



# MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS

Book by Robert Kazlaric

Music & Lyrics by George Howe

Based on the novel by Richard & Florence Atwater

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## Classroom Guide Grade 2 — Grade 3

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## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Mr. Popper’s Penguins* is designed for Texas students in Grades 2 and 3. It offers activities to help you integrate a performance of *Mr. Popper’s Penguins* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, and theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) content standards.

For students outside Texas, this guide’s ELA and math activities also are linked to Common Core standards. At the back of this guide, you will find a list of the guide activities and their related Texas and Common Core standards.

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## 1: Discussion Questions

### ***Before the Performance***

*Mr. Popper's Penguins* is a stage play. What is a stage play?

- How is a play similar to a TV show or movie?
- How is it different?

Who performs the parts (roles) in a play?

- What kinds of skills do you think performers need to have to perform in plays?
- Who else works on plays? (Remember: you may not see them on stage!)

The play is based on a book called *Mr. Popper's Penguins*.

- Have you read *Mr. Popper's Penguins* as a class or by yourself?
  - Based on what you read, what do you think may happen in the play?

### ***During the Performance***

When you watch a play, you are a member of the audience. What kinds of things should you do as an audience member? Examples:

- Pay attention
- Laugh when something funny happens
- Clap if you enjoy something

What kinds of things should you *not* do as an audience member? Examples:

- Talk to your neighbor
- Use a cell phone during the performance
- Yell at the actors (unless they ask you to!)

### ***After the Performance***

What did you think of the play?

- If you read *Mr. Popper's Penguins* beforehand, how was the play similar to the book?
- How was it different?

Describe the performers in the play.

- What did they do to make their characters special (different from the other characters)?
- How did they use their bodies to play their characters (using voice, movement, etc.)?
- Did you see anyone else who worked on the play besides the performers on stage?

Describe the characters' costumes.

- What did each character's costume tell you about that character?
- Did any of the performers change costumes?
  - If so, why do you think they needed to change costumes?

Describe the set of the play.

- Did it have a lot of locations?
- Did it look like a place you've been to before?
- How did different lighting change how the set looked for different scenes?

Did the play have music in it?

- If so, was it only in the background, or did it help tell the story?
- What instruments did you hear in the music?

If you were going to direct *Mr. Popper's Penguins* how would your production be different than the play you saw by Magik?

## **2: Magik Must-Reads**

For each of our main stage productions at The Magik Theatre, we choose a theme related to the show. Then we create a list of Magik Must-Reads on that theme.

The reading theme for *Mr. Popper's Penguins* is Determination.

The Magik Must-Reads (Grades 2 - 3) are:

*Brave Irene* by William Steig

*She Persisted* by Chelsea Clinton

*One Word from Sophia* by Jim Averback, illustrated by Yasmeeen Ismail

*Peter Powers and His Not-So-Super Powers!* by Kent Clark and Brandon T. Snider,  
illustrated by Dave Bardin

Read them as a class or let students choose two or more to read. Then use these questions for discussion or book reports:

### **Theme**

How did the theme of Determination show in each book? Explain.

### **Setting**

Describe the settings of each book.

- What details can you remember?
- Were the settings similar to a place you know or a place you've visited?

How were the settings similar to each other? How were they different?

### **Characters**

Who were the main characters of each book?

Did any characters show up in more than one book?

Were the characters of one book similar another book's characters in any other ways?

How were the characters related to the theme of Determination? Explain.

### **Plot**

What did the main characters of the books want most?

Did anyone or anything stand between the main characters and their goals?

Did the main characters get what they wanted? How?

How were the plots of the books similar? How were they different?

### 3: Write Your Own Story

In *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, Mr. and Mrs. Popper's family grows unexpectedly each time a new penguin arrives. Write a story about a character whose family gets bigger (through a pet, a sibling, a friend... anything!). Answer the questions below as you write your story:

- Who is your main character?
- Who are your other characters (if any)?
- What does your main character want?
- What is keeping your main character from what they want?
- How does your main character tackle the problem?
- How does your story end?

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**4: Word Problems**

- 1) If Mr. Popper received 2 penguins every day for 7 days, how many penguins would he have at the end of the week?
  
  
- 2) After Captain Cook became ill, the Popper family was sent Greta, making their total of penguins 2. Those 2 penguins then had babies, resulting in a total of 12 penguins all together. How many more penguins does Mr. Popper have now than when he had before the babies were born?
  
  
  
- 3) Mr. Popper trains his penguins for the show 3 hours a day. How many total hours did he train them after 5 days?
  
  
  
  
- 4) The penguins travel for 12 days to get to their next show location and they travel for the same amount of days to travel back home. How many days do the penguins travel total?
  
  
  
  
- 5) There are 5 shows and 30 penguins. If the penguins are split up evenly to perform in the shows, how many penguins are in each show?

## 5: Does the Ocean Freeze?

In *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, characters discuss the best environment for a penguin several times. Several species of penguins typically live near the South Pole, but penguins in general are considered marine birds, meaning they live most of their lives in the water. As a class, complete the following experiment to learn more about the ocean - penguins' natural habitat.

### Materials

- 8 cups of water
- 2 tablespoons of salt
- 2 large plastic bowls
- Freezer
- Spoon
- Dry-erase marker

### Procedure

- 1) Label the bowls "Bowl 1" and "Bowl 2"
- 2) Measure out 4 cups of water for each bowl.
- 3) Add 2 tablespoons of salt to Bowl 2 a little at a time, stirring until the salt is completely dissolved.
- 4) Leave both bowls in a freezer overnight.
- 5) The following day, check to see if the bowls have frozen over.
- 6) Record your results.

### Follow-Up Questions

- 1) Why do you think one bowl froze and the other didn't?
- 2) Bodies of water located farther inland tend to freeze, while oceans don't. Why do you think that is?
- 3) What do you think might happen if you added more salt to the bowl? Less salt?
- 4) Why is it important to penguins for the ocean to not freeze?

**6: Mapping Stillwater**

In *Mr. Popper’s Penguins*, the crew travels quite a bit, from taking the bus in town to traveling all over the country for their performances. However, they didn’t always seem to know the best way to get around. In fact, they had to ask the bus driver for directions once! That wouldn’t have happened if they had the map of the bus route through the town. Create your own map of the town below. Be sure to include the following places: the Popper residence, post office, primary school, penny arcade, pizza parlor, pool hall, and the Palace Theater. Be sure to include a compass rose too! After creating your map, answer the following questions:

- 1) What direction is the penny arcade located in relation to the Palace Theater?
- 2) Is there a building located west of the pizza parlor?
- 3) What is the furthest northeast building?




## 7: Penguin Habitat

The penguins needed a winter wonderland to feel at home in Stillwater, and the Popper family was able to provide that for them. Now it's your turn to create a 3-D habitat for the penguins.

### What You Need

- Blue cardstock (or white cardstock)
- Black cardstock
- White construction paper
- White cotton balls (as snow)
- Crayons
- Glue
- Scissors

### What You Do

- 1) Start by cutting out the shape of a standing up penguin (with an extra flap on the bottom so your penguin will be able to be glued in a standing position) from your black cardstock. Cut the white construction paper for the details on the penguin, and feel free to use crayons to give your penguin more features!
- 2) Glue your penguin onto the blue/white cardstock. Blue cardstock means the penguin is in the water, while white cardstock means the penguin is on land.
- 3) Use the white construction paper, crayons, and cotton balls to fill in the rest of the habitat! The blue represents the ocean, so if you used the blue cardstock for your penguin to stand on be sure to include some land with a home for your penguin, some fish for food, and plenty of snow! If you used the white cardstock for the base, remember to include the ocean! Penguins are aquatic birds!



### 8: Mr. Popper's Playlists

In *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, Mr. Popper decides to help the penguins return to their original home. It's a happy moment because the penguins get to return to the environment that's best for them, but it also means that Mr. Popper has to say goodbye. It can be very hard to say goodbye to friends and family, but music can help us to sort through those feelings.

As a class, create a playlist from the point of view of Mr. Popper to gift to the penguins when it's time to say goodbye. What kinds of songs do you think Mr. Popper would be listening to when preparing to say goodbye to his dear friends? For a challenge, only seek out instrumental tracks.

After you have your songs, listen to snippets of them and answer the following questions:

- 1) Is there a common theme with the songs?
  - a.) If they have lyrics, are there any similarities?
  - b.) If they're mostly instrumental, what instruments do you hear most?
- 1) What is the tempo like for most of the songs? Fast? Slow?
- 2) If you had been asked to create a playlist for when the penguins were on the road doing their vaudeville show, how do you think the playlist would have been different?
  - a.) Do you think the songs would have been more upbeat or slower?
  - b.) What do you think the lyrics of the songs might have been about?

#### **Additional activity:**

Play a game of freeze dance using your playlist! Move to the beats and act like your feeling the emotions of the song. How do the different tempos impact how you move?

**TEXAS**

**Grade 2**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.110.b.5
2	ELA 110.4.b.6
3	ELA 110.4.b.11
4	Math 111.4.b.4
5	Science 112.13.b.2
6	Soc Studies 113.13.b.5
7	Fine Arts 117.108.b.2
8	Fine Arts 117.109.b.1, 6 D

**Grade 3**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.113.b.5
2	ELA 110.5.b.6
3	ELA 110.5.b.11
4	Math 111.5.b.4
5	Science 112.14.b.2
6	Soc Studies 113.14.b.5
7	Fine Arts 117.111.b.2
8	Fine Arts 117.112.b.1, 6 D

**COMMON CORE**

**Grade 2**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.2.1, 5, 10
3	ELA W.2.3
5	Math 2.OA.1

**Grade 3**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.3.1, 3, 10
3	ELA W.3.3
5	Math 3.OA.1, 3, 7