

CONSTRUCT A TEMPORARY OUTLINE AND ORGANIZE NOTE CARDS

**Directions:** Examine the 5 main topics in the **Skeleton Outline** below (Plan No. 1: Statement with Supporting Examples). Label each note card on the left with **I, II, III, IV,** or **V** in the **Topic** box to match the main topic it proves. Next, construct the complete hierarchical outline for "Why Crows Are Considered Geniuses" on the right by writing the subtopics and details on their proper ruled lines. Mentally prove your outline.

SKELETON OUTLINE: WHY CROWS ARE CONSIDERED GENIUSES

PLAN #1: STATEMENT + EXAMPLES

I. Have an outstanding communications system

II. Possess amazing sense of caution

III. Use teamwork

IV. Are great mimics

V. Try own criminals in court of law

NOTE CARD 1

Topic:

- Post two guards on uppermost branches
- Form semicircle around two accused
- Begin cawing to decide fate
- May kill guards if they fail to warn of danger

NOTE CARD 2

Topic:

- Join together to kill enemy owl
- Join together to steal food
  - Two crows distract an animal feeding
  - Third crow darts down and seizes food

NOTE CARD 3

Topic:

- Built-in radar system
- Use a relay system
  - Crows repeat evenly spaced noises from one to another
  - Crows vary tones to stress danger, all clear, or food

NOTE CARD 4

Topic:

- Can learn to talk
- Can imitate animal sounds

NOTE CARD 5

Topic:

- While gathering food
  - Post guard in tree (spots gun barrel half mile distant; knows difference between gun & stick)
  - Flock leaves swiftly and silently when signaled
- While migrating
  - Meet in open area to permit good vision
  - Send scouts ahead to determine safety; fly silently in small companies

WHY CROWS ARE CONSIDERED GENIUSES

I. Have an outstanding communications system

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

II. Possess amazing sense of caution

A. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

III. Use teamwork

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Are great mimics

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

V. Try own criminals in court of law

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

WHY CROWS ARE CONSIDERED GENIUSES (MASTER HIERARCHICAL OUTLINE)

- I. Have an outstanding communications system Card 3

A. Built-in radar system

B. Use a relay system
  - Crows repeat evenly spaced noises from one to another
  - Crows vary tones to stress danger, all clear, or food
- II. Possess amazing sense of caution Card 5

A. While gathering food
  - Post guard in tree (spots gun barrel half mile distant; knows difference between gun and stick)
  - Flock leaves swiftly and silently when signaled

B. While migrating
  - Meet in open area to permit good vision
  - Send scouts ahead to determine safety
  - Fly away silently in small companies
- III. Use teamwork Card 2

A. Join together to kill enemy owl

B. Join together to steal food
  - Two crows distract an animal feeding
  - Third crow darts down and seizes food
- IV. Are great mimics Card 4

A. Can learn to talk

B. Can imitate animal sounds
- V. Try own criminals in court of law Card 1

A. Post two guards on uppermost branches

B. Form semicircle around two accused

C. Begin cawing to decide fate

D. May kill guards if they fail to warn of danger
- MODEL 5-PARAGRAPH EXPOSITORY REPORT: THE AVIAN GENIUSES
- Paragraph 1 (Sophisticated Communication):** Crows possess one of the animal kingdom’s most advanced communications systems. Equipped with an acute acoustic sensory apparatus resembling radar, they coordinate complex movements across vast distances. Through relay calling, sentinel crows transmit evenly spaced vocal pulses across treetops, subtly altering pitch and cadence to announce food sources, issue all-clear signals, or broadcast immediate danger.
- Paragraph 2 (Legendary Caution):** Their legendary intelligence is anchored in vigilant caution. While foraging, sentries survey the landscape from high perches, capable of spotting a glinting rifle barrel half a mile away and distinguishing a lethal firearm from an innocent walking stick. During seasonal migrations, flocks gather in open meadows to ensure 360-degree vision, dispatching reconnaissance scouts ahead and journeying silently in small contingents.
- Paragraph 3 (Tactical Teamwork):** Cooperative strategy enables crows to outmaneuver rivals far larger than themselves. When threatened by predatory owls, flocks execute coordinated mobbing maneuvers to drive off or kill the intruder. In food acquisition, two crows deliberately harass and distract a feeding predator while a third bird swoops in to snatch the prize.
- Paragraph 4 (Vocal Mimicry):** Crows also demonstrate astonishing vocal plasticity as master mimics. When raised near humans, their syrinx can replicate distinct human words and phrases. In the wild, they deliberately mimic the calls of dogs, hawks, and other animals to deceive competitors or sound covert alarms.
- Paragraph 5 (Avian Judicial Courts):** Most astonishing of all is the crow’s social judiciary. When community laws are breached—such as when sentries neglect their watch—the flock forms an orderly semicircle around the accused on uppermost branches. Following an intense communal cawing debate, the assembly renders a collective verdict, sometimes executing guilty sentinels who failed to protect the flock.
- Plan No. 1: Statement with Supporting Examples
- This capstone exercise shows how the thesis (“Crows are considered geniuses”) is fortified across 5 distinct ethological categories. Every Roman numeral answers “Why?” through empirical examples.
- Physical Note-Card Simulation
- Page 39 simulates the physical sorting process: students lay the Title at top center, arrange Roman numerals I–V along the left, and physically sort 4”x6” cards beneath each topic before drafting.
- | Card # & Roman Tier | Card Headline / Content          | Structural Rank             | Ethological & Rhetorical Function                         |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Card 3 → Topic I    | Radar & relay calling system     | Subtopics A & B (2 Details) | Information transmission and sensory acoustics.           |
| Card 5 → Topic II   | Caution: food guards & migration | Subtopics A & B (5 Details) | Survival vigilance and discriminating threat assessment.  |
| Card 2 → Topic III  | Teamwork: mobbing & diversion    | Subtopics A & B (2 Details) | Cooperative foraging and defensive coalition maneuvers.   |
| Card 4 → Topic IV   | Vocal mimicry & speech imitation | Subtopics A & B             | Vocal plasticity and cognitive imitation.                 |
| Card 1 → Topic V    | Crow court of law & trials       | Subtopics A, B, C, D        | Social governance and collective consequence enforcement. |
- Outlining Skills Series • Grade 4–6 Teacher Companion
- Answer Key & Animal Ethology Composition Guide
- Confidential • Classroom Use Only