

How much do you know about bats?

Read each of these statements carefully.

Tick a box by each one to show whether you think it is true or false

1. Bats are furry

True False

2. Bats feed their babies on milk

True False

3. Bats fly with their hands

True False

4. All British bats eat insects

True False

5. Bats are not blind

True False

6. All British bats use their ears to help them find their food in the dark

True False

7. British bats hibernate in winter

True False

8. All British bats are protected by law

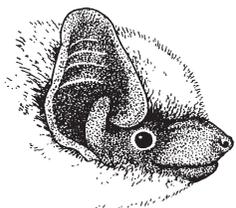
True False

9. There are over 1,000 different sorts of bat in the world

True False

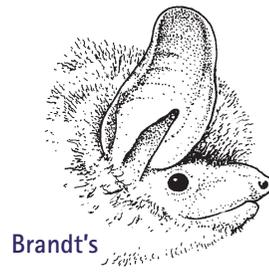
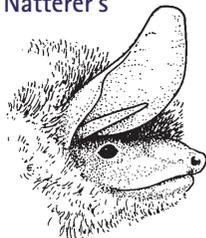
10. Vampire bats are only found in Central and South America

True False

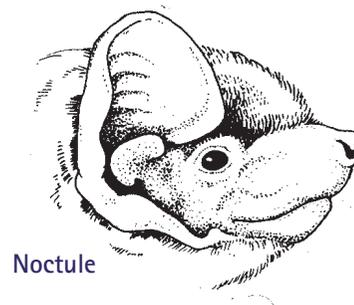


Common pipistrelle

Natterer's



Brandt's

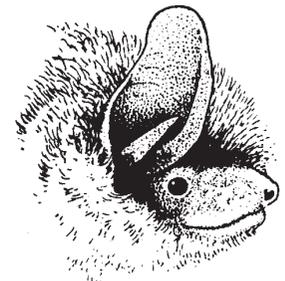


Noctule



Greater horseshoe

Whiskered



The True or False quiz on the reverse of this sheet can be given in a written or verbal form.

Pleased note, the CD in the pack Exploring the World of Bats, is based on this quiz, and can be used as a follow-up.

The following notes suggest approaches for discussion after the quiz, whether or not it is used in conjunction with the CD.

Ask the children (and adults) How many did you think were true?

ALL TEN STATEMENTS WERE TRUE
Go through each, with discussion.

1. Bats are furry

What group do bats belong to? What other animals have fur or wool?

Every animal that has feathers is a BIRD. All animals with fur, wool or hair are mammals. Bats are MAMMALS. What are we?

2. Bats feed their babies on milk

The most important thing that makes mammals different from other groups is the fact they feed their babies on milk – cats, dogs, cows, people – when they are first born. (*Can you think of some other mammals?*)

Bat mothers usually have only one baby a year, around June, and not every year. They get together with other bat mothers somewhere warm and safe while they are looking after their baby. We call this a maternity roost. They feed their babies on milk for several weeks after they are born.

3. Bats fly with their hands

Bats are the only mammals that can fly. Like us they have two legs and two arms. The bones of a bat's hand and arm are very like ours, with skin stretched between the very long finger bones and the body to form the wing membrane. Their wings make them look much bigger when they are flying than they really are. Imagine *your* fingers growing to the length of your body – your wings would be *huge!*

4. All British bats eat insects

All UK bats eat insects, with some also taking other invertebrates like spiders. Insects are the most important bat food all over the world, though in the tropics some bats eat other things too, including fruit, flowers, and fish.

5. Bats are *not* blind

That's just one of those myths! Bats can probably see as well as you or I at twilight, and do use their eyes when there is enough light. They can only see in black and white – but that's all we can pick out when it gets dark. And even for us ears are more useful than eyes in the dark.

6. All British bats use their ears to help them find their food in the dark

Bats can find their way in the dark much better than us because they can 'see' with their ears. What do you hear if you stand under a bridge and shout? An echo.

Bats send out shouts as they fly. If a shout hits something, an echo bounces back. The echo from a tree is very different to the echo from an insect. So as the bat beams its voice around like a torch, the echoes carry a sound picture of everything around. This system is called echolocation (locating or finding things by their echoes).

The sounds are so high-pitched that we cannot hear most of them unless we use a bat detector, which lowers the pitch to within our hearing range. (Bats also make sounds we can hear – when they chatter before they leave a roost, or calling to each other as they fly).

7. British bats hibernate in winter

There are few insects about in the colder months, so bats gradually become less active, store food as extra fat, then tuck themselves away somewhere cool to hibernate. Everything shuts down – their heartbeat and breathing are very slow so they use very little energy. They do sometimes wake maybe to have a drink or to move to another roost. It is important they are not disturbed at this time, as waking up unnecessarily will use up some of the energy they have stored to last through until spring.

8. All British bats are protected by law

Bats need lots of food and many different places to roost (or shelter) through the year. People have cut down trees and built houses and roads over places where bats used to feed and roost. There are far fewer bats than there used to be, so all our bats *and the places they roost* are protected by law. Advice must be asked before work is done that might change the places they use.

9. There are over 1,000 different sorts of bat in the world

There are 17 species (different kinds) of bat in Britain, though some are very rare. Throughout the world there are more than 1,000 species. The biggest numbers are found in the tropics, but they are found everywhere except the Arctic and Antarctic.

10. Vampire bats are only found in Central and South America

There are such things as vampire bats, but of all bats worldwide, only three species are vampires. Two of these feed on the blood of birds, and only one on other mammals, usually cattle. All three are found only in Central and South America.