

# Overview for Families

### Notes to Teacher:

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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 written in several different languages.
- Take pictures of students reading, writing, and drawing their expert 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 3 of this module, your student will participate in another research cycle in which members of the class study a specific bird to learn about how those birds' key parts help them to survive in their habitat. At the end of the unit, they will be able to answer the unit guiding question: "How do specific birds use their body parts to survive?" 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 continue to study how birds' key body parts help them to survive in their habitat by researching a particular bird in expert groups. The learning will be focused on these ideas:

- Some birds have unique and specially designed body parts that help them survive.
- Scientists gather information using a variety of tools and record what they notice.
- Students will also practice these reading foundation skills:
- Continue to read and spell two-syllable words with open and closed syllables
- Continue to read and spell CVCe (consonant, vowel, consonant, -e) words, but also with suffixes such as -s, -ed, and -ing (e.g., *saving* and *stretching*).

**How will your student be learning?**

Throughout the unit, your student will read, think, listen, talk, write, draw, and ask questions about the topic of how specific birds use their body parts to survive. Students will participate in these activities, among others, to build their literacy skills:

- Listening to read-alouds and independently reading a variety of texts about birds and their body parts
- Researching specific birds in groups
- Singing songs about birds
- Engaging in collaborative conversations with classmates
- Writing about how particular bird body parts help birds survive
- Learning how to make a scientific drawing of a bird

**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: How do the body parts of the bird he or she is researching help it survive?
- 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 what they are doing.

## Birds' Amazing Bodies

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- Encourage your student to read the weekly Student Decodable Reader or a letter book to you every night.
- Continue to help your child notice vowels and vowel sounds in words.
- Help your child notice how a suffix changes the meaning (e.g., *run* vs. *running*) and sometimes the spelling of a base word (e.g., *name* and *naming*; the silent *e* is dropped and the -ing suffix is added).

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

Sincerely,

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