Name: _____ Date: _____

# The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

Circle group

In the forests of Australia and New Guinea live birds that are very good builders. A male bowerbird does not build a nest. He builds a bower. A bower is made only to attract a mate. He may spend weeks getting it ready.

Each kind of bowerbird builds in its own style. Some males weave sticks into two walls, which make a lane. Others stack twigs into a tall tower around a young tree. The ground in front is cleared of leaves. Then he decorates it with bright things. He may use flowers, berries, shells and bits of plastic. Some kinds pick a favorite color, and one kind likes blue. The male moves his things around again and again. He also steals from his rivals when he can.

A female visits several bowers before she chooses. She looks at how neat each one is and how good the decorations are. The male dances and calls nearby. A well-built bower may tell her that the male is healthy and clever. That makes him a good father for her chicks.

After mating, the female leaves. She builds a plain nest and raises the chicks by herself. The bower has done its job. It is not a home. It is a stage.

## Questions

**1. What is a bower?**

_____

_____

**2. Where do bowerbirds live?**

_____

_____

**3. What does a male use to decorate?**

_____

_____

**4. Who builds the nest and raises the chicks?**

_____

_____

**5. Why might a female look at how neat the bower is?**

_____

_____

**6. Why does the writer call the bower a stage and not a home?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

bower: a decorated structure a male bird builds to attract a mate

## Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

# The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

Triangle group

In the forests of Australia and New Guinea lives a group of birds with an unusual talent for construction. A male bowerbird does not build a nest. He builds a bower, a structure made only to attract a mate, and he may spend weeks getting it ready.

Different species build in different styles. Some males weave sticks into two parallel walls, forming a lane the shape of a corridor. Others pile twigs into a tall tower around a young tree. The area in front of the bower is cleared of leaves and then decorated with colorful objects, such as flowers, berries, shells and bits of bright plastic. Some species pick a favorite color, and one kind uses mostly blue items. The male arranges and rearranges his collection, and he steals decorations from his rivals when he can.

A female visits several bowers before she chooses. She studies the neatness of each structure and the quality of its decorations, while the male dances and calls beside it. A well-built bower probably tells her that the male is healthy and clever, which makes him a good father for her young.

After mating, the female leaves to build an ordinary nest and raise the chicks by herself. The bower has done its job. It is not a home at all but a stage, and it shows how an animal can invest enormous effort in a display.

## Questions

**1. What is a bower?**

_____

_____

**2. Where do bowerbirds live?**

_____

_____

**3. What kinds of objects does a male use as decorations?**

_____

_____

**4. Who builds the nest and raises the chicks?**

_____

_____

**5. Why might a female pay attention to how neat the bower is?**

_____

_____

**6. Why does the writer call the bower a stage and not a home?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

bower: a decorated structure a male bird builds to attract a mate
construction: the work of building something
parallel: side by side and always the same distance apart
species: one particular kind of living thing
display: a show meant to be noticed and admired

## Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

# The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

Square group

In the forests of Australia and New Guinea lives a group of birds with a remarkable talent for construction. A male bowerbird does not build a nest at all. Instead he builds a bower, a structure intended solely to attract a mate, and he may devote several weeks to preparing it.

Different species favor different architectural styles. Some males weave sticks into two parallel walls, forming a lane like a narrow corridor, while others pile twigs into a tall tower around a sapling. The ground in front of the bower is cleared of fallen leaves and then adorned with colorful objects, including flowers, berries, shells and scraps of bright plastic. Certain species prefer a single color, and one kind uses mostly blue items. The male arranges and rearranges his collection continually, and he steals decorations from his rivals whenever he gets the chance.

A female inspects several bowers before making her choice. She considers the neatness of each structure and the quality of its decorations, while the male dances and calls beside it. A skillfully built bower probably signals that the male is healthy and clever, which would make him a suitable father for her young.

After mating, the female departs to build an ordinary nest and to raise the chicks entirely on her own. The bower has accomplished its purpose. It is not a home at all but a stage, and it demonstrates how an animal can invest enormous effort in a display.

## Questions

**1. What is a bower?**

_____

_____

**2. In which places do bowerbirds live?**

_____

_____

**3. What kinds of objects do males use as decorations?**

_____

_____

**4. Who builds the nest and raises the chicks?**

_____

_____

**5. Why might a female pay close attention to the neatness of a bower?**

_____

_____

**6. Why does the writer describe the bower as a stage rather than a home?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

bower: a decorated structure a male bird builds to attract a mate
construction: the work of building something
parallel: side by side and always the same distance apart
species: one particular kind of living thing
display: a show meant to be noticed and admired

## Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

# For the teacher: The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

### Circle: The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

Easier · 210 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.3

1. A structure a male bird builds only to attract a mate.
2. In forests in Australia and New Guinea.
3. Flowers, berries, shells and bits of plastic.
4. The female, by herself.
5. A well-built bower may show that the male is healthy and clever.
6. It is for showing off to a mate, not for living in.

### Triangle: The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

This passage · 234 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.9

1. A structure a male bird builds only to attract a mate.
2. In forests of Australia and New Guinea.
3. Flowers, berries, shells and bits of bright plastic.
4. The female, by herself.
5. A well-built bower may show that the male is healthy and clever.
6. It is used to show off for a mate, not to live in or raise young.

### Square: The Bowerbird's Stage Made of Sticks and Berries

Harder · 244 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 10.1

1. A structure that a male bird builds solely to attract a mate.
2. In the forests of Australia and New Guinea.
3. Flowers, berries, shells and scraps of bright plastic.
4. The female, entirely on her own.
5. A skillfully built bower probably signals that the male is healthy and clever.
6. It exists to show off for a mate, not to live in or to raise young.