Title/Author: *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen

Suggested Time to Spend: 5 Days (At least 20 minutes per day)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.7, RL.1.10; W.1.2, W.1.8; SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.5, SL.1.6; L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.4, L.1.5

Lesson Objective:

Students will listen to a Caldecott Award winning, beautifully illustrated picture book read aloud and use literacy skills (reading, writing, discussion and listening), with attention to figurative language and vocabulary, to understand the central message of this picture book.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students.** This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

Why is owling a special time for the girl and her Pa? She has to wait and work hard to enjoy this reward.

What is this story trying to teach us? If we wait, and we persevere, we may enjoy some of life’s most valuable and unique rewards.

Synopsis

*Owl Moon* is a 1987 children’s picture book by Jane Yolen. The book won many awards, most notably being the Caldecott Medal for its illustrations. This picture book is described as a family story and is about a girl and her father who go owling for the first time on a cold winter’s night. Along the way they encounter a great horned owl. It is gentle, yet adventurous, quiet yet full of sound. The author has written this book about her husband who is an avid outdoorsman and birdwatcher. The book teaches students about patience and appreciation for nature. Four different times during the book the girl steps out of first person and talks directly to the reader. It is during these times, that she is metacognitive about what she is learning from her Pa. The lesson can be heard if you listen closely to the times when the girl says, “If you go owling, you have to be quiet, that’s what Pa always says.” Later she says, “If you go owling, you have to be quiet and make your own heat.” “When you go owling, you have to be brave.” Finally, on the last page, she says, “When you go owling, you don’t need words or warm or anything but hope.” The repetitious nature of the language and the way the girls tells us what she is learning, are the author’s demonstration of the lesson/theme of this book. In addition, it is important for the teacher to know that in the Common Core State Standards, figurative language is not specifically listed until fourth grade. In this first-grade lesson, the teacher is working to provide guidance and support to students in demonstrating understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings and connections between words (L.1.5c).

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes this Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the source of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Hint: you may want to copy the questions vocabulary words and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| --- | --- |
| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| **FIRST READING:**  Pull the students together or use a document camera so that all can enjoy the illustrations. Read aloud the entire picture book with minimal interruption.  Since this book was written by an author who lives in a state where there is much cold weather and snow, draw attention to the illustrations, the snow, frost, and the woods. Be sure students notice that this story takes place during the winter in the middle of the night.  Activity No. 1: Show students pictures of winter landscapes. | The goal here is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole. This will give them some context and sense of completion before they dive into examining the parts of the book more carefully.  Throughout the first reading, draw attention to the setting of the story and the illustrations by noting the footprints in the snow, the trees, the animals hidden in the woods watching the father and the girl, and the dark forest.  You may want to share photos/video of winter scenes with students with the following links:  <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/photos/avalanche-winter-general/#/environment-winter13-fly-fishing-colorado_27804_600x450.jpg>  National Geographic Web site of snow scenes  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuqVnqNPyC0>  You Tube-Fast Falling Snow (no music)  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQN-HTbnvrw>  You Tube-Nature Sounds: Lake Walk, Crunchy Snow, Rustling Grass….  Sounds of the Great Horned Owl can be found:  [http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=sounds+of+owls&qpvt=sounds+of+owls&FORM= VDRE#view=detail&mid=A13F019A3E17336BC0CEA13F019A3E17336BC0CE](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=sounds+of+owls&qpvt=sounds+of+owls&FORM=%20VDRE#view=detail&mid=A13F019A3E17336BC0CEA13F019A3E17336BC0CE) . |
| **SECOND READING:**  During this reading of the book, you will read specific pages and engage students in discourse that helps them understand any challenging vocabulary. In addition to vocabulary, there will be some text-based questions built in leading to the theme of this piece. Teachers might want to post the words and the student-friendly definitions. See Activity 2 handout for the vocabulary word cards. In addition (see earlier Synopsis), notice when the little girl uses “you” in the text and she is talking to the reader. This will be further developed in the fourth read.  Page 5  What does it means to go “**owling**?” How do you know?  Does the little girl know what to expect the first night when she goes owling with her father?  How do you know?  When did they go owling?  How were they able to see if it’s late at night in the forest?  Page 8  How do the words or the pictures in this book help us to know what **snow** is?  What part of the text helps us understand what **footprints** are?  The author says, “Pa made a long shadow, but mine was short and round.” What is a **shadow**?  Page 9  What does the little girl say you have to do if you go owling?  Would that be easy to do?  Page 12  The author says that, “Pa shrugged and I shrugged.” What did they do? How does the story help you know what the word **shrugged** means?  Would it be hard to shrug and not talk?  Page 16  The author says the shadows **stained** the snow?  What does this mean?  Is the snow really stained?  Page 21  The author says an **echo** came threading its way back through the trees. What is an echo?  Page 24  What is a **meadow**?  Page 32  What does the little girl say at the end of the story?  Did she tell us this earlier in the story?  Why might she repeat some of the words?  Activity 2: After reading the vocabulary in context and asking questions to clarify the word meanings, students will engage in total physical response (TPR) by acting out the vocabulary words for each other. See word cards attached. | Owling is taking a walk in the forest and “calling” out to an owl to see if the owl will appear. In the story the girl says, “if you go owling…”  The first night she knows they are hoping to see an owl, but her brothers have told her it might not happen on the first try.  (Embed student discourse by asking students to turn to a shoulder partner and talk about owling before choosing a few to share whole group.)  The text says it was late at night.  The “moon was bright.”  Students can use the words “feet crunched” or “crisp” or “white” to describe snow. They should also refer to the illustrations and the way that Pa and the girl are dressed in winter coats, hats, and scarfs.  The girl and her Pa are making footprints in the snow when they walk. The illustrations show us what a footprint looks like.  A shadow is a shape that appears when a person or thing blocks the sun or a source of light.  (If students have trouble understanding how shadows work, bring a flashlight to class and demonstrate by turning off the lights and shining a flashlight behind a child’s back. Talk with students about how a bigger person makes a bigger shadow and how a smaller person makes a smaller shadow. Then put white butcher paper down on the floor to act as snow. Notice how the shadows are blacker when they are on the white paper.)  She says, “If you go owling you have to be quiet, that’s what Pa always says.”  No, it would be hard to be quiet and run along to keep up with your Pa. You would want to call out and ask him to wait for you. It’s dark out there and it could be scary.  Students should be able to talk about how they listened and didn’t hear an owl, then they shrugged. Practice total physical response for this word by modeling shrugging and having student emulate the teacher’s actions.  Yes, you would want to tell your Pa what you heard or ask if it was time to go home because you were cold.  It means the snow had a dark mark on it.  It means the snow looks like someone spilled something on it.  No, it’s the shadow, and when they move the stain will move.  An echo is when you use a loud voice and shout, like across a canyon, and the noise comes back to you.  Students should use the picture to see that the meadow is a big open space in the forest. Because they were in a meadow, this allowed them to see the owl’s shadow. The text says the owl’s call came from high in the trees on the edge of the meadow.  She says, “When you go owling, you don’t need words or warm or anything but hope. That’s what Pa says, the kind of hope that flies on silent wings under a shining Owl Moon.”  It sounds familiar, like we heard it earlier.  Sometimes when an author wants to be sure we got something, they might repeat it several times.  Total Physical Response, also widely known as TPR, is an approach that focuses on teaching language together with physical activities. The main idea behind this approach is that students, whether children or adults, are able to pick up and learn languages better and faster if they associate a physical act to a certain word. For example, if a teacher says "wave," students wave their hands in response. Read more: <http://www.ehow.com/info_7895677_total-physical-response-activities.html#ixzz2rTvmo5xQ> |
| **THIRD READING:**  Reread the picture book *Owl Moon* stopping as follows on specific pages to draw attention to the language of the book that the author uses to tell us about the winter weather. You may want to place sticky notes in your book to assist with text-based questions. In addition, page numbers referred to in this lesson begin with page 1 being the title page and continue to page 32, the final page of the book.  Page 5  Reread this page and ask the students, “What does the author mean when she says the ‘trees stood still as giant statues?’”  Page 6  What does the author mean when she writes, “And when their voices faced away it was as quiet as a dream?”  Was there a dream happening on this page?  Page 10  What does the author mean when she writes, “The moon made his face into a silver mask.”  Page 16  What does the author mean when she says, “The shadows…stained the white snow?”­­­  Page 18  The author says, “…the snow was whiter than the milk in a cereal bowl.” Why does she say that?  Page 21  An echo is a noise that you make that comes back to you. What does the author mean by, “…an echo came threading its way through the trees.”  Activity 3: Use the document camera to work with students to complete the attached Activity 3. Explain to students that writers use figurative language to help us paint a picture of what’s happening in the story. Model for students the first two examples and then have students complete the final example and draw a picture of what they mean by their sentence. | Statues don’t move or make noise. The author is comparing the trees to statues because they are not moving or making any noise.  Dreams can be quiet and peaceful so the author is saying that when they stopped talking, and stood still, the sounds of the forest were very, very quiet.  No, this is the way the author using words to describe the quiet.  When you’re out late at night in the forest and it’s very dark, the moon is the only light. The reflection of the moon on Pa’s face lights it up. The moon makes Pa’s face look like a silver mask.  The author is talking about shadows on the ground where there is snow. Snow is white and shadows are dark or black. It looks like a stain on the snow.  The white snow in this story tells us that no one else has walked on this snow. They are in the forest where no one else has walked since the last snow fell. The light from the moon is reflecting off of the white snow making it seem whiter than milk.  The author means that the girl and her Pa can hear the owl answering with “Whoo-whoo-who-who-whoooo.” You hear the sound of the owl coming through the trees.  [If students are still grappling with the vocabulary word threading, show them with a needle and thread. In addition, to make a connection for ELL students (total physical response) you might have a child thread his/her way through other students on the playground).]  See attached Activity 3.  Tell students that sometimes authors use words in a certain way; we call it figurative language to help the reader visualize the story. In the story *Owl Moon,* the author Jane Yolen uses figurative language to make the story more interesting to read.  Use a document camera to work with students to complete the following cloze activity. This could be done whole group, or started whole group and then moved to partner work, and finally, independent work for the last answer. Have students complete the last example on their own and draw a picture of their sentence.   1. The snow was as white as the milk in a cereal bowl. 2. The moon made its face into a silver mask. 3. The trees stood as still as giant statues. |
| **FOURTH READING:**  Reread the entire text, stopping on specific pages to focus on the girl and the theme of this story. Use the attached Activity 4 sheet to draw attention to times in the story when the little girl speaks to the reader (second person point-of-view) to bring their attention to something she has learned. These questions have been marked with an asterisk (\*). After each of these questions, students will draw pictures and annotate four parts of the story, the beginning, the early middle, the later middle, and the ending of the story.  Page 5  What time of day is it when the girl and her Pa go owling?  Page 9  \*What does Pa say you have to do if you go owling?\*  Page 12  What happened when Pa called to the owl?  How did the girl feel?  Page 14  What makes owling hard work for the little girl?  \*What do you have to do if you go owling?\*  What does it mean to “make your own heat?”  Page 16  \*What do you have to do when you go owling?\*  Why?  Page 22  What happens this time when Pa calls the owl?  Page 29  How long did the owl and the girl stare at each other?  Was it really 100 minutes?  Page 32  \*What do you need when you go owling?\*  Why does the girl say, “When you go owling, you don’t need words or warm or anything but hope.” | Activity 4  Page 9 – “When you go owling you have to be quiet. That’s what Pa always says.  Page 14 – “If you go owling, you have to be quiet and make your own heat.”  Page 16 – “When you go owling, you have to be brave.  Page 32 – When you go owling you don’t need words or warm or anything but hope.  It is late one winter night, long past the girl’s bedtime.  When you go owling you have to be quiet, that’s what Pa always says.  Teacher think aloud: “When I read this sentence, I notice that all of a sudden the girl isn’t just telling a story. She’s stopped using the word “I” and started talking directly to us, the reader.”  The owl did not answer.  She was not disappointed because her brothers told her that you might see an owl, but you might not.  She’s been waiting a long time and it’s cold when you go owling. She had to run to keep up with her Pa. It might take a long time to see an owl and you have to be quiet.  You have to be quiet and make your own heat.  Make your own heat means you have to keep yourself warm the best you can by wearing the appropriate clothes, moving, etc.  When you go owling, you have to be brave.  It’s dark and scary and you’re in a forest with big trees and hidden animals.  Pa hears the owl call back and Pa calls to the owl a third time.  For one minute, three minutes, maybe even one hundred minutes.  No, but when you’re trying hard to be patient, and you’re excited, a few minutes can seem like one hundred minutes.  Hope.  The important thing was that she still had hope about getting to see the owl. It was okay that she had to wait and be cold. |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK – Culminating Task

* What lessons did the little girl learn when she went owling with her Pa? Write a sentence that tells one of the lessons the girl learned. Then, give examples from the story that support your thinking. (Students who have difficulty writing sentences can draw a picture illustrating the lesson learned. A culminating activity worksheet has been attached for your optional use.)

**Possible lessons**: One lesson the girl learned is that you have to have hope and patience when you go owling because you might not see an owl right away, or you might not see one at all. Pa had to call the owl two times before they saw an owl. Another lesson she learned is that when you are trying to see an animal in the wild, you have to be quiet so you can hear them or spot them. The girl learned that sometimes you have to be brave when you’re doing something new or going someplace you’ve never been before (like the dark forest at night) because it gives you a chance to learn that you can do something you hadn’t thought you could do. Another lesson she learned is that if you stick with something, even when it’s hard, you might get an unexpected reward. Even though owling was hard because you had to be quiet, brave, and it was cold outside, she got to see an owl in its natural habitat and spend special time with her Pa.

Vocabulary

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| --- | --- |
| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your students will be unfamiliar with) |
| Page 8 - snow - When it rains, but the temperature is really cold, the rain drops are frozen and it turn to white snow, flakes that can make piles on the ground.  Page 8 - footprints - a mark left by a shoe or a foot in the ground or the snow.  Page 16 – stained – a spot of color different from the basic color.  Page 24 - meadow – an opening of grass, near the trees and forest. | Page 5 - owling – To go out into the forest, in the middle of the night, hoping to call/see an owl.  Page 8 – shadow - a shape on the ground from the light shining on a body.  Page 12 - shrugged – To raise and contract the shoulders.  Page 14 – make your own heat  Page 21 – echo – a sound that goes out and comes back to you. |

Fun Extension Activities for this book and other useful Resources

* National Geographic Web site: <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/photos/avalanche-winter-general/#/environment-winter13-fly-fishing-colorado_27804_600x450.jpg>.
* Author Jane Yolen’s Web site with activities for extending this work: <http://janeyolen.com/works/owl-moon/>.
* To see a YouTube video of a song with motions about the book *Owl Moon:* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvjx03UeLEY>.
* During writing, have students incorporate figurative language into their sentences/paragraphs.
* Students could play with/trace shadows during lunch recess or P.E. to further their understanding of the vocabulary. They could also trace footprints on the sidewalk with chalk.

Note to Teacher

* This text and the culminating activities, if included in a unit that focuses on the family, could be shared with fathers depending upon your students and their family situations.
* This lesson could also be extended to include informational text about owls, birds, or the moon.
* Scholastic, Inc. also offers many activities for further enjoyment of this piece of literature.
* Throughout the discussion portions of the lesson guide, teachers may want to consider how they can engage all students. For example, when posing a question, the teacher may choose to allow students to engage in partner talk before discussing whole group. The use of sentence frames for accountable partner talk would be useful to both ELL and language impoverished students. For example, after reading the book, a teacher could assign students a partner to engage in student discourse. The teacher would explicitly ask Partner A to tell Partner B, “When you go owling, you have to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Partner B would have the job of listening for three things you have to do when you go owling, counting to see if three items are shared, and being ready to share whole group.

**Activity 2**

**snow**

**footprints**

**owling**

**meadow**

**shadow**

**shrugged**

**stained**

**echo**

**Activity 3**

Directions:

Tell students that sometimes authors use words in a certain way (we call it figurative language), to help the reader visualize the story. In the story *Owl Moon,* the author Jane Yolen uses figurative language to make the story more interesting to read.

Use a document camera to work with students to complete the following cloze activity. This could be done whole group, or started whole group and then moved to partner work, and finally, independent work for the last answer. Have students complete the last example on their own and draw a picture of their sentence.

1. The snow was as white as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The moon made his face into a \_­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The trees stood as still as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Pa raised his face to call out again, but before he could open is mouth an echo came \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Activity 4**

**Directions:**

Each time you stop to discuss what the little girl has learned and what she has to do when she goes owling, write down the words from the book and draw a picture.

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| 1  When you go owling, you have to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. | 2  When you go owling, you have to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |
| 3  When you go owling, you have to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. | 4  When you go owling, you need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |

**Culminating Task**

What lessons did the little girl learn when she went owling with her Pa? Write a sentence that tells one of the lessons the girl learned and what from the story helped you know that. Draw a picture to show the lesson she learned.

One of the lessons the girl learned was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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What Makes This Text Complex?

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

630 Lexile

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that made it more or less complex.

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| --- | --- |
| Theme – perseverance, appreciation.  Example from text: “When you go owling, you don’t  need words or warm, or anything but hope.”  “I had been waiting to go owling with Pa for a long, long time.”  “When you go owling, you have to be brave.”  **Meaning/Purpose** | Text is written from the girl’s point of view, but at times, she talks directly to the reader (also called an aside).  Example:  “If you go owling, you have to be quiet and make your own heat.”  **Structure** |
| **Language**  Piece includes much figurative language.  Example: “We watched silently with the heat in our mouths, the heat of all those words we had not spoken.”  “…even my eyes got cloudy with the cold.”  “…an echo came threading its way through the snow.”  “…and the snow below it was whiter than the milk in a cereal bowl.”  Vocabulary – owling, shrugged, meadow  Syntax can be difficult as sometime the sentences are “backward.” (The subject follows the predicate or is embedded later in the sentence.  Example: “It was late one winter night, long past my bedtime, when Pa and I went owling.” | **Knowledge Demands**  Students in large urban districts often don’t have  Experiences with the snow or owling. They don’t  know that snow crunches when you walk on it or how  quiet the forest can be away from the city. They aren’t  aware of the darkness of the woods or possibly that owls  are nocturnal. |

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

* The use of figurative language throughout the book would be challenging for students are warrant additional instruction.
* Knowledge demands for students who live in the areas of the United States that don’t get snow nor have access to the forest would be challenging.
* Tier II vocabulary words such as “owling, shrugged, meadow” should be taught.

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

* By reading, and rereading, and engaging in discourse, students will learn about parts of the country with snow, their family traditions, and seasons. As students engage in additional conversations about the figurative language within the text, they will gain experience in and knowledge of imagery and the language of stories. In addition, when tied to an informational piece, such as *National Geographic Kids: Bird Guide of North America,* students have an opportunity to connect to science content and learn more about the great horned owl.

1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in? First grade.