



## MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS

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*Applause Series Curriculum Guide*  
January 11 & 12, 2018



CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

# MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Originally published as a children's book, Richard and Florence Atwater's 1938 story found a new audience through the 2011 Hollywood film starring Jim Carrey. Now it is time for The Poppers and their penguin friends to take the stage in this adaptation by Pins and Needles Productions and Casa Mañana. Using puppet penguins with a penchant for performing and featuring original music by Luke Bateman and lyrics by Richy Hughes, students will get swept away in the adventures and antics of this unlikely family. The Poppers prove that with a positive attitude, even the peskiest problems can pan out in the end.

We hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a wide variety of discussion questions and activities. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts  
Education Team



### Support for Des Moines Performing Arts education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

American Enterprise Group, Arts Midwest, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bravo Greater Des Moines, Clive Community Foundation, EMC Insurance Companies, DuPont Pioneer, Ernest and Florence Sargent Family Foundation, Gannett Foundation/The Des Moines Register, Hy-Vee, Inc., Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, John Deere, Judith A. Lindquist Scholarship Fund, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Meredith Corporation Foundation, Nationwide, Polk County, Prairie Meadows, Principal, U.S. Bank, Union Pacific Foundation, Wells Fargo & Co., West Bancorporation Foundation, Windsor Charitable Foundation, and more than 400 individual donors.

## GUIDE CONTENTS

About the Applause Series  
Page 3

Going to the Theater and  
Theater Etiquette  
Page 4

Civic Center Field Trip  
Information for Teachers  
Page 5

Vocabulary  
Page 6

About the Performance  
Page 7

About the Authors and Artists  
Page 8

Context: Nonfiction Connections  
Page 9

Pre-Show Exploration  
Pages 10-11

Post-Show Discussion  
and Assessment  
Pages 12-13

Reproducible  
Pages 14

Resources and Sources  
Page 15

This study guide was compiled and written by Allison McGuire; edited by Karoline Myers and Katie Seiberling.

# ABOUT THE APPLAUSE SERIES



TAKE THOUSANDS OF IOWA STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR CLASSROOMS, PLACE THEM IN A THEATER, SPRINKLE THE STAGE WITH WORLD-CLASS PERFORMERS, AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE? A RECIPE FOR LEARNING THAT REACHES NEW LEVELS OF POSSIBILITY—FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

WE CALL IT THE APPLAUSE SERIES.

## BRINGING ARTS EDUCATION TO LIFE

The Applause Series is a flagship education program of Des Moines Performing Arts. Since its launch in 1996, more than a half million students and teachers have attended school-time performances as part of the series. You are joining us for the 22nd season of school performances!

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Each year, more than 55,000 students and teachers attend an Applause Series performance. The actual cost per person is \$8, but thanks to the caring contributions of donors, schools pay just \$1 per ticket. By removing the financial barriers to participation, donors introduce a whole new generation to the power of arts in action. That means stronger schools and communities now and in the future.

## TICKET TO IMAGINATION

The Applause Series annually delivers 60 age-appropriate performances for pre-school to high school students. The impact stretches far beyond the Des Moines metro, reaching schools in over 35 Iowa counties. The theater becomes the classroom. One-hour matinees energize students to imagine new ways of creative expression, cultural diversity and even career opportunities.

## BEYOND THE STAGE

For many Applause Series performances, we offer the opportunity for schools to go deeper by exploring an art form or theme that connects with what is seen on stage. Invite a professional teaching artist into the classroom or visit another cultural destination in Des Moines to help students make more meaning of a piece of theater.

## ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

Des Moines Performing Arts is central Iowa's premier not-for-profit performing arts organization.

More than 300,000 guests attend performances and events in our four venues each year:

- ◇ *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- ◇ *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- ◇ *Temple Theater, 299 seats*
- ◇ *Cowles Commons (outdoor plaza)*

Guests experience a wide variety of art forms and cultural activities, with presentations ranging from Broadway, comedy, professional dance, to family programming.

Des Moines Performing Arts education programs serve more than 75,000 Iowans annually.

Programs for schools, such as the Applause Series and teacher professional development, help enliven students' learning. Public education programs such as master classes, workshops, Q&A sessions and summer camps allow audience members and aspiring artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages.

# GOING TO THE THEATER



ATTENDING A LIVE PERFORMANCE IS A UNIQUE AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITY! UNLIKE THE PASSIVE EXPERIENCE OF WATCHING A MOVIE, AUDIENCE MEMBERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN EVERY LIVE PERFORMANCE.

WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?

## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Artists on stage are very aware of the mood and level of engagement of the audience. As such, each performance calls for a different response from audience members.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- ◇ What kind of live performance is this (a musical, dance, or concert)?
- ◇ What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- ◇ What is the mood of the artists? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- ◇ Are the artists encouraging the audience to clap to the music, move to the beat, or participate in some other way?
- ◇ Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

### DID YOU KNOW?

ALTHOUGH NOT REQUIRED, SOME PEOPLE ENJOY DRESSING UP WHEN THEY ATTEND THE THEATER.

## THEATER ETIQUETTE CHECKLIST

- Do not bring food, drinks or chewing gum into the theater.
- The use of cameras and recording devices is not permitted.
- Turn off and put away cell phones and other electronics before the performance begins.
- Do not text during the performance.
- Respect the theater. Keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- Talk only before and after the performance.
- Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end.
- Remember that this is a special experience. The artists are creating something just for you. Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. **Enjoy yourself!**

# CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION



**WE WANT YOUR FIELD TRIP TO BE SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL!**

**PLEASE READ BELOW FOR IMPORTANT TIPS AND DETAILS TO ENSURE A GREAT DAY.**

## GET ORGANIZED

- ◇ Double-check that all students, teachers, and chaperones were included in your ticket order. Request an adjustment if your numbers have increased. We want to make sure we have enough seats for you!
- ◇ Tickets are not issued. Bring a copy of your invoice, which will serve as your group's "ticket".
- ◇ Schedule arrival for 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This allows time to park, cross streets, find your seats, and go to the restroom.
- ◇ Let drivers know that Applause performances are approximately 60 minutes, unless otherwise noted.
- ◇ Remind chaperones that children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause Series events.

## DIRECTIONS/PARKING

- ◇ The Des Moines Civic Center is located at 221 Walnut Street, Des Moines, Iowa.
- ◇ Directions from I-235: take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3<sup>rd</sup> St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Turn onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and head south.
- ◇ Police officers stationed at the corner of 3rd & Locust Streets will direct buses to reserved street parking near the Civic Center.
- ◇ Buses are not allowed to drop groups off in front of the theater. Contact us in advance if there is a special circumstance.
- ◇ Buses remain parked for the duration of the show. Drivers must be available to move the bus immediately following the performance.
- ◇ Personal vehicles are responsible for securing their own parking on a nearby street or in a downtown parking ramp.

**QUESTIONS?**  
**We are happy to help!**

Please contact us at:  
[education@dmpa.org](mailto:education@dmpa.org)  
515.246.2355

## ARRIVAL/SEATING

- ◇ An usher will greet you at the door and ask for your school name.
  - ◇ Adults will be asked to show proper identification (such as school IDs or visitor badges as applicable) at the door.
  - ◇ Each group will be assigned a specific location in the theater based on various factors. An usher will escort you to your section.
  - ◇ Your school may be seated in multiple rows. Adults should position themselves throughout the group.
  - ◇ Allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging student seats or taking groups to the restroom.
- This helps us seat efficiently and better start the show on time.

## IN THE THEATER

- ◇ Adults are asked to handle any disruptive behavior in their group. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- ◇ Please wait for your group to be dismissed by DMPA staff prior to exiting the theater.

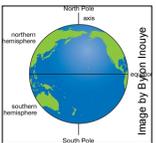
# VOCABULARY



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

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Helen Murray

Painter and decorator by day, Mr. Popper spends his time dreaming of Antarctic adventures. He is astounded when one day a packing crate arrives on his doorstep and a penguin waddles out!

With original songs and performing penguin puppets, this delightful, action-packed adaptation of Florence Atwater's popular book is "snow" much fun!

**Run time:** 1 hour

## SYNOPSIS

Mr. Popper paints houses in his hometown of Stillwater for half of the year and spends the rest of it sitting in his armchair reading about Antarctic exploration. More than anything, Mr. Popper *loves* penguins, but he and his wife just have goldfish. When he writes a letter to Admiral Drake to ask how his Antarctic expedition is going, Admiral Drake responds on his weekly radio address by telling Mr. Popper to wait for a surprise. The surprise comes in the form of Captain Cook, an Antarctic penguin!

Though Mr. Popper immediately falls in love with Captain Cook, with Mrs. Popper not far behind, Captain Cook is lonely living in London and falls very ill. The Poppers discover that penguins are social creatures, and so Greta, another sick penguin who has been living in the London Zoo, comes to live with them.

From there, Mr. Popper, Mrs. Popper, and their penguins embark on big adventures that take Mr. Popper out of his armchair and way beyond the borders of Stillwater.

## WHAT YOU WILL EXPERIENCE

*Mr. Popper's Penguins* is an action-packed musical, which means that singing and dancing play an important role in telling the story. It is performed by live actors...well, for the most part. Four actors portray Mr. Popper, Mrs. Popper, and a handful of other human characters, but rather than having live penguins on stage, penguin puppets are used instead (they eat far fewer fish).

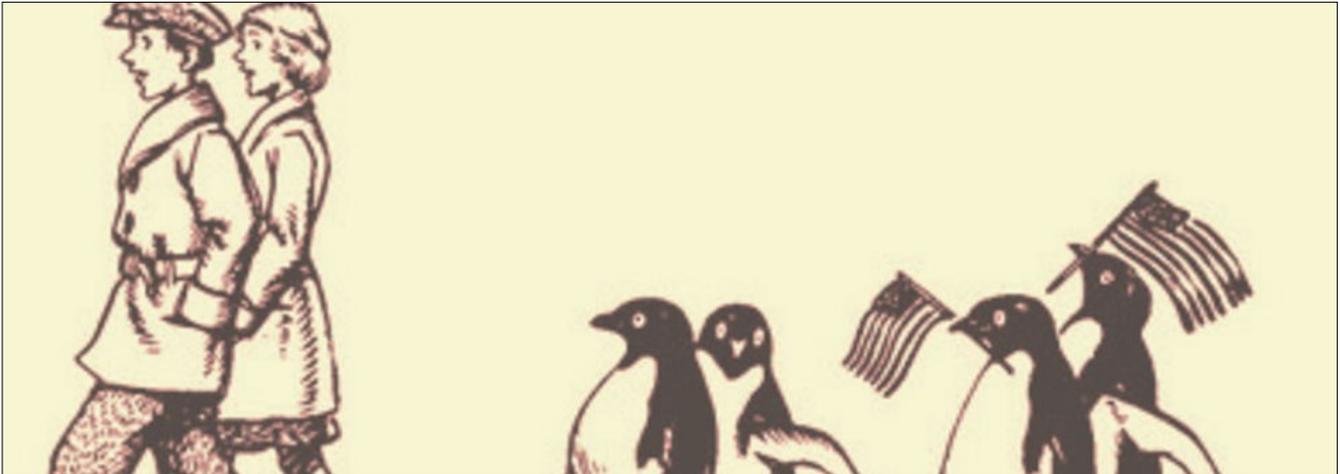
**SCENES:** Read through the scenes in *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Based on the titles, what do you **predict** will happen in each scene?

Predict: To say what will happen in the future

1. Antarctic Explorer
2. Stillwater
3. A Voice in the Air
4. Out of the Antarctic
5. Penguin's Promenade
6. Getting a License
7. Shadows
8. Explorer S.O.S.
9. Greta
10. More Mouths to Feed
11. Money Worries
12. Mr. Greenbaum
13. Popper's Performing Penguins
14. Admiral Drake's Return
15. Bon Voyage

"The company has terrific fun with the puppet penguins, who are almost as expressively comical as real birds." -Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian*

# 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.

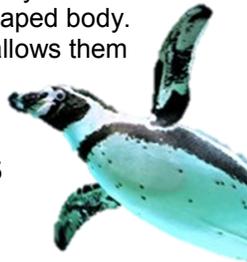
Later on, he commanded two ships all the way to the northern edge of Antarctica. It was a three-year journey. His third and final voyage (1776-79) was to find a sea route across America that would connect America to Asia. After he was forced to turn back at the Bering Strait, he reached Hawaii in January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

# 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—

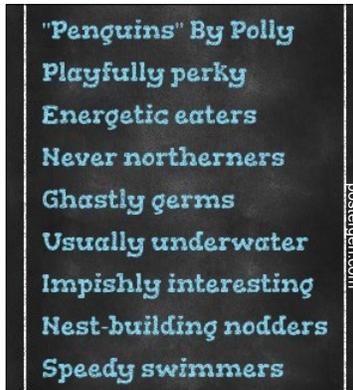
U—

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

## DISCUSSION

### Comprehension and Connection:

1. Where did Mr. Popper most like to visit and why? Where is a new place that you might like to visit and why?
2. Mr. Popper wrote to Admiral Drake, a famous explorer. Why is Mr. Popper so excited to write to him? If you could meet someone famous, who would you choose and why?
3. Mr. Popper took Captain Cook for a walk. How did people react to the sight of a penguin on the street? How would you react if you saw the same sight?
4. Why were Captain Cook and Greta sick? Describe a time when you missed someone very much. How did you feel?
5. What did Mr. Popper train the penguins to do? If you had a pet, what would you train it to do?
6. Why did Admiral Drake want to bring the penguins back to Antarctica? Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?

### Puppetry:

1. The puppeteers were very visible during the show. Why do you think this was?
2. Describe what you think the puppets were made of.
3. If you could ask the puppeteers a question, what would it be?

### Theater Experience:

1. What was your favorite part about the trip to the theater?
2. How was the performance different than the book or movie? How was it the same?

## 1) WRITE A LETTER

**Goal:** To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a letter about their experience to the *Mr. Popper's Penguins* performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

### Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:

- ◇ What was the show about?
- ◇ What parts of the show were most exciting?
- ◇ Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
- ◇ What did the characters learn?
- ◇ What was special about the puppets?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their theater experience.

### Example Letter Starter:

Dear Performers,

My favorite part of the show was...  
While watching your show I felt... because ...  
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...  
If I could be in your show, I would play the  
part of ... because ...

3. Mail the letters to:

Des Moines Performing Arts  
Attn: Education Department  
221 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

### Follow-up Question:

1. What did you include in your letter? Why did you want to share that particular idea?

# 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?



Helen Murray

## 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?

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2. How long does his journey take?

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

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4. Are there any problems on the trip?

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# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



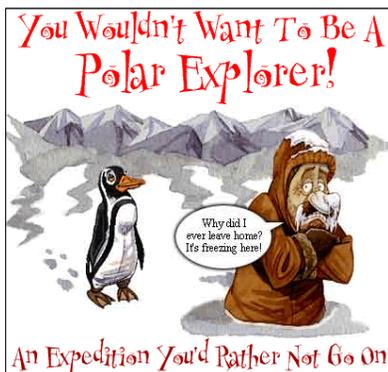
## ADDITIONAL BOOKS

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."