

English examples

1. Communication ideas

In this section we look at some ways of taking bird material and using them in different English styles.

Communication style	Example
Stories and story telling	See Robin document
Poems and rhymes	Kestrel
Diaries – nature walk	Bullfinch
Instruction manuals	Barn owl

1.1. Newspaper / magazine articles

Lead article	Robin murder
Celebrities and gossip	Robin courtship
Travel	Swallow migrating
Health	Blackbird and ant bath

2. Poems and rhymes

2.1. Kestrel swooping

The kestrel hovered
The mouse looked bothered
The kestrel dived
The mouse survived
The kestrel flew away
The mouse lived another day

3. Diary

3.1. A walk around the Hurst Water Meadow - extract

Thursday 14th April 2005

It was a beautiful spring afternoon, sun shining, birds singing, too good to be indoors. I walked down to the water meadow soaking in the sun.

When I got to the bridge I looked left and right for signs of water birds, hoping to see a kingfisher flash past, but none in sight.

I looked towards my favourite piece of scrub to see if I could see a bullfinch. Sure enough I could see a red blob amongst the white flowers. Still alive and hiding in the same place. I knew that as I walked by the bush he would move into the centre and I would not be able to see him, just hear his quiet call, letting me know he was still about.

Today he was sharing his bush with a pair of starlings and being entertained by a mistle thrush singing from a nearby tree.

4. Instruction manual

4.1. Teaching a barn owl to hunt from a perch

- You will start by flying to a perch and survey the ground for prey.
- When you spot some likely prey, lower your head, lean forward, open your wings and push off with your feet.
- Remember to flap your wings eventually changing to a silent glide, and move towards your prey.
- Keep your feet tucked well under your tail.
- When you are ready to pounce throw your feet forward so that they lead.
- At the last possible moment open your talons and spread them wide.
- Grab the prey with one foot and use the other to help you land.

5. Newspapers and magazines

5.1. Lead article - Robin murder

A young robin was murdered today trying to take over the territory of its neighbour.

The intruder was reported to have flown into the defender's territory, perched in one of his trees, took up an aggressive posture and sang angrily. The defender replied by flying to a higher perch, puffed out his red breast feathers and sang angrily in response. Despite the warning the aggressor would not back down.

The defender said that he had no other option but to attack. After a brief fight, he killed the intruder with a fatal peck to the head.

The defender announced his victory by singing to his neighbours and has not been bothered since.

5.2. Celebrities and gossip - Robin courtship

The famous singing robin duet from number 1 Thames Road, were seen exchanging food behind the garden shed.

The male robin said that he had fallen for his mate's begging calls and he couldn't resist offering her his food.

The female robin said that she would like a large family and hoped for 2 broods this season with 7 eggs in each.

The male robin looking extremely tired made no comment.

5.3. Travel – swallow migrating

When summer draws to an end and the temperatures start to drop, days get shorter and there are less insects to feed on, isn't this the time to plan a little holiday.

Why not get away and spend the winter in the warmth of South Africa.

I spent last winter there in the company of a group of swallows.

Our group took off from a telegraph pole in Dorchester and headed for the Channel. Our route took us over the West Mediterranean, Sahara Desert and African countryside until we arrived in Johannesburg.

In flight food was catered for by flying low and eating insects as we went along. We stopped overnight to rest and refuel.

5.4. Health – keeping feathers in good order

As we all know keeping our feathers in tip top condition is essential if we want to look our best and achieve high performance flying.

Have you tried bathing in ants?

The blackbirds tell us that they regularly take ant baths to keep in good condition. All you have to do is pick the ants up and place them on your body, or lie next to them and let them run over you. The ants will do the rest, squirting their juices over you.

It also has the advantage that if you are desperate for a snack, nibbles are readily available.