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Study Guide to accompany video

“Birding Basics with Sneed and Braden Collard”

**Introduction: “**Birding Basics with Sneed and Braden Collard” is a video that introduces birding to beginners and shows them a few common birds that can be seen in most parts of the United States. Watch the video, feeling free to pause and “rewind” it as often as you wish. Then answer the following questions:

Comprehension

Why did Sneed and Braden make this video?

What were their qualifications for making this video?

How many bird species (kinds of birds) did they tell you they would show you? How many did they actually talk about?

What other animals did they talk about in the video?

Did they break up the birds into different groups? What were those groups?

What are a few larger birds they talked about?

What birds lived on or near the water?

What was the name of the guest star in the video near the end?

What did Sneed and Braden do to make the video more interesting or entertaining?

What equipment did Braden suggest you have to begin birding? Were you supposed to buy this equipment?

Opinions

Did this video get you interested in birds and birding? Why or why not?

What was your favorite bird in the video? Why?

Did you feel Sneed and Braden are passionate about birds and birding?

What other information would you have liked to have in the video?

What parts of the video could you have skipped?

Was this a professional-quality video or a video made by two people who were just really interested in the subject? Did that matter to you?

Did you think this video was funny? Which parts made you laugh—or groan?

Do you think birds are important? Why or why not?

Connections

For Sneed and Braden, birding is a favorite hobby. Do you have a favorite hobby or interest? Did you see anything in the video that reminded you of your hobby or interest? Explain.

Have you seen any of the birds that were shown in this video? Where and when did you see them? Do you see them all year long? Did this video make you think about them more?

If you were to make a video about something that interests you, what would it be about? How would you approach it?

What do you think it takes to be a good birder? Are any of these qualities useful in other parts of your life?

Can you think of any human activities that help birds? How about human activities that harm birds?

Did you have any questions after watching this video? What were they? How do you think you could answer them?

**(Continue on to Writing Lesson and Activity on Following Pages)**

Lesson: Write from Real Life

**Objective:** To combine observation and research to write about the wildlife around you.

**Total Time:** 3-5 hours

**Required Materials:** A notebook and pen/pencil

**Additional Preferred Materials:** pair of binoculars; camera; bird field guide

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

Step 1: Watch the video “Birding Basics with Sneed and Braden Collard”. This may be found at Sneed Collard’s Youtube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0ZcdtTRoiWoYSlFryAu7rg>

If something went by too fast, stop the video and back up to re-watch a section again.

Step 2: Borrow a pair of binoculars and a camera (if possible) and go outside, either by taking a walk around your neighborhood, visiting a nearby park, or taking a hike with your parents, friends, or trusted adults. If you can’t do any of those things, get comfortable next to a window that looks out on a yard or street.

Step 3: Every time you see a bird, observe it through your binoculars (if you have them). Do you remember that bird from the video? Whether your answer is yes or no, study the bird in front of you and ask yourself:

* How big is this bird? (Hint: compare it to the size of your hand or your binoculars.)
* What color or colors does it have?
* Is it a big, chunky bird or slim and thin?
* What about its bill? Is that thick or thin? Long or short?
* Does the bird fly fast or slow?
* What kinds of sounds is it making if any?
* Where is it hanging out? In a tree? On a lawn? In a pond?
* What is this bird doing? Looking for food? Singing? Chasing away a rival? Resting? Flying?
* If possible, also take a picture of the bird, or sketch the bird in your journal. You also can try recording the bird’s song or calls with your phone. That can work pretty well if the bird is close.

Step 4: Write down all of your observations in your notebook/journal. If you think you know what the bird is, write its name down, too. If not, open your bird guide (if you have one) and flip through it. Do you see any birds that look like the one that you see? If so, write those down. (Hint: don’t worry if you can’t identify exactly the kind of bird that you see. If you can get in the right group, you’re doing great!)

Step 5: Repeat Steps 3 and 4 at least four or five times for different birds—more if you want to!

Step 6: Pick one bird that you saw that you especially liked that you can identify. If you don’t know what kind it was, feel free to ask your parents, friends, or teachers to help you figure out what it is by using a bird guide or online resources. Birding is often a group activity!

Step 7: Learn more about your bird. If you have a birding field guide, start by reading about it there. Also check out these other great online sources for learning about your bird:

All About Birds: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/>

(You will have to type in your bird’s name, and then click on the link under its picture.)

Audubon Guide to North American Birds online: <https://www.audubon.org/bird-guide>

Bird Watcher’s Digest Bird ID online: <https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/learn/identification.php>

Take notes while you are doing this research. As you are reading about your bird, pay special attention to:

* What it eats.
* Which parts of the country it lives (in every season).
* What kinds of habitats it likes.
* If it migrates or not.
* If it is endangered or not (probably not since you saw one yourself!).
* What its call sounds like.

Step 8 (Option A—Nonfiction): Imagine you are sitting with a friend, and you want to tell that friend something about your bird. It can be a general “all about my bird” story, or—better—something specific such as how your bird attracts a mate, gets food, or migrates thousands of miles each spring and fall. Now, using *both* your personal observations *and* the additional research that you did, write one to several paragraphs about your subject.

Step 8 (Option B—Fiction): Make up a story with your bird as a main character. It can be a talking character, or a more realistic character that plays a role in your story. In your story, incorporate **at least three real traits or habits** of your bird. For instance, if your character is a magpie, you might have it figure out some problem since magpies are really smart and good at problem-solving. If it is a woodpecker, you might have it grabbing some beetle grubs while it is talking to a friend. Let your creativity run wild!

Step 9: Form into small groups—or even a pair—and take turns reading *each other’s* stories out loud. Why not read your own story? Because you can learn more about your writing by hearing someone *else* read your story aloud. This allows you to see where a reader might get “tripped up” or confused by your writing.

After a story is read, let everyone in your group say something they really liked about your story and something they weren’t so sure about. Don’t argue with the person making the comments. This is a time for listening. While this is happening, take notes about which parts of your story work really well and which ones could be improved.

(Note: This can be done through a chatroom online if we are still in corona virus lockdown.)

Step 10: Using your notes from reading group, rewrite your story on a fresh sheet of paper to see if you can make it better.

Optional: If you’d also like to draw a picture of your bird, go for it. Everyone likes a good illustration—and it may help you think about details that you want to include in your writing.

Step 11: Read your story aloud to your classroom, either live or through a video session, depending on the situation.

Activity: Make a How-to or Introductory Video

**Objective:** Create a video that either shows people how to do something OR gives them basic information about something that may be new to them.

**Background:** Sneed and Braden made this movie using a digital video camera, a camera that takes regular (still) photos, and an Apple program called iMovie. iMovie allows you to import film clips, photos, and audio clips and turn them into a movie by editing them, adding sound effects and titles, and much more.

Similar video editors are available for Chromebooks and Windows operating systems. Here, for instance, is an article that describes software you can download onto a Chromebook.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/video-editors-for-chromebook/>

**Note that Sneed makes no guarantees for the quality or safety of any of these editing programs, but some of them are very well-known.**

If you do not have iMovie or another video editing tool, you can make a video directly without editing by simply shooting video on a phone or tablet. Almost any phone has some crude editing features that allow you to trim the ends of a video and do other things, but I have not found any ways to combine two videos on a phone without uploading them to iMovie, so if you are using a phone, you will want to film your entire video in one shot.

**Total Time:** 2+ hours, depending on the project.

**Required Materials:** A phone or camera that can shoot video; a video editor such as iMovie.

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

Step 1: Decide what you want your video to cover. (Hint: because even short videos can take a lot of time to put together, choose as small or focused a topic as you can, e.g. how to make a quesadilla; how to find collectable coins in your change; how to put on a new guitar string; my dog Lola, etc…)

Step 2: Write out a rough script or at least an outline of what you want to say.

Step 3: Practice your script four or five times *before* you begin filming what you want to film. Get to the point where you can say what you want to say without reading anything. (Hint: don’t try to *memorize* a script. Instead, just practice saying what you want to say until you are comfortable doing it without notes. If you have iMovie or a film editor, you don’t have to do everything in one take. You can practice a section, then film it, and repeat.)

Step 4: Film yourself talking and doing what you want to do. You will, of course, want to have someone else do the shooting or the acting OR just have your camera set up in a still position (maybe on a tripod?) and do it all yourself. (Hint: practice moving or shaking the camera as little as possible. As you saw on “Birding Basics” it’s a challenge to keep the camera still and you don’t want to make your viewers seasick!). You will probably end up with several different film clips. If you mess one up, you don’t have to stop the filming. Instead, just start over and you can edit out the bad spots in iMovie. Also note that the best way to film yourself is by putting your camera on a tripod. If you’re just using the camera on your desktop computer, you won’t have to worry about this—but will have to remain in view of the camera.

Step 5: Upload/download your film clips to your computer, tablet, etc… The easiest way to do this on a Mac is to make sure your videos automatically upload to iPhoto, but you can also connect your phone/camera to a computer with a cable or something like AirDrop and manually download certain video clips and photos as files in a folder.

Step 6: Open iMovie and import all of your film clips into it. Then, start editing your video!

Step 7: When you’re done, either upload it to your YouTube Channel or save it as a file that you can share with whomever you want.