

Writing Project Planner: Owl Case Study

Part 1: Big Picture Planning: A worthy task, well-framed	
Writing Project Snapshot	As part of their case study on owls, third graders will write opinion pieces describing which physical traits are most important to owls for their survival. Students will use facts from their research to support this opinion.
Timeframe	3 weeks
Focus Question/Prompt	<p>What physical trait is most important to owls for survival?</p> <p>Owls are becoming an increasingly endangered species due to human impact on their natural habitats. Owls must rely on their adapting physical traits to survive. Use a minimum of three facts from our research to support your opinion.</p>
Learning Targets	<p>I can describe the physical traits of owls.</p> <p>I can share my opinion about physical traits of owls.</p> <p>I can use facts from my research to support my opinion.</p> <p>I can use tier 3 vocabulary from research in my writing.</p> <p>I can revise and edit my writing, following feedback from a friend and teacher.</p> <p>I can reflect on the quality of my writing using an opinion rubric and checklist.</p>
Models to use with students	Use a combination of endangered animal opinion writing pieces as mentor texts.
Criteria (align to learning targets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diagram of owls and physical traits ● Opinion of which physical trait owls rely most on for survival ● 3 reasons for opinion based on a facts from research ● Writing revised after feedback from peer and teacher, using opinion rubric and checklist ● Use tiered words from research (academic and domain: ex. endangered, talons, etc.)
Part 2: Test Driving the Task: Questions to ask yourself as you write	
To what extent is the task clear, doable and purposeful? Who will be the authentic audience?	This task requires students to meet a number of the third grade CCSS ELA standards particular to writing and language. For an end of the year case study, this feels appropriate. The audience for this work will be...

Does the focus question require students to use evidence from their research/reading?	The prompt asks students to support their opinion with facts from their research.
What knowledge do I need to successfully complete this task?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical traits of owls ● How writers share their opinions ● How to use research to inform writing
What writing skills do I need to successfully complete this task?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purpose of opinion writing (to share perspectives on a topic) ● Structure of opinion writing (stating an opinion and supporting it with a reason) ● Checking work against criteria and giving/receiving feedback based on criteria ● Selecting facts from research that support my opinion ● Using words that describe owls (how they look, what they do and what they need)

Part 3: Scaffolding Towards Success: Focus writing lessons

1. What makes quality opinion writing? Look at opinion rubric, checklist and exemplars
2. Planning our writing—Shared writing and independent writing: facts about physical traits of owls
3. Writing our topic sentences to introduce our opinion
4. Supporting our opinions about owls using facts from our research
5. Revising our writing—Did we have an opinion supported by facts?
6. Revising our writing—Did we use words that vividly describe what owls look like, do and need?
7. Editing our writing—Does our writing send a clear message to the reader?
8. Publishing writing
9. Reflection—Student self-assessment (and teacher) using opinion rubric

Part 4: Quick Writes

- Quick write 1: What is my opinion about owls?
- Quick write 2: What are the physical traits of owls?
- Quick write 3: What are characteristics of how owls behave?
- Quick write 4: What do owls need for survival?
- Quick write 5: Why are owls becoming endangered?

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Traits Rubric for Voice
3rd Grade

	1	2	3	4
Purpose & Commitment	No point of view is established.	Point of view is inconsistent throughout the writing. Narrative is dull.	Point of view is mostly consistent. Narrative is sincere, but not engaging.	Clear point of view throughout writing with evidence, narrative engages the reader and is exciting.

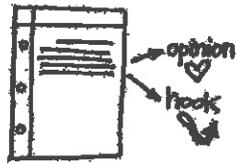
Opinion Writing Checklist

Grade 3

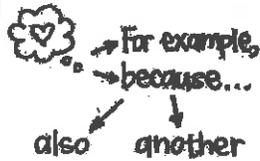
I told readers my opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them to understand my reasons.

Did I do it like a third grader?

NOT YET STARTING TO YES!



I wrote a beginning in which I not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about my opinion.



I connected my ideas and reasons with my examples using words such as *for example* and *because*. I connected one reason or example using words such as *also* and *another*.



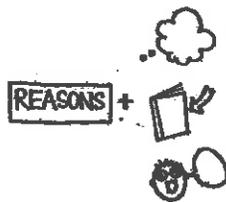
I worked on an ending, perhaps a thought or comment related to my opinion.



I wrote several reasons or examples of why readers should agree with my opinion and wrote at least several sentences about each reason.



I organized my information so that each part of my writing was mostly about one thing.



I not only named my reasons to support my opinion, but also wrote more about each one.



I not only told readers to believe me, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.

The Most Important Trait of an Owl

By ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

The most important trait of an owl are their talons. Their talons are shaped to grasp really well. Also they need talons to grab things for their nest. Another reason is that they need talons to grab prey.

Owls also need talons to balance on branches and perches. And also some owls need talons to walk. Another reason is that they use talons to grab onto trees and other things.

Owls need talons to get prey because they can fly while having their prey in their talons. Now that's neat! Also their talons can tear their prey apart. I don't want to be owl prey ouch! Another reason is that they attack with their talons.



OWL'S FEATHERS



Imagine an owl with no feathers. It would not only look weird but it would not survive. Warm and soft feathers are the MOST important trait of an owl's survival. Owls are silent fliers. They can't be heard in the night. They can catch their food or prey like the flash and like batman. Owls hunt at day and night. Only 2 owls hunt at night the rest hunt at night. That's cool! I wish I was a silent flier like them.

Owls keep warm, soft and comfy with owl feathers in the winter. They survive the winter by their feathers. Males pluck their feathers for the eggs since their feathers are warm, comfy and soft to make the owlets survive. The cold gets deflected off the feathers. I wish I had feathers like owls.

The soft and warm feathers help them muffle sounds to other owls. Different owls communicate different ways. It helps them call but not by making a "HOOT". Their primary feathers do the muffling. Owl moms and dads do that for babies. These are reasons why their feathers are the most important trait of owls.

Owl Camouflaging

By: [Name]

Deep in the forest where an owl is waiting for its prey to come, he is using his most important trait camouflaging looking like other things . This is why I think that camouflaging is the most important trait for survival for owls so they can't be seen by predators because if they weren't camo when they are hiding they will not get caught! When an owl is camouflaging they are never to be found and are very still so there predators will not find them. It is like a game of hide and go seek! They are also silent so that if the predator hears them they will not get caught. They also have camouflage for their babies just so they can camouflage and learn too like us and their parents!

What they can look like when they are hiding. Watch out! Some times when its prey is crawling on top of it and the next thing you know it they will catch it .Like a sneak attack! Sometimes they might look like tree bark and a log too so watch out! Some times when they are hiding they may look like an object and will scare the predators away. An animal that does that is a butterfly to look lie an owl and thy have eye spots to make the eyes for the owl.

What sounds they make when they are trying to keep the predators away. Whatever they are formed into they will make the sound of the animal. Barn owlets make the sound of a rattle snake when their mother is gone to keep the predators to stay away .Alot of different owls have a lot of different traits in the world. That is why I think that camouflaging is the most important trait of or for owls in the whole world in the wild and for the owlets camouflaging too so they can't be seen by predators.

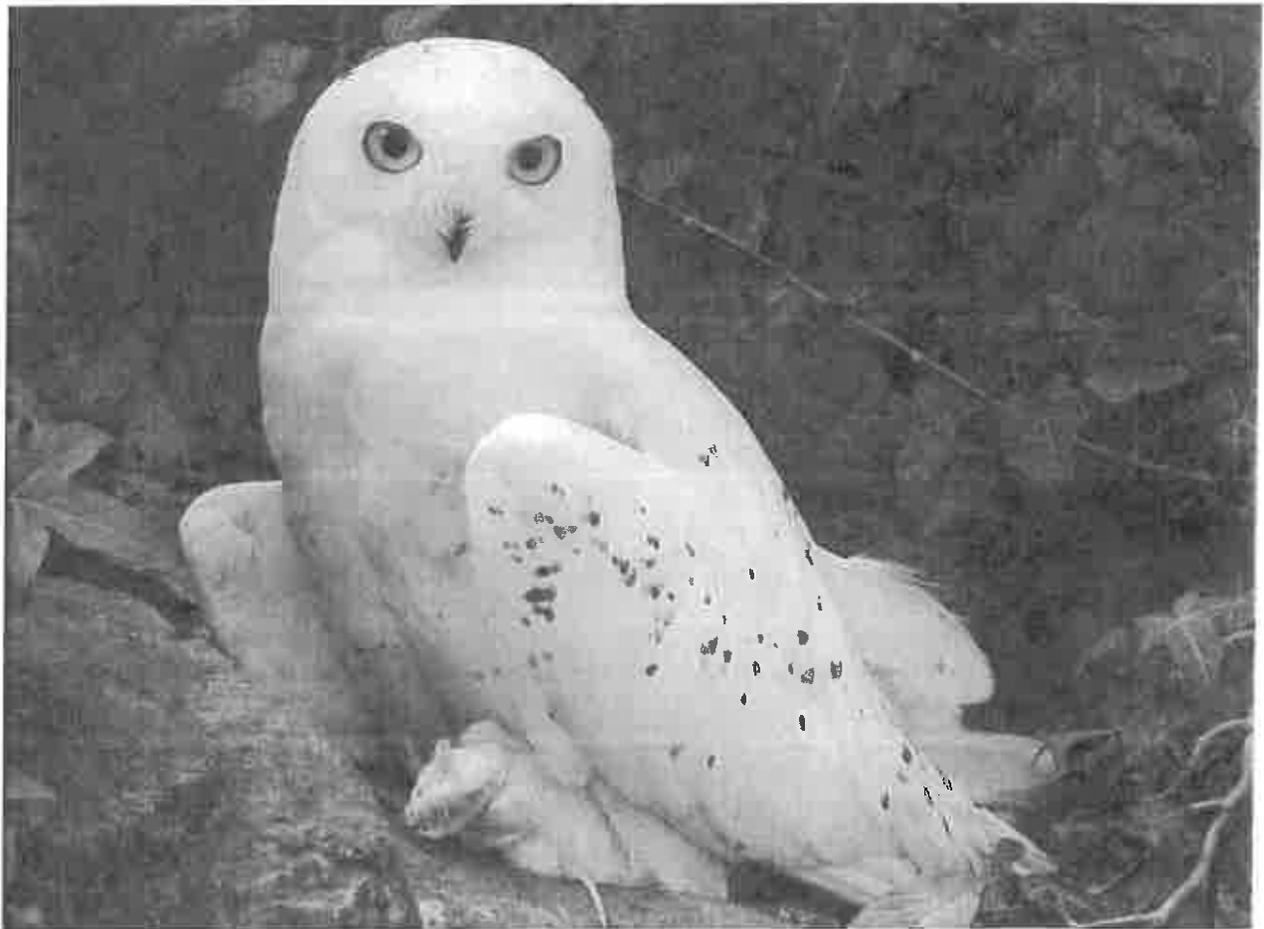
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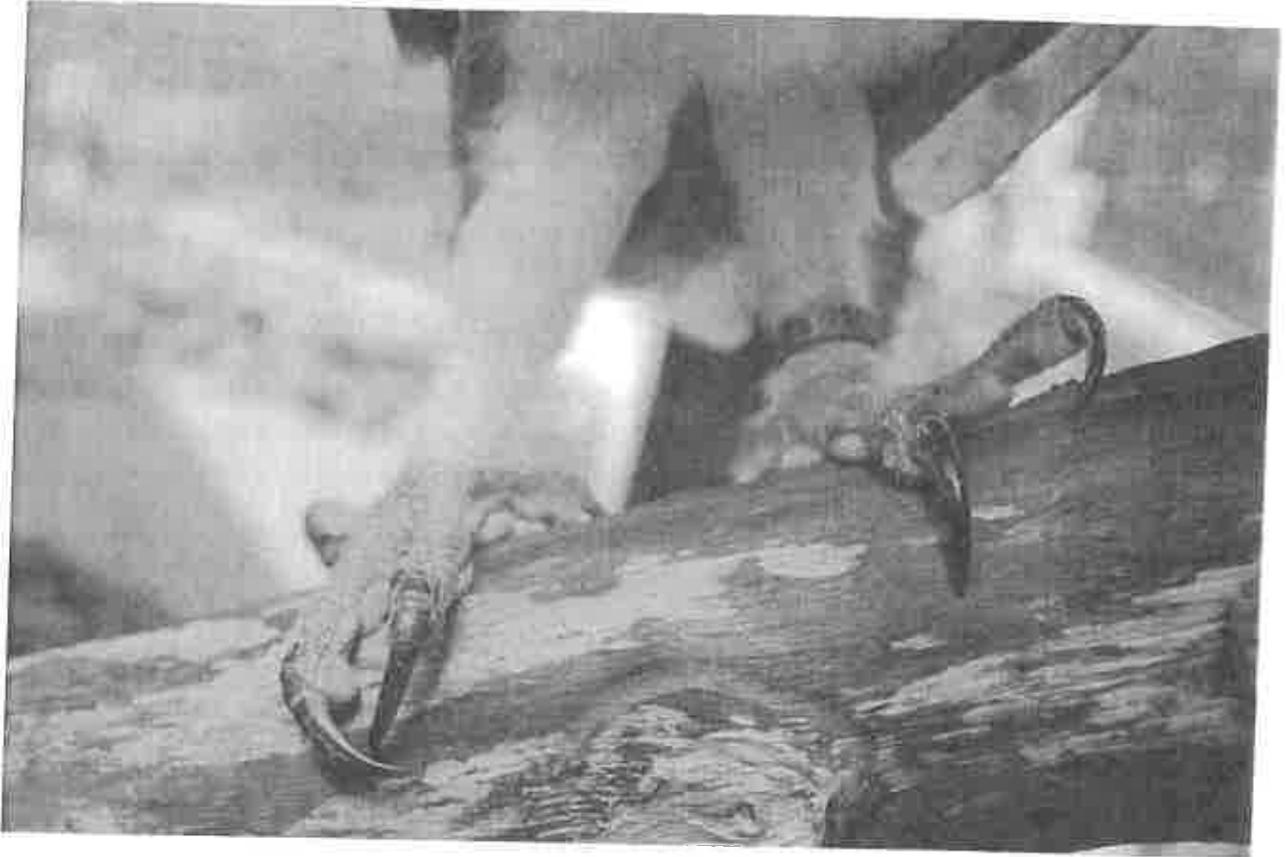
By ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

The most amazing trait of an owl is the wing. Owls have many feathers on their wings. Owls are always perfectly suited for flight. Owls have two types of feathers. This might surprise you but an owl's wing is as big as their body!

Owls are silent hunters mostly or partly because of their wings. The outside feathers on an owl are considered to be strong, for example stiff or not able to be moved so they don't make noise.

A feather is more useful than you think. Under those tough feathers are nice and fluffy feathers that show and keep them warm. Owls have a feather called dense feathers which keeps them strong to fight the wind. This is why the wing is the most important trait of an owl.





Best Trait of an Owl

By: [REDACTED]

What I think the most important trait of an owl is its talons. Without talons owls can't grab their prey. They can't swoop down real fast like they usually do. They would have to fly real fast then land just to grab prey. They couldn't even fly off with its prey. Their prey would keep slipping through their wings.

Without talons owls can't keep their balance. For example have you ever seen a picture that has an owl standing on its prey? without talons owls can't do that. Owls couldn't grip onto trees and some owls need talons to walk.

If owls didn't have talons they couldn't keep their balance they also couldn't grab prey or grip onto trees. Those are all the reasons that talons are the best trait of an owl.

OWL TALONS



Owls would be very clumsy without talons. In my opinion I think talons are the most important trait of an owl's survival. An owl can use its talons to catch or eat prey. When an owl hunts for food it starts up in a tree than works its way down to the ground but they have to stay hidden because whatever animal species is out at night is nocturnal just like the owl. Than in just a blink of an eye the owl grabs the prey with their sharp talons they have on them. But if the owl didn't have really sharp talons they wouldn't be able to catch food and without food the owl would die .Also when an uses their talons to eat it's just like having hands and feet combined. And when an owl eats they use the tip of their talons. Which is just like owls eating with invisible silverware because owls are messy eater's .they catch their prey with talons so they can cut up their prey and adjust their food. Than soon after that the owl will cough up their food which is called owl pellets. Can you imagine yourself coughing up your dinner?

My second reason why talons are the most important trait of an owl's survival possessive is so they can attack or defend themselves. When an owl uses its talons to protect themselves from their predator they use their talons to fight off enemies. Owls can also use talons to attack humans when they get to close to the owl nest or the baby owlets which makes owls the most powerful birds. And if an owl is in danger with a non-predator or non-prey owls use talons to threaten the enemy so that helps keep away predators which attacks more prey. Can you believe how small owls are but they can still take down a grown man?

Finally my last reason about talons being the most important trait of an owl's survival possessive is so they can grip on tree limbs to build nests .when an owl builds a nest it has to grip the tree tightly with the joints in their talons which allows them to move around their talons like human hands! But without talons owls would have a very hard time staying on trees which is like spinning around 30 times and then do 10 jumping jacks.inmpossibe they also have to balance which wings cover because the same amount of weight is on each side of the owl.in fact owls should join a gymnast. Owl's need talons to make their nest they use talons to weave leaves, grass, dirt, and sticks. Those were 3 reasons why I think owl's talons are the most important trait of survival.

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