



Explore the world of bat conservation through the national curriculum

Teachers' notes

10. BATS AND CULTURE

Relevant areas of learning and experience:

Language, Literacy and Communication, Art and Design

Bats present a strong image, and for centuries have been represented in many forms - in art, language, local culture and folklore. There are differences in the way bats are thought of in different parts of the world.

Culture

- Explore the way different religions and cultures approach nature including bats. Are there differences according to the age of people or is this a cultural dimension?
- How are bats portrayed here in the UK in the media?
- What reasons can you think of for the fear and mistrust of bats that has often been projected in Western culture?
- Do you think attitudes have changed in the last 20 years?
- If so, what do you think has led to these changes?
- How can you help to change attitudes?

Study the way bat images have been used in Christian painting for hundreds of years. Angels representing good are shown with white feathered birds wings, whilst devils and dragons, representing evil, wear black bat wings.

Search through information about other cultures to find bats in paintings and carvings, such as the totem poles of the North American Indians. Look for stylized bats on Chinese bowls and jars. Why are bats so often seen on Chinese ceramics and textiles?

Myths are stories traditionally told to answer difficult questions. Search the web for a wide range of myths about bats, from many countries and cultures.

Art and Design

Images of bats appear in many forms of art. Look for bats in pictures, pottery, sculptures, stamps, etc.

Make collection of bat images in unexpected places. Sketch those you can't take away like door knockers, pottery, jewellery and fabrics. You may even come across sweets, crisp bags, cereal packets and postage stamps. Don't forget Batman!

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Look for bats used as symbols on coats-of-arms and badges. Heralds of family names, towns, names and badges of several RAF squadrons sometimes show bats.

- Why do you think bats have been incorporated into these designs?
- Design your own badge or heraldic coat of arms including bat images.
- Silk painting incorporating bats in the picture.

Investigate the use of different media in making pictures of bats. Express different feelings about bats in your designs.

- Make a list of words that could be used to describe bats and their lifestyle in a positive way. Use this list to help you write a poem on bats.
- Now make another list of words that could be used to describe bats and their lifestyle in a negative way. Use this list to help you write another poem on bats. Ask your friends to compare how they feel about bats after reading them.

Write a haiku poem

Haiku, a traditional form of Japanese poetry, lends itself well to the subject of bats. Haikus are even bat-shaped! They consist of three lines that rarely rhyme. The first and last lines have five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables. It often focusses on images from nature, and emphasises simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression.

Poetry to read:

The Bat - Ogden Nash

Bat - D.H.Lawrence (Excellent for older pupils to compare with Ruth Pitter's poem)

Bats - Randall Jarrell

Man and Bat - D.H.Lawrence

Find more poems on the web

Stories to read:

Slumyn Dwl by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross (in Welsh)

- What are these poems and stories trying to tell us?
- What do pupils feel about bats? Have they changed since reading these poems and stories?

Music

Listen to the echolocation calls of bats on the web. Experiment with percussion instruments and other objects to make bat-like sounds. Vary the loudness and speed of the instruments.

The names of bats can be added to your music

pip-i-strelle - **pip-i-strelle** - **pip-i-strelle** - **pip-i-strelle**

long-eared - **long-eared** - **long-eared** -

Experiment with the rhythms.

- Invent music for a bat orchestra with different instruments, or body music, for different bats.
- Compose some bat music using computer software or a keyboard.
- Design a way of writing down your music so others can play it.
- Perform your music for your friends to enjoy.

Ask pupils to research the echolocation and social calls of bats and to choreograph their own short dance routines around these calls.