

# BROWN HARE

## *(Lepus europaeus)*

### **About this photograph:**

This hare was spotted on its own out in the open spaces of Salisbury Plain.

### **About brown hares:**

Brown Hares graze on vegetation and nibble bark from young trees and bushes. Hares shelter in a 'form', which is simply a shallow depression in the ground or grasses, but when disturbed, can be seen bounding across fields using their powerful hind legs to propel themselves forwards, often in a zigzag pattern. In early spring, Brown Hares can be seen fighting or 'boxing' as part of their breeding ritual. The Brown Hare is larger than the Rabbit. It has longer legs and longer ears with black tips, which makes it easy to distinguish between the two. Young hares are called 'leverets'.



### **Some key vocabulary:**

form    leveret

### **Discussion:**

What words can you find to describe the colours and shades of colour you see on the hare? Can you describe different features of the hare in similes? E.g. ears like... eyes like... fur as soft as....

What do you think the hare is hearing? If you were a hare what would make you happy? What would you fear?

### **Poem idea:**

Write as if you are the hare based on the ideas above. Think about the 'voice' of the hare – is it shy and timid or actually quite proud of itself? You could write a short monologue as prose and think about the line breaks afterwards e.g. I am softer than velvet, quiet and gentle as a cloud, but when I'm in the mood for a fight watch out for my sharp right hook! I'm oh so proud of my superior ears and my long, long leap. You'd think I had springs, or wings to jump so high.

I am softer than velvet,  
quiet and gentle as a cloud,  
but when I'm in the mood for a fight  
watch out for my sharp right!  
I'm oh so proud of my superior ears  
and my long, long leap.  
You'd think I had springs,  
or wings  
to jump so high!

# BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*)



## About this photograph:

This photograph was taken just before dusk on a winter's afternoon at Bransbury Common in Wiltshire. After busily quartering the area, the owl is about to pounce on its prey hidden in the rough grass.

## About barn owls:

Although nocturnal, barn owls can sometimes be seen hunting at dawn or dusk. Their prey consists mainly of mice, voles and shrews. They hunt over areas of open country, along field edges, riverbanks and roadside verges. Like all birds of prey they have excellent eyesight, but it is their ability to fly silently and their acute sense of hearing that make them such successful predators.

## Some key vocabulary:

nocturnal    prey    predator    raptor    quartering    silent    talons    glide    swoop

## Discussion:

What does the owl remind you of? It's a bit like.....

What colours can you see on the owl's wings?

If the owl could speak in words, what might it be thinking?

If you were the owl's prey looking up, what might you be thinking?

Imagine you are in a corner of the field watching the owl hunt. How would you describe what you see to someone on the other end of a telephone who can't see what you see?

## Poem idea:

Write a poem as if you are talking to the owl and asking it questions. The form could be something like this:

Greet the owl (e.g. Mysterious Barn Owl with your milk-white wings....)

Ask it a series of questions (e.g. What do you dream of in the black velvet night? etc.)

Final thought or goodbye (e.g. I wonder when I look at you – are you bird or ghost? etc.)

# CHEETAH

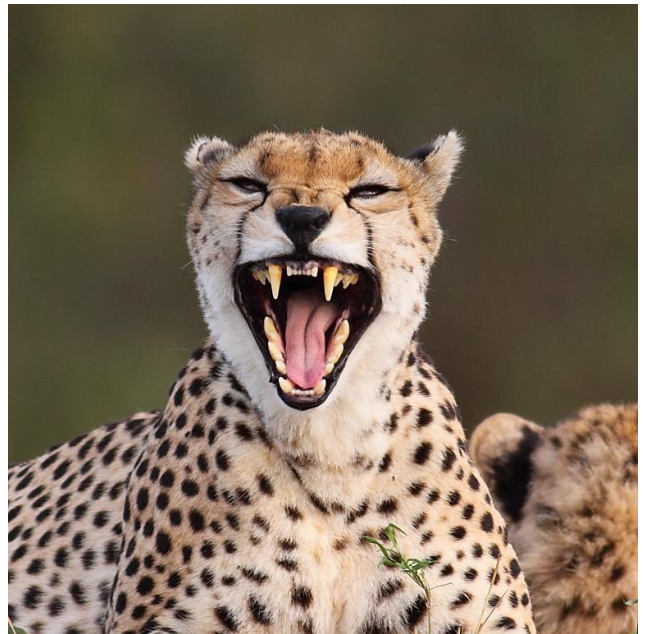
## *(Acinonyx jubatus)*

### About this photograph:

This photograph was taken from a jeep on a safari in the Masai Mara Reserve, Kenya.

### About cheetahs:

The cheetah is famous for being the fastest land animal. In fact, it is the cheetah's ability to accelerate and change direction at speed that enables it to be a successful predator. They prey typically on the small antelopes and gazelles that roam the open grasslands or savannas of Africa. Despite its fearsome appearance, cheetahs are the smallest of the big cat family and are easily threatened by other stronger predators, often having to surrender their kill to them in order to avoid injury in any conflict.



### Some key vocabulary:

carnivore      savanna      predator      accelerate      fangs

### Discussion:

Use a thesaurus to find other words meaning to race or run fast. Which ones would best describe a cheetah's movement?

Look closely at the cheetah's mouth and describe it in as much detail as possible.

If the cheetah could talk, what questions would you ask it?

### Poem idea:

Write a poem as if you are talking to the cheetah and asking it questions. The form could be something like this:

Greet the cheetah (e.g. Super-fast cheetah speeding through the grassy savanna ....)

Ask it a series of questions (e.g. How did you learn such speed and grace? etc.)

Final thought or goodbye (e.g. I wonder if you ever run out of breath... etc.)

# FALLOW DEER

## (*Dama dama*)



### About this photograph:

These two adults and an accompanying fawn wandered out from deep cover into the bright sunshine of a bridle path through Bentley Wood, Wiltshire.

### About fallow deer:

Fallow deer were introduced to this country by the Romans. They are shy woodland animals that graze on nearby open areas such as farmland or heath land. They are regarded as pests by farmers whose crops they damage and are regularly culled to control their numbers. The male fallow deer is known as a *buck*, the female is a *doe*, and the young a *fawn*.

### Some key vocabulary:

buck   doe   fawn   cull   woodland

### Discussion:

What do you think each of the deer might be thinking if they could speak?

Deer spend much of the day hidden deep in the woods. Why do you think this group have wandered out into the sunshine?

Do you think the deer feel safe? Tense? Alert? Relaxed in the sunshine?

### Poem idea:

Write a poem that creates a sense of the shyness and quietness of deer – use lots of soft sounds, e.g.

Sh. Sh. Sh.

She's she'll us!

Gentle doe with soft, shy eyes

Standing still in the ferny forest

Don't fear me etc...

# PEREGRINE FALCON

## (*Falco peregrinus*)



### About this photograph:

This peregrine has chosen to nest on the tower of Salisbury Cathedral where it can ambush the pigeons that live in the city.

### About peregrine falcons:

Peregrine falcons are crow-sized birds of prey. They mainly prey on medium-sized birds, but will also sometimes hunt small mammals. They are believed to be the fastest creatures on Earth, reaching speeds of up to 200 mph during the characteristic hunting dive or 'stoop'. Peregrines can often be found above rocky sea-cliffs and upland areas throughout the UK, but increasingly they are using man-made objects such as electricity pylons or high buildings in cities as ideal perches from which to swoop down on potential prey. Peregrines are highly prized falconry birds and have been trained for use in hunting game throughout history.

### Some key vocabulary:

talons raptor falconry stoop swoop

### Discussion:

What might the falcon be thinking as it looks down on the city? What can it see?

Does it seem out of place perched amongst the gargoyles and carved stonework of the cathedral, or does it seem at home there?

Do you think it has a family nearby, or is it on its own?

### Poem idea:

Write in the first person as the falcon looking proudly down on the city and people below.

# PUFFIN

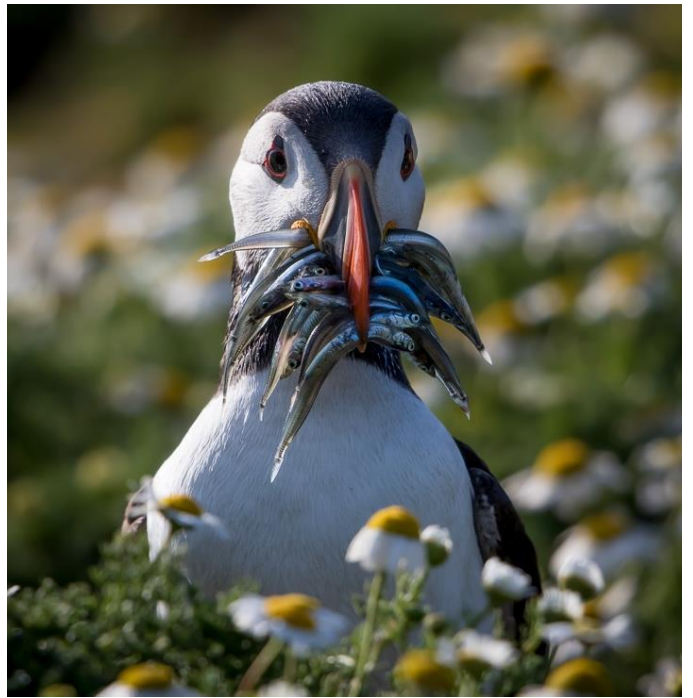
## *(Fratercula arctica)*

### About this photograph:

This was taken on the island of Skomer, just off the coast of Wales. The puffin has just landed after fishing out at sea and is making its way to its underground burrow to feed its young 'pufflings'.

### About puffins:

This popular little bird is recognized by its large, distinctive colourful beak, part of which is shed after the breeding season, leaving it with a smaller dull beak for the rest of the year. Puffins spend most of their lives at sea, returning to land each spring to breed. They excavate burrows to make their nests in, or take over, disused rabbit burrows. Their wings are short and stubby, ideal for swimming underwater in pursuit of their prey – mainly sand-eels, but not very good for flying, which means they are easily attacked by larger gulls that can bully them into giving up their catch!



### Some key vocabulary:

sand-eels      burrow      puffling

### Discussion:

What might the puffin be thinking as it makes its way back to its burrow with this catch of fish?

How do you view puffins? Funny? Cute? Clown-like? Clumsy? Earnest?

### Poem idea:

Write a poem as if you are talking to the puffin and asking it questions. The form could be something like this...

Greet the puffin (e.g. Perfect Puffin in your smart black suit and clean white shirt...)

Ask it a series of questions (e.g. Where are you off to with that catch of slippery fish? etc.)

Final thought or goodbye (e.g. I wonder why your eyes look so worried and sad.

Maybe you are worried about your pufflings.

I'd better let you get back to them. etc.)

# RED SQUIRREL

## *(Sciurus vulgaris)*

### About this photograph:

This red squirrel was photographed in the woods on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour. It's nibbling at a hazel nut that was put out to lure it closer to the camera.



### About red squirrels:

Red squirrels used to be common throughout Britain until the larger grey squirrel was introduced in the late 19th century. Red squirrels have been outcompeted by the grey squirrels and they can now only be found in a few isolated areas in England such as Brownsea Island and the Isle of Wight, where the grey squirrels have not been able to establish themselves. Red squirrels are omnivores - they eat seeds, nuts, fungi and sometimes bird eggs. They themselves are preyed upon by foxes and birds of prey such as buzzards, goshawks and owls.

### Key vocabulary:

drey rodent woodland

### Discussion:

Describe the squirrel in detail – its ears, head, eyes, legs, paws and tail.

What might it be thinking? What's it going to do next?

### Poem idea:

Write a 'first person' poem that captures the speed and busyness of the squirrel e.g.

Can't stop

No time

Nuts to find

.....

... include other things the squirrel has to do (research some facts that you could include)

.....

Gotta fly

Bye bye!

# WHITE RHINO

## (*Ceratotherium simum*)



### About this photograph:

This was taken at a watering hole in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya when a pair were wallowing in the mud to cool off.

### About white rhinos:

The white rhino is not white. Its name comes from a mishearing of the term 'wide rhino', referring to the wide mouth of this species of rhino compared to others. The white rhino is the largest land mammal after the elephants. Despite the fearsome appearance, white rhinos are herbivores and are not naturally aggressive. They live on the African savanna grazing the low growing grass. A group of rhinos is called a 'crash'. Rhinos are under threat because poachers kill them for their horns which are ground up and used in Asian medicine.

### Some key vocabulary:

savanna      crash

### Discussion:

If the rhino could speak what might it want to say to you?

What sort of life does this rhino lead?

### Poem ideas:

Write as if you are the rhino.

Write a poem based on questions you might ask the rhino.

Write a poem with lots of alliteration e.g. The rhino rollicks and rolls in rich, red mud....

Write a poem entitled *What do Rhinos Dream of?*