

# Amazing Canada Geese



**Grades:** 4 - 6

## **Objectives:**

### Affective:

- Students will read and comprehend a non-fiction reading selection about Canada Geese.
- Students will learn about the social structure and behavior of Canada Geese.
- Students will learn about the dangers that Canada Geese face and what they can do to help protect them.

### Academic:

- Students will read and comprehend a non-fiction story.

**Materials:** “The Amazing V” article and questions, lined paper for writing, books or photos about Canada Geese.

*Note: Additional multiple-choice question sheet is attached. This can be used as practice for the New York State 4<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Exam.*

## **Motivation:**

Ask students if they have ever seen Canada geese.  
Show photos of Canada geese (i.e. V-formation)

## **Procedure:**

### Mini-Lesson:

- 1) Distribute “The Amazing V” article and have students read aloud.
- 2) Create a chart to summarize key points from the story (include behavior, food consumption, dangers they face from people and animals)

### Small-Group Activity:

- 1) Write questions on chart paper.
- 2) Divide class into six groups and assign one question to each group.
- 3) Students will write and discuss answers to questions in their group.

## Summary:

Each group will present their answers to whole class.

## Follow-Up Activities:

- Students can do follow-up research on Canada geese via library and web research and write reports on the information they gather.
- Students living near Canada geese habitats can observe and record their behavior and present findings to the class.
- Students can create posters to educate others about how to help Canada geese.
- Students can write to their legislators offering solutions for the Canada geese - human conflicts (see [www.canadageese.org](http://www.canadageese.org) for ideas).

## Resources:

- [www.canadageese.org](http://www.canadageese.org) : lots of information, stories and many pictures of Canada geese on this website
- *Fly Away Home* video (1996). The soaring adventure of a 13-year old girl and her estranged father who learn what family is all about when they adopt an orphaned flock of geese and teach them to fly! A heartwarming story for all ages!
- Books for Students (K-3 reading level but higher-level story messages):  
Rossiter, Nan Parson, *The Way Home*, Dutton Children's Books, 1999  
Best, Cari, *Goose's Story*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishing, 2002

## New York State Standards Addressed:

ELA Standard 3 - Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation – Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

### Listening and Reading

1. Listening and reading to analyze and evaluate experiences, ideas, information, and issues requires using evaluative criteria from a variety of perspectives and recognizing the difference in evaluations based on different sets of criteria.

ELA Standard 4 - Language for Social Interaction – Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

### Listening and Speaking

1. Oral Communication in formal and informal settings require the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures, to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect on how talk varies in different situations.

MST Standard 4 – Science – Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

### The Living Environment

1. Living things are both similar to and different from each other and nonliving things.

## Addendum #1:

### *The Amazing “V”*

**By Anne Muller  
President, Wildlife Watch**

Yes, the proper name is “Canada geese” not “Canadian geese.” In addition to the joy we feel when we see a V-formation of Canada geese in flight, there is so much to be learned from the way Canada geese behave. If they were human, they would be looked up to as model citizens.

You might assume that the bird who leads the “V” is in that place, but that’s not so. When the lead bird needs to rest, he or she will drop back and another bird will take the lead position. Can you imagine a goose refusing to give up that position? It wouldn’t be good for the bird or for the followers! As each goose flaps his or her wings it gives a boost to the birds that follow. By flying in a V-formation, the whole flock gets greater flying power than if each bird flew alone.



always in that position. Can you imagine a goose refusing to give up that position? It wouldn’t be good for the bird or for the followers! As each goose flaps his or her wings it gives a boost to the birds that follow. By flying in a V-formation, the whole flock gets greater flying power than if each bird flew alone.

When Canada geese land, they choose areas that have grain or grass; they need both to survive. They fly 250 miles a day, usually at night, during their migration flights. So you can understand why they have to store as much energy as possible to prepare for their flight. Eating is the way they get their energy. Geese must eat a lot of grains and grasses to build up the energy they need for flying. That is why, when you see Canada geese in parks or lawns, they are always eating.

The Canada geese that we see in New York have most likely come from either the Ungava Peninsula or the Hudson Bay areas in northern Canada. These areas get very cold in the winter, so the geese cannot stay there all year long. They can only be there when the weather is warm and that’s not for too long. After they spend the winter here in New York and other states that have a warmer climate, they migrate back home to the north to nest and raise their young.

Some birds have been injured by hunters or have other disabilities so they cannot make the long trip north. These geese have no choice but to stay and raise their young here. Other these geese are the offspring of birds that were bred (made to produce offspring) by hunters for hunting so they don’t know how to fly back home to the north. Now there may be too many geese in the same areas that people want to use. Sometimes this has led people to kill geese in order to try and control the population of geese.



Some have observed that when a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, a few other geese will drop out of the V-formation to follow the bird down. They help and protect the injured bird. They stay with the goose until he or she dies or is able to fly again. Then, they take off with another V-formation or catch up with their own flock.

Canada goose eggs hatch during the spring and summer and the goslings (baby geese) are raised until they fly. Their parents

train them to leave the area before the harsh winter sets in. Geese migrate south starting around mid-August through the end of September. They migrate north around mid-March through April. Imagine how much energy geese need to store for their long trips! Even geese who do not do a full migration need to store energy. Can you imagine flying (without a plane) even 60 miles away? Think of how tired and hungry you would be!

A mother goose will lay about five eggs and she will sit on the eggs to keep them warm until they start to hatch. No matter how cold or hot it is, she will stay with those eggs. One goose, who was caught in a late snowstorm, was seen sitting on her nest even though she was up to her beak in snow!

When the goslings hatch they have to be near water and a food source. That is why lawns with ponds are so appealing and necessary to the survival of geese. When those lawns (which are their food!) are sprayed with toxic chemicals – the geese swallow polluted food!

Many animals prey upon geese, but these animals have no other way to survive. Snapping turtles, raccoons and skunks will attack and eat eggs and goslings. Coyotes will attack and eat adult geese. This is how nature keeps the population down. Sometimes you will see a mom with many goslings, but she has most likely adopted the goslings of other moms who have been killed by cars, hunters, natural predators, or vandals.



Also, if geese are flying overhead looking for a good place to land, the geese below welcome them with loud honks! Hunters take advantage of geese who are looking for a safe place to land in order to rest and eat. They will put out decoys to fool geese into thinking that it's safe because other geese are there already.

You can help protect geese by paying attention to any signs that say "PLEASE DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE". Feeding geese in certain places will only attract more geese to areas that people want to use such as picnic areas and playgrounds. However, in bad weather conditions, a goose who is unable to fly may have trouble finding food. If possible, ask a park manager if you should feed the goose. You can also learn about successful ways to control the population of geese without killing them and write letters to the newspaper and town officials about it.

I encourage you to learn even more about the amazing Canada geese. Then teach others how we can share our world with these beautiful creatures.

## Addendum #2:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Canada Geese

**Directions:** Read *The Amazing V*, an article about Canada Geese. Circle the best answer for each question.



**How does flying in a V-formation benefit a flock of geese?**

- A) tired birds are able to remain as the leader
- B) part of the flock gets a greater flying power
- C) hunters can see them from the ground easier
- D) the whole flock gets a greater flying power

**Why do Canada geese eat as much as they do?**

- A) because it is cold outside
- B) to build up the energy they need for flying
- C) they like to eat
- D) to supply food to their young

**What dangers do the Canada geese face from people?**

- A) hunting, population control, car accidents, vandalism
- B) hunting, overfeeding, natural predators, vandalism
- C) hunting, geese eating their own eggs, natural predators, vandalism
- D) hunting, natural predators, car accidents, vandalism

**What are some facts that show how “amazing” the Canada geese are?**

- A) eating more than they need and helping sick or wounded geese
- B) helping sick or wounded geese and abandoning their eggs
- C) flying in V-formation and helping sick or wounded geese
- D) flying in V-formation and traveling thousands of miles per day during migration flights

**What happens when a goose in the V-formation gets sick or wounded?**

- A) the rest of the flock flies away and leaves the sick or wounded goose alone
- B) one goose flies with the sick or wounded bird on their back

- C) the whole flock follows the sick or wounded bird down to help and protect them
- D) a few geese follow the sick or wounded bird down to help and protect them

**What can you do to help Canada geese?**

- A) tell others about ways to control the population of geese without killing
- B) feed geese in picnic areas
- C) chase geese on the playground
- D) remove eggs from their nest

