Pondering Penguins Activity Pack

12 cross-curricular activities including:
  Fine Arts: music, visual art, drama, dance
  Language Arts
  Social Studies
  Math
  Science
  Technology

Printable student pages

Song lyrics

Vocal Score

This song is also included in the following resources:

  Computer Cat CD – Donna & Andy
  Pondering Penguins single-song print music download (vocal score and accompaniment)
  Computer Cat Song collection – printed or e-book
    12 songs, vocal pages, accompaniments
  Computer Cat Teacher’s Resource – printed or e-book
    All items in the song collection PLUS activities for each song,
    music teaching strategies, composer anecdotes and more!

Copyright © 2020 Donna Rhodenizer/Red Castle Publishing
www.redcastlepublishing.com
Activity #1  (Fine Arts: Music)

Introduce the song

Listen to the performance track for Pondering Penguins.
As you listen, keep a gentle, steady beat on your knees with your fingers.

What is the style of the song? It sounds like music for a barn dance.
Do penguins know how to dance? not usually!

Listen to the whole song again.

Can you list some of the facts about penguins that are in the song?
There are at least seven things that are either stated or hinted at in the song:
- Penguins waddle
- He wears a dinner jacket (hinting at his black and white colouring)
- He cannot sing
- He cannot fly
- He loves the icy ocean (this penguin must live where it is cold — although some penguins do not)
- He has feathers that keep him warm
- He juggles an egg on his feet

Follow the words using the lyrics sheet or vocal score.

What is the penguin in the picture doing with his egg? He is “juggling” it on his feet.

Listen to the instrumental accompaniment track as the students leave the classroom.
Try waddling like a penguin to this dance tune!

Preparation / supplies:  Lyrics sheet
Performance track
Instrumental accompaniment track
Vocal score

Activity #2  (Fine Arts: Music)

Directed listening

Listen to the performance track for the answers to the following questions.

How does a penguin move? He waddles to and fro.
What does the song say he wears when he goes to play out in the snow? a dinner jacket (a suit jacket worn when dining at formal occasions)
Does he really wear a dinner jacket? No, but he looks like he is wearing a white shirt and a black jacket because of the colour of his feathers
What are two things mentioned in the song that birds usually can do, but penguins cannot do? sing, fly
What is one thing that penguins love to do that many birds do not do? swim
How does the penguin stay warm? His feathers are specialized and act as insulation that keeps the warm air trapped near his body, plus he has a layer of fat that helps keep him warm.
What instruments do you hear in the song? fiddle, banjo, piano, acoustic guitar and vocal bass

Preparation / supplies:  Performance track
Activity #3  (Social Studies, Language Arts)

Eggs anyone?

Discuss how you would feel if you were the father penguin and had to hold an egg on your feet for two months.

Pretend to be a human “penguin-egg caretaker” for a day.

Create an egg you will care for and keep safe.

You won’t hold your “egg” on your feet, but you must figure out how to keep it safe.

Take it with you wherever you go.

What will you do if you want to eat lunch?

How will you keep your egg safe while you are in Phys Ed. class?

Will you have to carry it in a special way to keep it safe when going home from school?

Where will you put your egg while you are asleep?

Preparation / supplies:  An “egg” to care for

Activity #4  (Physical Activity, Fine Arts: Dance)

Learn a line dance

Several people stand in a line.

Keep your arms by your sides bending at the wrist to create short penguin wings.

Keep your legs and feet together.

During the first verse when there are words for the song, waddle (sway) side to side while staying in your spot.

When the instrumental part begins, do the following actions:

Touch your right heel on the floor in front of you (beside the toe of the other foot) and then put your foot back.

Do the same with your left foot.

Repeat, alternating right and left heels, a total of two times per foot.

Move your “wings” 3 times. Keep your arms by your sides and just flip your hands out to the sides.

Turn to the right 90° by jumping.

Repeat: heel, heel, heel, heel, wings, wings, wings, jump.

Once you have done this sequence four times, you should be facing the same direction in which you started.

The words are added to the song again.

You may return to waddling side to side as you stay in your spot, or you may continue the line dance to the end of the song.

At the end take a big penguin bow.

Create a line dance of your own.

Preparation / supplies:  Performance track
Activity #5  (Fine Arts: Drama)
Create a penguin costume

Create a simple penguin costume for all your penguin songs and performances.
Dress entirely in black.
Cut the corners of an 8 ⅝ x 14 sheet of white paper to create rounded corner edges.
Pin the white paper to the front of your shirt.
You are ready to penguin line dance, sing a penguin song, recite a penguin poem, or just waddle wherever you wish to go.

Preparation / Supplies:  White 8 ⅝ x 14 paper (legal size)
Pins
Black clothes

Activity #6  (Fine Arts: Visual Art)
Be an artist

Draw a picture of a penguin doing some of the things mentioned in the song.
Find some pictures of penguins in their colonies, or doing the things that penguins do.
Make a collage of the pictures or use them as a guide to draw your own pictures.

Preparation / supplies:  Art supplies (glue, paper, etc.)
Pictures to cut out for a collage
Scissors

Activity #7  (Language Arts, Fine Arts: Visual Art, Technology)
Be an author/illustrator

Create a book of penguin facts.
Write one fact on each page.
Draw a picture to go along with that fact.
Create a book with a partner.
Share the writing and illustrating responsibilities.
Create a class book about penguins.
Present a different fact on each page of the book.
Use the computer to print the text for each page.
Have students create the illustrations.
Put the books on display in your classroom.
Lend your books to the school library for a month.
Read your book to someone in your family.

Preparation / supplies:  Access to library or Internet
Art supplies
Writing supplies
Computer and printer
Activity #8 (Language Arts, Social Studies, Fine Arts: Music)
Be a book buddy

Share your books (from Activity #7) with students in another class.
Invite them to your class and read to them.
Show them your art work (from Activity #6 and/or Activity #7)
Tell them about making the book.
Tell them what you have learned about penguins.
Play the instrumental accompaniment track for background music as you read and share.

Preparation / supplies:  Art created in Activity #6
Books created in Activity #7
Instrumental accompaniment track
Invited book buddies

Activity #9 (Fine Arts: Music, Language Arts)
Be a composer

Create your own verses to the penguin song telling some of the facts that you have learned and that you find most interesting.
Write a letter to the composer and send her your new lyrics. (Donna loves getting mail!)  Contact information for Donna Rhodenizer:  www.redcastlepublishing.com

Preparation / supplies:  Paper and pencil
Letter writing supplies

Activity #10 (Fine Arts: Music)
Read some music

Listen to the performance track of Pondering Penguins.
Create a copy of the vocal score that can be seen by the class as a whole (e.g. smart board, Elmo projector, etc).
Follow the notes with a pointer as you listen to the music.
  Have a student “be the teacher” and point to the notes as the song is played.
On another day, have the students follow individual copies of the music using their finger to keep track of where they are. Students may do this individually or with a partner.
Have the students sing or read along silently (inside their heads) as they point to the notes.
Stop the track.
Ask who knows where the song was when the music stopped.
  (e.g. the first line of the verse, or bar 14 or whatever the teacher has established that the students should use to identify the stopping place)

Preparation / supplies:  Vocal score for whole-class viewing
Individual vocal scores
Performance track
Activity #11  (Fine Arts: Drama, Language Arts, Technology)
Create a penguin rookery

Use the library or Internet to collect additional penguin facts.
Listen to other songs about penguins.
Create a play about being a penguin living in a penguin rookery.
(A rookery is a colony of penguins.)
Write a script for a narrator (or several narrators) to read as you present your play.
How will you waddle around with an egg on your feet?
What will you do with your egg if you want to go swimming?
What will you do if a seal or other predator shows up when you are swimming?
Will you be able to stay warm by huddling together with your penguin friends?
It will be exciting when all those penguin eggs hatch and the baby penguins arrive!
Present your play or skit for another class in your school, or to friends and relatives at home.

Preparation / supplies:  Performance track
Other Donna Rhodenizer penguin songs:
  Penguin Parade
  The Penguin Ball
  I Wonder
Access to library or Internet

Activity #12  (Math)
Penguins + penguins = MORE penguins

Write simple addition and subtraction equations on a sheet of paper.
Give each student a copy of the math equations.
Copy the student worksheet of penguin images.
Have the students cut out the penguins.
Have the students glue the penguins on a sheet of paper to create a visual representation of each equation.

Preparation / supplies:  Sheet of simple math equations for each student
  Student worksheet “More Penguins!”
  Blank sheet of paper
  Scissors and glue
**BONUS Activity** (Language Arts, Fine Arts: Music)

**Penguin Crossword Puzzle Challenge**

All the penguins have been invited to attend the “penguin ball”. They have joined together in a kind of “square” dance, except the squares are all part of a puzzle.

It is a crossword puzzle.

This puzzle uses words from all four of Donna Rhodenizer’s penguin songs.

**Preparation / supplies:** View/print/download the Penguin Crossword Puzzle Challenge

(“Top of the Class”/Computer Cat membership page bonus section)

---

**Composer’s Anecdote – Pondering Penguins**

“Pondering Penguins” is one of four songs I wrote for some of my grade two students who were learning about penguins. The children told me everything they knew about penguins. They told me that penguins cannot sing (they make a funny sound), they cannot fly, they like to swim, and they have special feathers to keep out the cold. My favourite fact is that after the mother penguin lays her egg, the father penguin holds the egg on his feet for two months to keep it warm while the mother goes and eats! I think this is an equitable division of labour.
Pondering Penguins

The penguin is a funny bird who waddles to and fro. He wears a dinner jacket to play out in the snow. He cannot sing, he cannot fly, it's really quite absurd. To think our friend the penguin is even called a bird. He loves the icy ocean, he loves to dive and swim. How can he stand the temperature? His feathers keep warm in!

He’s very good at juggling an egg upon his feet. I think an expedition would be great so we could meet!

Words and music by Donna Rhodenizer
© Copyright 1996, 2020 Donna Rhodenizer / Red Castle Publishing
ISMN 979-0-53009-0-009-1
Original publication: Computer Cat song collection © RCP

Performance and accompaniment tracks available in digital or CD format
Print music available as single song download or included in Song Collection
www.redcastlepublishing.com

Original Artwork by Daniel Taylor (age 7)
Pondering Penguins

Words and music by Donna Rhodenizer

The penguin is a funny bird who waddles to and fro. He wears a dinner jacket to play out in the snow. He cannot sing, he cannot fly, it's really quite absurd to think our friend the penguin is even called a bird. He loves the icy ocean, he loves to dive and swim. How can he stand the temperature? His feathers keep warm in! He's very good at juggling an egg upon his feet. I think an expedition would be great so we could meet!

Fine 15 D.S. al Fine

Copyright © 1996, 2020 Donna Rhodenizer / Red Castle Publishing
Original publication: Computer Cat Song Collection © RCP
www.redcastlepublishing.com
ISMN 979-0-53009-009-1