

## CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY

### 1 Choosing your species of wildlife

We've talked about lots of different native UK wildlife species during our Go Wild programme, have a think about which one you might like to write about. Maybe you'll choose one you saw when you went out surveying your local wildlife, or maybe you'll pick a rare UK species that would be difficult to spot in the area where you live.

Make sure you know **where** your chosen species lives in the wild and what **threats** they have to their lives and habitat.

### 2 Introduction

Introduce yourself giving your name and age and a bit about yourself.

In your story, you will travel to whichever part of the UK your chosen wildlife lives to find out more about the species. Tell your reader which species you going to study and where in the UK you would find them. This might be somewhere specific if it's a rare species such as a red squirrel which is only found in a few places, or a more general location such as the coast if you were writing about a marine species.

Explain why you chose this species to study. Is it your favourite? Is there something really amazing or unusual about this species?

### 3 Setting the scene for your story

The scene for your story should be the habitat where your chosen species lives in the wild. For example a golden eagle would live in an open area where there are mountains, whereas a peregrine falcon might be found nesting on a tall building in a city.

Describe to your reader back home what the **habitat** is like. To make the story come alive try to think about all the senses and not just what you can see. What can you hear? How does it feel, cold or hot? Wet or dry? Are there any strong smells? How do you feel being there? Is it isolated and lonely? Or is it busy with lots of people around?

### 4 Describe your species

As a conservationist you should know a lot about your chosen species of wildlife. From a picture or from memory **describe** what your species looks like. What colour(s) does it have? How big is it? What does it like to eat? Try to include as much **detail** and **description** as you can.

Does your species have any special characteristics? For example a badger has a black and white striped face for camouflage, a kestrel can hover, or sundew has sticky pads to catch insects.

How **endangered** is it?

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## 5 What threats are there to your species?

Now you need to tell your readers what **threats** your species faces. This could be habitat loss, or chemicals being sprayed where they live, or a non-native species being introduced to their habitat.

Can you explain **why** the threat is happening? Are farmers spraying pesticide to protect their crops? Are people clearing space to build more houses or roads?

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## 6 What can we do to stop this?

Is there anything we can do help protect this species? Can you think of anything you could do whilst in the habitat? Are there any conservation organisations working to protect the species?

We may have discussed some of the things that Chester Zoo are doing to help this species, is there anything people at home could do as well? Could you make space in your garden, or litter pick?

## TIPS FOR WRITING STORIES

To help your reader fully picture your story why not think of different figures of speech. For example, in your stories think of part of a sentence that uses one of the following:

A **simile** is when you say something is like something else.  
For example, the *"forest was like a sea of green"*.

Your example \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A **metaphor** is when you say something or someone is actually something else.  
For example, *"My belly is a bottomless pit."*

Your example \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A **personification** is where you use a human characteristic for something that is not human.  
For example, *"their chainsaws devour all the trees."*

Your example \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Onomatopoeia** is a word that mimics the sound of the object or action it refers to, like 'hoot' or 'moo'. For example, *"the birds as they tweet high up"*.

Your example \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Alliteration** is the repeated use of the same sound or letter.  
For example, *"the tall tropical trees."*

Your example \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Using dialogue can also help explain your story to your reader. Can you put some speech into your story?



## MY JOURNEY TO BORNEO TO SAVE THE ORANGUTANS

by Charlie Lea, aged 10

Do you know what my favourite food is? Biscuits! I love them.

I could eat them for breakfast, lunch and tea as well as for a midnight feast. My belly is a bottomless pit when it comes to all things biscuits! Mum isn't too keen on me eating them all the time and always gives me healthy food but if I was Prime Minister then I would make children just eat biscuits all day.

My teacher at school knows I love biscuits too. One day, in a lesson, she asked us to bring in our favourite foods. I thought we were going to have a party in school so brought my favourite biscuits.

Some of my friends brought in chocolate, others pizza and another an empty tub of ice cream.

However, there was no party to be had. Our teacher asked us to all to look at the ingredients to our favourite foods to see if there was one common thing in them all. We all checked each other's foods and there was something I had not heard of before, 'palm oil'.

She explained that palm oil was a type of vegetable oil, like olive or sunflower oil. It's actually in lots of things, not just foods but also in things like shampoo, lipstick and soap. She said that it's made from the fruit of oil palm trees that can only grow very close to the equator.

Apparently you can get lots of oil from the fruits so lots and lots of people grow oil palm trees in Indonesia so that they can sell the oil to businesses all over the world but unfortunately large parts of the rainforest are being cleared so that palm oil could be made instead.

This has led to the loss of these biodiverse and rich forests and the destruction of the habitat for a number of animals including tigers, elephants and orangutans. She said that in Borneo, the orangutan is critically endangered which means they are close to extinction.

I was unhappy to hear about this as my favourite animal is the orangutan. They live only in the rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo which is in South East Asia and palm oil production is threatening their home.

We were all concerned but our teacher told us that we could all help by buying only products which are made from sustainable palm oil. Growing oil palm trees sustainably means that no more rainforest is cut down, wildlife corridors are made for orangutans to move around, fewer pesticides are used and the workers are happier.

Imagine my surprise when my teacher turned around to me and said, "Charlie, I know your favourite animal is an orangutan and that your favourite food in the whole wide world is biscuits, so you will be flying out today with conservationists from Chester Zoo to Borneo to see the problem at first hand and how we can protect orangutans and the rainforest."

I think I fainted with shock and excitement.

### The Expedition

It took 15 hours to fly to Borneo from home in the United Kingdom but finally, I arrived.

The rainforest is very different to where I live at home. For a start it's very, very wet – otherwise, it would not be called a rainforest! It's raining today, I thought it might stop after a bit like it does at home but it is still pouring down and everything, including myself, is very wet.

Orangutans live mainly in what is called the lowlands, that is, not in the high mountains where it's a bit cooler, so this means that it is really, really hot too. It reminds me of having a shower for about an hour and leaving the bathroom door and window shut.

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They have thin, reddish brown hair and have long arms that can stretch up to 2 metres long from fingertip to fingertip - that's taller than most of my teachers. They eat food like figs which they pick from trees and can even use a wooden stick to find termites.

Lots of other animals live in the rainforest and it can be very noisy, especially the birds as they tweet high up in the tall, tropical trees.

The forest is very dense which means that it is hard to walk through due to the number of trees and bushes growing. Due to the rain and the good soil on the floor the forest is like a sea of green.

This is the best sort of habitat for an orangutan and I am sure I will see one soon but after a few more minutes the forest becomes less dense and there are fewer trees around me.

There is less noise from the animals and then I hear another, stranger noise. It's not a human sound but..... the roar of a motor, not in a car but a motor in a chainsaw.

There are men in this part of the rainforest and their chainsaws devour all the trees standing in their way. I explain to them how cutting down trees will affect the rainforest and the orangutans and ask them to stop cutting down the trees.

"We cut down the trees as a job so we can get paid and feed our families. Without this work we would starve." One of the workers says.

"But the orangutans need these trees to live and find food from," I continue.

Another of the workers says, "But the rest of the world wants more and more palm oil so we have to clear these areas to grow more oil palm trees."

I know and understand this after my lesson at school and my love of biscuits.

The conservationists from Chester Zoo take me away from this part of the rainforest and into another to show me what work they are doing to help orangutans. I look up by a river and see my first orangutan. It's not hanging around in a tree, however, it's climbing across the river using a man-made bridge made from a light webbing material.

One of the conservationists explains, "We make these bridges to help orangutans and other

animals cross rivers and move around the forest more easily. Before people starting cutting down trees, the orangutans could move across the rainforest easily but now it has become difficult for them."

I wanted to climb up and have a go on one of the bridges but was told that it would be too dangerous being so close to the orangutans and also too high.

Before we left to fly back home I was shown a sustainable palm oil plantation. These plantations help protect endangered species such as the orangutan by creating wildlife corridors for them to move to different parts of the rainforest.

There is still a lot more that can be done in Sumatra and Borneo but there's also a lot we can do back in the United Kingdom.

When I get back home, I explain to my classmates what I have seen and learned.

Palm oil is now the world's most used vegetable oil and around 50% of a weekly shop in a supermarket has products that have palm oil as an ingredient. Most of this oil comes from South East Asia where the orangutan lives.

All of us can help by only buying products which are made from sustainable palm oil. If we can buy only products that use sustainable palm oil then, eventually, the vast deforestation of Borneo may stop and orangutans will be able to live their lives in peace.

I still love my biscuits but I make sure my parents only buy ones made from sustainable palm oil now.

**The End**