Fantastic Penguins

by Giselle Clarkson

The Learning Progression Frameworks describe significant signposts in reading and writing as students develop and apply their literacy knowledge and skills with increasing expertise from school entry to the end of year 10.

Overview

This TSM contains information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The material provides multiple opportunities for revisiting the text.

This visual text straddles the line between personal essay and non-fiction article. The writer uses words and cartoon-style images to provide information about penguins, a topic of great interest to many young people. The information is conveyed in the same distinctive and lively way the writer used in an earlier text about the Subantarctic Islands (see "Texts related by theme" below). It is an appealing approach that makes it easier for the reader to engage with the technical information. It provides scope for a range of reading approaches and will reward repeated reading.

This essay:

- includes humorous illustrations, using a comic-strip approach
- has factual information presented in a variety of ways, including a map, visual comparisons, speech bubbles, a table, running text, labelled illustrations, and fact boxes
- has a strong personal tone and includes the writer's own opinions, which invite a response from the reader
- uses comparisons, including similes, to support understanding of new information.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme   "The Subantarctic Islands" SJ L3 Aug 2017 | "The Emperor of Peka Peka Beach" SJ L4 Oct 2012 | "Hoiho" JJ 43 | "An Ecologist on Ice" Connected L4 2013

Text characteristics   Opportunities for strengthening students' reading behaviours

abstract ideas, in greater numbers than in texts at earlier levels, accompanied by concrete examples in the text, requiring students to make links across the text and draw conclusions to gain understanding

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly, requiring students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text

a significant amount of vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the students (including academic and content-specific words and phrases), which is generally explained in the text by words or illustrations, requiring students to make links across the text, integrate information, and use prior knowledge to gain understanding

illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs that clarify or extend the text, requiring students to make connections across the text and combine information from various sources to gain understanding

Text and language challenges

Some of the suggestions for possible supporting strategies may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.

Go to The Learning Progression Frameworks – Reading: "Making sense of text: vocabulary knowledge" and "Making sense of text: using knowledge of text structure and features" to find detailed illustrations showing you how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects.

VOCABULARY

- Topic-specific words and phrases, including "Flippers", "gland", "kidney", "preen gland", "moult", "catastrophic moult", "Penguin bills", "DNA", "penguin colonies"
- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including "tropics", "fossilised", "barnacles", "Catastrophe", "Satellite", "monitor", "vagrant", "olearia", "predator-free sanctuaries", "marine reserves"
- Place names, including some that are in both English and te reo Māori, such as "southern hemisphere", "equator", "northern hemisphere", "Namibia", "Rakiura/Stewart Island", "Auckland Islands", "the Snares", "Fiordland", "Piopiotahi/ Milford Sound", "Antipodes Islands", "Bounty Islands"
- The two-part Latin names of penguins, such as *Megadyptes antipodes*
- The names of penguins, including some that are in both English and te reo Māori, such as "kumimanu", "kororā or little blue", "Magellanic penguins", "woolly penguin", "Galapagos penguins", "African penguins", "Crested penguins", "Hoiho/Yellow-eyed Penguin", "Snares Crested Penguin", "Tawaki/Fiordland Crested Penguin", "Eastern Rockhopper", "Erect Crested Penguin"
- Colloquial language, including "hanging about", "penguins arrived on the scene", "some species … came and went", "mingled with the whiff", "I find their stink strangely comforting", "It's freaky in there", "other kinds of penguins show up on our shores", "another cooling trick"
- Figurative language, including "scaling sea cliffs like mountaineers", "zipping across waves", "braying like donkeys", "a bit like a kidney", "like the difference between picking up peas with tweezers and picking them up with barbecue tongs", "look like bolts of lightning"

Possible supporting strategies

- Identify words or phrases that may be unfamiliar. Remind the students of strategies for working out unfamiliar vocabulary, such as looking at the context and thinking about the surrounding information, finding root words, using knowledge of word patterns and prefixes or suffixes, and making connections to prior knowledge.
- **DIGITAL TOOLS** The students could create word maps to capture key ideas about penguins, using an online mapping tool, such as Mindmup.
- Discuss what the writer says about the scientific names for penguin species. Have the students do some investigation into what the other Latin names for penguins might mean.
- Prompt the students to notice that the writer also provides explanations for the names "hoiho" and "tawaki" and gives both the English and te reo Māori names of some places. *Why do you think she does this? Do you agree that this is a good idea?*
- Challenge the students to make a drawing for each topic-specific word. To do this, they need to understand the meaning of each word. You can check students' understanding from what they draw and provide further support as necessary.
- Help English language learners to understand the meaning of the colloquial language. It's important for them to understand these words and phrases as it helps them to be more socially included. Also discuss when it is and isn't appropriate to use informal language.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also ESOL Online, Vocabulary, for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Familiarity with penguins
- Experience with reading mixed text types, including visual text
- Knowledge of the geographical position of the places where penguins live
- Some familiarity with the concept of species and how they are classified
- Some understanding of the impact of humans on wildlife
- Some familiarity with measurements, including "60 million years ago", "over 160 centimetres tall", "40 centimetres shorter", "minus 40 degrees Celsius", "2 metres off the ground", "up to 7,000 kilometres"

Possible supporting strategies

- Prompt the students to share their knowledge and any prior experiences of penguins.
- Use a map of the world to find the location of each of the places mentioned.
- **DIGITAL TOOLS** Use Google maps to see relative distances and photos. Zoom in to see the environment. Check that the students understand the difference between the southern and northern hemispheres and that the two are split by the equator.
- Prompt the students to share what they know about how animals (including humans) are classified. Clarify this by sketching out the penguin "family tree": class, order, and family. (See More about Penguins for more about penguin classification.)
- Discuss the purpose of the measurements. Have a tape measure, globe, and thermometer to help the students visualise the measurements.
- Some English language learners may not understand how the additional words in the noun group modify the meaning of the measurement, for example, "over 160 centimetres tall", "up to 7,000 kilometres". Check their understanding of these terms and, if necessary, draw diagrams to illustrate each one. You could also provide similar examples and ask the students to draw their own representations of these.

Text and language challenges CONTINUED

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- Non-fiction text using a mix of visual and written formats
- The use of illustrated characters and speech bubbles to add information and comment
- A number of sections with illustrated headings
- Explanations of natural phenomena, including predation, moulting, and adaptations to the environment
- Generalised information about penguins, moving to specific information about particular species
- References to threats posed by humans and a challenge to readers: "the better we can fight for their survival"
- The conversational tone and direct address to the reader: "I bet you'd never guess that a penguin had a neck this long!"
- The inclusion of personal anecdotes and opinions
- The use of time, causal, and additive connectives and the simple present tense
- The use of humour
- A double-page spread featuring a diagram of a penguin, with labels

Possible supporting strategies

- Invite the students to use the headings and visual clues to make predictions about the kinds of information they will find in this text. Focus on the various features and what their purpose might be (the headings, a diagram with labels, a speech bubble, and text boxes).
- Prompt the students to identify features that are typical of non-fiction text and others that make this text unusual. Make sure the students can identify the chatty, colloquial tone of the writing, which isn't usual in an informational text.
- During subsequent readings, highlight specific features, such as the conversational tone, the use of similes, and the captioned illustrations. Remind the students to use what they know from reading similar texts such as "The Subantarctic Islands" (*School Journal*, L3 Aug 2017) to support their understanding of how this text works.
- English language learners may need support to notice the types of text connectives and the tense used in written explanations. A vanishing cloze activity could be a fun way to take notice of these words. Select a short piece of text and write it on the whiteboard. As a group, read the text together chorally several times until the students are very familiar with it. Then erase one or two words. Begin by deleting some of the text connectives, prepositions, or verbs, which English language learners often find more difficult to notice. The students then choral-read the text again saying the missing words as they read. Keep erasing more words and rereading the text. Challenge the students to continue until all the words have been erased.

Sounds and Words

Possible curriculum contexts

The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum describe the literacy knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need to draw on to meet the demands of the curriculum.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Purpose and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Purpose and audiences. Show a developing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

SCIENCE

Level 3 – Ecology: Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.

Possible first reading purpose

- Find out about the variety of penguin species in New Zealand's waters.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- Compare facts and information about New Zealand's penguins
- Identify and evaluate the features, presentation, and organisation of this illustrated essay about New Zealand's penguins.

Possible writing purposes

- Write an illustrated essay on another New Zealand native species
- Write an article about another sea bird or animal in New Zealand's waters
- Explain and describe the special and unique characteristics of penguins.

The New Zealand Curriculum

Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

Go to The Learning Progression Frameworks – Reading: "Acquiring and using information and ideas in informational texts", "Reading to organise ideas and information for learning", and "Making sense of text: reading critically" to find detailed illustrations showing how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects.

First reading

- Share the purpose for reading.
- Remind the students of strategies that are particularly useful on a first reading, such as rereading to look for clues, asking questions, making connections with their prior knowledge, and/or reading on to see if the meaning becomes clearer.
- Have the students use a KWL chart to record what they think they already know about New Zealand's penguins (K) and what they want to find out (W). As they read and find answers to their questions, they record what they've learnt (L). When they finish reading, they evaluate their initial thoughts and record their findings as "What I now know". **DIGITAL TOOLS** 🖥️ The students could create their KWL chart as a Google Doc so that they can add to it and share it with others.
- Have the students work in pairs, reading one section at a time. Have them ask each other questions to find out how the information connects with things they already know and to see if they have any shared questions about the content.
- Record the students' questions for discussion in subsequent readings.

If the students require more scaffolding

- Discuss the fact that this is an unusual text, with lots of information presented in many different ways. Explain that the students will need to adjust their reading rate and be prepared to reread to clarify their understanding.
- Walk the students through the article and use a shared reading approach for the first reading. Point out the diagram on page 27 and have the students discuss any new information it provides. Prompt them to make connections between the information in the visual text and the information in the written text. *Do you agree that those features look like bolts of lightning? What clues do we get about the appearance of the other penguins from their names? Are our ideas justified when we look at the pictures?*
- As the students read, take note of sections, ideas, visual features, sentence structures, and vocabulary that are challenging for them so that you can focus on clarifying them in subsequent readings.

Subsequent readings

How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose. Where possible, have the students work in pairs to discuss the questions and prompts in this section.

The teacher

Use the KWL charts to review what the students have learnt about penguins. Discuss whether the students' predictions about the kinds of information they would find in different sections proved correct.

Focus on pages 30–31. Work with the students to construct a chart that summarises the key information about New Zealand's penguins. Prompt them to identify headings such as appearance, behaviour, and habitat that they could include. Have the students work in pairs to orally summarise the information in their charts. Remind them to include any relevant information from other parts of the article.

The students:

- reread the text to review their predictions and whether they were accurate
- consider what they learnt about penguins and what questions they still have
- identify and list the New Zealand penguins described in the essay
- use the headings to find and summarise key information
- identify the topics the writer covers in her descriptions
- integrate information from across the text to identify and summarise the key facts about New Zealand penguins.

The teacher

Provide copies of a more conventional *School Journal* or *Connected* article and use it to pull out the features of a typical non-fiction text. Create a Venn diagram with the students to compare those features with the features of this personal essay, for example:

- "Labelled diagrams" as an example of something they have in common
- "Colloquial language" as something that is different about this text
- "Often written in the third person" as a feature of typical non-fiction texts, while this text often uses the second person.

The students:

- analyse the features of this personal, illustrated essay and compare them with those of a more typical non-fiction article
- identify the purpose and likely audiences for these different approaches.

The teacher

Remind the students that good writers start by knowing their purpose for writing and the audience they are writing for. They then make decisions about content, language, and form, based on the purpose and audience. With that in mind, ask them to work with a partner to decide on:

- the writer's purpose and who she was writing for
- interesting choices the writer made and why she made them
- how the structure of the article affected them as a reader
- what the writer wanted them to think, feel, or do as a result of reading her essay and whether her approach worked
- the advice they would give to her if she was going to write another item for the *School Journal* on a similar topic.

The students:

- identify the writer's purpose and audience using evidence from the text
- think critically about the decisions the writer made and evaluate their effectiveness
- justify their opinions with examples
- think creatively about other approaches the writer could have used.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You asked some useful questions when you were reading this section with your partner. That's a great strategy for really connecting with the information in the text.*

METACOGNITION

- *We learn about different types of writing, such as narratives and recounts, but then writers play with those forms and mix them up. Do you prefer writing that sticks to a set form, or do you like it when they break the rules, like this writer did? What do you think a writer needs to be able to do for that to be successful?*

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

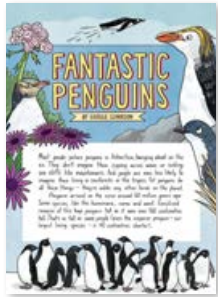# Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 3 – Purpose and audiences. Show a developing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

Science (Living World) Level 3 – Ecology: Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.

Go to The Learning Progression Frameworks – Writing: "Creating texts to communicate current knowledge and understanding", "Writing meaningful text: using knowledge of text structure and features", and "Using writing to think and organise for learning" to find detailed illustrations showing you how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects.

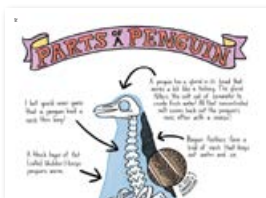| Text excerpts from "Fantastic Penguins"	Examples of text characteristics	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
Page 24	**AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE** *Writers always write for a purpose and with an audience in mind. Together, the audience and purpose determine the choices the writer makes about content, vocabulary, and style.*	Tell the students that they are going to write an illustrated essay on another New Zealand native creature. Once they have decided on their topic, ask questions to support the students to decide on their audience and purpose. • *Who will your audience be, and what do you know about them? What do you think they would like to know about your topic? How can you engage them in your writing?* • *Do you just want to tell your audience facts? Or do you have a message for them – is there something you want them to think, feel, or do about your topic?* Have the students jot down their notes and talk them over with their partner. (Google Docs allows easy editing.) They can use this process to work out their main messages or the key content they want to include.
Page 28 **Penguin Bills** Penguin bills – they're worth a closer look! Emperor penguins and king penguins have long, slender bills, …	**HEADINGS** *Writers of non-fiction use headings to foreground the content of each section. Skilful readers use the headings to predict what they will be reading, to navigate the text, and to decide whether it will help them meet their purpose for reading.*	Explain that writing descriptive headings is a great way to plan and structure writing. Have the students review their notes and use them to write some draft headings, using topic words or short sentences that cover their main points. They can then add and subtract headings and move them around until they follow a logical order. Have them talk through their headings with a partner. • *Do the headings flow? Is there an important point you need to add? Is there a big idea that can be broken up with another subheading?* When the students have written their headings, they can write paragraphs beneath them – or they may decide that there is a better way of presenting the information, such as drawing a picture.
Page 30 Eastern rockhoppers have the funkiest eyebrows in the penguin world. They're also fantastic climbers. They live on steep, bouldery subantarctic islands.	**DESCRIPTION** *Descriptive writing is an attempt to give a clear or creative description of people, places, objects, or events using appropriate language and informative details. Writers choose words and images to help the reader "see" what they are describing.*	Discuss the techniques the writer uses to give us a vivid picture of the eastern rockhopper penguin. • *Find places in your writing where you could support your reader to visualise something. Could a simile or metaphor help?* • *The writer includes personal anecdotes and colloquial language to connect with the reader. Is that something that might work for your writing?*
Page 26	**VISUAL INFORMATION** *Visual information, such as diagrams, maps, photographs, and pictures, can make the text more interesting or entertaining and can also help clarify and extend information that is hard to put into words.*	Ask the students to find places where visual images could be added to help the reader understand complex information or to add interest. They could draw their own images or find ones in magazines or online. They might use cartoons, photographs, diagrams, or maps, and add captions or speech bubbles. **GIVE FEEDBACK** • *Finding a photograph for your visual image was a good idea. I see you've given it a caption, so we know why it's there. Don't forget that when you use other people's work, you need to tell us the source.*

METACOGNITION
• *What were some techniques you borrowed from "Fantastic Penguins" to make your writing engaging for your reader? How well do you think they worked? Is there another technique that you would like to try?*

The Literacy Learning Progressions