

If You Were a Penguin
By Wendell and Florence Minor

Interactive Read Aloud

A note to story readers: The following includes recommended ways to make If You Were a Penguin an interactive read aloud. There are many suggestions listed, so you can pick and choose what works best for the children.

Pennsylvania Academic Standards:

Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening:

- 1.1 A Develop book/print knowledge and conventions
- 1.1 B Develop sentence awareness/word awareness
- 1.1 K Name and describe new concepts
- 1.1 M Listen to new vocabulary in multiple contexts in order to understand new words and concepts
- 1.1 N Discuss unknown words and word meanings
- 1.1 P Demonstrate an increasing understanding of new vocabulary introduced in conversations, activities, stories or books
- 1.2 A Determine important ideas and messages in informational texts
- 1.3 A Understand and respond to a variety of literary selections that are read, listened to or viewed

Before Reading:

Introducing the Text: Explain the purpose for reading the story
Example: “I have a very special story to share with you today; it is my FAVORITE this week. The title is *If You Were a Penguin* by Wendell and Florence Minor. Right now, I would like you to bring your eyes to the cover of this book. What are you *wondering* about the story when you look at the front cover?”

- Prompts: I wonder why it’s called, *If You Were a Penguin*.
I wonder where penguins live.
I wonder how you might be similar to a penguin.
I wonder how you might be different from a penguin.

Introducing the Genre:

“The book that I am sharing with you today is an informational book. As a successful reader, I know that this type of book has true facts and information about a topic. While we are reading you may notice some things that you know are true. You may also learn something that you did

not know before. What is something you would like to learn from this book?"

- Examples: I would like to learn how penguins are born.
I would like to learn what penguins eat.
I would like to learn some things I would do if I was a penguin.

Introducing the Author/Illustrator:

"As successful readers, we should always notice the authors and illustrators of the books we read. Florence Minor is the author of this book; she wrote the words. Wendell Minor is the illustrator; he created the pictures."

Getting Started:

"All of the things we are wondering help us to get really excited about reading this book. Let's dive into this story together and find out what is inside."

During Reading:

As this is a short, rhyming book, read through the whole story once. Then go back and reread it, this time with a focus on open-ended questions and vocabulary.

Page 7:

- Is the penguin really flying underwater? What do you think the penguin is doing?
- Why do you think the author said the penguin is flying when we know that penguins can't fly?
- How do you think penguins can swim so fast?

Page 9:

- What kind of songs do you sing?
- How might a penguin's song be different from yours?
- What does it mean to sing a *duet*?
- Who have you sung a duet with before?

Page 11:

- Can you think of any other animals that live on land and also in the water?
- Why do you think penguins spend so much time in the water?

Page 13:

- What is a *tuxedo*?
- Sometimes people say that a tuxedo is a "penguin suit." Why do you think people say penguins wear tuxedos?

- Do all penguins look exactly the same?

Page 15:

- If you were a penguin, where would you like to live?
- Do you think wild penguins would like to live in Pittsburgh? Why or why not?

Page 16:

- Why do you think those penguins dug holes / what are they for?
- Do all penguins dig holes?

Page 19:

- Why do you think those penguins are all bunched up together like that?
- Do you think penguins that live in warm areas stay as close together?

Page 21:

- Why do you think that penguin is called “Chinstrap?” (pictured on page 20)
- What are some other funny names you can think of?
- If you had a pet penguin, or a different type of pet, what would you name it? Why?

Page 22:

- Why did the author say the penguin is tobogganing?
- Have you ever gone sledding down a hill? What was it like/how did it make you feel?

Page 26:

- What are the mom and baby penguins doing?
- Why does the baby eat like that? How come the babies do not catch their own food?
- What is *squid*? Is that something that people also eat? (talk about calamari)
- Have you ever eaten fish or other seafood? Did you like it?
- Do penguins eat the same way we do?

Page 29:

- What do you think the surprise could be?

Page 30:

- What are those penguins doing?
- Is that something that you do?

- Why/when might you give someone a hug?
- Who do you like to hug?

Vocabulary:

“Listen very carefully as I read this sentence again and try to pick out one of my special words for today. Think about what these words mean in the story. Can you think of other meanings for these same words?”

Duet: a song meant for two voices

Tuxedo: A man’s suit for formal events including jacket, dark trousers, often with silk stripes down the sides, a bow tie, and usually a cummerbund

Toboggan: to fall rapidly

After Reading:

Retell Activities:

“Let’s think back to the special story that we shared together.”

1. What are penguins?
2. What are some things that penguins like to eat?
3. What do penguins look like?
4. What was something new that you learned from the story?”
5. Have you ever seen a penguin? Where/When?

Make Text-Text Connections:

1. “If you like this story that we shared together you may really like _____, or these informational books _____.”
 - a. *The Emperor Lays an Egg* by Brenda Z. Guiberson
 - b. *Growing Up Wild: Penguins* by Sandra Markle
 - c. *Penguin* by Polly Dunbar
2. Does this book remind you of any other book we have read together or that you have read on your own?

Use the Book Resources

The penguin species list and “Fun Facts” page are wonderful aspects of this informational book. Answer the children’s questions about penguins by exploring these pages together.

You may also wish to have a connecting activity to further enhance the literacy experience you just enjoyed with the children. Refer to the activity guide for suggestions.

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