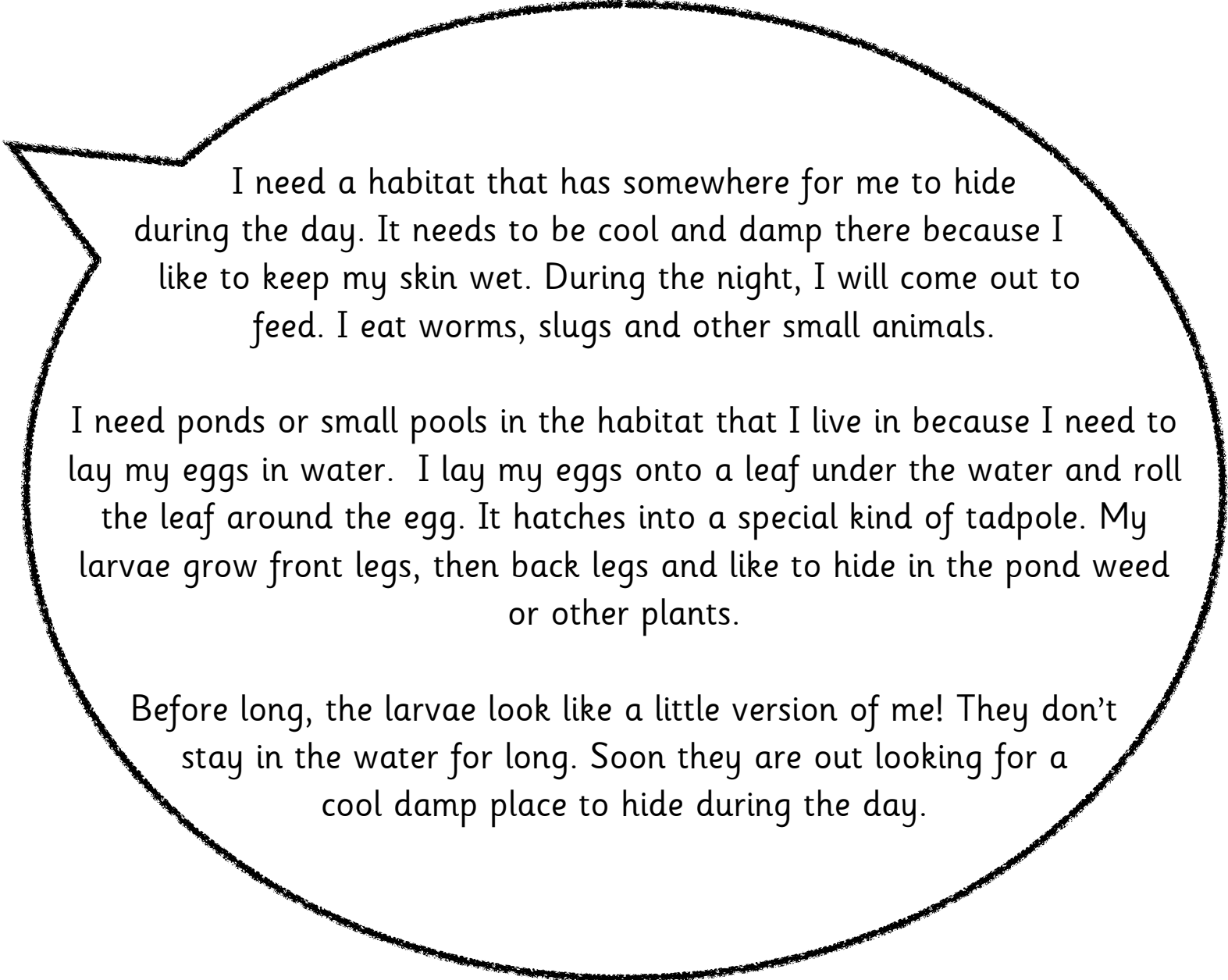


Creature Profiles

My favourite habitat to live in is open countryside, along field edges, riverbanks and roadside verges. A habitat such as this is a good hunting ground for me. I like to eat mice, voles and shrews and these animals live mainly in these areas.

I have very sensitive hearing and this helps me to find the animals that I eat. These animals are called my 'prey'. I also have large talons to grip onto my prey when I have caught it. I hunt at night so you won't see me during the day! My relative, the Tawny Owl calls 'kewick' or 'hoo-hoo-oo-oo', but I screech.

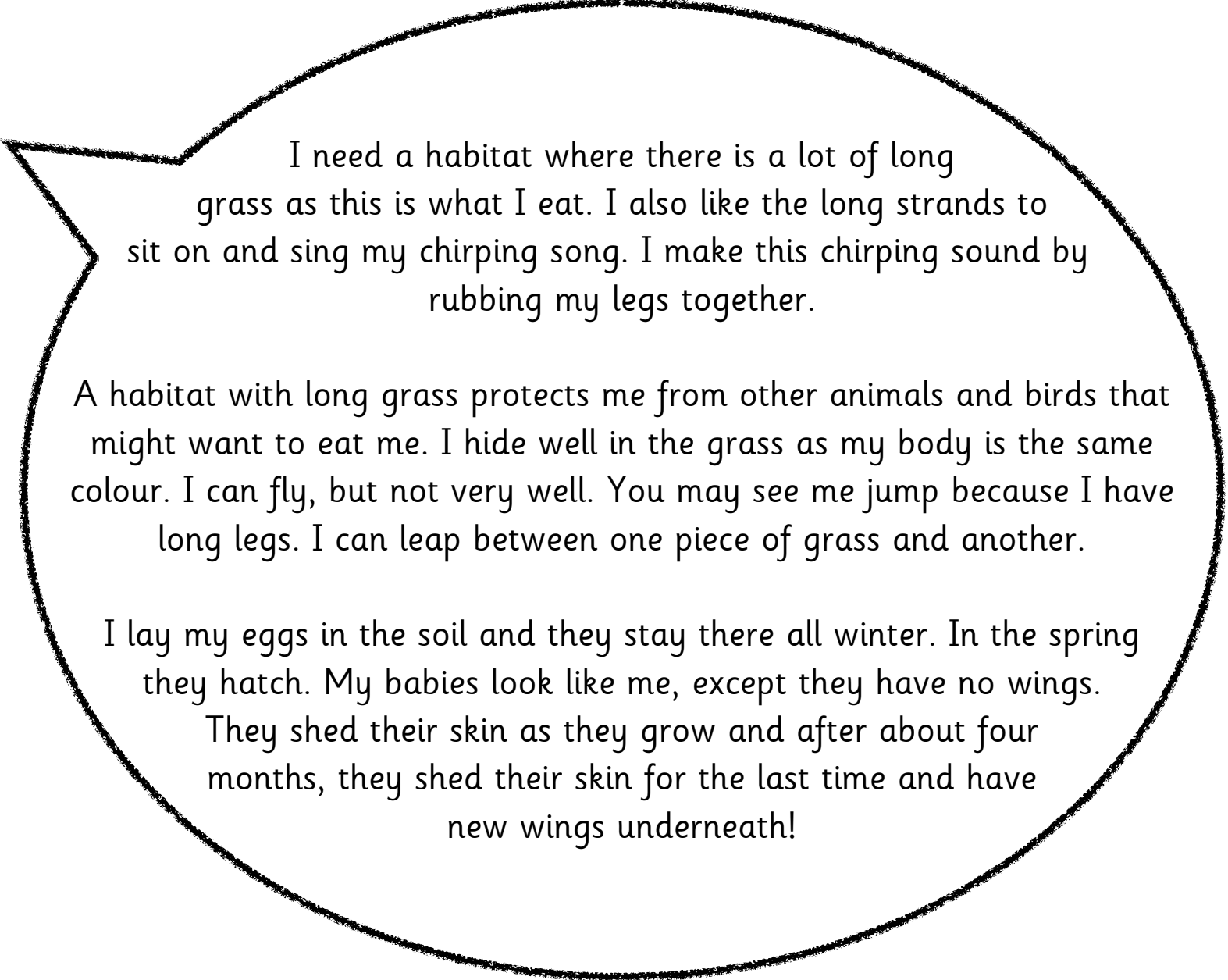
I sometimes build my nest on tree stumps and cliff crevices, but most often in vacant or ruined buildings. Sometimes I like to use a special nest box. In March I will lay my eggs, usually around 6. My chicks live in the nest until they are old enough to come out. Then they will take their first flight and go hunting for small animals to eat.



I need a habitat that has somewhere for me to hide during the day. It needs to be cool and damp there because I like to keep my skin wet. During the night, I will come out to feed. I eat worms, slugs and other small animals.

I need ponds or small pools in the habitat that I live in because I need to lay my eggs in water. I lay my eggs onto a leaf under the water and roll the leaf around the egg. It hatches into a special kind of tadpole. My larvae grow front legs, then back legs and like to hide in the pond weed or other plants.

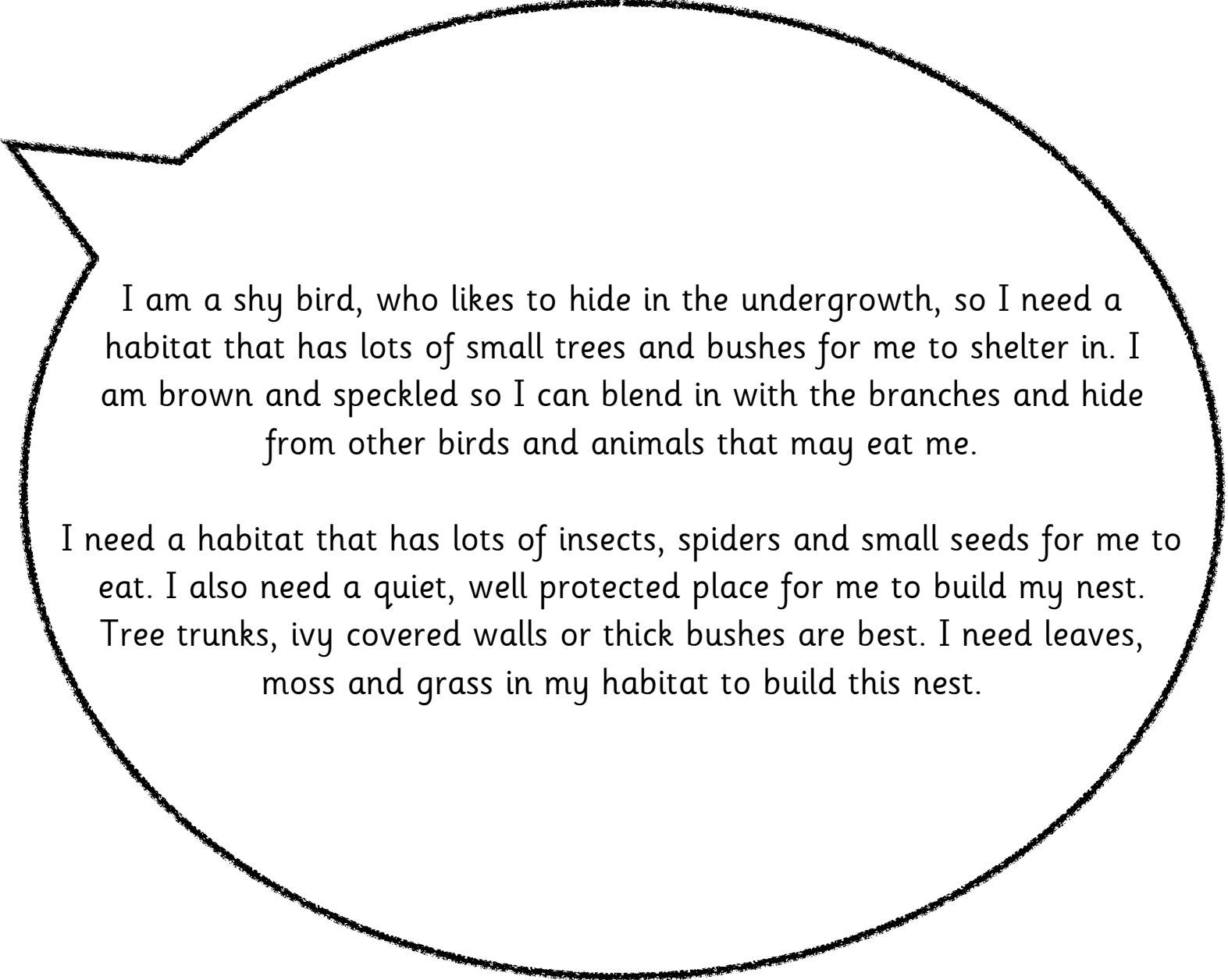
Before long, the larvae look like a little version of me! They don't stay in the water for long. Soon they are out looking for a cool damp place to hide during the day.



I need a habitat where there is a lot of long grass as this is what I eat. I also like the long strands to sit on and sing my chirping song. I make this chirping sound by rubbing my legs together.

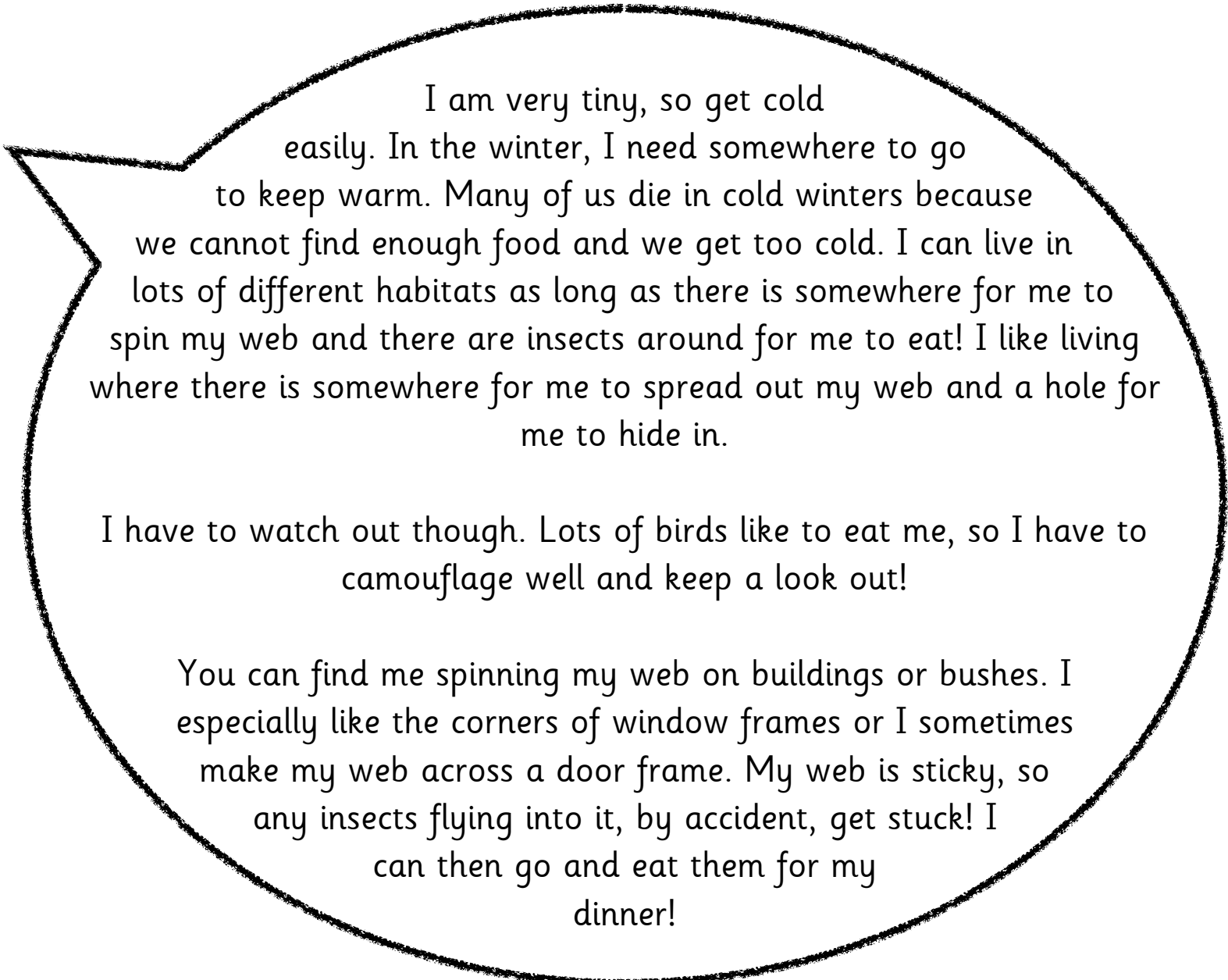
A habitat with long grass protects me from other animals and birds that might want to eat me. I hide well in the grass as my body is the same colour. I can fly, but not very well. You may see me jump because I have long legs. I can leap between one piece of grass and another.

I lay my eggs in the soil and they stay there all winter. In the spring they hatch. My babies look like me, except they have no wings. They shed their skin as they grow and after about four months, they shed their skin for the last time and have new wings underneath!



I am a shy bird, who likes to hide in the undergrowth, so I need a habitat that has lots of small trees and bushes for me to shelter in. I am brown and speckled so I can blend in with the branches and hide from other birds and animals that may eat me.

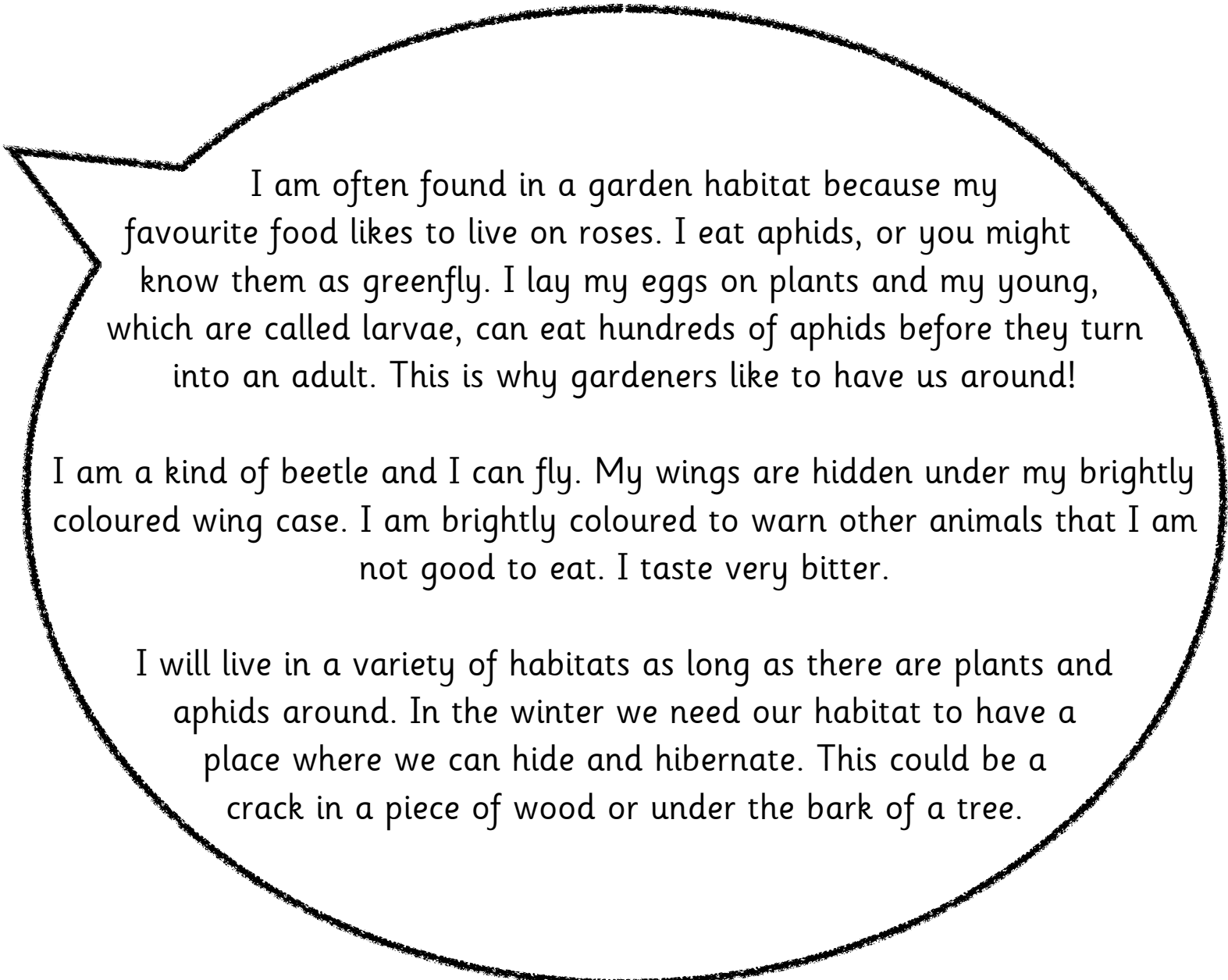
I need a habitat that has lots of insects, spiders and small seeds for me to eat. I also need a quiet, well protected place for me to build my nest. Tree trunks, ivy covered walls or thick bushes are best. I need leaves, moss and grass in my habitat to build this nest.



I am very tiny, so get cold easily. In the winter, I need somewhere to go to keep warm. Many of us die in cold winters because we cannot find enough food and we get too cold. I can live in lots of different habitats as long as there is somewhere for me to spin my web and there are insects around for me to eat! I like living where there is somewhere for me to spread out my web and a hole for me to hide in.

I have to watch out though. Lots of birds like to eat me, so I have to camouflage well and keep a look out!

You can find me spinning my web on buildings or bushes. I especially like the corners of window frames or I sometimes make my web across a door frame. My web is sticky, so any insects flying into it, by accident, get stuck! I can then go and eat them for my dinner!



I am often found in a garden habitat because my favourite food likes to live on roses. I eat aphids, or you might know them as greenfly. I lay my eggs on plants and my young, which are called larvae, can eat hundreds of aphids before they turn into an adult. This is why gardeners like to have us around!

I am a kind of beetle and I can fly. My wings are hidden under my brightly coloured wing case. I am brightly coloured to warn other animals that I am not good to eat. I taste very bitter.

I will live in a variety of habitats as long as there are plants and aphids around. In the winter we need our habitat to have a place where we can hide and hibernate. This could be a crack in a piece of wood or under the bark of a tree.





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Steve Round



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