

Tacky the Penguin

by Helen Lester

A wildly funny tale about an odd penguin who saves the day because of his individuality.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *This book is about a penguin named Tacky who marches to the beat of his own drum. What does it mean to "march to the beat of your own drum"?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder if those crazy-looking animals are going to use that net to catch that little penguin?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Tacky the Penguin*

- companions: somebody who accompanies or shares time with another
- odd: peculiar or out of the ordinary
- hearty: done in a cheerful and enthusiastic way
- graceful: move smoothly or with beauty
- switch: a thin flexible stick
- puzzled: confused
- dreadfully: in a very unpleasant way

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What are some of the things that make Tacky an odd bird?
- What do you think of how Tacky counts?
- Do you think a graceful dive or a splashy cannonball would be more fun? Why?
- Was Tacky afraid of the hunters?
- What all did the hunters bring with them to catch some pretty penguins?
- How did being different help Tacky scare off the hunters?
- What do you like about Tacky?

The Emperor Penguin and His Egg

The Emperor penguin is the largest penguin and weighs anywhere from 65-85 pounds. Baby penguins hatch out of eggs just like ducks. However, no nest is built for an Emperor penguin's egg when it is laid. Male Emperor penguins are in charge of keeping the egg warm and they do it by holding the egg on their feet and using their pouchy stomach to help keep the egg in place. In this activity, each student can volunteer to be an Emperor penguin with an egg to keep warm.

You will need a large egg-shaped object (a softball works great), a long, large pillow, and a belt or rope to hold the pillow up. First, take off your shoes (leave your socks on). Place the pillow on your stomach and the rope or belt to hold it up. Leave enough of the pillow hanging down so it touches the tops of your feet. Next, balance the softball on the top of your feet. Place the pillow on top of the egg and walk.

Discussion questions:

- Was it easy or hard to walk?
- Were you able to keep the egg from rolling off your feet?
- What did the pillow do to help the egg?
- What does the penguin have that is like the pillow?
- Why do you think penguins don't make nests to use for hatching their eggs?