

Grade 1: Module 3: Unit 1

Overview for Families

Notes to Teacher:

Making connections between home and school is vitally important in supporting students' learning. The following suggestions and materials represent some of the ways you can support these connections during this unit.

Suggestions:

- Copy the attached family letter and send it home with students after teaching Lesson 1 (this letter can be used as is or as a model). Consider having the letter translated for families whose first language is not English.
- Encourage students to share any at-home learning with the class. They can do this orally or by sharing writing, pictures, or artifacts. Example: Consider providing time for students to share the types of birds they see around their yard or neighborhood. Students can document with a camera or draw pictures.
- Create a display board featuring pictures of birds. Provide a label for each bird body part written in several different languages.
- Take pictures of students reading, writing, and drawing about birds throughout the day and post them in the room or hallway.
- Depending on the needs of your students and the expectations of your school community, consider assigning additional homework. Examples: open-ended activities that help students read, think, talk, write, and ask questions about the topic instead of those that simply test students on their content knowledge (see suggested activities in the family letter).
- If using EL Education's K–2 Reading Foundations Skills Block, consider sending home a copy of the Student Decodable Reader used each week and encourage families to have students read these texts aloud to them.

Dear Family,

During Unit 1 of this module, your student will research the physical characteristics of birds. At the end of the unit, they will be able to answer the unit guiding question: “What makes a bird a bird?” I am writing today to explain what your student will be learning, describe the activities that will support this learning, and suggest how to support this learning at home. I hope that you will plan to join us at the end of our deep study to celebrate all of your student’s learning!

What will your student be learning?

Students will study the physical characteristics of birds. The learning will be focused on these ideas:

- Birds are animals with beaks, feathers, wings, and feet.
- There are many different types of birds, and they use their body parts to help them.
- Despite their differences, there are key features that all birds have in common.
- Students will also practice these reading foundation skills:
- Beginning to read and spell two-syllable words with closed syllables (e.g., *absent* and *bandit*).
- Beginning to read and spell one- and two-syllable words with closed syllables (e.g., *hero* and *hotel*).

How will your student be learning?

Throughout the unit, your student will read, think, listen, talk, write, draw, and ask questions about the physical characteristics of birds. Students will participate in these activities, among others, to build their literacy skills:

- Listening to read-alouds and independently rereading a variety of texts about birds’ physical characteristics
- Researching specific bird body parts with a partner
- Singing songs about birds and their physical characteristics
- Engaging in collaborative conversations with classmates
- Writing to describe birds’ body parts using adjectives
- Learning how to make a scientific drawing of birds’ body parts

What can you do to support your student’s learning at home?

Here are a few activities that you can do at home with your student to support his or her learning:

- Ask your student to talk with you about this question: What are the parts of birds’ bodies, and how do birds use them?
- Read books and sing songs about birds from home or at the library.
- Identify different types of birds around your yard or neighborhood; observe them closely to describe their body parts.

Birds' Amazing Bodies

- Encourage your student to read the weekly Student Decodable Reader or a letter book to you every night.
- Notice vowels in written words and vowel sounds in spoken words. This helps readers identify syllable type in order to read an unknown word.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss your student's learning.

Sincerely,
