Assessment Answer Key

Owl Prowl

Note to teachers: The assessment should be used not as a pass-or-fail unit test but as an opportunity to diagnose students' language arts and science comprehension, knowledge, and skills. We have designed it for students to have their copies of "Owl Prowl" available for reference as they work on answering the questions. Please use the assessment diagnostically. With struggling readers, take the opportunity to review their answers individually. We hope that the answer key provides suggestions that will help you improve students' reading. The assessment also can be given aloud as part of a class discussion. Most of all, we hope the assessment—and the entire Audubon Adventures program—will develop students' appreciation for and enjoyment of the environment we share.

1. **Correct answer:** c. This answer is found in the first two sentences of the cover essay of the student magazine. Getting the question wrong is clearly a case of guessing. All of the "wrong" answer options contain ideas that are addressed in other parts of the magazine, and discussing them is valuable as well. The only answer that is completely false is *d*—a belief held by many people. Answers *a* and *b* are true of some owls, but not all of them, as the magazine explains. The key concept for a follow-up discussion is the predator-prey relationship in the natural world. Once they understand that owls are predators and the mice, snakes, and other animals owls eat are prey, students can point to other examples of predators and their prey they can think of.

2. **Correct answer:** b. The answer is found in the feature "The 'Flying Mousetrap'" on the right side of page 3. Students who get this question wrong are likely to be guessing. Understanding the owl's role in controlling rodent populations is an important concept related to the "balance of nature" and the functioning of ecosystems. Plants and animals in an ecosystem are interconnected in ways that help the system function smoothly, which includes keeping populations in check. When something upsets the system (e.g., if owls are removed from an ecosystem), the system's natural checks and balances are no longer effective.

3. **Correct answer:** a. The answer is found on page 4 in "Can Owls Really Do That?" This question addresses a very commonly held belief about owls, and so students who choose the wrong answer have probably not read the magazine, have poor recall, or have failed to comprehend the question. All of the "wrong" answers (in other words, the statements that are true) contain interesting or surprising information that students who are guessing might be inclined to believe could be false. Exploring the physical properties that allow owls to turn their heads most of the way around but not all the way could be an interesting STEM investigation, with students developing models or creating illustrated explanations.

4. **Correct answer:** d. The answer is found on page 2 of the student magazine in the "Words for the Wise" feature on the left. Wrong answers are likely to indicate guessing. Most people are familiar with owls and have some common misconceptions about them, and this addresses one of them. One of the first things a child usually says about an owl is that it is "nocturnal" or that it hunts at night. As the magazine points out in the first paragraph of the cover essay, this is true of most owls, but not all. The "wrong" answers to this question all touch on information contained in the magazine, so students who choose them may be answering in haste when they see a familiar concept. Follow-up discussions related to this question can delve into other examples of nocturnal, diurnal, and crepuscular animals. Other discussions can extend to the "wrong" answers to this question.

5. **Answers will vary,** but the key to look for is that students have read and understood some of the information about owls in the student magazine. The importance of owls in a habitat or ecosystem is touched on almost indirectly in the "Flying Mousetrap" feature on page 3. In general, look for students' understanding that owls play a role in keeping rodent populations in check and that they are creatures that deserve our respect and protection.