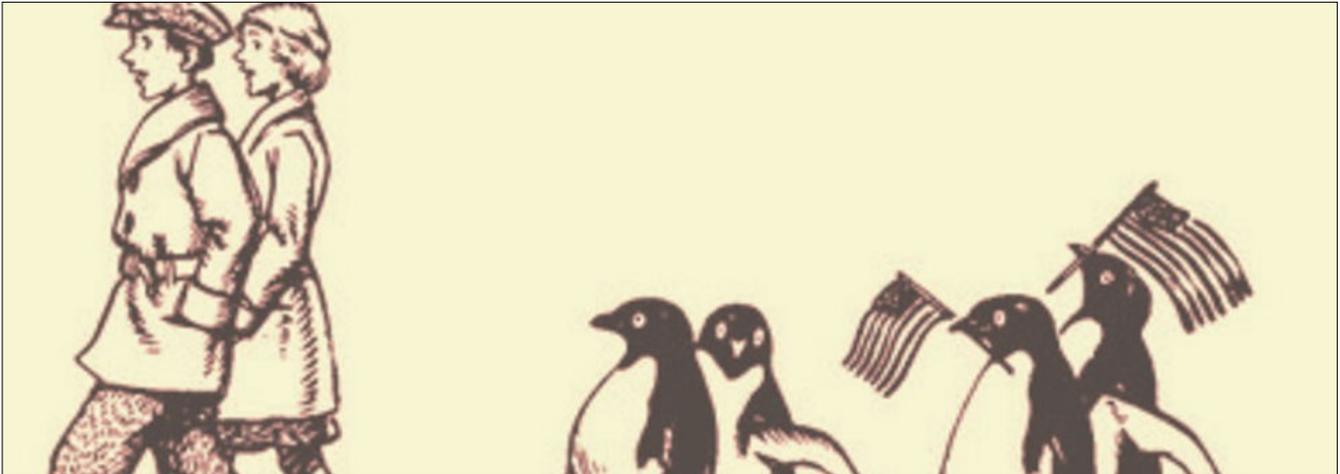


ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ARTISTS



ABOVE: An illustration by Robert Lawson from the original publication of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*

RICHARD AND FLORENCE ATWATER

Born in Chicago, *Mr. Popper's Penguins* author Richard T. Atwater taught Greek at the University of Chicago. Under the pseudonym "Riq," he wrote a humor column for the *Chicago Evening Post*. In 1932, inspired by a film he saw about Byrd's Antarctic expedition, Atwater began writing *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, but couldn't come up with a satisfactory ending for the story.

He suffered a stroke in 1934, and his wife Florence Hasseltine Atwater took over the project. She completed the novel, which was published in 1938 and became an instant favorite for children and their parents. The still-popular *Mr. Popper's Penguins* won the Newberry Award in 1939.



A 1925 photo of Richard and Florence Atwater and their daughter, Doris.
stage.openroadmedia.com

PINS AND NEEDLES PRODUCTIONS



Pins and Needles' production of "The Bear"

Mr. Popper's Penguins was adapted for the stage by Pins and Needles Productions, a theatre group based in Bristol in the United Kingdom. They are passionate about finding theatrical, imaginative ways of telling stories to challenge expectations and ignite audiences' senses. Pins and Needles' ambition is to introduce young audiences to theatre and continue to engage and inspire them as they grow. They are also focused on re-engaging Young Adults and challenging their expectations of what theater is.

CASA MAÑANA



Casa Mañana is the North American producer for *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Located in Dallas-Ft. Worth, Casa Mañana strives to create, nurture, and advance live professional theatre unparalleled in artistic excellence for the enrichment and education of a diverse community and its future generations of artists and patrons.

DID YOU KNOW???

Casa Mañana is Spanish for "The House of Tomorrow"

NONFICTION CONNECTIONS

Even though *Mr. Popper's Penguins* is fiction, some of the references and allusions can encourage students to make cross-curricular connections after reading about one explorer and one polar animal featured in the story.

CAPTAIN COOK

Born: 27 October 1728
Died: 14 February 1779
Birthplace: Marton, England

Captain James Cook was an English explorer whose journeys in the 1770s allowed the British to map out many places in the Pacific Ocean, including New Zealand, Australia and Hawaii.



Captain James Cook was one of the first navigators of the scientific era, and his expeditions made him the most famous naval explorer since Ferdinand Magellan, who was the first to circumnavigate the world.

Source: TeacherVision.com

**CIRCUMNAVIGATE:
TO SAIL OR TRAVEL ALL THE WAY
AROUND**

When he was young, James Cook worked for shipbuilders and later decided to join the British navy. His first travels were spent mapping out the areas around Newfoundland and Labrador on the eastern side of Canada. His first expedition as Captain was also his first trip to the Pacific Ocean; his job was to observe the movements of the planet Venus. On his way back to England, he circumnavigated New Zealand, mapped out the eastern coast of Australia, and traveled by way of Java and the Cape of Good Hope.

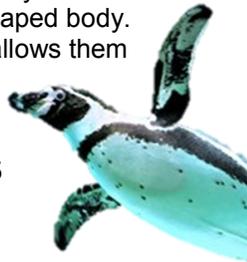
Later on, he commanded two ships all the way to the northern edge of Antarctica. It was a three-year journey. His third and final voyage (1776-79) was to find a sea route across America that would connect America to Asia. After he was forced to turn back at the Bering Strait, he reached Hawaii in January of 1779. A dispute with islanders over a stolen boat ended with Cook dead.

PENGUINS

Penguins are birds that cannot fly. The name "Penguin" comes from the Welsh terms meaning "head" and "white."

There are 17 species of penguin, each slightly different. All of the species live in the Southern hemisphere. Many live at the South Pole on Antarctica. Some are found on the coasts of South America, the Galapagos Islands, Australia, Africa, and New Zealand. There may be as many as 100 million penguins in the world.

Penguins have black and white feathers and they waddle when they walk. They also have a torpedo-shaped body. This shape allows them to speed through the water at speeds of 25 miles per hour.



Penguins spend most of their time in the water searching for food. They are at home in the water as they spin, jump and dive as they play and search for food. A penguin can hold its breath under water for approximately six minutes.

A penguin is a very strong bird and can launch itself six feet into the air when leaving the water to return to land. When a penguin wishes to move quickly across the ice, it can be seen falling onto its belly and using its arms to propel it over the surface.

Penguins have no biological defenses against germs found outside of the cold Antarctic so they are difficult to keep healthy in zoos.

Source: KidsConnect.com

EXTENSION...

Use maps for cross-curricular connections:

In science, students can find on a map the places mentioned where penguins live.

In social studies, students can use a map to track Captain Cook's journey.

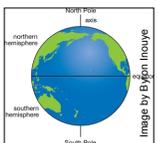
VOCABULARY



Helen Murray

adaptation: a change or adjustment to improve something or make it suitable to a different situation. When Captain Cook came to stay with the Poppers, they quickly realized that the penguin wasn't adapted to the London environment.

alliteration: the same letter or sound at the beginning of closely connected words (Ex. *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, *Marvelous Marcos*, *Captain Cook*)



axis: the axis is an imaginary line through the center of Earth around which the planet rotates.

Captain Cook: a British explorer who was one of the first people to cross the Antarctic Circle in 1773. In *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, Mr. Popper names the first penguin he receives after explorer Captain Cook.

expedition: a journey or voyage undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose, especially that of exploration, scientific research, or war.

manners: polite social behavior (saying "excuse me," "please," and "thank you"). Mrs. Popper gives Mr. Popper and Captain Cook a lesson in



manners when Captain Cook first comes to stay ("Don't take a mouthful then begin to squawk," "Keep it tidy, this is not the zoo")

Robert Falcon Scott: known as "Scott of the Antarctic," he commanded the National Antarctic Expedition from 1901-1904. The expedition reached further south than anyone had gone before.



Robert Falcon Scott explores Antarctica.
© Scott Polar Research Institute; University of Cambridge

When Captain Cook falls ill, Mr. Popper writes a letter to Admiral Drake asking for help. Admiral Drake decides to send out an SOS call to other famous explorers like Amelia Earhart, Charles Darwin, Scott, and Shackleton.

Ernest Henry Shackleton: part of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration, Shackleton joined R.F. Scott on his expedition. On a later voyage, he rescued his entire crew when they were trapped by ice for almost 500 days.



Ernest Henry Shackleton in 1914
www.coolantarctica.com

South Pole - the South Pole is the southern end of Earth's axis, located in Antarctica.



Image by White Desert

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

1) WRITING A NARRATIVE STORY

Source: "A Guide for Using Mr. Popper's Penguins in the Classroom"

Goals:

- ◆ Students will practice writing in narrative form.
- ◆ Students will understand the difference between first and third person narration.
- ◆ Students will practice creative narrative writing that moves through a beginning, middle, and end.
- ◆ Students will incorporate characters and settings from *Mr. Popper's Penguins*.

Explanation: Students will brainstorm and then write a short, narrative story in either first or third person describing the penguin Captain Cook's journey from Antarctica to Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Materials: Brainstorming worksheet (one per student), page 14

Activity:

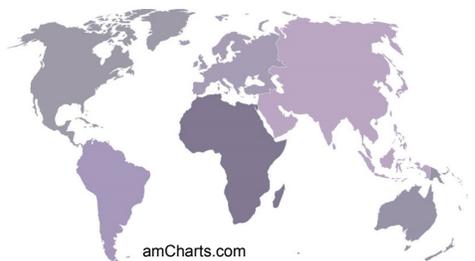
1. Discuss narrative and point of view: A narrative story describes the way in which events happen. An important aspect of a narrative is called point of view. The point of view refers to who is telling the story. *Mr. Popper's Penguins* is a narrative because it describes the events caused by the arrival of Captain Cook. It is told in the third person (he, she, it, they) by a narrator, someone who is not involved in the story but is able to see what everyone else is doing and thinking. Another type of point of view is called first person. In first person, a narrator tells the story from personal experience as it is happening (or as it happened) to him or her. In a first-person story, the narrator uses "I."
2. Explain that students will be writing a short, narrative story imagining the penguin Captain Cook's journey from Antarctica to Mr. Popper's home in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Share that the book does not detail this part of the story, and neither will the musical they are about to see, so students are free to imagine whatever adventures they like for Captain Cook. Pass out the brainstorming worksheet.
3. Ask students to select a point of view and brainstorm ideas for their narrative. Once they have gathered their thoughts, students will write their rough drafts.
4. Have the students revise a final draft and create illustrations for their story, as well as a title.
5. Staple or sew pages together to create booklets, if time allows.
6. Encourage students to create book covers, title pages, and a dedication if they so desire.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What challenges did you face as you created your narrative?
2. What was your favorite part about creating your narrative?

2) AROUND THE WORLD!

Source: Casa Mañana Show Study Guide



Goal: Students will create and analyze maps.

Explanation: Students will plan a route and determine best modes of transportation.

Materials: Blank maps of the city, state, country, or world

Activity:

1. Have students draw a circle where they live (or where they will start their journey). Put a star on 3-5 places they would like to visit.
2. Ask them to number the locations 1-3 (or 4 or 5) in the order which they will visit.
3. Students will plan their route by drawing an arrow from home to location 1 to location 2 and so on, until they draw a final arrow from their last location back home.
4. Have each student look at the arrows and determine the best means of transportation to get from one point to the next. Are they traveling across the ocean? Maybe they want to take a plane or a ship. Are your two locations close to one another? Maybe they can drive a car or take a train (trains are very popular means of transportation in many countries!). Write a mode of transportation next to each arrow.
5. Let each student share their journey with a friend. Ask each student to share where they decided to go and why.

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg 2.

3) AWESOME ACROSTIC ALLITERATION!

Goals:

- ◆ Students will understand the definition of alliteration.
- ◆ Students will identify alliteration in example texts.
- ◆ Students will practice using words and sounds in unique and creative ways.

Explanation: Students will write original alliterative acrostic poems.

Materials:

- ◆ *Alligators All Around* by Maurice Sendak (HarperTrophy, 1991)
- ◆ Computers with Internet access
- ◆ Dictionaries

Activity:

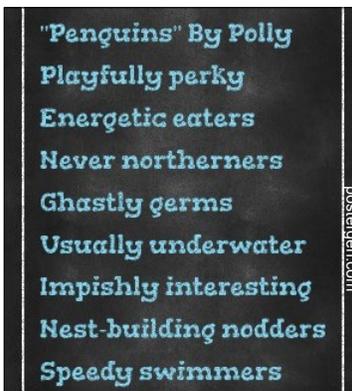
1. Share that you will be reading *Alligators All Around* by Maurice Sendak in preparation for seeing *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Ask students if they see a connection between *Alligators All Around* and the name of Mr. Popper's penguins performing act: "Popper's Performing Penguins." Start reading *Alligators All Around*. After you have read several pages aloud, ask students to define alliteration. (They will soon realize that alliteration is the repetition of words with the same beginning sound.) Point out how the author uses alliteration in word pairs to describe the activities of the alligators. Inform students that they will use the same alliterative style when writing their own acrostic poems.
2. Ask if students can come up with other alliterated names for the penguins or other animal performing groups.
3. Explain that an acrostic poem uses letters from a word written vertically to begin each line of the poem. Ask each student to think of a word with at least six letters that begins with the same first letter as his or her name. For example, Polly might choose "Penguins" for her word.
4. Brainstorm a model word with the class and write it vertically on the board:

"Penguins" by Polly

P—
E—
N—

G—
U—
I—
N—
S—

5. As a class, think of two words for each line of the poem that describe the topic word and begin with the same first vertical letter. Our model "Penguins" poem becomes:



6. Lead students to the classroom computers or computer lab, and introduce them to the [Acrostic Poems](#) interactive tool. Model again how to create an acrostic alliterative poem using this tool. Show students how for each letter of the vertical word, they should think of two words beginning with the same letter that describe the topic word.
7. Have students generate their own acrostic alliterative poems using a topic word of their choice. The [Acrostic Poems](#) tool provides students with sample words for each letter on the writing screen. You may also want to have a few dictionaries on hand to help students identify words for their poems.
8. Circulate among students as they are writing their acrostic poems and provide assistance as needed.

Follow-up Questions:

1. What challenges did you face as you created your poem?
2. What was your favorite part about creating your poem?

There are many other examples of alliteration in the musical *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Keep your ears open during the performance and see how many of them you can notice!

Source: readwritethink.org

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT, pg 2.

2) CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

(Suggested grade level: 3-5)

Goal: Students will self-reflect on challenges and determine how to improve upon them.

Explanation: Students will work with partners to list problems faced by Mr. and Mrs. Popper and write about how they solved them.

Activity:

1. Assign student partners.
2. Remind students that Mr. and Mrs. Popper had their fair share of problems come up when they began raising their penguins. Although they found their situation quite challenging, they did not give up. Instead, they created a plan of action to solve their problems.
3. In their groups, ask students to list 3-5 problems that the Poppers came across when raising their penguins.
4. Instruct students to write a couple of sentences stating the Poppers' plan to address one of these problems. Then ask them to consider whether or not this solution worked. Why or why not? Make sure they back up their answer with evidence from the show!

Extension Activity:

Ask students to list one problem they are having, either in school, at home, with a hobby, or anything else.

Have them write a couple of sentences stating their plan to address the problem.

How will they know if their solution works? What would it look like if their problem is solved? What might be an alternative solution if the first one does not work?



3) GIRAFFE IN THE GROCERY STORE!

(Suggested grade level: K-2)

Goal: Students will use creativity and humor to teach manners and etiquette.

Explanation: Students will create rules to teach animals how to behave in a certain place.

Activity:

Mr. and Mrs. Popper learned pretty quickly that penguins have no idea how to live in an everyday house in Stillwater! They needed to teach Captain Cook how to behave at home. In this activity, students get the chance to do the same thing.

1. Each student chooses an animal and a location that the animal would not typically encounter, such as an elephant at school, a giraffe at the grocery store, or a monkey in the library.
2. Students think of the many ways that animal could get into trouble in the new location and try to teach them the right way to behave. Depending on the skill level and learning style of the child, they can decide among:

- ◆ Writing a short narrative
- ◆ Drawing a picture
- ◆ Writing a list of "Dos and Don'ts"
- ◆ Writing a dramatic scene in dialogue format
- ◆ Using a popular song to write a parody

3. Students share their creations in pairs, groups, or in front of the class.

Follow-up Questions:

1. How did you decide the kind of trouble your animal would get into?
2. Have you ever gotten into trouble when you didn't know the rules of a place? How did you learn them?

REPRODUCIBLE (for use with pre-show activity #1)

“Writing a Narrative” Brainstorming Worksheet Name: _____

Point of View: _____

1. What is Captain Cook’s mode of transportation?

2. How long does his journey take?

3. How does he feel on the different parts of his journey?

4. Are there any problems on the trip?

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



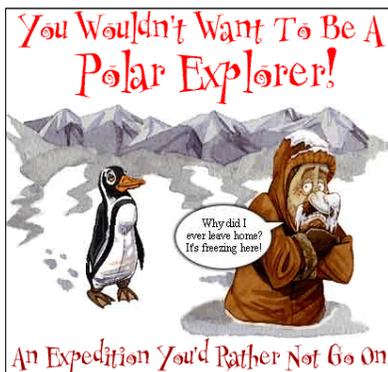
ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Books about Penguins:

- ◇ *My Penguin Osbert* (Elizabeth Cody Kimmel)
grades K-2
- ◇ *Penguin Problems* (Jory John and Lane Smith)
grades K-2
- ◇ *Pierre the Penguin: The True Story* (Jean Marcello and Laura Regan)
grades K-5
- ◇ *The Emperor Lays an Egg* (Brenda Z. Guiberson and Joan Paley)
grades K-3

Books about Explorers:

- ◇ *You Wouldn't Want to Be a Polar Explorer* (Jen Green)
grades 3-5
- ◇ *Discovering Antarctica: The People* (June Loves)



RESOURCES

[All About Explorers](#)

A website geared toward teaching upper elementary students about web literacy and proper search etiquette through purposely false information about explorers. Includes guided Treasure Hunts that help students fact check answers they find online about explorers.

[Interactive Antarctica Penguin Map](#)

National Geographic shares the sights and sounds of wildlife in Antarctica.

[Penguin Jump Multiplication](#)

Mr. and Mrs. Popper's started with one penguin, then they had two. Soon, those two had babies and many more penguins filled their house. Students can use this penguin multiplication game to make connections between literature and mathematics.

[World Penguin Distribution Map](#)

The International Penguin Conservation Working Group shows penguin habitats in this interactive map of the Earth.

SOURCES

[Casa Mañana](#). Show Study Guide.

[KidsConnect](#). "Penguin Facts and Worksheets."

"Mr. Popper's Penguins in the Classroom" by Rebecca Paigen (1997).

[ReadWriteThink](#). Acrostic Poem.

[TeacherVision](#). "James Cook."