Design your own dance based on part of the film.
- Decide whether you will do a solo or a group dance and whether you need any props, such as streamers or fans.
- Create a musical accompaniment to complement your dance; you could use percussion or an electronic app.
- Practise, perform and film.

#### **Illustration conversation**

- Look at the different feathers of the illustrated birds and how the feather effects have been created.
- Create your own bird of paradise, experimenting with feather effects.
- Think up a name for your spectacular bird.

## **PANDA SONG**

#### **Talk for thought**

- What sort of character do you think a panda has?
- Think of different animals which are also black and white. Why do you think this is?
- Think of animals of different colours. Why do you think they are these colours?
- What do we know about the giant panda from the poem?
- List the facts.
- What else would you like to find out?

#### **Rapid research**

- Find the mountains in China where the panda lives and mark on the class map and key.
- <http://www.ngkids.co.uk/animals/ten-panda-facts> Choose five favourite facts.

#### **Number cruncher**

- What is the difference between the size of a fully grown panda and a new-born baby panda?
- How much does a panda eat per day? How do you think that compares with humans?
- How much time is spent eating each day? How does that compare with humans?

#### **Vivid vocabulary**

Colourful similes

- What other similes can you think of for these colours:
  - o Black as .....
  - o White as .....
- Think of similes for a whole rainbow of colours.

#### **Art**

- Find photos of bamboo plants, if you don't have any real specimens available.
- Create a background texture on paper by making rubbings on a textured surface (e.g. carpet,



hessian, tarmac).

- Paint bamboo on top of the rubbing.
- Experiment on rough paper to find the best way to paint the leaves.
- Add a panda to your picture.

## SPOTS AND STRIPES

### Talk for thought

	True	False
Spots attract birds.		
Spots can look like eyes.		
Sunlight shining through leaves makes light patchy.		
Stripes can provide good camouflage.		
Stripes warn of danger.		

### Illustration conversation

- How do you think Petr Horáček created these different pictures?
- Why has he chosen to do this?

# Animal Homes

## THE BEAVER DAM

### Talk for thought

- Why do you think beavers build dams out of trees?
- What other word/s could you substitute for 'felled'? Why do you think Nicola Davies chose this particular word?
- How are beavers adapted to their habitat?

### Extra challenge

- What are the problems of re-introducing animals into the wild, such as the beaver in Scotland?  
<http://www.scottishbeavers.org.uk/beaver-facts/learning-zone/>

### Size wise

- Look at <http://www.dkfindout.com/uk/animals-and-nature/rodents/beavers/> and read all of the information. Do these match the facts you found out from the video?
- Go out into the playground and measure how wide and high a dam can be.
- Who can build the strongest structure? Make a scaled down model on a tough mat.  
<http://www.scottishbeavers.org.uk/beaver-facts/learning-zone/>

### Instruction writing

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuMRDZbrdXc>
- Write a list of instructions for the beaver.
- Remember to use
  - o list of materials
  - o bullet points or numbers
  - o imperatives (bossy words in present tense)
  - o the second person
  - o time connectives (firstly, secondly, thirdly, next, then, after that, finally)
  - o simple, clear sentences

### Illustration conversation

- Identify where the dam is.
- Identify where the lodge is.
- What other features can you see?

## WEAVER BIRD

### Talk for thought

- Who do you think is talking in this poem and to whom do you think they are talking?
- What have you found out about the weaver bird from the poem?

### Vivid Vocabulary

- Find the time connectives in the poem.
- What other time connectives can you think of?
- Why do you think Nicola Davies chooses the words: 'ribbon' and 'teases'?

### Writing challenge

- Watch the first part of the video: <http://www.animalplanet.com/tv-shows/animal-planet-presents/videos/ultimate-animal-dads-weaver-bird-dads/>
- Write instructions for making a weaver bird nest.
- Remember to use
  - o list of materials
  - o bullet points or numbers
  - o imperatives (bossy words in present tense)
  - o the second person
  - o time connectives (firstly, secondly, thirdly, next, then, after that, finally)
  - o simple, clear sentences

### Creative challenge

- You may want to work in pairs
- Using a range of natural materials, such as twigs and grasses, create your own weaving, attaching it to the twig.

### Illustration conversation

- Why do you think the bird is upside down?
- Use a reference book or the internet to find out what sort of weaver bird is in the illustration.

## WOLVES HOWL

### Before reading the poem

#### Word switch

- Using the word cards, create rich sentences or a poem. You don't have to use all of the words.
- Then read Nicola's poem.

#### Talk for thought

- How does the poem, together with the illustration, make you feel about wolves?
- Why are the ears of the deer and the hare twitching?
- When and where was the last wild wolf seen in Britain?

#### Vivid vocabulary

- Pick out the words that you find most striking. Why do they have this effect?

#### Paint a picture in words

- In pairs, describe the illustration to each other, trying to convey how the wolves feel.

### Illustration conversation

- List all the colours you can see in the illustration. Are there any surprises?

#### Art challenge

- Try this: how to draw a wolf howling at the moon tutorial -<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQk1TfZSjX0>

## SNAIL SHELLS

#### Talk for thought

- How do you feel about snails?
- Why do you think Nicola Davies uses the metaphor '*a curly suit of armour*' to describe the shell?
- How do gardeners feel about snails?

#### Poetry Pattern

- Work out the rhyme pattern in the poem.
- Can you think of more words that rhyme with these?
- Do they have the same spelling patterns?

#### Scientific observations

- Using magnifying glasses, look closely at snails in their natural habitat.
- What do you notice?
- Draw and label a diagram of a snail.
- Carefully place the snail on a piece of transparent plastic and watch how he moves from underneath.
- What do you notice?
- Place the snail back in its habitat carefully.
- Create a food chain, showing what the snail eats and what eats snails.

#### Snail art

- Visit <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/matisse-the-snail-t00540> to look at Matisse's picture *The Snail*.
- How many years ago was this created?
- How big do you think it is? Check the dimensions in the information given on the website.
- What do you think of this art work and the title?

### Illustration conversation

- Look at the textures of the illustration. How does the snail body differ from the shell and the leaves?

#### Art challenge

Either:

- Create your own piece of snail art

Or:

- Create your own piece of art using coloured shapes, like Matisse, and give it a title.

## SPIDER WEB

#### Talk for thought

- How do you feel about spiders?

- What do you already know about spiders?
- What have you learned from the poem?
- How does Nicola Davies convey a sense of size?

### Preposition pounce

- Find all the prepositions in the poem.
- Why do you think so many are used?

### Vivid vocabulary

- What do you notice about the words Nicola has selected in the first line and in the poem as a whole?
- What does 'spans' mean?

### Research and discuss

- Observe spiders in their natural habitat and note any observations.
- Watch: BBC Bitesize Features of spiders <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zbqd7ty>
- Jot down any new information.
- Are spiders good or bad?
  - o Organise your thoughts before discussing with a partner: practise using sentence openers:
    - I think ...
    - I believe ....
    - On the one hand ...on the other ...
    - Some people feel that ...
    - It is often felt that ...
    - One reason for ...
    - However ...
  - o Do you need to find out extra information?

### Web of words

- Create a spider's web across the corner of the classroom using string or wool.
- Discuss how to make the spider as accurately as possible, before he takes his position in the centre of the web.
- Dangle words relating to spiders from the web. Think about alliteration and rhyme.

### Poetry

- Create a spiders' string poem
  - Spiders, spiders, spiders!
  - \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ spiders
  - \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ spiders
  - \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ spiders
  - Spiders, spiders, spiders!
- Work in groups to find the best words in the best order for your line.
- You could choose:
  - o Alliterative words (words beginning with the same sound)
  - o Words with the same number of syllables
  - o Words ending in *ing*.
  - o Names of types of spiders.
- If you work using sticky notes, you can play around with the word and line order, chanting the song aloud, to find out which words work best.

## ANEMONE AND CLOWNFISH

### Talk for thought

- Were there any surprises in this poem? If so, what were they?
- What is unusual about the creatures which are anemones?
- Why do you think the clownfish is unstung?
- Read the following extract to discover more fascinating facts about animals that form symbiotic relationships:

Clownfish perform an elaborate dance with an anemone before taking up residence, gently touching its tentacles with different parts of their bodies until they are acclimated to their host. A layer of mucus on the clownfish's skin makes it immune to the fish-eating anemone's lethal sting. In exchange for safety from predators and food scraps, the clownfish drives off intruders and preens its host, removing parasites.

Did you know?

Ironically, *Finding Nemo*, a movie about the anguish of a captured clownfish, caused home-aquarium demand for them to triple.

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/fish/clown-anemonefish/>

- What does the writer mean by *'ironically'* in the final paragraph?
- What do you think this tells you about human nature?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Why do you think Nicola Davies uses the description *'stinging fingers around a hungry mouth'*?

### Illustration conversation

- How do you think Petr Horáček has created this picture?

### Creative challenge

Group work

- Create a watercolour background for the sea.
- Use a different texture to suggest the sand on the sea bed.
- Paint and cut out sea anemone 'fingers'.
- Create clownfish and cut out, arranging them amongst the sea anemones. Find out what size they are and draw them accordingly.

## JELLYFISH GO WITH THE FLOW

### Talk for thought

- How does a jellyfish move?
- What do they look like when they are washed up on the beach? Why do you think this is?
- Why do you think the jellyfish *'doesn't care or even notice'* where it's going?
- What do you think of jellyfish?

### Vivid vocabulary

- What does 'current' mean?
- Why did Nicola Davies choose the word *'trawl'* to go with *'stinging tentacles'*?

### Rapid research

- Read: <http://www.ngkids.co.uk/animals/jellyfish-facts>
- Create your own fact file.

### Science craft

- Watch the video, jot down what you need and what to do and make your own jellyfish:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzOOJTuhYGc>

### Illustration conversation

- Look at the way Petr Horáček has used white paint.
- Experiment with paint on dark paper to create similar effects, using different tools to help you.
- Then create your own jellyfish paintings.

## ORANG-UTAN NEST BUILDING

### Talk for thought

- Find three words which suggest that the orang-utan has a relaxed approach to life.
- What **exactly** do these words mean?
- What does the poet mean in the last line?
- Would you say that the orang-utan is a good parent? Give reasons for your answer.
- What do we have in common with orang-utans?
- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFACrIx5SZ0>
- Is it right to keep wild animals as pets?
- Find out about different sayings about the weather, such as:  
*Red sky at night, shepherds' delight.*  
*Red sky in the morning, shepherds' warning.*  
Are they reliable indicators of weather?

### Rapid research/Global search

- Find out the meaning of the name 'orang-utan'.
- Locate where orang-utans live on your class map.
- Find out why this animal is in danger of extinction.

### Creative

- Create a den outside using natural materials. Can you add a canopy?

## WHITE STORK'S NEST

### Talk for thought:

- Why do you think people thought it was lucky to have a stork nesting on their house?

- Why do you think storks now '*prefer to nest on pylons*'?

### **Vocabulary**

- What is a '*cartwheel*'?

### **Stork story**

- Draw a storyboard or map of what happened to the white stork.
- Write captions under each picture.

### **Rapid research**

- Read: <http://easyscienceforkids.com/all-about-storks/>
- List all the interesting new facts you have discovered in your own words.

### **Stork sounds**

- Listen to the recording of storks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K89JrQQvaRg>
- Can you replicate that with percussion instruments, or design your own stork clatterer?

## **PARASITES**

### **Talk for thought**

- How do you feel when you read about parasites?
- Can you think of any other parasites?

### **Rapid research**

- Find out about other parasites. You might like to look in another book by Nicola Davies: *What's Eating Me?*

### **Illustration conversation**

- What is the object on the right hand page?
- Why is it in the picture?
- Create your own drawing of a parasite and write a caption in your very best handwriting.

# Animal Babies

## FIRST DAY OUT

### Talk for thought

- How do you think the baby bears feel on first emerging from their den? What would the world look like to them?
- How do you think the mother bear feels?
- How does the mother bear's movements differ from her cubs' and which words indicate this?
- Look at Nicola Davies's book *Ice Bear*. What extra information have you found out about polar bears?
- Watch the Planet Earth clip on polar bears: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwZH\\_aT0FGI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwZH_aT0FGI)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXb9kOO8Lzs>
- Note down any new facts.

### Vivid vocabulary

- How does the writer suggest the size of the cubs in a way that you can visualise?
- Can you think of any examples in the other poems where size has been conveyed clearly?

### Rapid research

- Find out what threats there are to polar bears' existence.

### Illustration conversation

- How does the picture make you feel?
- What do you notice about the way the snow is depicted?

## SEA TURTLE EGG LAYING

### Vivid vocabulary

- What senses does Nicola Davies appeal to in the poem? Pick out all the movement verbs.
- In pairs mime one of the movements, whilst your partner guesses, and then swap.
- Find synonyms for the movement verbs and have a 'thesaurus chorus'.

### Research

- Read Nicola Davies' book, *One Tiny Turtle*, and find out extra information, noting it down.
- With a partner, devise how to make a life-cycle diagram for the sea turtle.

### Sand scramble

- Watch a film of baby turtles hatching and rushing to the ocean. Observe carefully and jot down any ideas that occur to you.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G2\\_Z4H\\_1ZI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G2_Z4H_1ZI)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w82xpBR\\_Z4A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w82xpBR_Z4A)
- Pretend you are a baby turtle and describe how you hatch, what you do and how it feels as you head for the sea and how the sea feels if you reach it.

### Illustration conversation

- Which are the main colours in the painting?
- Why do you think the sea only covers one corner?

## BABY GORILLA

### Talk for thought

- How do you think the newest baby feels?
- What colours are mentioned in the poem?
- What facts have you learned about gorillas in this poem?
- What else would you like to find out?
- Compare the care of young in Sea Turtle Egg Laying and this poem.

### Global search

- Find out where gorillas live and locate the continent and countries on a globe or atlas.
- Mark these on the class map and key.

### Research

- Find out why gorillas are endangered?

### Art challenge

- Look at different images of gorillas, showing a range of different expressions.

- Think of words that convey their mood.
- Have a thesaurus race to extend the number of words for the different moods.
- Using one image, create your own picture, deciding whether to use paint, crayon, pastel, charcoal, pencil, etc..

## WAYS TO GET TO WATER

### Talk for thought

- The young of which type of amphibian will have the best chance of survival, do you think? What reasons support your opinion?

### Rapid research

- Find out about the life cycle of a frog and create either a labelled diagram or 3D model. You could use bubble wrap for frogspawn and parts of egg cartons for frogs. Add captions.
- Find out the general differences between frogs and toads.
- Match the method to the frog or toad:

MALE MIDWIFE TOADS	Swallow tadpoles as they hatch, to grow inside their mouth
POISON ARROW FROGS	Make foamy nests
MALE DARWIN FROGS	Carry the eggs and drop them in a pool when they are ready to hatch
TREE FROGS	Carry tadpoles on their backs to rain-pools in plant leaves.

### Fun Frogs competition

- Who can jump the furthest? <http://www.redtedart.com/easy-jumping-frog-origami/>

### Art challenge

Frog free-for-all

- There are some fantastic images of different frogs on the internet. Choose one you like and create a model or picture. Note the details carefully, such as colour, markings and foot shape.
- Try to find out the name of your frog and some interesting facts about it.

## DRAGONFLY BABIES

### Talk for thought

- What surprises you about this poem?
- What other animals can you think of where the young are very different from the adults?
- Why do you think these creatures are called dragonflies?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Pick out all the verbs. What do you notice about them?
- What do you think 'catapult jaws' means?

### Illustration conversation

- What do you think is happening in the illustration on page 72?
- How do you think Petr Horáček created the leaves and grasses in the picture?

### Art challenge

- Using a range of materials, create a picture showing grasses and leaves.
- Look carefully at the different parts of the dragonfly's body and create a body and the head with its enormous eyes.
- Add jointed, hairy legs.
- Finally, think of a way to make and attach the transparent wings.

### Research

- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5-KoPvZDIU>
- <http://www.smithsonianchannel.com/videos/stunning-time-lapse-of-a-dragonfly-growing-wings/48717/playlist/1261056>
- Find out the name given to the larval stage of a dragonfly.
- Draw a diagram of the dragonfly life-cycle.



## Poetry

- Write a poem about dragonflies.  
You could start with:  
*Over leaves and grass they pass,  
Jewelled insects...*

Think about where and how they fly, what they do, what they eat.

## Diamante dragonfly

- Work on a computer to create a diamante poem by centring the text:  
Line 1: Nymph (noun)  
Line 2: 2 adjectives describing the noun  
Line 3: 3 verbs ending in *ing* or *ed* relating to the nymph  
Line 4: 4 nouns – 2 relating to the nymph, two to the dragonfly  
Line 5: verbs ending in *ing* or *ed* relating to the dragonfly  
Line 6: 2 adjectives describing the dragonfly  
Line 7: dragonfly
- Think carefully about the colour and style of font. You could insert an image to cover the page and format it so that the colours are not too strong.

## DADDY SEAHORSE

### Talk for thought

- Are there any surprises in the poem and the illustration?
- What sort of creatures are seahorses?
- Why does Nicola Davies call the babies ‘*sea foals*’?

### Research

- Find out more on:  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Long-snouted\\_seahorse#p01jdppt](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Long-snouted_seahorse#p01jdppt)  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Long-snouted\\_seahorse#p01jds38](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Long-snouted_seahorse#p01jds38)

### Poetry

- Either in pairs or individually, write a second verse of four lines for the poem, starting:  
*When the sea foals first pop out ...*

Or:

*Floating in the deep blue sea ...*

### Illustration conversation

- Look at the way the background colours merge into each other. How do you think Petr Horáček did this?
- Experiment with paints to see if you can create the same effect.
- Make a demo video to show how it is done, voicing a commentary.  
You will probably need to write out the list of instructions first to organise your thoughts.  
You could try using time lapse.

### Art

- Using clay or air-drying modelling material, make a seahorse. Think about how you will make the texture and what tools will help you.
- Finally attach your seahorse to your sea background.
- Decide whether you need to add any further detail.

## EMPEROR PENGUINS

### Talk for thought

- Why are the penguin ‘*daddies*’ looking after the eggs?

### Vivid vocabulary

- What is special about the choice of words: ‘*Shuffle-huddle, shuffle-huddle*’, ‘*biting blizzards*’ and ‘*quiet heroes*’?

### Number cruncher

- Find out the sizes of all the different breeds of penguins and mark them off on a height chart:  
<http://www.penguinworld.com/>
- What is the difference between the smallest and the largest?

### Physical challenge

- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL7O5O7U4Gs>
- Starting at the edges of the hall, balance a beanbag on the top of your feet. All try to shuffle together into a huddle in the centre of the room, taking it in turns to move to the outside of the group. All the time, you have to keep your beanbag balanced on your feet!

## Science investigations

1. How do penguins keep warm?

Part 1

### Materials needed:

2 bowls  
cold water  
ice cubes  
3 ziplock bags  
lard  
stop-watch

### Method:

- o Fill the two bowls with ice and cold water.
- o Spoon lard into a bag.
- o Put your hand into a second bag.
- o Place covered hand inside the 'blubber bag' and make sure that hand is completely surrounded by lard.
- o Take the other hand and place it in the third plastic bag.
- o Push one hand into each bowl of ice.
- o Start the stop-watch.
- o Time how long it takes for each hand to get cold.
- o Repeat four times.

### Record your results:

	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time
Hand in blubber					
Hand without blubber					

Find the average time each hand took to feel cold.

Part 2

- Add more lard to the bag. Does it make a difference?
- Make a hypothesis: does double the blubber = double the time before the hand feels cold.
- Repeat four times, recording your results and finding the average.
- Was your hypothesis correct? If not, why not?
- Extra challenge for older pupils: <http://nationalgeographic.org/activity/arctic-adaptations/>

### **Feather experiment**

- Find a downy feather and an adult feather.
- Place both in water and compare what happens.
- Why do you think this is?

### **Illustration conversation**

- How does the picture make you feel?
- How does Petr Horáček achieve this?
- Describe the weather. You might want to have a thesaurus race to find more words and then have a thesaurus chorus or a Mexican wave of cold words.

## KANGAROO BIRTH

### **Talk for thought**

- What surprised or puzzled you in this poem?
- Why do you think the mother keeps the joey in her pouch?

### **Vivid vocabulary**

- What simile does Nicola Davies use for the new baby?
- Why does she use this simile?
- What similes can you think of for the mother kangaroo?

### **Research**

- Find out more about where kangaroos live and mark it on your class map and key.
- Kangaroos belong to a special group of animals called marsupials. Find out what this means and

- which other animals belong to this group.
- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lCKc8tURtc>

### Illustration conversation

- Look carefully at the outline and shading in the picture of the kangaroo.
- Use a similar technique, showing the strength of the legs and the use of colouring.

### Art challenge

- Find examples of aboriginal drawing of kangaroos.
- How are they created and what colours are used?
- Using earthy colours, create your own aboriginal style kangaroo painting.

## THE TENDER CROCODILE

### Talk for thought

- What is surprising about the poem's title?
- Do you agree with Nicola Davies' viewpoint?
- What facts have you found out about crocodiles from the poem?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Find the words that describe the nature of the crocodile and group them.
- Can you add any other words? Consult a thesaurus if you find it difficult to think of any.

### Writing conversation

- In pairs, think of an animal most people don't like and innovate on Nicola's poem:  
*No one thinks of ..... as .....*;  
*..... is something for .....*  
*But .....*  
 Final line: a reason why they have a good quality.
- Play around with your ideas until it sounds good and then write it down and read to the class.

### Illustration conversation

- How does the artist convey the same feelings as the poet?

### Art challenge

- Draw a pencil outline of either a crocodile's head or the entire crocodile, showing the pattern of the scales.
- Go over the scales with a green or brown wax crayon.
- Paint the skin colour over the top, looking at the way Petr Horáček has used different shades.

## EGGS

### Talk for thought

- What other creatures lay eggs? Which animal groups do they belong to?

### Scientific observation

- Look at a hen's egg.
  - Draw it as accurately as possible.
  - Touch it – how does it feel?
  - Crack the egg open and place on a plate and describe exactly what you see.
- Remember to wash your hands before and after handling eggs.
- Test the strength of an egg: applying pressure to the top/bottom and on the side.  
<http://www.scienceprojectideas.co.uk/how-strong-eggshell.html>
  - Egg drop challenge: design protection for an egg which will sustain a fall – height can be increased each time a team is successful.  
 This can be a large scale project involving budgets and free choice in materials or simplified by providing a range of materials which can be used.  
[http://kidssciencechallenge.com/pdfs/2011activities/Zero-Waste\\_Egg-Drop-Challenge.pdf](http://kidssciencechallenge.com/pdfs/2011activities/Zero-Waste_Egg-Drop-Challenge.pdf)  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Drop-an-Egg-Without-It-Breaking> (some unusual solutions!)

# Animals in Action

## THE DINNER THAT GOT AWAY

### Talk for thought

- How did you feel about the ‘*dinner*’ escaping?
- What similes does Nicola Davies use? Why do you think she chose these?

### Rapid research

- Find out how fast a cheetah can run?
- If it is the ‘*fastest sprinter on earth*’, how did her prey escape?

### Scientific observation

- Compare images of the cheetah’s face with those of a lion and tiger.
- How are they different/the same?
- Now compare their bodies and the way they move.

### Writing challenge

- Work out the rhyme scheme. These are called rhyming couplets.
- With a partner, make up three couplets about a cheetah. A rhyming dictionary might help, but remember, the words need to work and make sense – not sound clunky and clumsy.
- Select your best and use these collaboratively to create a group or class poem.

## ARCTIC TERN

### Talk for thought

- What is another way of saying (paraphrasing):  
*‘this small bird flies from pole to pole...’*

### Number cruncher

- How much does a cupcake weigh? Estimate first then weigh.
- How far away is the moon?
- How far does an Arctic tern travel in its life?

### Illustration conversation

- Looking carefully at the illustration, what would you say are the main features of an Arctic tern?

### Art challenge

- Look carefully at the shape of the tern in flight and create your own design, showing the wings extended, which can be cut from thin white card.
- Fold along the centre line.
- Colour the head and beak.
- Suspend, using thread.
- Use your bird as you read the poem aloud.

## KOALA LULLABY

### Talk for thought

- What facts have you discovered about the koala?
- Why do you think the:  
*‘...gum leaves sigh  
A never-ending lullaby.’*
- What lullabies do you know?

### Vivid vocabulary

- What does the simile ‘*fluffy as a little cloud*’ suggest to you?
- Which words are repeated and why is this?

### Research

- This animal belongs to the special group of mammals of which kangaroos are a member. What is this group called and what other animals belong to it?

### Smell test

- Apparently koalas smell of the eucalyptus leaves which they eat. Smell a range of essential oils and see if you can guess which one is eucalyptus.

### Illustration conversation

- How does the illustration make you feel towards the koala?
- What features do you notice the most?

### Art challenge

Either:

- Using pastels and smudging techniques, create a picture of a koala.

Or:

- Using paper plates of different sizes for the ears and face, create a koala face.
- Think about how you can make the nose and eyes look realistic.

## SLOW, SLOW SLOTH

### Talk for thought

- What do you think people who are described as *slothful* are like?
- Why do you think Nicola Davies says: 'Hooked on by two toes, or by three.'
- Why is the sloth's fur green, and is this a good or a bad thing?
- Do you think it matters whether there are sloths or not?

### Physical challenge

- Watch the video: [http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/sloth\\_threetoed](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/sloth_threetoed)
- Using outdoor climbing frames, move across, upside down, very, very slowly, using your arms and legs. Can you hang from the bars like a sloth? How difficult is this?

## FIREFLIES

### Talk for thought

- What is surprising in this poem?
- Did you expect the fireflies to be beetles?
- How are beetles different from flies?
- Why are the beetles flashing?

### Physical challenge

- Watch the video: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/news/160805-news-synchronized-fireflies-vin?source=searchvideo>
- Work in pairs, and devise a way of signalling a pattern with glow sticks so that you can recognise each other amongst a lot of others.
- Scatter in a darkened room and, at a signal, start communicating your glow stick pattern and try to locate your partner.
- Scatter and try again.

### Illustration conversation

- Look at the composition of the picture (the way the artist has arranged the different parts). Why do you think there are lots of tiny lights among the trees and a close-up of a beetle on a large leaf in the foreground?

### Art and craft challenge

- Create a forest firefly scene, either on card backing, or using a box.
- Decide how you can make the fireflies glow. You could use pinholes and solar powered fairy lights or create your own electric circuit of lights.

## DANCING BEES

### Talk for thought

- What facts have you learned about bees from this poem? Aim for five!
- Why are bees so important to us?  
<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved/bumble-kids/>
- Invite a local beekeeper in, preparing questions you would like to ask before the visit.

### Vivid vocabulary

- What is the effect of the first line?
- What is pollen and what is nectar?
- Bee idioms:
  - o Queen bee
  - o A bee in your bonnet
  - o Busy as a bee
  - o Beeline

In small groups:

Take turns to choose one of the idioms and act it out for the others to guess.

### Tasting

- Honey from different regions tastes different, according to the types of plant the bees have visited. Sample different types of honey and rank them in order of preference. Find out where they have been produced.

### Illustration conversation

- Look carefully at the illustration of bees. Which parts of the body can you identify?
- What kind of creature is a bee?
- What shape are the cells in the picture?
- Why do you think they are this shape?
- What other objects can you think of which use this shape?

### Craft challenge

Either:

- Make a bee B and B: <https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/givenatureahomeinyourgarden/gardenactivities/buildabeebandb/>

Or:

- Create alder cone bees for a class display
  1. Wind yellow wool or embroidery thread around an alder cone three times, poking the ends into the gaps.
  2. For the wings, cut a circle out of a clear plastic bag about the size of a two pence piece.
  3. Tie thin cotton around the middle of the plastic and pull tight to create two wings.
  4. Tie the wings around the middle of the body.
  5. Attach a long thread to suspend from a branch.

## BARN OWL

### Talk for thought

- How would you read this poem aloud? Practise in groups of three.
- How would you interpret the meaning of the last line? Who has gone?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Why do you think Nicola Davies likens the owl's quietness to that of the '*floating moon*'?
- What effect does the use of two commas in line 4 have?  
The rhythm is very important in this poem as it reflects the way the creature moves; when you read it aloud, remember this.
- What are the special qualities of the owl?
- Touch a piece of velvet. How does it feel?
- What else can you think of that is '*gleaming white*'?

### Writing conversation

- Watch a choice of videos on: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Barn\\_Owl#p00hpcdz](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Barn_Owl#p00hpcdz)
- In pairs, innovate on the first two lines of the poem, describing the owl's flight, to create an alternative rhyming couplet.

### Art/craft challenge

- Create three stick puppets to use with your recitation: the moon, the barn owl and the mouse.
- Alternatively, you could make shadow puppets with moving limbs, fastened with paper clips and create a shadow puppet performance of the poem.

## MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

### Talk for thought

- Where do you think this valley full of '*dreams and magic*' is?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Spot the simile. Why is it so effective?
- Find all the words and phrases relating to the colour of the butterflies. Why do you think there are several?
- What is the effect of the line:  
*'... a thick coat of living flame  
That shimmers as a shiver passes.'*

### Creative challenge

- Make several butterfly string puppets to attach to flexible willow sticks with different length threads.
- Try to recreate the same patterns and colours accurately. Watch Austin's Butterfly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqh1MRWZjms>
- Practise saying the poem, thinking about tone, pace and volume.

- Then decide how everyone should move their butterflies to create the effect suggested by the poem.
- Discuss whether you need any music or sound effects.
- Film and evaluate.

## THE SWIFTEST SAILFISH

### Talk for thought

- Listen to the poem without looking at the illustration.
- Draw what you think a sailfish looks like, then compare with the picture. How accurate were you?
- Watch the two films and say which you prefer and why. Which gives you the most information?  
<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/wild/videos/the-sailfish-frenzy/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyeusHmfTxQ>

### Vivid vocabulary

- What technique does Nicola Davies use to great effect?
- Why do you think the first line opens: '*Fast and fierce*'?
- What other animals could be described as fast and fierce?

### Writing challenge

- Write a three line poem for your chosen animal, innovating, using the pattern:  
*Fast and fierce*  
 .....ing, .....ing, .....ing  
 .....ing, .....ing, .....ing.
- Give a title to the poem, including your creature's name.

### Illustration conversation

- How does Petr Horáček suggest the sailfish's speed?
- Why do you think he showed the shoal of small fry as unpainted creatures?

### Art challenge

- Create your own picture of a swift animal, using pastels.

## ALL IN THE BITE

### Talk for thought

- What do you notice about the last line in each verse?
- Why do you think Nicola Davies does this?
- What other patterns do you notice in the poem?
- How does the poem make you feel about vipers?
- Re-read the poem: which part stays most vividly in your mind?
- Why can't a snake chew?
- What is another name for a viper?

### Writing challenge

Three line poem

Either:

- Choose an animal and substitute words:  
 A ..... has no .....,  
 No .....,  
 But it's got .....

Or:

- You could make it into a riddle:  
 My animal has no .....,  
 No .....,  
 But it's got .....
- Guess each other's animals.

### Illustration conversation

- How do you think the artist created the patterns on the viper?

### Art challenge

- Design a pattern with a texture.
- Build up a printing block using cardboard and string or by pressing a design into the flat section of a polystyrene food container.
- Use a roller to cover the printing block with paint and produce a repeated design on long strips of paper.

### Craft challenge

- Make a long accordion snake <http://www.easypeasyandfun.com/accordion-paper-snake-craft/>
- Use the long printed pattern strips you have prepared.

- Note where the eyes for a viper should be when you attach the head (the side, not the top!).
- Attach the body to two sticks and use when reciting the poem, making it move in a snaky fashion.

## CORALS

### Talk for thought

- Find examples of repetition in the poem. What effect does this have?
- What is miraculous about coral?
- Which class of animals do you think corals belong to?
- What are the threats to coral reefs?

### Vivid vocabulary

- Spot the simile.
- Would this have been as effective if ‘*open-close, open-close*’ had come after ‘*like miniature umbrellas*’?
- What picture do you visualise after reading the poem?

### Number cruncher

- Find out how to write one million in digits.
- Find out how to write one trillion in digits.
- What is the difference?
- Why can’t we write one zillion?
- What do you think we mean when we say ‘*zillion*’?

### Illustration conversation

- Watch the video on coral reefs: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/coral-reefs>
- Do you think that Petr Horáček has captured the quality of this ecosystem?

### Art challenge

- Create your own coral reef scene, using paint, printing and collage.
- Don’t forget to add ‘*rainbow clouds of fish*’.

## THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE HUMPBACK WHALE

### Talk for thought

- Why do you think Nicola Davies has linked the nightingale with the humpback whale?
- What does she mean in the line: ‘*Where the waves can’t reach*’?
- Why will the creatures never hear each other?
- Big question: what does the following line mean?  
*Their different songs are the same music...*

### Vivid vocabulary

- What verbs does Nicola Davies choose for the nightingale singing?
- What does she choose for the whale and what are the similarities and differences?
- Have a thesaurus race and chorus for words to do with singing.
- In pairs, choose to be a whale or a nightingale and collect your words and phrases together.  
Think of how you will utter them:  
e.g. *I trill and gurgle,*  
*Singing, singing.*  
*Notes rise and soar,*  
*Singing, singing.*

### Illustration conversation

- How do you think the artist created the different parts of this illustration? What order do you think he did it in?

## TOOL-USING ANIMALS

### Talk for thought

- Which of the examples did you find most surprising, and why was this?
- Why do you think these pages were chosen for the end of the book?

### Research

- Find out about other animals which use tools. Create your own sketches and beautifully written captions, explain how the tool is used.  
<http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20141107-incredible-tool-use-in-the-animal-world>



# Extras

## Talk for thought

- Should we have zoos? Research and debate.
- What can we do, as individuals, to help endangered species?
- Are some animals more important than others?
- Should species that have disappeared from some habitats be reintroduced?
- How do you think scientists find out about different species, such as the blue whale, which lives far out to sea, under the ocean, and the tiny bumblebee bat that lives in the top of rainforest trees?

## Art

Petr Horáček works in mixed media and uses collage. He decided to use different techniques according to which animal he was painting. For example, with the whale shark, he used masking fluid for the pattern of the shark's skin and watercolours; for the seahorse and corals, he used wax crayons and watercolours. For the other animals, he mostly used acrylic paint and coloured pencils. There is also monoprinting, where he scratched designs into polystyrene sheets and printed from them.

- Look at the prints on the first and final page. Can you see a repeating pattern?
- Design a repeat print using leaves and paint or design a repeating leaf pattern on the computer.
- Try silk painting designs for the more vividly coloured animals in this book.
- Look at Petr Horáček's other books and see what techniques he has used in illustrating these.

## Writing

- Animal secrets: pretend you are a creature of your choice and think of a secret you have:

*No one must know, but*

*I .....*

Collect together everyone's and compile in the *Animal Book of Secrets*.

- Use the knowledge you have gained of all the different animals and places to write:

*An explorer dreams of .....*

Remember that details of sight, smells, sounds, textures all make writing come to life.

- Four ways of looking (from an idea from *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* by Wallace Stevens)

o Choose an animal

o Brainstorm ideas in response to the following:

A simile

A question

An instruction

A wish

E.g. *Like a sugared sweet hovering,*

*Why do you sting?*

*Swap golden treasures,*

*So the plants grow in the spring.*

## Useful websites

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/children-and-families/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/families/children/>

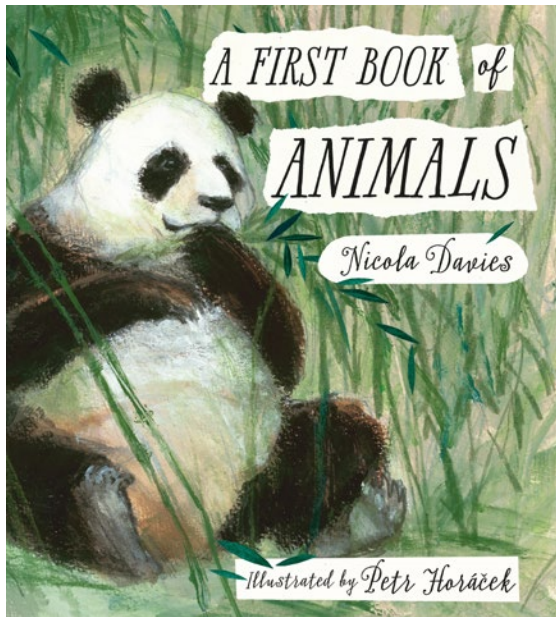
<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved/bumble-kids/>

<http://www.rainforestlistening.com/rainforest-listening.html>

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/>

<http://easyscienceforkids.com/>

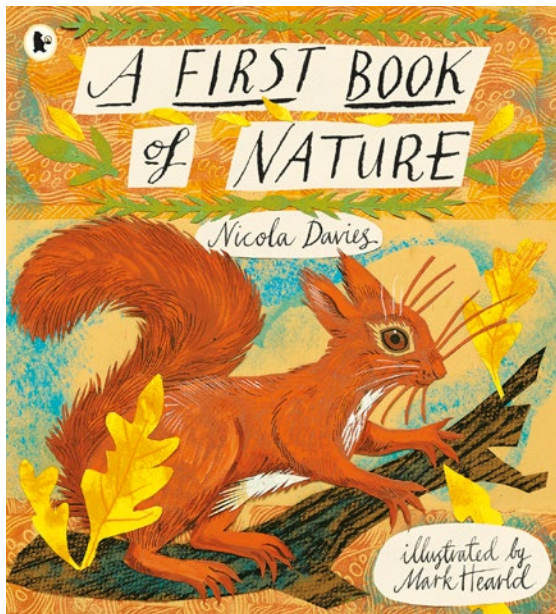
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