

# Barred Owl

## A Little Perception Please!

### What you need!

- A pencil
- A paperclip
- Two eyes

Owls look like us and this is one of the reasons people often choose them as their favourite bird. What makes owls look a little like us are their two forward-facing eyes. Owls and Homo sapiens share what is known as binocular vision, and this gives us both the depth perception we have come to rely on. Depth perception allows us to judge the differences in distance between objects we observe. Try this simple activity to see how much you and owls depend on the sight from both your eyes.



### What you do:



1. Bend out the two, rounded-hoop ends of the paperclip until it forms an 'L'.
2. Place the paperclip on a flat surface with one rounded end standing up and the other flat on a table. Line it up so that it looks like an 'L' when you stand in front of it.
3. Stand at arm's length from the paperclip. Now close one eye and from the side try to put the pencil through the hoop in the paperclip.
4. Open both eyes and try again.

### Ask Yourself

- What happened when you had one eye covered?
- What happened when the other eye was covered?
- Was it easier or harder to get the pencil through with both eyes open?
- Why do owls and humans have binocular vision?

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### What did you find out?

The brain uses the difference in distance between both eyes to judge distance and depth in order to make a three-dimensional picture of what we are looking at. With only one eye, depth perception is very difficult, which means it is hard to tell which objects are close to us and which are farther away.

If you only have one eye, you can get around this by moving your head slightly from side to side to zero in on the target. In fact even perfectly fine, two-eyed owls are often seen bobbing their heads slightly, just to get an even better perception on their world.

### Specific Learner Expectations (SLE)

**Grade 1 Topic D:** Senses.

- SLE 4: Recognize the limitation of our senses and identify situations where our senses can deceive us; e.g., optical illusions.
- SLE 5: Recognize that other living things have senses and identify ways that animals use their senses: danger; finding food; recognizing mates; and babies.