

Investigate Predators

Investigate Predators series contains six non-fiction children's books – *Predators*, *Big cats*, *Wild dogs*, *Bears*, *Birds of prey* and an accompanying *Predators* CD-ROM.

***Predators* overview book**

Predators is an introductory overview book that lays the foundations for the detailed information contained in the books on specific animals: *Big cats*, *Wild dogs*, *Bears*, *Birds of prey* and *Snakes*.

It can be used in group work and, in conjunction with the CD-ROM, in shared work to teach children key scientific concepts concerning predators. You can also use it to develop the literacy skills necessary for reading, writing and talking about non-fiction.

Big cats, Wild dogs, Bears, Birds of prey and Snakes

These books develop the concepts touched upon in the overview book, *Predators*, and are ideal for group work in developing children's scientific knowledge and vocabulary while teaching them the literacy skills they need to read and write non-fiction.

CD-ROM

The CD-ROM is extremely versatile and contains video clips, audio, in-depth information and games. It is ideal for teaching and modelling concepts, non-fiction features, grammar and vocabulary contained in the overview book. It can be used alone or alongside the overview book to develop children's enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of the defences that animals need for survival, while promoting non-fiction literacy skills.

Highly flexible, it is perfect as an extension of the overview book since it contains further information, activities and in-depth answers to questions. It also contains a source of activities for less-confident learners allowing them to access the text through the audio and other stimulus to generate interest while developing knowledge in the subject.

Teachers' notes

The following pages provide teachers' notes for leading guided reading sessions. They can be used in any order and cover work at word, sentence and text levels.

Investigate Predators teachers' notes

Key words

predator, prey, hunt, habitat, food chain, camouflage

Activities for guided reading

- Look at the cover of *Predators* together. Can the children name the animals featured?
- Ask the children what they know about these animals and list suggestions on the board. Explain that this is a non-fiction book and gives information about these animals.
- Tell them that a non-fiction text is more likely to be illustrated with photos than drawings. Can the children give reasons for this?
- Read through the contents page and explain its purpose.
- Identify the glossary. In the text, find a word in bold type and model looking it up in the glossary.
- Model reading page 4. Draw the children's attention to the words 'All', 'Many' and 'Some'. Explain that the text begins by providing general information ('All') and then goes into the particular ('Many', 'Some'). Explain that this is a feature of a non-chronological non-fiction text.
- Read the first sentence together on page 4 and ask the children what they notice about the way it begins (capital letter) and ends (full stop).
- Look at the verbs 'need', 'eat' and 'hunt'. Point out that they are verbs that tell us what is happening in the present and explain that non-chronological reports are usually set in the present tense.
- Cover the word 'are' in the sentence 'Hunting animals are called predators'. Ask the children to fill in the missing word and to justify their answer.
- What do the children notice about the punctuation in the last two sentences on page 4? Explain that questions are a common feature of non-fiction texts. Why do they suppose questions are used? (To gain the reader's interest, to prepare the reader to find the answers further in the text.)
- Point to the word 'prey' and ask the children why it is set in bold.
- Ask the children to identify words that begin with the consonant cluster 'pr' (for example predator, prey, prowl, prides).
- Turn to page 6 and ask the children to identify the words 'All', 'Some' and 'Other'.
- If the reader wants to find out where else in the text the word 'fangs' is used, what should they do? Explain that the purpose of an index is to help the reader to locate information.
- Look at page 8 together and explain the purpose of labels.
- Explain that the comparison chart on pages 8–9 allows the reader to access information at a glance.
- Clap the number of syllables in the following words: 'prey', 'predators', 'belong', 'hunting' and 'habitat'.

Speaking and listening opportunities

- Invite the children to take turns in making a short presentation on one type of animal discussed in the book that has captured their imagination and to talk about the way it hunts for food.
- Check the children's comprehension by asking them to comment on the picture on page 5. Why do they suppose the image of the lion looms large over the zebras?

Follow-on writing opportunities

- Write the words 'zebra', 'donkey', 'cheetah', 'gazelle', 'owl', 'wolf', 'orca' and 'lion' onto separate cards and ask the children to arrange them in alphabetical order.
- Invite the children to plan a draft paragraph about the cheetah, using the information they have learned. Remind them to use key words, present tense and capital letters at the beginning of the sentence and full stops at the end.

Support for less confident learners

- Ask the children to draw a picture of a cheetah. Prompt them to think of a caption and labels to body parts. Model writing the caption and labels.
- Invite the children to think about key words they could use to accompany their picture.

Extension for more confident learners

- Ask the children to make a list of other things they would like to know about the cheetah. Write their suggestions down in the form of questions. Encourage them to find answers to these questions using websites and information books.

Bears teachers' notes

Key words

predator, den, cub, hunt, prey, camouflage, eat

Activities for guided reading

- Before reading, cover the title of the book and ask the children to identify the animal depicted. Can they predict what the book is about?
- Challenge the children to find the contents page, a chapter heading, the glossary and index. Can they find an example of a label?
- Check the children's comprehension skills as you go along. Read a spread with the children and ask them to tell you what they have just learned.
- Investigate words with the same sound but with different spelling patterns, focusing on the word 'bear'. Can the children think of other words that have the same sound? (For example, 'pear', 'lair', 'fare'.) Make lists of words arranged by grapheme 'ear', 'air' and 'are'. With the children, scan the text for key words.
- Make a list of words that rhyme with 'meal' (for example, 'seal', 'deal', 'feel', 'peel') and sort them into 'ea' and 'ee' words.
- Extend vocabulary by making a list of animals and the word used to denote their young, for example: Bear – cub; Seal – pup; Bird – chick; Kangaroo – joey and so on.

Speaking and listening opportunities

- Check the children's comprehension skills by asking why they think the mother polar bear is so hungry at the end of winter.
- Ask the children to talk about one fact in the book that has caught their imagination.
- In groups, ask the children to prepare a presentation about polar bears. Encourage them to think of a list of key words, and to organise their thoughts in a spidergram.

Follow-on writing opportunities

- In small groups, ask the children to research and take notes on topics concerning the polar bear that they wish to write about. Get them to list the topics as headings and to write notes under each heading, for example food – favourite meal – seals; birds; habitat – Arctic, white like snow; den – snow, cubs born in den, winter. Explain that these notes are the basis for topics that they may wish to discuss in their writing.
- Tell the children they are going to write a draft text on the polar bear, using the spidergram they prepared earlier as a skeleton. Suggest that they use each topic – camouflage, prey, den – as a heading. Remind them that the opening sentence or paragraph of their writing should provide general information and that subsequent paragraphs should be organised by heading. Remind them that headings can be presented in any order since each heading represents a different topic. Ask them to think about appropriate illustrations and captions and/or labels.

- Ask the children to write a caption for the photo on page 5.
- Ask the children to sort the bears referred to on page 7 into two categories: meat-eaters and mainly plant-eaters.

Support for less confident learners

- Model writing a text on polar bears based on the spidergram. Using their suggestions as the basis, model a strong opening sentence and show them how to organise the text under headings.

Extension for more confident learners

- Ask the children to provide illustrations and to write captions and/or labels to support their text.
- Tell them to research other animals that use camouflage to hide from predators.

Big cats teachers' notes

Key words

predators, food chain, cubs, hunt, prey, camouflage

Activities for guided reading

- Challenge the children to find the contents page, a chapter heading, the glossary and index. Can they find an example of a caption and a label?
- Before reading the book, ask the children what they know about big cats. Record their answers on cards, and arrange the cards into appropriate categories. Then ask the children what they want to know about big cats. Write their answers in the form of questions.
- After reading, ask the children to compare the lists and identify any questions that still need answering.
- Read page 4 together. Why do the children suppose the word 'roar' is in a different font and colour? How should they read the sentence aloud?
- What effect is created by starting the text with a question? (To gain the reader's interest.)
- Cover the verb 'is' in the second and third sentences on page 16 and ask the children to fill in the gap. Now cover the verb 'are' in the first and second sentence on page 20 and ask the children to fill the gap. Ask them to explain their answers.
- Can the children find words that rhyme with 'cub'?
- Investigate words with the same sound but different spelling pattern by focusing on the word 'coat'. What other words have the same /oa/ phoneme? (For example 'boat', 'stoat', 'vole'.)

Speaking and listening opportunities

- Check the children's comprehension skills as you go along. Read a spread with the children and ask them to tell you what they have just learned.
- Ask the children to discuss how they would feel and what they would do if they came face to face with the lion on page 5.
- Ask the children to talk about their favourite picture in the book and to give reasons for their choice.

Follow-on writing opportunities

- Using pieces of card, write the names of eight animals discussed in the book (for example 'jaguar', 'cheetah', 'lion', 'leopard', 'tiger', 'hyena', 'antelope', 'gazelle') in a random order. Ask the children to write the names in alphabetical order.
- Ask the children to sort the animals discussed in the book under two headings: predator and prey.
- Challenge the children to write a list of three verbs and three adjectives that they can use in their own writing about the cheetah.
- Look at the sentence 'Wild big cats are at the top of their food chain'. Ask them to look up the words 'food chain' in the glossary.

Support for less confident learners

- Help the children to suggest one verb and one adjective that describe the cheetah by looking at the photographs.

Extension for more confident learners

- Ask the children to write a paragraph about the cheetah, using the three verbs and adjectives they have previously written down.

Birds of prey teachers' notes

Key words

predators, prey, hunt, glide, nocturnal, feather, swoop, talon, beak

Activities for guided reading

- Look at the cover together and ask the children to predict what the book is about. Can they identify the animal on the cover? Before reading, ask the children what they know about owls.
- Challenge the children to find the contents page, a chapter heading, the glossary and index. Can they find an example of a caption and a label?
- After reading, make a list of words that rhyme with 'owl' (for example, 'howl', 'growl', 'prowl').
- Clap the number of syllables in the following words: 'rabbit', 'head', 'falcon', 'feather' and 'predator'.
- Read the boxed text on page 7 and highlight the word 'don't'. Do the children know that this is a contraction of 'do not'? Do they know any other words that can be contracted? ('Won't', 'can't'.)
- Look at the word 'nightfall' on page 9. Can the children split the word into component parts? Together, make a list of compound words, for example 'football', 'pancake' and 'nightlight'.
- Ask the children to scan the text for powerful verbs that they could use in their own writing on birds of prey, for example 'swoop', 'glide', 'twist' and 'grab'.
- Write the words 'condors', 'vultures', 'hawks', 'eagles', 'owls', 'vole' and 'mouse' onto separate cards and ask the children to arrange them alphabetically.

Speaking and listening opportunities

- Invite the children to discuss the effectiveness of the word 'swoops' on page 5 and its overall impact on the layout of the spread.
- Ask the children to write a caption for the photo on page 17.
- Invite the children to talk about which aspect of birds of prey they most enjoyed reading about, giving reasons for their choice.
- Test the children's comprehension by asking them why owls make no noise while flying. To do this, allow the children to check through the text and to make notes before one member of the group stands up to give a presentation.
- Ask the children to give a presentation, in their own words, on what they learned in the chapter entitled 'Night flight'.

Follow-on writing opportunities

- Ask the children to research two animals, apart from the owl, that hunt at night and two animals that hunt by day and to organise them under headings.
- Make a class dictionary of interesting words such as 'nocturnal' that children can use in their own writing. Remind the children to organise the words in alphabetical order and to give definitions.
- Ask the children to research owls in Britain, using information books and websites, reminding them to take notes as they do so.

Support for less confident learners

- Ask the children to research and draw two animals, apart from the owl, that hunt at night.
- Referring to the notes that have been taken, model writing appropriate headings for a draft information text on owls in Britain.
- Listening to their suggestions, model writing a strong opening sentence.

Extension for more confident learners

- Ask the children to prepare a draft layout for an information page about owls in Britain. Remind them that their work should include the following: general opening sentence, present tense, headings, photos, captions, diagrams (optional) and labels (optional).

Snakes teachers' notes

Key words

hiss, slither, prey, strike, sniff, flick, camouflage, scales, venom, poison

Activities for guided reading

- Hide the title of the book and look at the cover image together. Ask the children to predict what the book is about.
- From the cover, invite the children to predict whether the book is fiction or non-fiction, asking them to justify their answer. Together, write a list 'What we already know about snakes'.
- Draw the children's attention to the contents page. Read through the list of chapters and then ask them to find a specific chapter for example, the chapter entitled 'Hiss, hiss, strike!'
- Explain that the glossary is a list of words that define unfamiliar or specialist words. Then ask them to find the meaning of the word 'camouflage' on page 14.
- Turn to the index and show the children how to use it.
- Challenge the children to find an example of a caption, a label and a diagram.
- On page 4, what effect is created by setting the word 'rattle' in capital letters and in a different colour?
- Ensure the children understand compound words by asking them to split the word 'rattlesnake' into its component parts. What other compound words can the children think of?
- Check the children's comprehension by asking them why the rattlesnake makes a rattling noise.
- On page 6, point out the words 'All', 'Some' and 'Others' and explain that an information text usually progresses from the general to the particular.
- After reading the chart together on page 7, can the children say which snakes are poisonous? Ask the children to list one fact about each snake.
- Do the children know of any other animals with scales? (Alligator, fish, lizard.)
- Say aloud the words 'hiss' and 'slithers' and explain that they are onomatopoeic, (that their sound is associated with their meaning).
- Talk about the effect created by the words 'Look out!' on page 17.

Speaking and listening opportunities

- Before reading, invite the children to look at page 6 and ask them to answer the question at the end of main text, asking them to provide reasons.
- Ask the children to explain in their own words what is happening in the picture on page 14.

Follow-on writing opportunities

- Ask the children to write under the heading 'New facts about snakes' what they have learned from reading the text. Let them compare the lists, 'What we already know about snakes' and 'New facts about snakes'.

- Encourage the children to use different fonts and colours for emphasis and special effect.

Support for less confident learners

- Invite the children to talk about the new facts they have learned, using drawings where appropriate.

Extension for more confident learners

- Invite discussion about bringing all the facts together and sorting them under headings.

Wild dogs teachers' notes

Key words

predator, pack, pup, howl, litter, den, prey, hunt

Activities for guided reading

- Challenge the children to find the contents page, a chapter heading, the glossary and index. Can they find an example of a caption and a label?
- Read the opening sentence together and ask the children whether it is a statement or a question. How do they know? (It ends with a question mark.) Why do they suppose the author begins with a question? (To gain the reader's interest.) Does the text answer the question?
- Check the children's comprehension skills as you go along. Read a spread with the children and ask them to tell you what they have just learned.
- Explain the difference between the suffixes '-ing' (present) and '-ed' (past).
- Look at the word 'howling' on page 11. Can the children distinguish between the root word ('howl') and the suffix ('-ing')? Look at examples of other words on that page to which '-ing' can be added.
- Turn to page 7 and explain the purpose of a chart. (To make information immediately accessible through labels and drawings.)
- Invite the children to go on a word hunt for CVC words in the text. How many can they find? (For example, 'dog', 'cub', 'not', 'pup', 'can'.)

Speaking and listening opportunities

- Ask the children to describe the body language of the grey wolf on page 5, and how they would feel if they came face to face with the animal.
- Look at the 'Body talk' text and pictures on page 15. Ask the children to explain, using words and mimicry, the body talk of a human being for 'Go away!', 'I'm scared!' and 'Look out!'.
- Read the text at the top of page 19 and then look carefully at the inset pictures of the moose and the deer for clues as to why the wolf is more likely to hunt moose and deer that are old.

Follow-on writing opportunities

- Ask the children to write the past tense of the following words: 'whimper', 'bark', 'growl', 'hunt', 'sniff' and 'look'.
- Encourage the children to write a paragraph on the arctic fox, based on information provided in the chart on page 7. Remind them to begin each sentence with a capital letter and to end with a full stop, and to use key words where appropriate.

Support for less confident learners

- Ask the children for key words that they may wish to include in a paragraph about the arctic fox. Model writing sentences based on their suggestions.

Extension for more confident learners

- Tell the children to begin their paragraph on the arctic fox with a question. The question can be general, for example 'What is an arctic fox?' or 'Is an arctic fox a wild dog?' Remind the children to answer the question in the next few sentences.