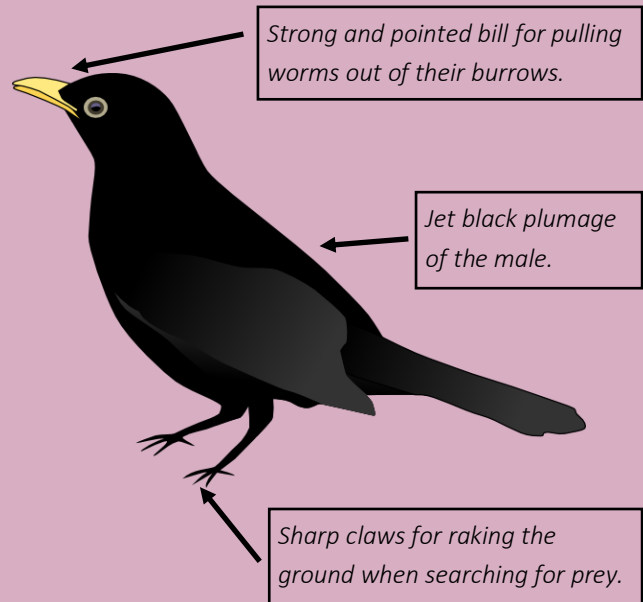


## THE BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*)

The blackbird is one of the most common birds that can be seen in our gardens all the year round. A smart, plump bird with a distinctive habit of raising its tail once it has landed. Although they're often seen in our gardens, they live in woodland, farmland and around parks.



The male blackbirds live up to their name having shiny black **plumage** and a bright yellow bill and ring around their eye. Confusingly, the females are brown, often with spots or streaks on their chests. Because of this, they are often mistaken for **Thrushes** (another common garden bird).



The male blackbird is a superb singer and can often be heard very early in the morning before sunrise or late

in the evening towards **dusk**. They can be spotted perched high on a treetop or on the top of buildings.

What they eat: Their natural diet is made up of insects, worms and berries but they will eat a lot of the food that we leave out for them such as mealworms, apples and bread.

| Measurements |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Length       | 24 - 25 cm |
| Height       | 12 - 18 cm |
| Weight       | 80 - 100 g |
| Wingspan     | 34 - 39 cm |

### Fun Facts!

- The male blackbird bobs it's tail to attract a mate, and to act as a warning to other birds.
- There are about 5 million breeding pairs in the UK.
- Blackbirds like singing after it has been raining.
- The most common causes of death are cats and cars.
- Blackbirds were captured alive and put in an empty pie for King Charles I. At an evening feast, the candles were blown out. The King opened the pie making the birds fly around in the darkness scaring the ladies! This appears in the nursery rhyme 'Sing a song of sixpence'.

Don't be dead, blackbird! Pg 1

Circle the correct answer.

The boy in the story had a...

Concussion

Conviction

Confession

Concession

Why do you think that the author had never told anyone before? (1)

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Tick true or false

The boy was really good at shooting.

He loved shooting animals as well as targets

The boy's father owned a gun club.

The boy's gun had iron sights originally.

The blackbird was pretending to be dead.

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(3)

Why do you think that shooting across gardens is dangerous? (1)

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Don't be dead, blackbird! Pg 2.

Why do you think that the author chooses to repeat these lines? (1)

*'He just stood there, still, looking at me. Did he really know that I was there?  
Could he see me? Was he daring me to take the shot to see if I really was that good?'*

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Number these statements to put them in the correct order.

To boy breathed out and pulled the trigger.

The boy went to his parent's bedroom to try out his new sights.

The black bird seemed to be staring at the boy.

The boy went back to see if the bird had flown away.

The boy lined the sights up with the blackbird's chest.

The bird visited the bot in his dreams.

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| 1 |
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(1)

*'Why do you think that the author chooses to use the word 'perching'*

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Don't be dead, blackbird! Pg 3.

Draw lines to match the statements.

Only the male blackbird

to pull worms out of their burrows.

They have strong bills

is actually black

Female blackbirds

raise their tails once they've landed.

Blackbirds are known to

are often mistaken for Thrushes.

In the fact file about blackbirds, some words are in bold type.

Explain why.

(1)

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Where would you find these type of words in a non-fiction book? (1)

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What does the word '*broods*' mean?

(1)

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Don't be dead, blackbird! Pg 4

List three features of non-fiction writing that can be seen in the fact file about blackbirds. (1)

*E.g, Heading*

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Give two reasons why a male blackbird 'bobs it's tail'. (2)

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What are the two main causes of death for blackbirds? (2)

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Blackbirds are a very successful species of bird in this country (3)

Explain your choice using evidence from the text.

True/False

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