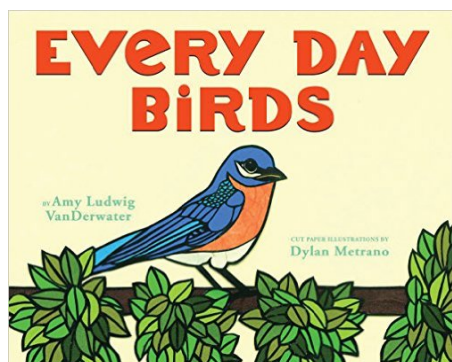


First Grade Bird Study: Informational Writing for Spring

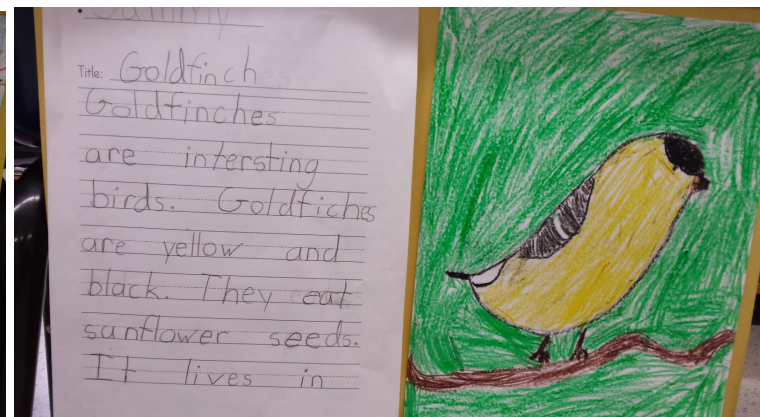
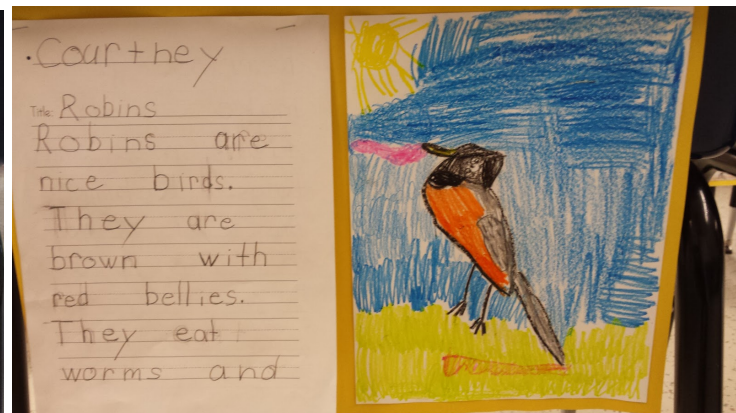
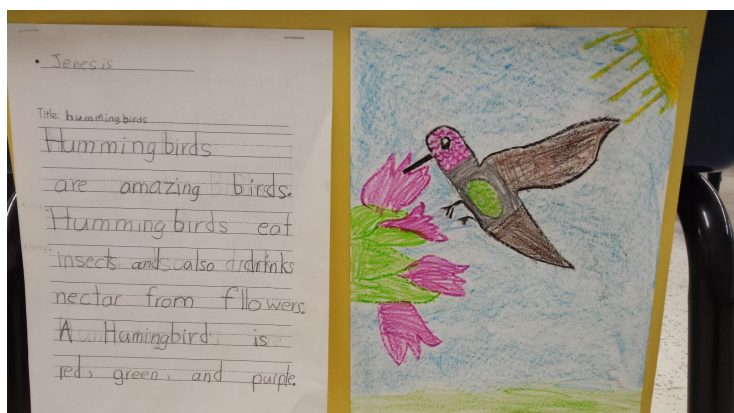
by Susan Kellner, Teacher at Harold O. Brumsted Elementary, Holland, NY, Spring 2016

We kicked off our spring bird unit by reading and rereading *EVERY DAY BIRDS* (Scholastic, 2016), written by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater and illustrated by Dylan Metrano.

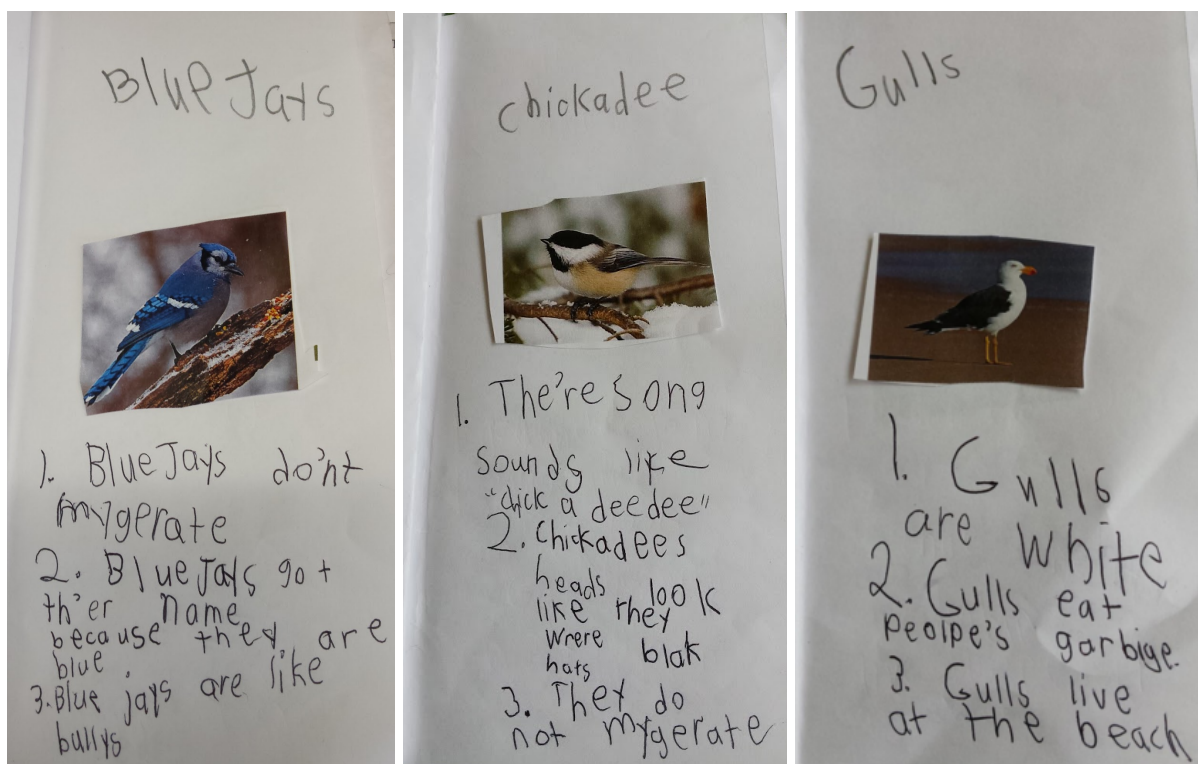


This book introduced us to many birds that students might see right around our area. Students then partnered up and chose a bird they would research together. I had them stick to the birds from *EVERY DAY BIRDS* to keep them from choosing exotic birds they would never see in their neighborhoods. Once a bird was chosen, others could not choose that bird so that we would learn about variety of birds. I gathered bird books and field guides from the public library, our school library, and my own bookshelves

Students read through these books, hunting for their birds, and writing down facts. We talked about important facts to look for: what the birds look like, what they eat, how they act, and anything interesting or unique. Students also used research tools on their iPads to find out more about their birds. After a few days of research, each pair wrote a short bird report and drew a picture of their bird.



On our celebration day, each student was given a blank book to use as a field guide along with small printed photos of each bird studied. Student partners presented their research to the class, and during this time, all other students jotted down details they learned about each bird, and glued the matching bird photos to the proper pages. If I were to do it again, I would have the celebration over two or three days to keep the students fresh for note-taking. Also, instead of using the photographs for the field guides, it would have been neat if I had taken pictures of the pictures they had drawn and used those instead!



At the culmination of our project, we created a big tree full of birds. Students used construction paper to try to accurately depict any of the birds from our research.

We also re-read *EVERY DAY BIRDS*. This time, the students had a sense of ownership for the birds they studied, and when we read the pages of the book that depicted each bird, they were so excited!

The best part of this project was that students became very tuned in to birds and kinds of birds. They noticed every bird that is outside our classroom window. Following this study, during our poetry unit, many students chose to write poems about birds.

I asked students to write a reflection of the bird study. Here are some of the quotes:

The thing I liked about the bird study is we got to draw pictures of our birds. - J.

I liked to work with partners. - D.

I learned that males are prettier than females. And I saw my bird outside! - D.

I liked it because I got to study my favorite bird. I learned the cardinal has a crest. - C.

I learned the parts of a bird. - C.

I liked to research the bird and I like to draw the birds. - A.

I learned all the different colors of birds. - B.

I learned that woodpeckers have long tongues. - R.

I like to research the birds and then write about the birds. - A.

I learned my bird's color and what it eats. - S.



Susan Kellner has been teaching kindergartners and first graders in Holland, New York for 12 years. She loves working with young writers because they are so honest and eager when putting their words on paper. Susan has raised four children and enjoys taking walks in the woods with her husband, Ken, and brown dog, Willow.



To learn more about EVERY DAY BIRDS, visit Amy LV's website.