



MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS

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Music & Lyrics by George Howe

Based on the novel by Richard & Florence Atwater

Classroom Guide Grades 4 - 5

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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Mr Popper’s Penguins* is designed for Texas students in Grades 4 and 5. 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.

Table of Contents

Theatre

1: Discussion Questions 3

English Language Arts

2: Magik Must Reads 4

3: Write Your Own Story 5

Mathematics

4: Word Problems 6

Science

5: Penguins and Fish and Seals 7

Social Studies

6: Cook, Magellan, and More! 8

Art

7: Paper Mâché Penguin 9

Music

8: Your Vaudeville Act 10

Appendix

Activity Content Standards 11

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 4 - 5) are:

Charlotte's Web written by E.B. White, illustrated by Garth Williams

Holes by Louis Sachar

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

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. Popper's dreams of adventure come true when he, his wife, and the penguins become a popular vaudeville act. Write a story about a character who goes on an unexpected adventure. 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?

TITLE: _____

4: Word Problems

- 1) Captain Cook has added six cards, Greta has added 8 twigs, and Nelson has added 6 ribbons to the penguins' rookery. Out of all the new additions, what is the percentage of twigs?
What is the percentage of ribbons?

- 2) Mr. and Mrs. Popper are \$10,000 in debt. If they are offered \$250 per day to be a part of a documentary and all of that money can go towards their debt, how many days would it take them to pay off their debt?

- 3) There are twelve penguins. If the Poppers have 20 minutes for their act and they want each penguin to have the same amount of time to do their tricks, how many minutes should each penguin take up?

- 4) Svensen's Sensational Seals each weigh 120.5 pounds. If there are five seals, how much do the seals weigh total? If Sven Svensen weighs 155.25 pounds and he and the seals are on the stage at the same time, how much total weight is on the stage?

- 5) Mr. Popper makes \$500 for each house he paints in full and \$125 for each front door he paints. If it takes 45 minutes for him to paint a door and three hours for him to paint a house, how many doors does he need to paint before he makes as much as he does painting 2 houses?

5: Penguins and Fish and Seals

In the play, Svensen's Sensational Seals are mentioned to be natural enemies of penguins. However, they're not just enemies. In Antarctic food chains, krill usually consume phytoplankton, penguins usually consume krill, and seals usually consume penguins. This is an example of a food chain.

In each food chain there are, in addition to the sun, three main components that keep the cycle going: Producers, Consumers, and Decomposers. *Producers* are organisms that **produce** their own food. *Consumers* are organisms that **consume** other plants or animals. There are three main levels of Consumers: Primary (meaning the first level, they eat plants and are also known as Herbivores), Secondary (meaning the second level, they eat plants or primary consumers and are therefore omnivores or carnivores), Tertiary (at the top of the food chain, they have no natural predators and they eat plants, primary consumers, or secondary consumers, making them omnivores or carnivores). Finally, there are *Decomposers*, who are organisms that eat dead plants or animals. They help turn them into nutrients that, with the sun, help producers to grow, starting the cycle over again.

Procedure

- 1) As a class, brainstorm several different ecosystems that you can come up with enough organisms for to form a food chain (ex: forest, ocean).
- 2) In small groups, choose an ecosystem. Each group should have a different ecosystem. Then, create a food chain. Include the Sun, Producers, the three levels of Consumers, and Decomposers.
- 3) Write (or draw) out your food chain on a sheet of paper and prepare to present it to the class.
- 4) Once each group has presented, answer the following questions.

Follow-Up Questions

- 1) What were some of the Tertiary Consumers (aka the apex predators)?
- 2) What were some of the Decomposers?
- 3) How did each food chain differ based on the ecosystem?
- 4) Why do you think that was?
- 5) What are some other animals that could make their way into some of the food chains you saw?
- 6) What are some animals that could help the Decomposers to do their job? (Hint: this is another level to the food chain, called *Scavengers*.)

6: Cook, Magellan, and More!

In *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, the penguins are named after famous explorers and their patrons (the people who asked them to go on their adventures). In small groups, do some research on a famous explorer. Answer the following questions, then come together as a class to learn more about what each explorer was famous for.

Sample Explorers:

- Christopher Columbus
- Captain James Cook
- Hernan Cortes
- Vasco da Gama
- Sir Francis Drake
- Ferdinand Magellan
- Marco Polo
- Juan Ponce de Leon

Answer the following questions, and be prepared to present your findings to the class:

- What year were they born?
- Where were they born?
- What year did they die?
- Who was their patron?
- What were they hoping to find?
- (If applicable) What/where did they discover?

After you have presented your findings, as a class discuss why countries were so desperate to send out explorers during the Age of Exploration. What made them want to look outside of their kingdoms for resources?

7: Paper Mâché Penguin

Now it's your chance to make a penguin of your very own! Follow the instructions below to make a paper mâché penguin.

Materials

- Balloons (1 per person)
- Tape
- Newspaper strips
- Glue and water for the paste
- Scissors
- Black tissue paper
- White tissue paper
- White paint and paintbrush
- Orange and black construction paper.



Directions

- 1) Blow up one balloon all the way.
- 2) Create your paper mâché paste by stirring 3/4 a cup of white glue and 1/4 a cup of water together. The thicker the glue, the less glue you have to use.
- 3) Cover the entire balloon with 2 layers of paper mâché.
- 4) Let the layers dry (12 to 24 hours).
- 5) Once dry, cover the entire balloon with no more than 2 layers of paper mâché. Don't let the project get too wet!
- 6) Let the project dry completely (another 12 to 24 hours).
- 7) After things are dry, paint the project white and let it dry.
- 8) Cut petal shapes (to be feathers) from black and white tissue paper. Fold the tissue paper over so you can cut multiple feathers at once.
- 9) Glue the feathers on the project starting at the bottom and working up. Most of the penguin should be black with white on the front in an oval for the stomach.
- 10) Cut out a diamond from orange construction paper for the beak. Fold it in half and glue where the fold is to the balloon where you want the beak to be.
- 11) Cut out eyes for the penguin and glue them on.
- 12) Cut out wing shapes from the black construction paper and glue them onto the sides of the penguin. Cut out optional feet from the orange construction paper and paste them on too. And you're done!

This project was borrowed from www.dltk-kids.com.

8: Your Vaudeville Act

In *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, Mr. and Mrs. Popper and the penguins created an act to take with them from city to city. In it they used the penguins' strengths to entertain the masses. As a class, come up with your own penguin-inspired act!

Directions

- 1) First choose a song for your act. This could be pre-selected by the teacher or a song voted upon by the class. It should probably be upbeat, however.
- 2) Listen to the song. Determine the emotions of it, as that will impact your movements.
- 3) Clap out the rhythm as you listen to the song. This will help when you begin to dance to it.
 - a.) Note when the song speeds up and slows down too!
- 4) Listen to when the song gets louder and quieter (crescendos and decrescendos). Be sure to incorporate that in your movements as well.
- 5) As a class, mill and seethe around the room, moving to the music. Be sure to dance to the rhythm of the song, speeding up and slowing down when the song does and incorporating bigger movements when the song gets louder.
- 6) After you've danced around the room to the song once, begin to solidify the movements you want to do. Everyone can have different dance moves, but they should be doing the exact same movements every time.
- 7) Play the song at double speed. See how that impacts the movements you set to the music.
- 8) Play the song at half speed. See how that further impacts your movements.

After you've finished dancing, answer the following questions:

- 1) What impact did the speed (tempo) of the song have on your movements?
- 2) If you had been dancing to a slower song the whole time, how do you think your movements would have been different? A faster song?
- 3) How did the mood of the music impact your chosen movements?

TEXAS

Grade 4

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.116.b.5
2	ELA 110.6.b.7
3	ELA 110.6.b.11-12
4	Math 111.6.b.1 A, 2, 3, 10 B
5	Science 112.15.b.9 B
6	Soc Studies 113.15.b.1
7	Fine Arts 117.114.b.2
8	Fine Arts 117.115.b.3 C

Grade 5

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.119.b.5
2	ELA 110.7.b.7
3	ELA 110.7.b.11-12
4	Math 111.7.b.1 A, 2-3
5	Science 112.16.b.9 B
6	Soc Studies 113.16.b.2
7	Fine Arts 117.117.b.2
8	Fine Arts 117.118.b.3 C

COMMON CORE

Grade 4

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.4.2-3
3	ELA W.4.3
5	Math 4.OA.3

Grade 5

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.5.2
3	ELA W.5.3
5	Math 5.NBT.5