



Mysterious ravens



Let's Think

1. Have you ever seen ravens?
2. Do you think ravens and crows are the same?

You are Elaine. You are reading an encyclopaedia entry about ravens.

Ravens are large black birds that have a deep, loud call. Often confused with crows, ravens belong to the same bird family as crows do. People often associate these black birds with death and mystery.

5 Differences between ravens and crows

Many people cannot distinguish between ravens and crows. In fact, ravens are much larger than crows. Ravens can reach a length of 69 cm and have wingspans as wide as 150 cm while crows

- 10 usually grow up to only 43 cm and have wingspans of about 91 cm. Besides their appearance, it is also worth noting that ravens tend to travel alone or in pairs, whereas crows like to fly in larger flocks.



Stories and mysteries

- 15 There have been many tales and superstitions about ravens, which have long fascinated mankind. In Greek mythology, ravens are believed to be messengers of the Gods. In England, there is an old story that there must be ravens living in the Tower of London, or else the tower would fall and then a great disaster would strike the country. Therefore, the government is still keeping several ravens there.



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The ravens currently resident there are named Jubilee, Harris, Gripp, Rocky, Erin, Poppy and Merlina. To keep them from straying far, some of their flight feathers are trimmed regularly.

(211 words)

Part A

Answer the following questions using the information from the encyclopaedia entry. Choose the **BEST** answer and blacken **ONE** circle only.

1. According to paragraphs 1 and 2, which of the following is **TRUE**?
 - A. Ravens and crows come from different bird families.
 - B. Crows are larger than ravens.
 - C. Both ravens and crows like to mimic sounds.
 - D. Many people cannot tell a raven from a crow.
2. In line 12, the words ‘tend to’ can best be replaced by ‘_____’.
 - A. are likely to
 - B. are born to
 - C. are good at
 - D. are bad at
3. Which of the following can a person pay attention to when trying to distinguish a raven from a crow?
 - A. the distance between the ends of the bird’s wings
 - B. the bird’s size
 - C. the bird’s flight habits
 - D. all of the above
4. The flight feathers of the ravens in the Tower of London are _____.
 - A. cut off to make them stay in the tower forever
 - B. coloured to make them easily recognisable from wild ravens
 - C. sold across England
 - D. cut short to prevent them from flying too away from the tower
5. Which of the following is a probable extra section for the encyclopaedia entry?
 - A. The writer’s experience of petting a crow
 - B. Stories related to other well-known bird species
 - C. Extinct raven species
 - D. Most common bird species in the West

Grammar Corner

We use the **simple present tense** to talk about facts, habits and general truths.

e.g. *People often associate these black birds with death and mystery.*
(Lines 3-4)

Pay attention to the features of an encyclopaedia entry.

Part B

Answer the following questions using the information from the encyclopaedia entry. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. In paragraph 1, find a verb which means ‘to connect something in your mind with something else’.



2. Find words in the encyclopaedia entry that can be replaced by the following. Fill in each blank with only one word.

mixed up	(a)	(v.)
interested	(b)	(adj.)
the human race	(c)	(n.)

3. In paragraph 3, find an idiom which is used to say ‘what will happen if another thing does not happen’.

4. Do you think the old story about ravens in England still has an influence on the country? Explain your answer.



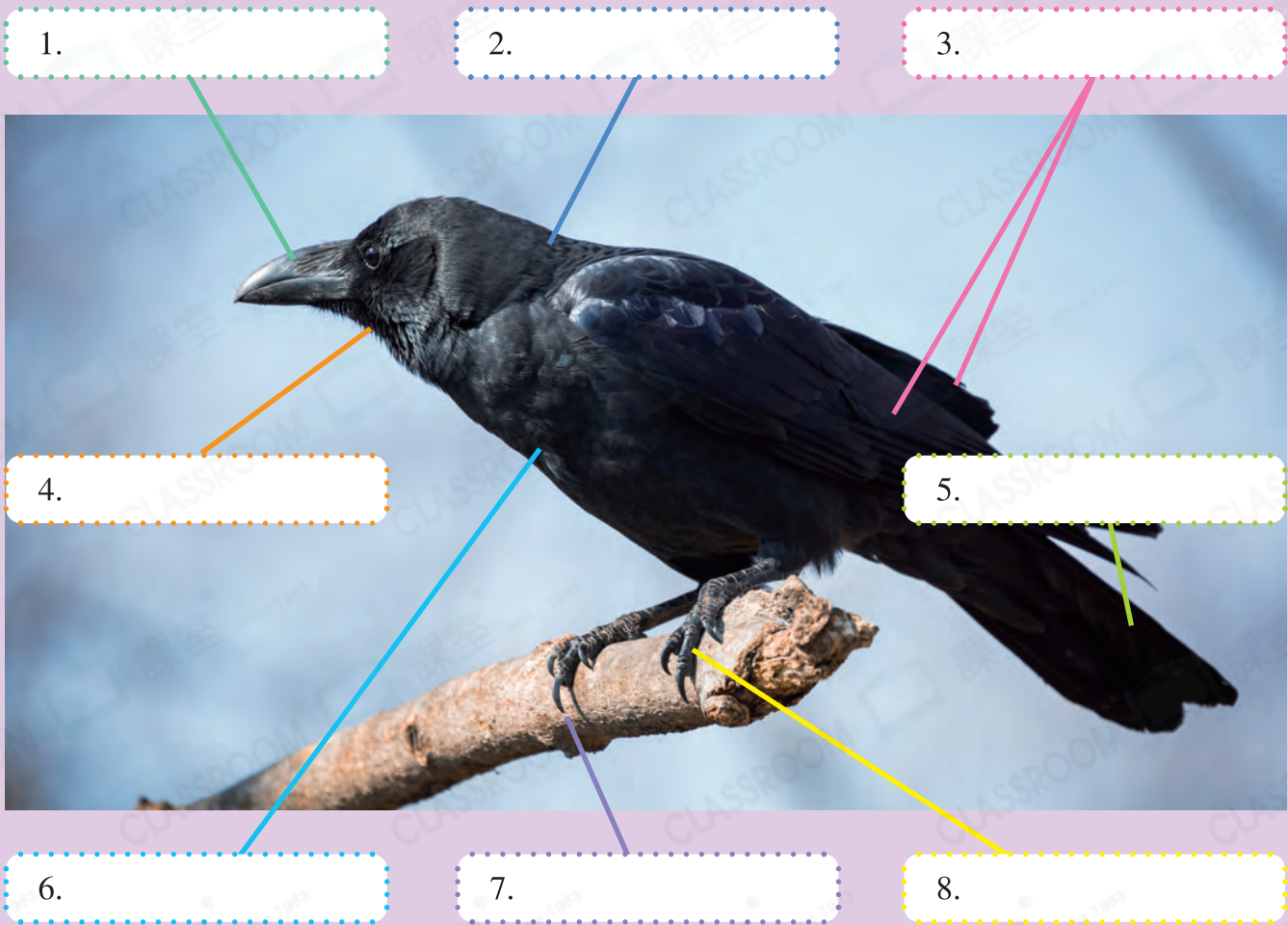
5. Complete the following note about ravens and crows by filling in each blank with one word.

	Ravens	Crows
Average maximum length	(a) _____ cm	43 cm
Feather colour	(b) _____	(c) _____
Average maximum wingspan	(d) _____ cm	(e) _____ cm

Vocabulary Bank

The following is a photo of a crow. Label its body parts with the correct names. One of the words is not used.

bill / beak chin wings breast crest tail nape toe claw



Let's Discuss

1. In your opinion, what makes ravens a symbol of bad luck in some cultures?
2. Can you name a bird species that is seen as a symbol of something positive?