



A Lesson on Penguins by Alicia Jadidian

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Penguins, birds, ocean, aquatic

Lesson Description: This lesson is designed to engage students with reading comprehension and writing activities so they can get a better understanding of the physical and environmental characteristics of the penguin. By reading the passage closely and completing the activities associated with the reading, students will be able to better understand the penguin and how it differs from other birds.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1a: Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2c: Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4a: Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

Penguins by

Content: The penguin is a bird, but it does not fly. Penguins are not like other birds. They are unique birds, and although they do have feathers, even their feathers are unusual. Other birds have rows of feathers that grow in a specific pattern. A penguin's feathers grow all over, like hair on a mammal. You will not see penguins in the air, and you will not see them in trees. You will see them in the water, in fact you will see them below the surface of the water if you have an underwater video camera.

The penguin is an ocean bird, living in and near the ocean. The penguin spends much time in the ocean, so much of its life is unknown. People only get to know penguins well when they are on land, and the penguin can be at sea for months at a time.

While the penguin is not a great flier as the eagle is, the penguin can out-swim most birds and probably out-swims some other aquatic animals. The penguin has thick strong wings and flippers instead of feet that it uses to push through the water. When the penguin is on land, it walks along slowly, and this limited mobility may be one reason the penguin spends more time in the water. The penguin's food source is in the water, the fish it catches. They have solid bones, while other birds have bones that are not solid.

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: mammal **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "A penguin's feathers grow all over, like hair on a mammal." What does the word "mammal" mean in this sentence?

A: Animals that live primarily in the ocean and contain hair to help keep warm.

B: A type of bird only found in Antarctica.

C: Any of various warm-blooded vertebrate animals of the class Mammalia, including humans, characterized by a covering of hair on the skin and, in the female, milk-producing mammary glands for nourishing the young.

D: All animals that have feathers on their body and produce milk for their young.

Question: Which of the following sentences uses the word "mammal" correctly?

A: My favorite animal at the zoo was the two-toed sloth, a slow-moving mammal.

B: I can't remember where I left my mammal.

C: I should try to get a new mammal since I broke mine last month.

D: A mammal will teach the class today.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: aquatic **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author of the story says "While the penguin is not a great flier as the eagle is, the penguin can out-swim most birds and probably out-swims some other aquatic animals." What does the word "aquatic" mean in the sentence?

A: Relating to air.

B: Consisting of, relating to, or being in water.

C: An animal with a furry texture.

D: Animals found on land.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "aquatic" correctly?

A: It was an aquatic day outside.

B: I received an aquatic grade on my test.

C: I was feeling very aquatic when I woke up.

D: A dolphin is an aquatic animal.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: unique **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "They are unique birds, and although they do have feathers, even their feathers are unusual." What does the word "unique" mean in the sentence?

A: Being extremely common.

B: Having an unpleasant smell.

C: Being the only one of its kind.

D: Lacking gracefulness.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "unique" correctly?

A: That is a unique hairstyle.

B: My mother drives a unique to work each day.

C: Unique is my favorite flavor of ice cream.

D: Martha's burns a unique in her house that smells like vanilla.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: mobility **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "When the penguin is on land, it walks along slowly, and this limited mobility may be one reason the penguin spends more time in the water." What does the word "mobility" mean in this sentence?

A: Having to do with memory.

B: The quality of moving freely.

C: The appearance of something.

D: The temperature of an animal.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "mobility" correctly?

A: I lost mobility in my left arm after I broke it this summer.

B: Mobility is fun to win at the fair.

C: I got a mobility for receiving high scores on my tests.

D: I keep my mobility in my pocket before doing homework.

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Feathers

Based on the story, why do you think penguins have feathers all over their body?

2 - Characteristics of a Penguin

Describe the characteristics of a penguin that help it live in and near the ocean.

3 - Comparing Penguins to Other Birds

Based on your knowledge of other birds and what you have learned about penguins, why do you think penguins have solid bones?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: For your writing assignment, you are to compare and contrast characteristics of the penguin to those of other birds. Be specific and use examples from the text. Be sure to include environmental differences as well as physical differences. Your assignment should be between 2-3 paragraphs. Make sure each paragraph includes a minimum of four sentences.

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