

The Crow Family.

OR THE BLUE JAY AND HIS RELATIVES.



Away to the woods! Away!
On a bright September day
To hear *Kee-yack,*
Kee-yack, Kee-yack,
The song of the noisy Jay.

I.

TEACHER. I know you all must have heard and seen the blue-jays when passing near the woods during the last few days. Let us see what we have been able to notice about them between us all. Now tell me, Joe, what strikes you first about the jay.

JOE. The bright blue about him.

T. When can you see the blue best?

JOE. When you creep up near him when he is sitting on a branch.

ANOTHER S. And when he flies down into the valley and you are on the hill.

T. Doesn't he look as blue when he flies over your head?

CHORUS. No.

T. That shows that the blue is principally on the —

CHORUS. Upper parts.

T. The lower parts are of what color?

S. Whitish.

T. His crested head is —

S. Blue—purple-blue.

T. Sides of head, chin and throat —

S. Whitish—with a purple tinge.

T. Bordered with a collar—of what color?

S. Of black—bluish black, purple black.

T. Yes, it is black enough. The back —

S. Is bluish.

T. The wings and tail quill feathers!

S. Very bright blue, with very dark bars of color crossing the feathers.

ANOTHER S. And a white bar across its wings.

JACK. And white on the ends of some of the wing feathers and on all of the tail feathers, except the two middle ones.

T. How long is the bird from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail?

JACK. I would say about one foot.

T. And how long is its bill?

S. About an inch.

T. Let me see who can draw the shape of its bill best, Jack and Joe may try on the blackboard, while the rest may use their slates.

(Drawings shown).

T. Very good; I am glad to see no hooked bills. I think some are a little too stout at the base and a few are too slender; but many are very good. Let us try now to draw an outline of his shape on the blackboard, and we shall see who will make the truest one.

II.

T. In our last lesson we were studying the appearance of the jay. Now let us get some points about his habits. How does he talk?

JOE. He says *chay, chay*, sometimes.

T. Is this what you have all been hearing?

CHORUS. No, no. (Various imitations made).

T. Well, I shall try to spell what you appear to find the most common note. Is this it?

"*Kee-yack, kee-yack, kee-yack?*"

JIM. Yes, but I sometimes think it sounds more like a hard g in the place of the first k,—"*gee-yack, gee-yack, gee-yack.*"

JACK. But he makes another very pretty sound sometimes. I heard it very loud and as clear as a bugle, but could not at first see the bird. At last I came near one in a bush and saw him distinctly when he sounded the note, which was neither like a bugle nor a bell.

T. Well, you tried to spell it, of course. What is the nearest spelling you have made for it?

JACK. "*Jer-reel'-oop*," with a strong stress on the middle syllable, and the last syllable very short.

T. "*Jer-reel'-oop*," "*jer-reel'-oop*." Who have heard this note?

(A number of hands up).

T. They say the jay can mimic the notes of other birds. That might be a good point to prove. Now, some of you have been watching the jay to find out what he eats.