



OWL BABIES

AUTHOR: MARIN WADDELL

ILLUSTRATOR: PATRICK BENSON

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Owl Babies](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

"I want my mommy!" Three baby owls (Sarah, Percy and Bill) awake one night to find their mother gone, and they can't help but wonder where she is. What is she doing? When will she be back? What scary things move all around them? Readers see the anxious little owls as they worry and express their thoughts from different perspectives (size, and maybe age). They try to reassure themselves that she is going to return soon. And she does.

[amazon.com](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

According to author information in back of book, Waddell decided to write this books after hearing a lost child wailing at the market, "I want my mommy!" Martin Waddell was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1941 and has lived most of his life in nearby Newcastle. He grew up liking animals and "told stories in a lively manner." He has a very successful series for children titled, *Big Bear Little Bear* which is known around the world. He and one of his book illustrators won the [Kurt Maschler Award](#) among many other awards for his books.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Patrick Benson was born in 1956 in Rogate, Hampshire, UK, the youngest of 4 children. He has an undergraduate degree from Eton College and continued to study art in classical drawing in Florence, the Chelsea Art School and St. Martin School of Art. After working in fashion for several years, he met a book publisher who encouraged him to experiment in the children's book illustration industry. He has worked on over 40 books and his illustrations have received awards such as The Mother Goose Award, the Kurt Maschler Award and the Christopher Award. As a child Benson loved copying pictures and believes that is a very helpful way to learn technique. He did not put a lot of detail into the images for one of his most popular books, OWL BABIES. OWL BABIES happens at night and Benson wanted to let the reader imagine what else is in the night-time wood. He also didn't want to make it too scary! He used a technique of drawing the birds in black and white, then they are put onto film and the color is added on a separate layer. This enables the black to be very rich and dark. He explained that this was a really difficult book to illustrate as nothing happens!

THE READ ALOUD

OWL BABIES

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Owls
- Feelings

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- What do you think this book will be about?
- What Time (day/night?) do you think this will take place? How can you tell?
- About owls: What do you know about owls?
- I wonder owls live and I wonder when are they play?
- Does anyone know what noise they make?
- Can you imagine how these baby owls feel by looking at this picture?

DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

- Pg. 1-2 Repeat owl names and comment on sizes again. At end of page review where baby owls are when story starts.
- Pg. 3-4 – How can we tell it's night? Notice the big print for word "GONE". I wonder how mom got out of the hole? How does Bill feel?
Predict: Do you think Mother Owl will come back?
- Pg.5-6 - What do the owl babies think Mother is doing? - Do you think that will make them feel better? – What about Bill – remember what he says?
- Pg. 7-8 So, what did the babies do next?
- Pg. 9-10 How do Sarah and Percy make themselves feel better? What about Bill – repeat his words. Compare size of owls to where they choose to sit.
- Pg. 11-12 Call attention to baby owls way up in the tree. What does it mean to be brave? Why were owls scared? What does Sarah think Mom will bring (why mice?) Bill's response?
- Pg. 13-14 See if children can help with phrase "all owls think a lot". Why do you think Sarah suggested they all sit together? Consider owl expressions to talk about feelings.
- Pg. 15-16 Talk about what owl babies thought might happen to Mom. What did they do to try to help Mom and make themselves feel better?
- Pg. 17-18 Look at the big print. What do you think this says?
- Pg. 19-20 Does the mother owl make a lot of noise when she flies? (silent means...) Do the babies see her coming? Where are they?
- Pg. 21-22 How do babies feel now? How can you tell?
- Pg. 23-34 Capital letters again...What does fuss mean? Repeat of phrase "all owls think a lot". Did the owl babies actually tell mom that they were scared? How did she know? What did Mother Owl remind little owls about when she goes away....she will come back. How did Bill end the story. Do you think the owl babies will remember this the next time their mom is gone in the night?

AFTER READING

Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- Pg. 23-34 Capital letters again...What does fuss mean? Repeat of phrase "all owls think a lot". Did the owl babies actually tell mom that they were scared? How did she know? What did Mother Owl remind little owls about when she goes away....she will come back. How did Bill end the story. Do you think the owl babies will remember this the next time their mom is gone in the night?
- Can you remember names of owl babies? What happened to them in the story?
- Who stayed with owl babies while their mom looks for food? Who stays with you when your mom has to be away? Do people moms leave their babies alone?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Have you ever been sad because someone has left you to go to work or school? How do you make yourself feel better?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Owl Movement Activity – Owl Exercises

Lead children in some movements and stretches using owl behaviors as a guide. Children can:

- Fly by flapping their arms
- Look around by turning their heads slowly from side to side
- Perch by bending their knees and standing on their toes with arms at their sides
- Swoop by sticking arms out straight to each side and dipping their heads down and then back up from side to side.

1. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Talk about other animals that come out and move around at night.
- Writing activity: Talk about the letter O which starts the word Owl. Practice making the “o” on paper. See attached work sheet if this type of activity is used in class.