

Owl ears



Class Length: 15 minutes

Grades: 3-8

Season: Fall, Winter, Spring

Group Size: 8 - 12

Safety: Take first aid kit. Note any relevant medical issues/needs in group and modify lessons to accommodate students.

Materials: blindfold, two spoons

Pre-class Prep: It's helpful if students have some background knowledge of owls and their habits

Class Outline: Talk about the position of owls' ears on their head (they are offset, one higher than the other). To demonstrate this, have students point one index finger at their left temple and one index finger halfway down the right side of their neck. Human ears are opposite, meaning right across from each other. We can see this! Elect a student volunteer "owl" to put on a blindfold and bang spoons in various locations around their head-- above, below, in front, behind and to either side. The student indicates in which direction they think the spoons were banged. Other students observe quietly and note which directions the volunteer owl was the most/least accurate at guessing. After a few dozen tries, the owl takes the blindfold off and gets feedback from their peers. Typically, students hear most accurately to their left and right (since that's where their ears are) and struggle with the other directions, unlike true owls! Play a few rounds allowing different students to be in the volunteer owl role.

Purpose: Students learn about owls' offset ears and how the ears help owls hunt their prey at night.

Vocabulary/Concepts: offset ears, opposite ears, adaptation, predator, prey

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to explain how the position of owls' ears helps them hunt their prey at night.

Next Generation Science Standards:

1-LS1-1. Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs.

2-LS4-1. Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

4-LS1-1. Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction.

4-LS1-2. Use a model to describe that animals receive different types of information through their senses, process the information in their brain, and respond to the information in different ways.

