


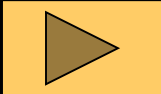



MD 2009



# in the night

[Link for teachers](#)

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# Why do we have day and night?

Nearly all our light comes from the Sun. Light from the Sun gives us days and nights.



This picture was taken by satellite. It shows that some parts of the Earth are in darkness while some are still in the light from the Sun.

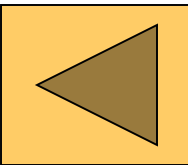
The Sun looks as though it moves but it doesn't. It's the Earth that spins around the Sun and that's what gives us day and night.



As the Earth spins round the Sun, the side facing the Sun has daylight, while the other side is dark and has night.



If you go into a dark room and shine a torch on one side of a globe you can see how the light changes.



## In the dark

When it goes dark outside we need light to see. We can't get light from the Sun at night but we can get some light from the stars in the sky.

It's hard for us to see properly in the dark so we need artificial light. At night there are usually lots of lights on all around us. The lights inside houses



and from street lamps and headlights help us to see.

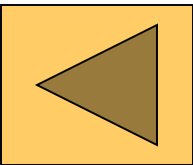


Outside it gets cooler at night. Sometimes it seems scary at night because it's dark. At night, the world is full of sounds and smells that are different to the sounds and smells of the daytime.

Our eyes can play tricks on us because it's hard for us to see in the dark.



Following a trail through the woods would be very hard without a torch to help us see our way through.



## People who work at night

While we are asleep in bed, many other people are at work. They work through the night and have to sleep during the day.

Some lorry drivers drive their lorries during the night. The picture shows you what they see from their cab in the dark.

Even though they have their headlights on it's not always easy to see clearly in the dark.





These people are carrying on working at the side of a motorway in the dark. There is less traffic at night and it's easier to move heavy equipment.

By working during the day and at night, the job is finished quicker.





Emergency workers such as the police, fire crews, lifeboat crews, ambulance workers and other rescue workers often have to work at night.



These pictures show police closing a road after a car accident and lifeboat crew carrying out a rescue at sea during the night.

Doctors and nurses work through the night looking after patients who are ill in hospital.

Some factories never shut their machines down so they need people to work in the day time as well as people who will work through the night.

Night shift in a car factory



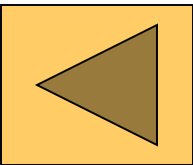


Post Office workers work through the night to sort thousands of letters so that postmen can deliver them in the morning.





When people work at night,  
they say they are working  
night shifts. They work while  
we are fast asleep in bed.



What's outside in the dark?





When we go to bed and settle down for the night, one special group of animals is awake and busy in our towns, gardens and countryside. These animals are called **nocturnal** animals. Nocturnal animals sleep during the day and wake up at night.



Nocturnal animals have specially developed senses that help them to hunt and survive in the dark at night. Animals such as owls and cats have eyes that are adapted to seeing in the dark.



That means they can see much better than we can in the dark.



Other animals have a good sense of smell and can find their way home by following a trail of scent. Foxes and pet dogs have cold, wet noses that help them to smell much better than us. They can keep their noses to the ground and follow scent trails in the dark. That helps them catch their prey.



Some animals, like rabbits, have very good hearing. Bats and deer have big ears to help them to hear sounds and movement in the dark.

Long-eared Bat



Pipistrelle Bat



Pipistrelle bat flying at night



Bats make high pitched sounds that bounce off objects around them. They use these echoing sounds to work out the shape, size and location of objects. The echoes help them to find their way around in very dark places and help them to find their prey.



At night we find it hard to see in the dark. If there is hardly any light at all we use our sense of touch. We feel our way with our feet and use our hands to stop us bumping into things.

Many animals, including house mice and cats, use their sense of touch and have long, sensitive whiskers. Their sense of touch tells them where they are.

house mouse



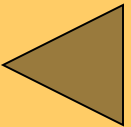
Nocturnal animals may have bigger eyes, bigger ears, moist noses, darker colours and quieter movements than animals that are active in the day time.



Badger

When we wake up in the morning ready to start our day, the nocturnal animals that live in our gardens and towns hide themselves away and rest.

While we are awake and busy, they settle down and wait quietly for darkness to come again in the night.



# The night garden

There is more happening in a garden after dark than most people realise. A neighbour's cat may be the easiest thing to see but there are other creatures out in the dark.



Some animals come out at dusk, others emerge later and are still active at dawn. Some are very quiet and others quite noisy.





Fox with its prey



Foxes have a strong, musty smell. They hunt at night for small animals and birds. Some people regularly have foxes visit their garden scavenging for food in dustbins.



The Tawny Owl is the most common owl in gardens. It hunts at night for mice and other small animals and can even attack birds while they roost.



Barn Owls also hunt at night.

Moths come out at night too. They use the light of the moon as a guide to flying in straight lines. They do this by keeping the moon's light on the same side of their body.

If there is a bright light in the garden at night, the moths are confused by the light and try to use it to steer by. By keeping the light on the same side of their body they fly in smaller and smaller circles until they finally fly into it.



Moths hide in the day time but at dusk, they shiver to warm themselves up then fly away to drink nectar from a flower. As the temperature drops, the moths rest but as soon as it gets warmer they fly again. The moment it gets light the moths hide.



Privet Hawk Moth resting

Bats are active at dusk and just before sunrise. They feed on insects. At night, many moths are eaten by bats. Some moths have ears on the sides of their bodies. They help them to hear the squeaks that bats make. If these moths hear a bat coming, they drop to the ground or try to dodge out of the way.

Brown long-eared bat  
eating a moth





Hedgehogs often visit gardens at night looking for worms, beetles, slugs and snails which are all active at night. They snuffle and grunt around the lawn as they use their long snouts to look for food.







The Wood Mouse comes out only when it is very dark outside. It feeds mainly on seeds and berries and will climb bushes to reach the fruit.

It has large eyes and big ears to help it look out for signs of danger. Cats, weasels and owls all enjoy a tasty meal of Wood Mouse.

Under cover of darkness the world comes alive with animals we don't see in the day. Owls use their sense of hearing to catch their prey. Others use the dark to keep from being eaten. While we sleep and other animals sleep, nocturnal animals fill the night with their activities.

When we wake to start our day, the nocturnal animals hide and wait for darkness.



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