

Wildlife Mini Documentary

An activity of "Predators".

Read the article, "Predators" (pages 14-15, *What's Up* March 2025). The beautiful pictures show some of nature's predators. Work in small groups to create and enact a mini documentary.

1. Study one predator in action.

a) Watch this mini documentary:

World's Grumpiest Cat

➤ https://youtu.be/kgrV3_g9rYY?feature=shared

(BBC Frozen Planet series, 24 Sept 2022)

b) Fill in the following table to examine what made the mini documentary about the Pallas's cat engaging. You can replay the video to take a closer look.

Component	Description/ Effect	Examples from video
Narrator's tone (The way the narrator speaks. He is at times serious, dramatic, funny, amused, light-hearted, excited etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humorous. The narrator describes the cat in such a way that it has an amusing, human-like personality. • 	"Top of the menu are voles and gerbils." The narrator makes it sound like the cat is ordering food at a restaurant rather than hunting. This makes it light-hearted.
Pacing (How fast/slow the story is told. Fast pacing can add excitement, while slow pacing can build suspense.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow and steady (when describing cat, so the audience can take in the information). • 	"Relative to body size, Pallas's cats have one of the shortest legs of any cats." This gives time for the audience to look at the cat's legs.
Humour (Funny moments that make the audience laugh or feel entertained.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cat's behaviour and responses seem very human-like. • 	The cat "grumbles" and shows frustration when the rodents escape. The narrator consoles it, saying, "Never mind, there are plenty more", as if they were having a dialogue.
Suspense (The feeling of excitement or tension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audience sees something that the prey does not. 	The cat is hidden among tall grass, prowling slowly towards

before something big happens.)	•	the rodents, which have not spotted it.
Descriptive language (Using adjectives or comparisons, similes, metaphors, to make the narration come alive.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive words that engage the audience. • 	“He has the densest fur of any cat in the world.” These help to direct the audience to observe those particular traits in the cat.
Music/ sound effects (The music and sounds used to match the mood of the scene.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds that help to demonstrate what the narrator means. • 	As the narrator says, “Its (short legs) not so good for wading through deep snow”, there is a crunching sound of snow. This demonstrates how the sound scares away the prey.
Visuals (The way the camera shows the animals, where to focus, zoom-in, slow motion, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast. • 	The cat’s slow and heavier build is contrasted with the fast, zippy movements of the small rodents. This shows that though the cat is bigger and more powerful, it might not outrun the quick rodents.

2. Create your own mini documentary and perform it!

- a) As a group, select a wildlife predator. You can choose one from the article or another of your own. Find out key facts about the predator (i.e. appearance, habitat, hunting style, speed, prey, special abilities, etc).
- b) Write a short documentary script. It should allow for a two-minute narration. Mimicking the style of the *BBC* narrator you had listened to earlier. Try to incorporate some components mentioned in the *BBC* video.
- c) Take turns to perform your mini-documentary in front of the class. You can have one member to narrate, others to act as the predator and prey. You can also make use of simple props, music, and sound effects to enhance your presentation.
- d) Have a conversation within your group about your experience. What was the most exciting part of this activity? Was there anything you struggled with? In what ways has creating a mini documentary and performing it affected your understandign of wildlife predators?