

Read the text below all about garden birds. Follow the same sequence that we did in school to help you to answer the questions below.

Garden Birds

Why do Birds Matter?

Birds are just there to look pretty and sound nice, right? Wrong! Birds are vital for the environment.



Birds encourage varied plant life through seed dispersal. They disperse seeds within their droppings, by catching them on their feathers and by dropping them from their beaks while flying. This means seeds get to travel to different places and grow elsewhere.



Birds control insect growth. Many birds, such as dunnocks, blue tits and blackbirds, eat insects. Without these insect-eating birds, there could be a dangerous number of insects on the planet.

Many birds, like crows and magpies, help rid the world of disease through eating dead animals. Without these birds eating the carcasses of other animals, diseases could more easily be spread.

Decreasing Numbers of Common Garden Birds

The starling, once common, has seen a steady decline in numbers. The loss of starlings has been linked to farming; it is thought that heavily farmed land makes it more difficult for birds to find their favourite food, the crane fly larvae.

House sparrow numbers have also decreased in the last few years, particularly in urban environments. The reason is not fully known, but could be due to cats or air pollution from more vehicles being used. Fortunately, last year, there was an increase in house sparrows reported through an RSPB nationwide survey.



Urban Environment
Cities and towns.



RSPB
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - a charity that protects British birds.

The Rise of Less Common Garden Birds

There has been an increase in some birds that are not often seen in gardens, such as fieldfares. Fieldfares are large, colourful thrushes that stand very upright and move forward with little hops. One reason for this increase seems to be freezing

winters forcing fieldfares to leave the countryside and look for food in gardens.

At the beginning of 2016, there was an increase in the sightings of long-tailed tits and goldcrests. A warmer winter meant that more of these tiny birds survived.

Migration

Some birds migrate from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer.



- Swifts and swallows migrate to Africa.
- They can fly up to 200 miles every day.
- Many die from starvation, exhaustion and storms.



Resident British Birds



Robins:

- have a bright red breast;
- are very aggressive and will defend their territory;
- sing all year round;
- can be seen in British gardens all year round.

Magpies:

- have a loud, chattering cackle;
- can be easily seen with their black and white feathers;
- are important insect controllers;
- hunt for leftover food and dead animals.



Make sure you have read the text carefully. You might need to go back through and read the text again a few times to help you to understand it better.

Monday

Read through the text and underline or write down any of the words that you are unsure of. Once you have all of these words, have a go at defining them. You may need to ask an adult or use a dictionary or the internet to help you find the answer. Once you know the meanings of each of these words, read through the text again to help you to understand the text better. You might also want to make notes about what each of the sections are about (the main idea) like we do in class.

Tuesday

As this text is non-fiction, your focus for the next few days is going to be on retrieval as this is a skill that you need to develop for these types of texts. This means that the answers are in the text, you just need to find them. Look for the key words in the question and in the text to help you to find your answer. You do NOT need to make any of these answers up, they are in the text somewhere. Look carefully.

- 1) How do birds help with seed dispersal?
- 2) Why are insect-eating birds important?
- 3) What is the benefit of birds eating the carcasses of dead animals?
- 4) Explain what problems have occurred due to heavily farmed land.
- 5) Why are there fewer house sparrows? Give one reason from the text.
- 6) Describe how fieldfares move.

Wednesday

- 7) Name one bird whose numbers have increased. Explain why this has happened.
- 8) Why do some birds migrate and where do they go?
- 9) Why might storms be a danger to migrating birds?
- 10) Are Robins always cute and friendly?
- 11) Name one good thing that magpies do.
- 12) Why was there an increase in sightings of birds in 2016?

Thursday

The questions today require you to think about the knowledge that you gained on Monday when you read the text and thought about the meanings of the words you are unsure of. Use this information to help you to answer the following questions about 'understanding words'. Think about the strategies we used in school.

- 1) 'Birds are vital for the environment' (line 2). What does the word vital mean in this sentence?
a) Lively b) essential c) important d) active
- 2) What is the meaning of the word 'common' in *decreasing number of common garden birds*?
a) Popular b) general c) family d) community
- 3) In the text it states that Robins 'are very aggressive and defend their territory'. Select the best answer for the meaning of this phrase from below.
a) They keep it away from Terry
b) They fight when they feel like it
c) They are always kind
d) They protect their area of land
- 4) In the text it talks about the starling having a '...steady decline in numbers'. What does the word decline mean?

Friday

Since it is Friday and you should know the text well by now, I thought it would be a good idea to include some questions that get you thinking. These types of questions are typically opinion questions but you can use evidence from the text to support your answers. Make sure you are explaining and answering in full and complete sentences.

- 1) What do you think would happen if we didn't have any birds? Use evidence from the text in your answer.
- 2) Why do you think birds leave the UK in the winter?
- 3) Do you think that birds are important? Did you think that they were before reading the text? Write down some of the reasons why you think birds are important. You can use your own ideas and evidence from the text.
- 4) Robins are usually associated with Christmas. The text says that you can find these animals in our gardens all year round. Why do you think this is? (*hint: use the picture as a clue and you could use the internet to find out why they are associated with Christmas*).
- 5) Why do you think that the RSPB does a survey of the birds that people have spotted?

Don't forget to log onto Epic too! Any problems with anything, send me an email.

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