

The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark

Plop was afraid of the dark.

'You *can't* be afraid of the dark,' said his mummy. 'Owls are *never* afraid of the dark.'

'This one is,' Plop said.

'But owls are *night* birds,' she said.

Plop looked down at his toes. 'I don't want to be a night bird,' he mumbled. 'I want to be a day bird.'

'You *are* what you *are*,' said Mrs Barn Owl firmly.

'Yes, I know,' agreed Plop, 'and what I *are* is afraid of the dark.'

'Oh dear,' said Mrs Barn Owl. It was clear that she was going to need a lot of patience. She shut her eyes and tried to think how best she could help Plop not to be afraid.

Plop waited.

His mother opened her eyes again. 'Plop, you are only afraid of the dark because you don't know about it. What *do* you know about the dark?'

'It's black,' said Plop.

'Well, that's wrong for a start. It can be silver or blue or grey or lots of other colours, but almost never black. What else do you know about it?'

'I don't like it,' said Plop. 'I do not like it AT ALL.'

'That's not *knowing* something,' said his mother. 'That's *feeling* something. I don't think you know anything about the dark at all.'

'Dark is nasty,' Plop said loudly.

'You don't know that. You have never had your beak outside the nest-hole after dusk. I think you had better go down into the world and find out a lot more about the dark before you make up your mind about it.'

'Now?' said Plop.

'Now,' said his mother.

Plop climbed out of the nest-hole and wobbled along the branch outside. He peeped over the edge. The world seemed to be a very long way down.

'I'm not a very good lander,' he said. 'I might spill myself.'

'Your landing will improve with practice,' said his mother. 'Look! There's a little boy down there on the edge of the wood collecting sticks. Go and talk to him about it.'

'Now?' said Plop.

'Now,' said his mother. So Plop shut his eyes, took a deep breath, and...

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Questions

① What are the names of the owls in the story? [1 mark]

② Who is the author of the story? [1 mark]

③ Write down the colour Plop's mummy said the dark was almost never. [1 mark]

④ *"I don't want to be a night bird," he mumbled.*

Which phrase has a similar meaning to *'mumbled'*? Circle **one** answer.

said quietly and not clearly **said loudly and clearly** **said quietly and clearly** [1 mark]

⑤ *'It was clear that she was going to need a lot of patience.'*

Which of these words has a similar meaning to *'patience'*? Circle **one** answer.

calmness **anger** **courage** [1 mark]

⑥ Sequence these events from the story. One has been done for you. [1 mark]

Mummy said that Plop needed to find out about the dark before he made his mind up.	
Plop wobbled along the branch outside.	
Mummy said that owls can't be afraid of the dark.	
Plop was afraid of the dark.	1

⑦ A. *"I don't like it," said Plop. "I do not like it AT ALL."*

How do you think Plop was talking to his mummy at this point? Circle **one** answer.

happily **forcefully** **humorously**

B. What makes you think this? [2 marks]

⑧ How do you think Plop was feeling when he wobbled along the branch and peeped over the edge? What makes you think this? [2 marks]

⑨ What was the little boy doing? [1 mark]

⑩ *"Now," said his mother. So Plop shut his eyes, took a deep breath, and...'*

What do you think happens next in the story? [1 mark]

Teaching assessment

- 1 Pupils should write **Plop** and **Mrs Barn Owl** (accept **mummy** or **mummy owl**).
1 mark (Content Domain 1b)
- 2 Pupils should write **Jill Tomlinson**.
1 mark (Content Domain 1b)
- 3 Pupils should write **black**.
1 mark (Content Domain 1b)
- 4 Pupils should circle the phrase **said quietly and not clearly**.
1 mark (Content Domain 1a)
- 5 Pupils should circle **calmness**.
1 mark (Content Domain 1a)
- 6 Expected standard:

Mummy said that Plop needed to find out about the dark before he made his mind up.	3
Plop wobbled along the branch outside.	4
Mummy said that owls can't be afraid of the dark.	2
Plop was afraid of the dark.	1

1 mark for all correct (Content Domain 1c)

- 7 A. Expected standard: Pupils should circle the word **forcefully**.
1 mark (Content Domain 1d)
- B. Extension: Some pupils may be able to explain that the use of capitals suggests that Plop was being forceful about his feelings. Accept answers alluding to shouting only if reference to the capitals is made.
1 additional mark (Content Domain 1d)
- 8 Expected standard: Pupils should explain that Plop was feeling nervous / frightened.
1 mark (Content Domain 1d)
- Extension: Some pupils may be able to expand their answers by explaining that 'wobbling' showed his uncertainty and 'taking a peek' would have been a very quick look at what was below.
1 additional mark (Content Domain 1d)
- 9 Expected standard: Pupils should write **collecting sticks**.
1 mark (Content Domain 1b)
- 10 Expected standard: Accept any plausible prediction such as Plop flapped his wings and flew or Plop fell to the ground.
1 mark (Content Domain 1e)