

Diary of a Falcon

Dear Diary, today I learned all about Peregrine Falcons

Grade Level: 2-5

Subject Areas:
science, language arts, computer science

Activity Duration:
3 sessions of 40-50 minutes

Setting:
Classroom

Group Size:
any

Materials:

- access to internet for research;
- copies of "Background Research: Peregrine Falcons" front and back (1 per student)
- copies of "Dear Diary" double-sided page (at least 2 per student)
- markers, crayons or other drawing materials
- copy of "Diary of a Worm" or "Diary of a Spider" by Doreen Cronin (optional)

Skills Used:
researching, critical thinking, creativity, creative writing

Vocabulary:
descriptive text
perspective

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will learn researching skills through use of the internet, books, and printed materials.
2. Students will collect information about peregrine falcons and use multiple methods to organize information.
3. Students will use critical thinking and creative writing skills to create a peregrine falcon's diary based on facts.

BACKGROUND

Take a walk outside and you will likely see them - birds! Birds are all around us. Sometimes we see them flying. Other times they are walking or hopping on the ground. Occasionally we see them sitting on a nest of eggs or caring for their young. Often we see them eating - seeds, fish, small mammals or even nectar. Birds are amazing creatures with lots of behaviors.

Have you ever wondered about why a bird does what it does? Why does a Sandhill Crane dance? Why does a turkey gobble? Why does a robin hop on the ground?

And, have you ever thought what it would be like to live life as a bird? What would you do when you first woke up in the morning (and what time would you wake up?!). What would you eat for breakfast? How would you find a friend? What would it be like to have to look out for predators or dangers all the time?

In this activity, students will be learning how to research a topic. Quality research skills includes the following practices:

- Asking good questions and refining questions or search queries to find the exact information for which you are looking.

Example: "Peregrine Falcons" vs. "Habitat needs of Peregrine Falcons" or "Peregrine Falcon food needs."

- Using reliable and trusted sources. You can not believe everything you read - especially online. But, how do you know if your source is reliable? Things to look for when evaluating online sources include:
 - Date information was posted (is the information old and outdated?)
 - Does the site ask for users to enter personal information?
 - What is the source of the information or what site does the content come from. A site that is selling something or proving opinions can not be trusted to provide facts.
 - Look for sites that have been around for a long time and have established a reputation of accurate information (National Geographic vs. Pete'sPets.com)
- Check multiple quality sources; make sure they are all saying the same thing.
- Start broad, then dive into details.
- Stay organized. Try using index cards or a sheet of paper for each topic. And, be sure to keep track of your sources.
- Respect ownership. Be sure to site your sources and give proper credit for quotes. Remind students it is not allowed to copy exact words directly from a source.

In this activity, students will also be writing a descriptive text.. A **descriptive text** is

BACKGROUND, continued

when an author uses detailed, expressive or vivid words to describe a detailed picture to the reader. Often the author uses their five senses (what they hear, what they see, what they smell or taste, or what they touch) to ensure the reader truly understands or feels the situation.

In this case, the students will be writing from the **perspective** of a peregrine falcon. Perspective is a term used to think about things from the view or mind-set of another person (or in this case, animal). For this reason, the student (author) will be describing a detailed picture of what a peregrine falcon might hear, see, smell, taste or touch. The author will also be describing what the peregrine falcon might be doing, what they might be feeling or what they might be thinking.

ACTIVITY

1. Explain to students that they are going to begin a writing project, but first they will need to do some research. The topic of their research will be peregrine falcons.

Discuss with students quality researching skills and how to determine quality sources of information.

2. Give each student a copy of “Background Research: Peregrine Falcon.” Allow students to work individually or in groups to complete the worksheet. Alternatively, students can choose to not use the research worksheet and can collect data on their own.

3. Once students are done researching peregrine falcons, transition to the writing portion of the activity by reading “Diary of a Worm” by Doreen Cronin to students. Talk about how the book is written from the perspective of a worm. Discuss with students how the author had to think about the daily life of a worm or what simple activities would be like from the mind-set of a worm.

4. Explain to students that they will be using the information they learned from their research to write a diary from the perspective of a peregrine falcon. Students will think about what the peregrine falcon

would need to do to accomplish simple tasks and what that would be like from the perspective or mind-set of a peregrine falcon.

5. Give each student multiple copies (at least 2) of the double-sided “Dear Diary” page. Because the sheets are double-sided, providing students with 2 copies will mean each student will have 8 journal entries.

6. Allow students time to think and write their journal entries. This can be done in small time sections over the course of several days.

7. Encourage students to illustrate their journal entries.

8. Ask students if they would like to share. Provide time for students who would like to share their journals with the class.

EXTENSIONS

- Invite a biologist from a local raptor organization or environmental organization to come talk about falcons and other raptors.
- Set-up a bird feeder near a window. Encourage students to record what birds visit the feeder. Students can research the birds visiting the feeder and write stories from a bird’s perspective or about a bird.
- Invite students to draw peregrine falcons and enter their art in a local art contest.
- Head outside to record what birds you find on the school grounds.

RELIABLE ONLINE SOURCES FOR KIDS

National Geographic for Kids
kids.nationalgeographic.com

Animal Diversity Web
University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology
animaldiversity.org

Encyclopedia Britannica Kids
kids.britannica.com

Cornell Lab of Ornithology: All About Birds
allaboutbirds.org

NAME: _____

Background Research

Peregrine Falcons

What country or countries do peregrine falcons live? Do they live in the same country for their whole life? Or, do they move or migrate?



What do peregrine falcons eat?

How do peregrine falcons get their food?

What habitat do peregrine falcons like? Forest? Prairie? Cities? Deserts?

What body parts does a peregrine falcon have that help it?

Where do peregrine falcons build a nest?

How do peregrine falcons take care of their babies?

What things would a peregrine falcon need to do every day to survive?

What are some predators of peregrine falcons?

Cool facts about peregrine falcons.

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Dear Diary, _____

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Blank writing area for the bottom-left diary entry.

Dear Diary, _____

12 horizontal lines for writing the bottom-right diary entry.



Blank writing area for the top-left diary entry.

Dear Diary, _____

12 horizontal lines for writing the top-right diary entry.



Blank writing area for the bottom-left diary entry.

Dear Diary, _____

12 horizontal lines for writing the bottom-right diary entry.

