



## A Lesson on Penguins by Ashley Cafiero

**Grade Level:** Grade 4

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 2 hours

**Lesson Keywords:** Reading, Writing, Evaluating

**Lesson Description:** Students are to read, then reread the passage about Penguins until they fully understand what is being read. They are then to go on and answer the questions about vocabulary, which will show if they understand what they are reading. Then the response questions, which will require them to think about what they are reading and see their peers point of view. And finally, write a two paragraph, 300 word minimum response on a question that requires their own personal opinion. The vocabulary questions are what weigh the heaviest, totaling up to 40 points. The next two parts are split in half, both adding up to 30 points. It is important for students to understand the reading, and then really think hard about what they already know about Penguins to answer the questions following the reading.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4a: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

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

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1c: Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).

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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:** unique **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author states that penguins are "unique" birds. What do they mean by "unique?"

- A: excited
- B: unhappy
- C: unlike any other
- D: bad tasting

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

- A: I have been feeling sick all day, I think I am unique.
- B: I have never seen that type of bug before, it is so unique!
- C: My eyes feel unique when I am tired.
- D: Jen is so unique after gym class.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** unusual **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author describes penguins feathers as "unusual." What do they mean by "unusual" in that statement?

- A: unhealthy
- B: different
- C: old
- D: damaged

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

- A: That man statnding alone is very unusual.
- B: I am unusual in math, it is my favorite subject.
- C: I think my friend gave me the her unusual because now I am sick too.
- D: My mom makes me eat unusual even though I don't like it.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** mammal **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author says a penguin's feathers grow like hair does on a "mammal." What does the word "mammal" mean?

- A: a plant
- B: a planet
- C: a warm-blooded animal
- D: a ghost

**Question:** Which one of these sentences below uses the word "mammal" correctly?

- A: I love to grow mammals outside.
- B: There are mammals living all over the world.
- C: It is too mammal outside!
- D: I do not mammal you.

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

**Question:** The author states that a penguin's limited "mobility" on land may be a reason why they spend so much time in the water. What is "mobiity?"

- A: ability to love
- B: ability to laugh
- C: ability to think
- D: ability to move

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

- A: I do not have any mobility because my legs are broken
- B: I love to eat mobility.
- C: John asked me if I wanted to go out with him next mobility.
- D: It is so nice out today, perfect mobility day for the beach!

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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 - Penguins are unique!

Penguins are unique in many ways, not just for their feathers. What are some other things that set aside penguins from other birds that you know of?

### 2 - Penguins flying like an Eagle?

Do you think it would be helpful or harmful for penguins to have the ability to fly as well as an eagle? Why?

### 3 - Flippers or Feet?

The passage states that penguins have flippers that help them swim, not feet like us humans. Which do you think would be better to have to help you survive, flippers or feet? Why did you make that choice?

### 4 - Survival Mode!

If penguins had to find a different way of getting food other than swimming, how do you think they would get it?

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### Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** Penguins have many characteristics to them that help them survive in colder weather. Your writing assignment is to write a total of two paragraphs (minimum 300 words) explaining whether or not you believe penguins would be able to survive in warmer weather. If you believe they could, what characteristics do they have that would help them? If you believe they can not, what characteristics do they have that would hold them back?

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