

# Owls

There are many different kinds of owls, all birds of prey, hunting small mammals, insects and other birds (and some owls hunt fish). Owls tend to keep to themselves and are mostly nocturnal. They have large forward-facing eyes and have to turn their whole head to look to the side. The smallest owl is the Elf owl, which is only about 13cm long, while the largest are the Eurasian Eagle Owl and Blakiston's Fish Owl which can reach 70cm long and have a wingspan of over 2 metres! There are five species of owl in Britain: the British barn owl, tawny owl little owl, short-eared owl and long-eared owl.

- There are around 200 different owl species.
- Owls are active at night (nocturnal).
- A group of owls is called a parliament.
- Most owls hunt insects, small mammals and other birds.
- Some owl species hunt fish.
- Owls have powerful talons (claws) which help them catch and kill prey.
- Owls have large eyes and a flat face.
- Owls can turn their heads as much as 270 degrees.
- Owls are farsighted, meaning they can't see things close to their eyes clearly.
- Owls are very quiet in flight compared to other birds of prey.
- The colour of owl's feathers helps them blend into their environment (camouflage).
- Barn owls can be recognised by their heart shaped face.

*Fun fact: a group of owls is called a "parliament".*



Tawny Owl



Barn Owl

### **A Wise Old Owl**

Why do we think of owls as "wise"? In Greek mythology, the owl was associated with the goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom. In fact, the city of Athens is named after Athena, and its emblem is the owl.

### **Owls In Literature**

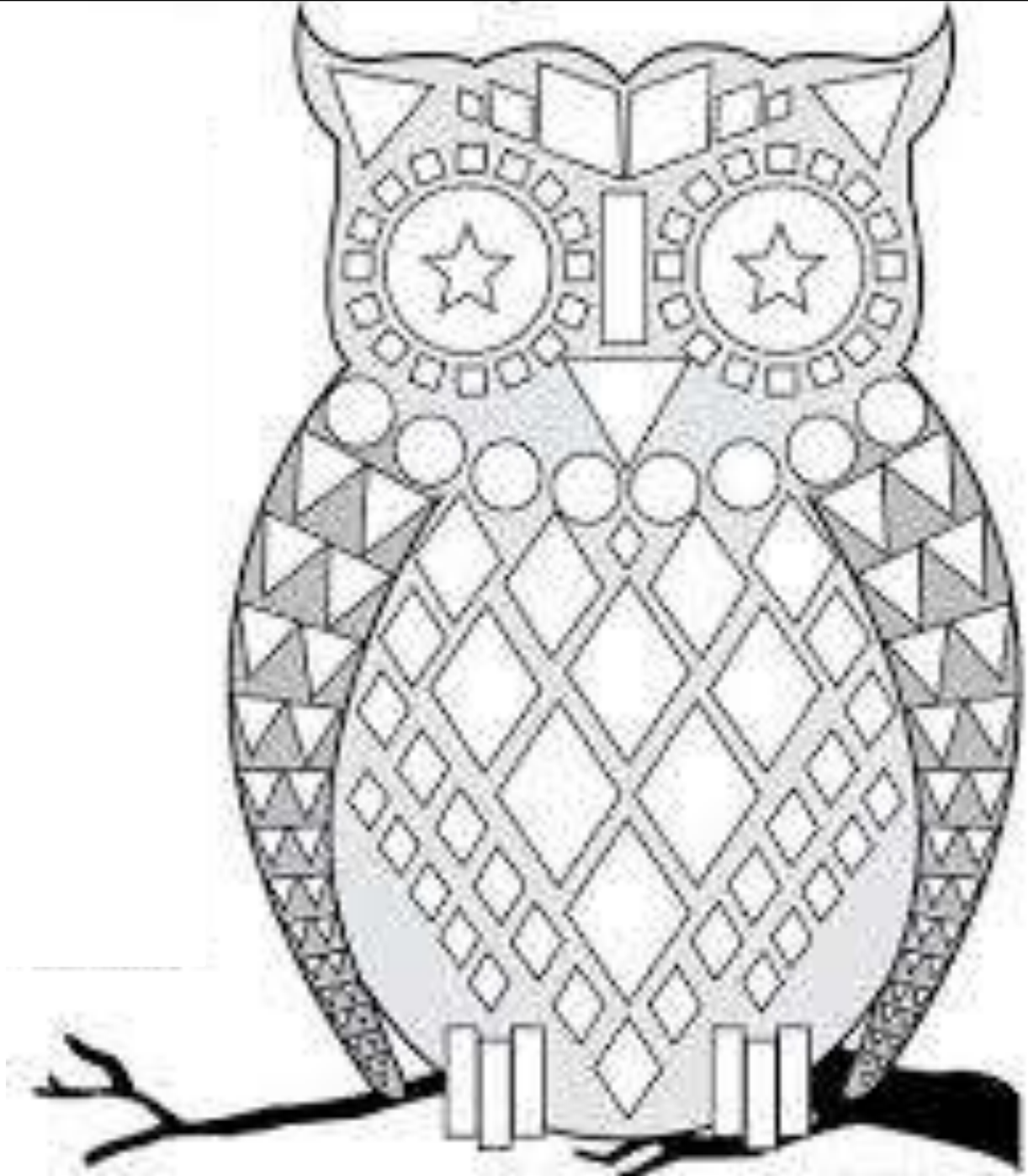
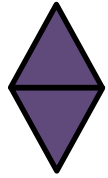
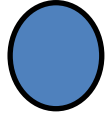
Here's a well known old English nursery rhyme:

*A wise old owl lived in an oak  
The more he saw the less he spoke  
The less he spoke the more he heard.  
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?*



owl

Colour the shapes in the owl.



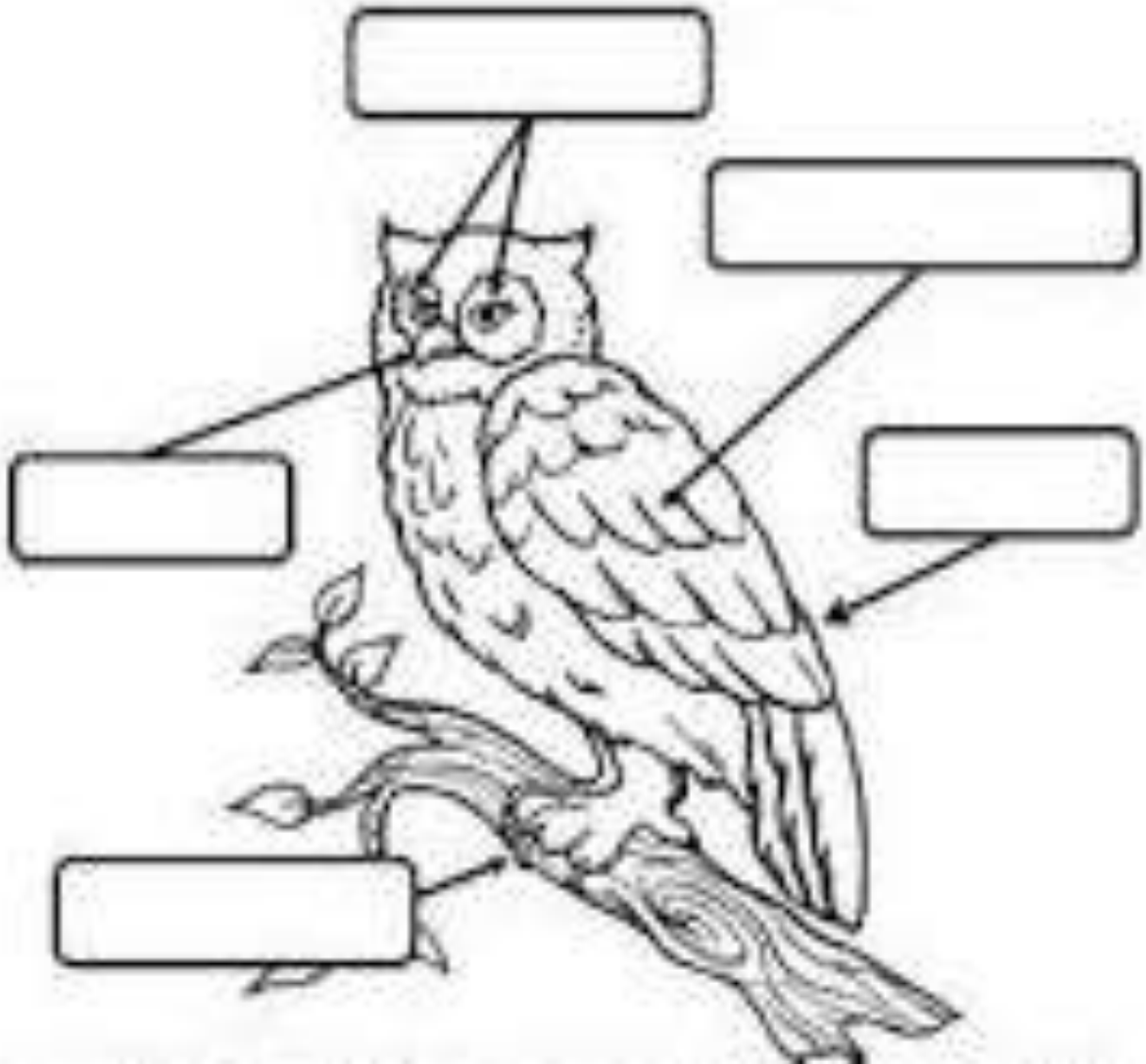


owl

owl

owl

Label the owl



eyes    wing    feathers    beak    talons







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