

TEACHING PACK

WILDLIVES

50 EXTRAORDINARY ANIMALS

THAT MADE HISTORY



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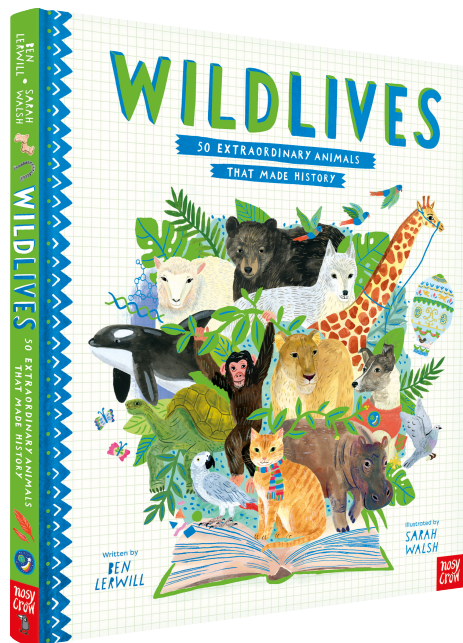
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INTRODUCTION

DISCOVER SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS AND UNFORGETTABLE ANIMALS OF ALL TIME!

*Have you ever heard of the bear who became a soldier,
or the sheep who flew in a hot-air balloon?*

In this fascinating and touching book, children can learn about 50 courageous creatures from around the world and throughout history. Written by travel journalist Ben Lerwill, this captivating collection gathers heart-warming, surprising and often emotionally powerful stories of bravery, discovery and friendship. Perfect for anyone interested in animals, history, conservation, science and culture, this fascinating compendium is brought to life with vibrant illustrations by Sarah Walsh and rare archive photography.



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We have put together some activities for you to use with your class alongside *WildLives*, allowing you to look in-depth at the lives of some of the animals whilst developing creative writing, speaking and listening and drama skills.

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CONTENTS

Lesson One: Rescue and Protect

In this section, the students will focus on creative writing skills, looking at language used to describe the animals and writing their own short story from an animal's perspective.

Lesson Two: Adventure and Explore

This section focuses on the journeys animals might go on and includes a drama task, encouraging students to imagine what it was like to see an animal for the first time.

Lesson Three: Change and Solve

In this section, students are encouraged to think about the threats facing animals today and the lessons that can be learnt from them. Their writing skills will be developed through constructing a persuasive piece of writing about the importance of animal conservation.

Lesson Four: Discover and Pioneer

This section will focus on the lessons we have learnt from animals. Students will consider the similarities and differences between animals and humans.

Lesson Five: Inspire and Influence

This final section allows students to be creative, designing a poster celebrating one of their favourite animals, and provides a good opportunity to group together everything they have learnt so far.

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LESSON ONE:

RESCUE AND PROTECT

The animals in this section found themselves in some very dangerous situations and they showed us that, just as humans can look after animals, animals can look after humans too.

Extract: Cher Ami – the pigeon who saved the lives of soldiers (p. 6)

During the First World War, the United States Army used homing pigeons to deliver messages across battlefields. Cher Ami had already delivered important messages during the war but her final mission was her most famous.

On 4 October 1918, American soldiers were being fired at by both the enemy and their own side, who didn't realise they were there. The major wrote a note that read:

"We are along the road parallel 276.4. Our artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us. For heaven's sake stop it."

It was tied to the leg of Cher Ami, and while bombs and bullets whistled through the air, the bird rose into the sky.

The enemy knew exactly what was happening and shot at Cher Ami. She was hit almost immediately, in the breast, leg and eye, and fell to the ground. But her injuries weren't enough to stop her. Amazingly, she took off again, flapping upwards through another storm of bullets and flying 40 kilometres in under half an hour to reach her base. She arrived blinded in one eye and coated in blood, but her message was still dangling from her wounded leg.



ACTIVITY ONE:

- Cher Ami helped the soldiers by carrying a message to stop the attack. Consider the relationship here between animals and humans. Do we expect animals to be the protector? Why/why not?
- Has an animal ever helped you? How?
- Cher Ami is described as a hero. Brainstorm a list of adjectives that can be used to describe her and her heroic act.
- A lot of the animals in *WildLives* made the news around the world. Use your adjectives to write some newspaper headlines about Cher Ami and the other animals in this section.

For example: Brave pigeon faces bullets to save soliders, Heroic bird stops major attack

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LESSON ONE: RESCUE AND PROTECT

So with the message tied on tight,
I flew up straight with all my might;
Before I got up high enough,
Those watchful guns began to puff.

Machine-gun bullets came like rain,
You'd think I was an aeroplane;
And when I started to the rear,
My! the shot was coming near!

But on I flew, straight as a bee,
The wind could not catch up with me.

Extract from the poem 'Cher Ami' (1926), by Harry Webb Farrington



ACTIVITY TWO:

- Read the poem 'Cher Ami', by Harry Webb Farrington (p. 7) as a class. Circle the similes used and underline other language which emphasises the heroic act undertaken by Cher Ami.
- Animals aren't able to tell their own stories, so humans have to tell them instead. Imagine you are Cher Ami, or choose another animal in this chapter and write a short story from their perspective during their heroic act.

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LESSON TWO:

ADVENTURE AND EXPLORE

The animals in this chapter all made epic journeys that were out of the ordinary, not always of their own choice.

Extract: Clara – the rhino who toured Europe (p. 42)

Clara was born in India in 1738 and soon found herself alone when her mother was killed. A Dutchman took her home to look after her, and he soon realised that people in Europe had never seen a creature like her before. This was the perfect opportunity to make some money and show Clara to the world.

Clara certainly went to lots of places. Over the next 17 years, she travelled to almost every major city in central Europe, chomping huge amounts of hay, bread and oranges as she grew bigger and bigger. She was visited by royalty in Berlin and Vienna, sailed on a barge up the River Rhine, drew crowds in Switzerland, met the Holy Roman Emperor, impressed the King of France and became one of the stars of the Venice Carnival.

She was examined by scientists, painted by artists and written about by poets. Some of Europe's most fashionable ladies were so amazed at the sight of Clara that they even started wearing hats that looked like rhino horns!



ACTIVITY ONE:

- Why might animals travel away from their home? *For example: food, safety*
- Some animals such as Clara don't have a choice and are taken from their homes by humans. Discuss how this might make them feel.
- Now, we know what most animals look like. In the past, people had never seen certain animals because they lived so far away. Imagine you are alive in the 18th century and you have just been to see Clara the rhino for the first time. How would you feel?
- Run a drama exercise, with students taking it in turns to act as someone who has just visited Clara and have the rest of the class interview them about the experience.
- *Suggested questions: What did the rhino look like? How big was it?*
- *Use lots of adjectives and similes to describe the experience.*

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LESSON TWO: ADVENTURE AND EXPLORE

“It’s difficult to imagine the impact that a female Indian rhinoceros could have had on 18th-century Europe . . . (she was) the equivalent of a modern-day rock star.”

The J. Paul Getty Trust



ACTIVITY TWO:

- Clara was compared to a ‘modern-day rock star’. Why do you think this comparison was made?
- This visit may have been exciting for many people, but it was also a huge undertaking to transport Clara from her home in India to Europe. What did her transporters and carers have to consider?
- When Clara arrived in Europe, there was great excitement. Women even began to wear hats that looked like rhino horns. Design a celebratory outfit, either for visiting Clara or inspired by her. Think about colour and texture but make it wearable too.



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LESSON THREE:

CHANGE AND SOLVE

The animals in this section have led remarkable lives. Whether they lived to an astonishing age or became a symbol of conservation, they all deserve to be remembered forever.

Extract: Elsa – the lioness who changed how we protect wildlife (p. 50)

In 1956, a wildlife warden in Kenya took in three lion cubs after their mother died. Two were sent to a zoo, but Elsa grew up around the house, never learning to look after herself.

Joy and George understood that Elsa needed a wilder life. They encouraged her to spend time on the plains by herself for days and weeks at a time, hoping that she might meet other lions and learn how to feed herself. Months went by. Elsa was slowly getting used to living like a proper lioness, but she was usually very hungry, and Joy and George still had to give her food.

Then one day, they heard a lot of noise coming from the river. Elsa had caught a buffalo that was crossing the water! It was a clear sign that she was ready to start living on her own in the wild. Joy and George still drove out to the plains to see her from time to time, and less than a year later they spotted her crossing the river again – only this time she wasn't alone.

Behind her splashed her three tiny cubs. Elsa was a mother.



ACTIVITY ONE:

- The animals in this section have each taught people something new. What important lesson did people learn from Elsa? How do you think this has changed the way we treat animals today?
- Using this chapter and your students' own knowledge, work as a class to brainstorm the different threats that animals face in both the wild and in protection. *For example: melting ice, poachers, wildfires, changing climates.*
- How many of these threats are caused or influenced by the actions of humans?
- Discuss why conservation is important. Develop a class manifesto of things that you can do to help protect animals and their habitats. *For example: cutting down on single-use plastics, turning lights off, recycling.*

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LESSON THREE:

CHANGE AND SOLVE

Elsa inspired thousands of people to help animals that were being harmed or hunted and, in 1984, the actors who played Joy and George in one of the films started the Born Free Foundation, which today helps to look after wildlife around the world.

Elsa was a playful, beautiful lioness, but her life was just the start of a conservation story that's still happening today.



ACTIVITY TWO:

- Ask the students to write a piece of persuasive writing to convince people how important it is to protect animals, from cats to polar bears. Why should we help look after them now and conserve them for the future?
- *Encourage them to include at least three of the following techniques:*
 1. *Repeated words*
 2. *Emotive language*
 3. *Rhetorical questions*
 4. *Facts and evidence*
 5. *Alliteration*
 6. *Personal pronouns*

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LESSON FOUR:

DISCOVER AND PIONEER

The more we understand about animals, the more we understand about the world around us. The animals in this chapter all helped us to see things differently.

Extract: Koko – the gorilla who learned to speak in sign language (p. 72)

In 1971, a doctor went to visit Koko at San Francisco Zoo. She wanted to see if it was possible to teach a gorilla how to use sign language.

Penny started by showing the baby gorilla some simple signs for 'eat', 'drink' and 'more'. When Koko seemed to understand and use these hand signs, Penny taught her some more.

Koko became so good at learning new signs that in 1974 she was moved from the zoo to the university where Penny worked.

By the time Koko was fully grown, she could understand around 2,000 spoken words and use over 1,000 different hand signs for things like 'flower', 'love', 'sorry', 'surprise' and 'polite'.

She was even able to use these hand signs to make short sentences – 'bring me cat', for example – and sometimes to invent her own words, like 'finger bracelet' for 'ring' or 'scratch comb' for 'brush'.



ACTIVITY ONE:

- How did Koko change the way people think about gorillas?
- She is described as 'funny, loving, cheeky and kind'. Is this a surprising way to describe a gorilla?
- Think about the ways in which humans and animals are both different and similar. Create a Venn diagram, using the template on the next page, with human characteristics in one circle and animal characteristics in another. Which characteristics are shared? Has reading about these animals changed the way you carry out this task?

ACTIVITY TWO:

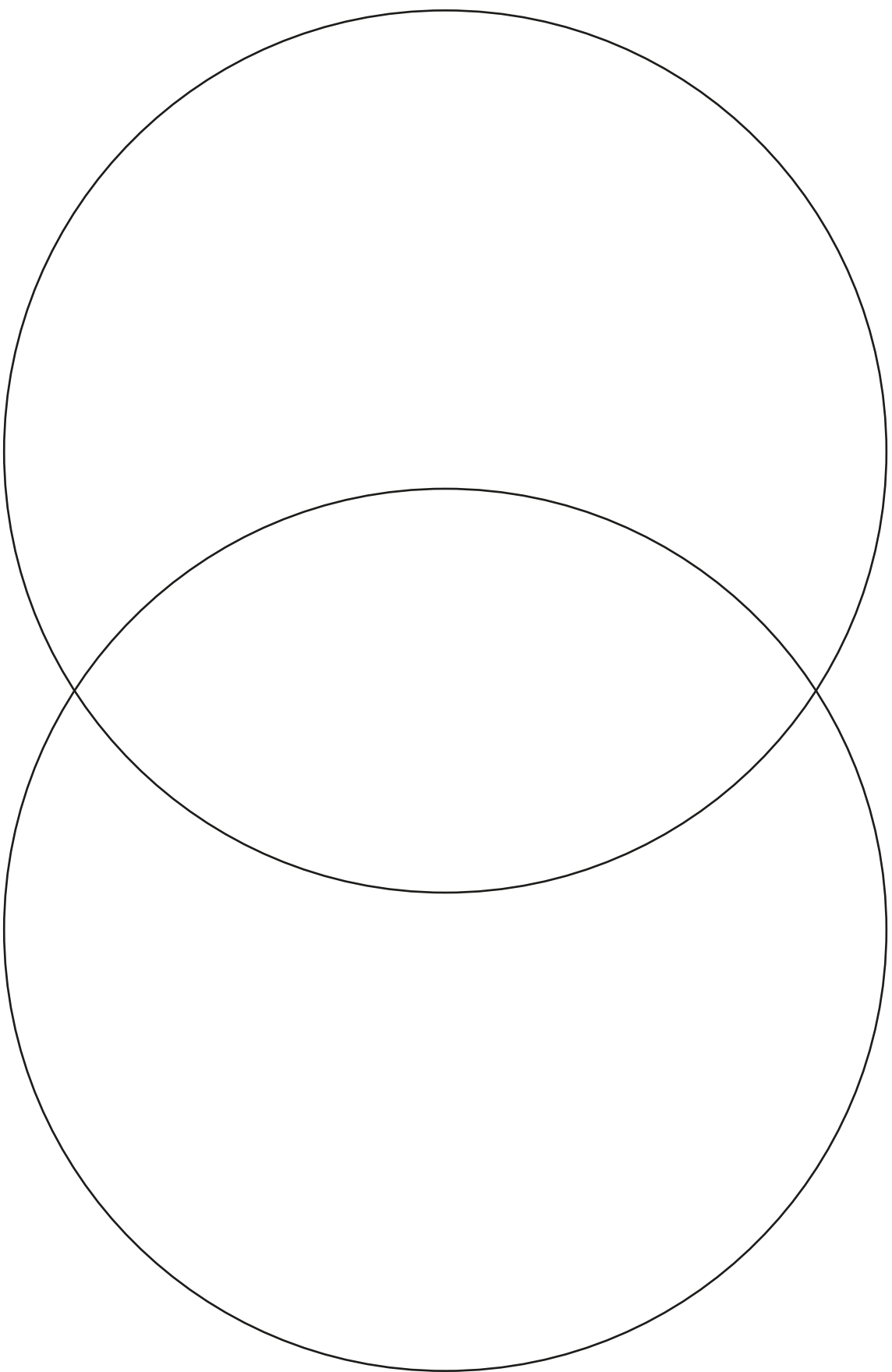
- Koko learnt over 1,000 hand signs over her lifetime. Teach the class some simple sign language for words such as eat, drink, flower, love. You can use british-sign.co.uk to create a sheet of signs.
- You could also show the class this clip from a documentary about Koko: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqJf1mB5PjQ>

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ANIMAL CHARACTERISTICS

HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS



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LESSON FIVE:

INSPIRE AND INFLUENCE

The animal kingdom is extraordinarily diverse, and the animals in this chapter show us just how impressive the natural world can be.

Extract: Pale Male – the red-tailed hawk of New York (p. 98)

One year, a red-tailed hawk roosted at the top of a tall apartment building in New York. He soon attracted wildlife-lovers who named him Pale Male.

Pale Male seemed happy too – he had such a good view of the park from his roost that he could easily swoop down to catch squirrels and pigeons! The next year, Pale Male tried to start a family. The mate he found was a female named Chocolate, and together they built a nest 12 floors up on the side of a tower block.

By now, Pale Male and Chocolate were famous. Stories about them appeared in the newspapers and on television, and more and more people came to see them. It was a thrill to watch them glide over the city. Then, two years later, something very special happened – Pale Male and his mate hatched three eggs in their nest! Soon a whole family of red-tailed hawks could be seen flying over Fifth Avenue.



ACTIVITY ONE:

- Pale Male made his home at the top of an apartment building. Why is this so surprising? Where would you expect hawks to live?
- Think about the animals you have heard about in this book. What different environments have they lived in? Come up with a list of animals and their ideal environments. What makes a good home for an animal?
- What other animals have adapted to live in cities? How?
- Ask the class to choose their favourite environment and draw a picture of it, including some of the animals you might find there.

ACTIVITY TWO:

- Ask the students to choose their favourite animal from this chapter or the whole book and create a poster about them. *Include a picture, words to describe them and a short paragraph about how they made history.*
- *Encourage the students to build on everything they have learnt throughout the previous sections e.g. creative writing and persuasive writing.*

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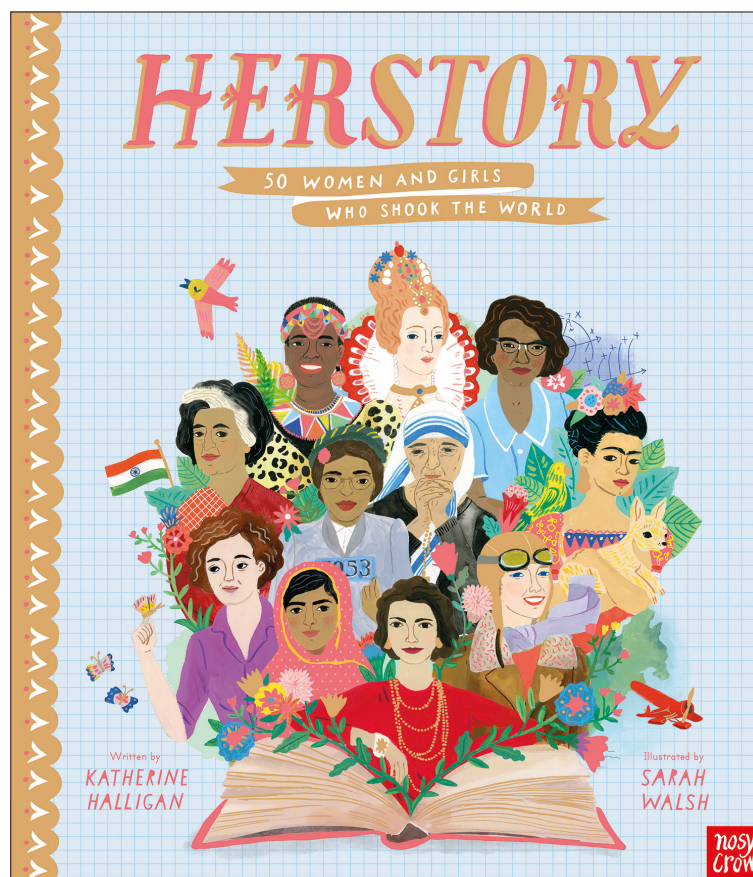
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THANK YOU FOR USING THIS TEACHING PACK!

We hope you have enjoyed learning about all of the amazing animals from around the world and throughout history!

We would love to see your creations!
Please share any work with us @NosyCrowBooks #WildLives
or email marketing@nosycrow.com

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