

## These notes are for:

- Kindergarten / Preschool
- Primary
- 3+yrs old

## Key Learning Areas:

- English
- HSIE / SOSE
- Art

## Example of:

- Picture Book
- Repetition
- Fiction

## Experience of:

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening & Speaking
- Viewing

## Themes:

- Zoo
- Animals
- Truth / Honesty
- Environment
- Habitats
- Humour
- Facts
- Roles in society

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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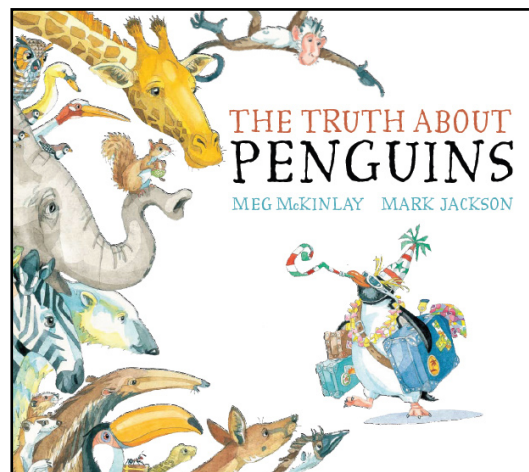
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## The Truth About Penguins - Overview

### The Truth About Penguins

By: Meg McKinlay  
 Illus by: Mark Jackson  
 ISBN: 9781921150487  
 ARRP: \$27.95  
 NZRRP: \$29.99  
 No. of Pages: 32  
 July 2010



## Outline:

A zany romp that demonstrates the fine line between fact and fiction in the animal world.

The penguins are coming and there is great excitement at the zoo. But what's a penguin? The animals don't quite know what to expect – but they all have an opinion, each more outlandish than the last. When the truth about penguins is finally revealed, everyone is in for a surprise!

An hilarious, laugh-out-loud tale of exaggeration and hyperbole that kids will really love. Students will also enjoy naming the animals and identifying the Australian and New Zealand animals included in the story.

The debut picture book from Meg McKinlay with detailed illustrations by Mark Jackson will have children searching each page for added fun.

## Author / Illustrator Information:

**Meg McKinlay** grew up in Bendigo, Victoria, in a book-loving, TV and car-free household. A poet as well as a children's writer, Meg developed an affinity with the Japanese language after going on an exchange year in high school, and went on to complete a PhD in Japanese Literature. Along the way, she has worked in a variety of jobs including swim instructor, tour guide, translator and teacher. These days she lives with her family near the ocean in Fremantle, Western Australia, and is an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Western Australia where she has taught Australian Literature, Japanese and Creative Writing. Meg divides her time between teaching and writing, a balance that swings wildly between chaos and calm. She is the author of *Annabel, again*, *Duck for a Day* and the Lightning Strikes titles *Going for Broke* and *The Big Dig* published by Walker Books.

**Mark Jackson** is an illustrator based in Melbourne. He has co-illustrated several books with his wife, Heather Potter, and their work has been featured in several exhibitions. For more information and samples of their artwork,

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

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**Classroom Ideas for *The Truth About Penguins*:*****Before Reading***

- Prior to listening to a reading of *The Truth About Penguins*, examine the cover, title and back cover blurb. What do you think the book is about and why?
- Have a discussion about what the word 'truth' means and the importance of telling the truth.
- Ask students to identify who the author and illustrator are.
- Have students look at a selection of picture books from the library. Identify who the illustrators are. How many different styles of illustration can the students identify? How do they differ? What type of illustrations do they prefer?

***After Reading***

- Ask students to discuss in groups what they know about the animals in this book. With older students, ask them to research one of these animals and find out further information. They could present this as a PowerPoint presentation.
- Do you think penguins really like pizza? What is your favourite food? Would you eat a pizza with olives and pepperoni? Ask students to list the foods they like and dislike. Compare results in the class. What is the most unpopular / popular food?
- Create your own zoo in the classroom. Ask students, in groups, to make a list of the different animals they would have in their own zoo. Then on a large piece of A3 card, draw each animal. What animals should be near each other, what animals shouldn't be?
- Create a book display of books about the zoo.
- As a class visit a zoo website and look at what zoos do. What do students think is the most important role of a zoo?
- Create a memory game using animals from the book. Draw each of the following animals on a card, one animal per card. Write the name of the animal on the back of the card: penguin, giraffe, meerkat, otter, squirrel. Have students put the cards in order of the story, first using the picture side and then using the written word side.
- Ask students to pretend to be some of the animals that are in this book. How would these animals move? Would they wriggle, squirm, jump, hop, fly? Ask students to move around like each animal.
- Discuss the role of zookeepers in the community. What are their roles and responsibilities? What do they do? Why do we need them? What special equipment do they need? What situations do they sometimes find themselves in?
- Is this a real or imagined story? What would you expect in a non-fiction book about penguins?
- Ask students to draw their own picture of a penguin in its natural habitat.

**READ ALONG READER QUESTIONS:** Use the following questions to engage students as you read aloud the text.

**Spread 1 (the opening double page of the story)**

- Ask students to identify where the penguin exhibit is. How do we know this is their place in the zoo? What does this tell us about penguins? What clues are we given to find the penguin exhibit?
- Ask students to vocalise these different words: buzz, roar, twitter. What type of animals would buzz, roar and twitter?

**Spread 2**

- Ask students what they think a penguin is. How would they describe a penguin?
- Where in the world are most penguins found? Discuss what other animals you might expect to find there?

**Spread 3**

- Ask students what they think this exhibit is for? Which two animals do not belong there?
- Ask students to repeat the information that we are given on this spread. What are the characteristics of a bird?

**Spread 4**

- What sort of animal is telling us about penguins on this page? How many of these animals are there? What other animals can students identify?
- Ask students, 'Why would some birds fly south for the winter?'

**Spread 5**

- What type of animals are on this page? Which animal is telling us about penguins?
- Ask students to repeat the information that we are given on this spread. Do they think this is true? Should you believe everything you read in a book?

**Spread 6**

- As a class, how many ants can you count on this page? What sort of animal is eating the ants?
- Do you think penguins really eat pizza? Ask students what they think penguins would prefer to eat. Create a list of these foods.

**Spread 7**

- Ask students to find the two iconic Australian animals on this page. What are they?
- Ask students to repeat the information we are given on this page. Do they think that penguins can't swim? What features do penguins have that would help them swim?

**Spread 8**

- This page tells us that penguins love to wear "cool bathers". All the bathers on this page have different patterns. What other types of patterns can students think of? Ask students to draw different patterns in class.
- Ask students what their favourite clothes to wear are. Do they like spots and stripes? Or, clothes of particular colours?

**Spread 9**

- What does the elephant tell us on this page? What type of parent should an elephant have? What is the name for a baby elephant?
- The elephant describes penguin babies as cute. Ask students to think of and verbalise other words to describe babies.

**Spread 10**

- Do penguins really enjoy dancing? Have everybody do a penguin party dance. How do you think penguins would dance?
- Why is the word "stop" written in capitals and so large on this page? Discuss which words you might write small and which words you might write big.

**Spread 11**

- Read all the facts about penguins on this page. Afterwards ask students how many facts they can remember.

**Spread 12**

- What is the twist on this page? Ask students whether they believe the last illustration or not? Ask for a show of hands.