



volume 1, issue 16

Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!

Welcome to issue 16 of the *Minis at Home* newsletter. Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

This week's theme = Penguins

Last week we talked about polar bears; this week we're all about **penguins!** During wintertime, we love learning about animals that live in the polar regions of our planet Earth because it's *brrrrrrr*....there, too. The polar regions are located at the very top and the very bottom of the Earth. You might know them as the North Pole and the South Pole. Because the polar areas don't get any direct sunlight, it is pretty cold, icy and snowy all year long.

Different animals have adapted for life at the polar extremes. Polar bears live only in the northern polar regions such as the Arctic. Penguins live mostly in the Southern Hemisphere. Many penguins live in the ice and snow-covered continent called Antarctica. They spend half their time on land and the other half in the water. Penguins live in large groups with many other penguins. A huge group of penguins on land is called a "**waddle.**" When penguins swim together in groups, they are called a "**raft.**"

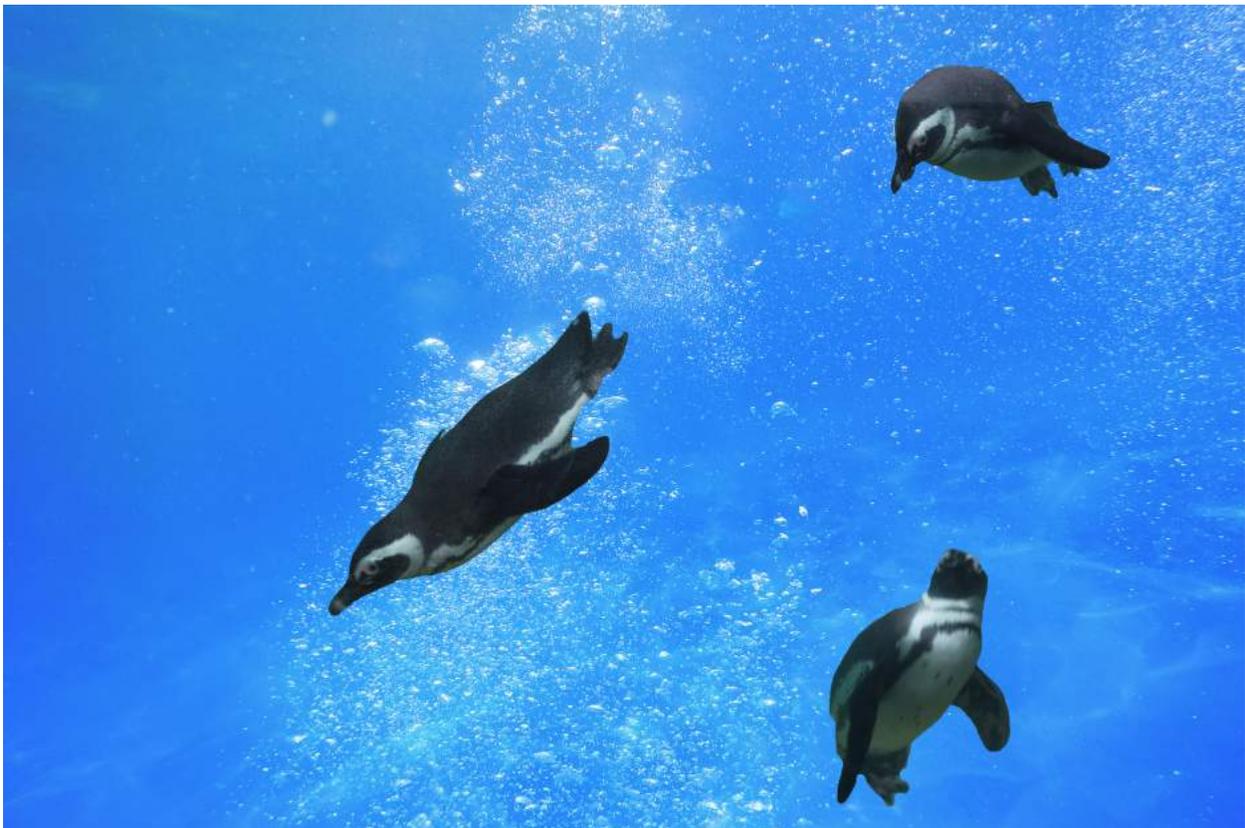


Penguins are considered birds because they lay eggs and they have feathers, but they cannot fly! They waddle, hop, and jump, and they are amazing swimmers. Penguins eat fish, so a lot of their time is spent in the ocean. When they are in the water, they spin and dive, but they cannot swim backwards. They are fast swimmers because they have to catch fish and get away from predators like large seals, orcas and sharks. Penguins have a small hook on the tip of their beaks and bristles on their tongues which help them grab on to slippery fish.

Did you know that most birds that fly have hollow bones? Hollow bones make birds lighter which helps them fly. Because penguins don't fly but swim instead, they don't need to be so light. In fact, their bones are solid like ours. This helps them to dive and swim below the surface. If their bones were filled with air, they would just float so it would be very difficult for them to go after fish.

Activity: Science Observation

Take a paper straw and then find a stick (or another solid object about the same size). Gently lay the straw and the stick in a tray or sink full of water. The stick is heavier because it is solid, and the straw is lighter because it is hollow (filled with air). Which one sinks, and which one floats?



Have you ever seen a penguin at the zoo or an aquarium? There are 17 different kinds of penguins in the world, and most all of them are black and white with yellow or orange beaks. Some have yellow and red coloring on their heads and chests, and others have orangey-yellow feathers on their heads that stick up like hair. Macaroni and Rockhopper penguins have what looks like "crazy hair."



All penguins are oval-shaped. This helps their bodies glide smoothly and quickly through the water. They can swim up to 25 miles per hour, which is about how fast your car may drive through your neighborhood. Their wings look like flippers and are designed to help them swim. Their feet are large with sharp claws to help them walk many miles on the ice without slipping. Penguins have white bellies and black backs. This coloration is great for camouflage. When penguins are swimming, they need to be camouflaged from their predators like seals or whales. If a hungry seal is swimming underneath a penguin, the seal would be looking up at the penguin's white belly. This white belly would blend in with the white surface of the water where there is lots of light. If the seal is swimming above the penguin, the penguin's black back would blend in with the bottom of the ocean where it is dark. So, if you're a hungry leopard seal looking for dinner, the penguin would be hard to spot.

How do penguins stay warm? Like polar bears, seals and whales, they have a layer of fat, called **blubber**, under their skin that keeps them toasty. They are also covered with special fluffy down feathers. On top are large feathers that overlap to keep them extra warm. Penguins have a small gland on their backside that holds oil. They use their beaks to collect this oil and rub it all over their feathers. This keeps the feathers clean and dry. You'll see penguins "**preening**"



much of the time —busy keeping their feathers in tip top shape.

Let's hear it for teamwork! Penguins work together to stay warm and safe. It can be REALLY cold in the southern oceans and especially in Antarctica. Penguins will huddle together in large groups to keep each other warm. They stand close together in a tight bunch, so the heat from their bodies is shared. Penguins will rotate, or move, to different parts of the huddle so that every penguin gets the chance to be on the inside of the huddle, where it's warmest.



Penguins are strong animals. They can jump out of the water as high as 6 feet in the air (the size of a tall man) in order to get on land.

It's hard to climb up on ice floes that may be really slippery, so it's easier for penguins to hop up onto the land. They land with a bellyflop on the ice or rocks. Not very elegant, but hey, it works!

Their smooth bodies not only help them swim faster, but they also allow them to slide on their bellies on the ice. Penguins cannot really run, so they slide on the ice and use their flipper-like wings to push themselves forward. It's a great way for them to get to where they want to go without having to waddle all the time! Try waddling like a penguin for a bit: Put your weight on one leg and take a little step with the other. Now put your weight on the other leg and take a teeny step. You probably can't do this very fast.

Penguins lay eggs, as all birds do. Let's hear it again for teamwork! The mother and father penguin take turns keeping their eggs warm. While one parent is out fishing, the other parent sits on the eggs. Because penguins live in huge groups with other penguins and they all look very much alike, each penguin has its own song or "voice." Parents can find each other among thousands of other penguins that look just like them just by recognizing each other's voices. Chicks will also learn to sing when they hatch so that mom or dad can find them in a crowd. Do you think you could recognize your mom or dad's voice in a crowd? Try to come up with your own special sound and ask your parents and sisters and brothers to do so, too. Try to call each other using your own sound. Can you tell who is calling?

Penguins are not only super cute, they are also amazing animals who have adapted to life in the water and on ice and snow.

Activity: Craft

Macaroni Penguin



Materials:

Toilet paper roll

Black paint

Paint brush

Construction Paper scraps: black, white, orange (or yellow would work too)

Scissors

Aleene's Tacky Glue

Glue stick

Small googly eyes

Procedure:

Paint the outside of the paper roll black along with the inside of the top rim.

While roll is drying, cut out the parts for the penguin (a great shape identification activity):

2 long black ovals that come to points for the wings

1 white belly for the penguin (an upside down long U shape about half of the length of the roll)

1 orange diamond shape for the beak

2 orange feet (Make the tops a little long, so you can glue them to the inside of the bottom of the roll)

1 long orange rectangle wide enough to fit inside the circumference of the TP roll

Glue the wings on either side of the body, letting them flap out a little

Glue on the white belly so the straight side is in line with the very bottom of the roll

Glue on the googly eyes

Glue on the bottom half of the orange diamond shape so the top half folds over like an open beak

Glue feet inside the bottom rim of the roll so the toes stick out below

Glue the rectangle inside and around the top of the roll, allowing most of the rectangle to stick out from the top. When everything is dry, snip the rectangular paper into strips to make feather plumes (which look like crazy "hair")

Make a whole waddle of penguins!

Activity: Waddle and Move Like a Penguin

I'm a Little Penguin

(Tune: I'm a Little Teapot)

I'm a little penguin,
two feet high.
I am a bird,
but I cannot fly.
Look how I swim
out in the sea:
I am super-fast,
as fast can be!

I'm a little penguin,
black and white:
Short and wobbly,
such a cute sight.
I can't fly at all,
but I LOVE to swim.
So I'll waddle to the water
And dive right in!

(adapted from kidssoup.com)



Penguins Having Fun

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)

Penguins, penguins having fun,
waddling in the winter sun.
Waddling fast and waddling slow,
waddling to and waddling fro.
Penguins, penguins having fun,
waddling in the winter sun.

(adapted from kidssoup.com)

Waddle Like a Penguin

Three little penguins dressed in white and black.
Waddle, waddle forward and waddle, waddle back!
Three little penguins in a funny pose.
Look, they're wearing their fancy clothes!
Their suits are black, and their vests are white.
They waddle to the left and they waddle to the right.
They stand on the ice and they look very neat
as they waddle along the ice on their little flat feet.

(adapted from kidssoup.com)

Literacy: POEM TO SHARE

Penguin Penpals

by Constance Del Nero

If I were a penguin
I'd look for a penpal,
perhaps another bird.

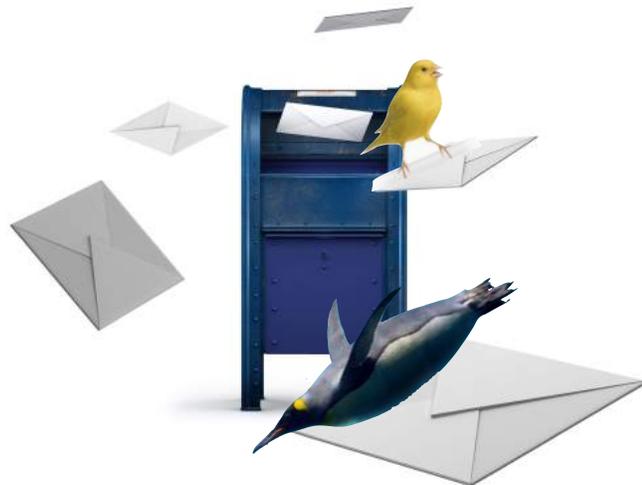
When you want to show off,
you open your beak
and out comes the prettiest song.

I'd write to that bird,
perhaps a canary,
and ask, "Hey, have you heard?"

When I want to show off,
I dive in the water
and swim away fast and strong.

We're both birds, you know;
we both lay eggs
and have splendid feathers to boot.

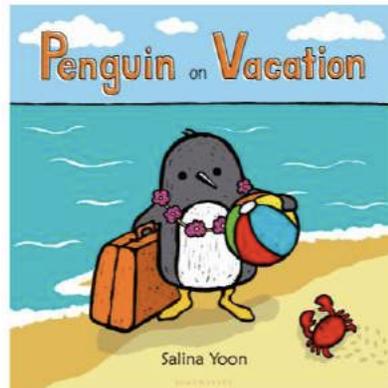
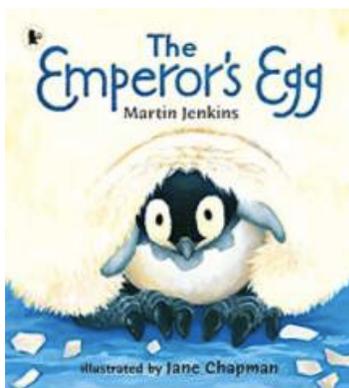
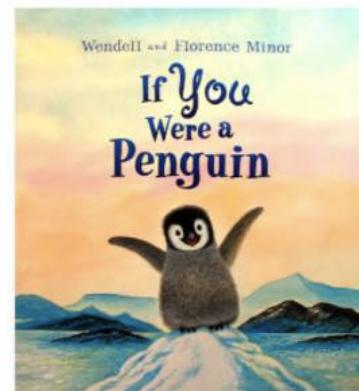
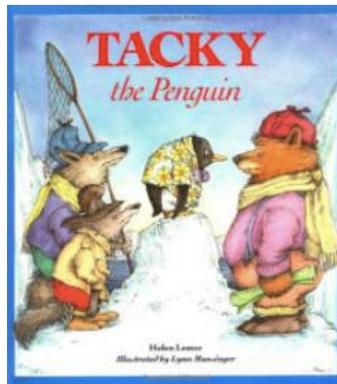
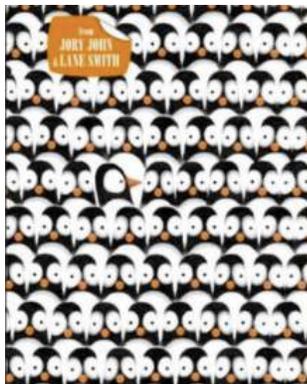
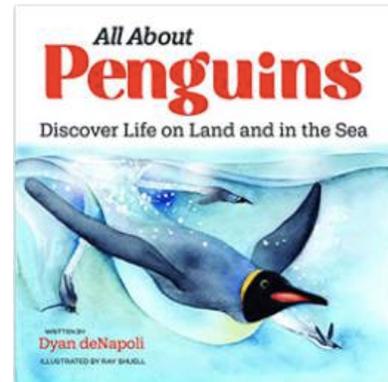
Yours are bright yellow
and mine, you see,
make me look
like I'm wearing a suit.



Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together

- All About Penguins** by Dyan deNapoli
- Penguin Problems** by Jory John
- Tacky the Penguin** by Helen Lester
- If You Were a Penguin** by Florence Minor
- The Emperor's Egg** by Martin Jenkins
- Penguin on Vacation** by Salina Yoon



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See you next week with issue 17 of **Minis at Home!**

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

or email pictures to Ann Hansen
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