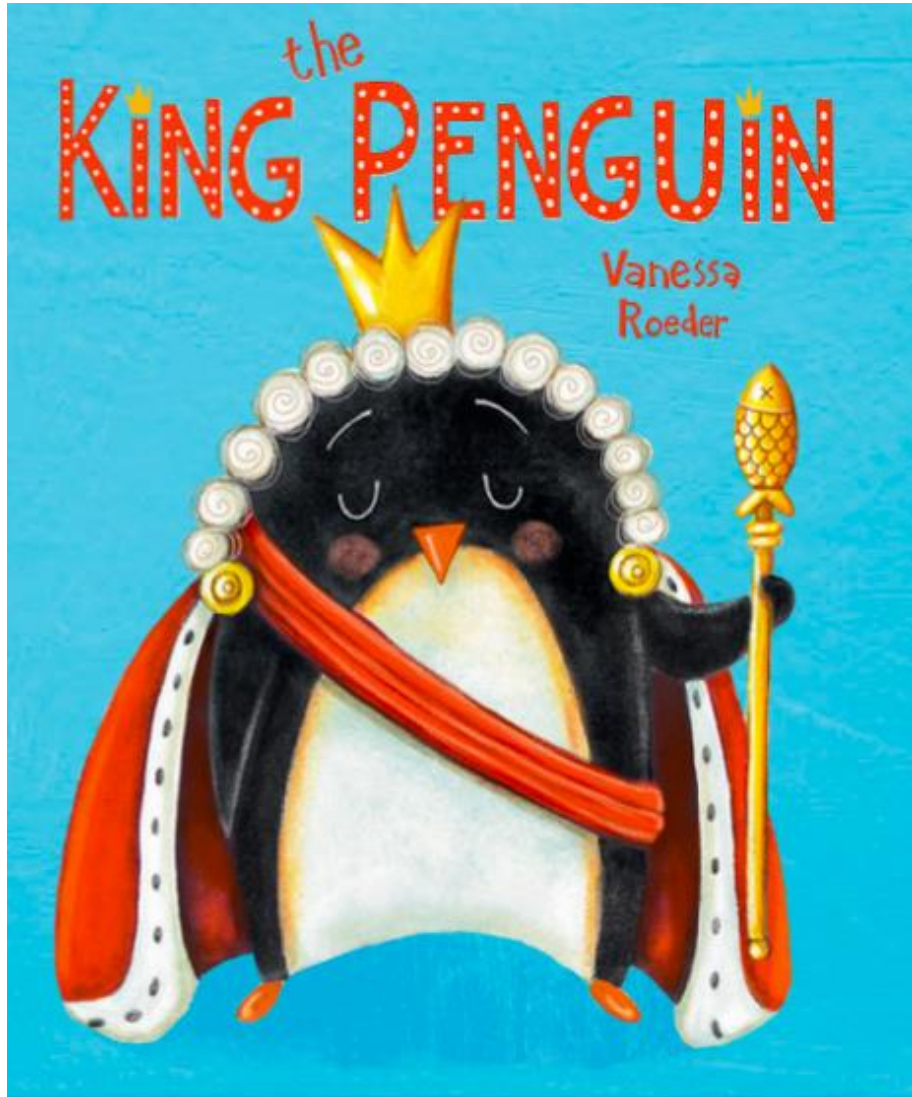


# The King Penguin

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen  
based upon the picture book  
written and illustrated by Vanessa Roeder



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Dial Books,  
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**Vanessa Roeder,  
Author and Illustrator, *The King Penguin***

Vanessa Roeder is the author and illustrator of *Lucy and the String* (Dial Books, 2018), *The Box Turtle* (Dial Books, 2020), a Spring 2020 Kid’s Indie Next List pick and Indie bestseller, *The Stack*,(Dial Books, 2022) which received a starred review from the School Library Journal, and her newest book, *The King Penguin* (Dial 2023), an NPR “Books We Love” pick. Vanessa lives in Austin, TX with her 3 kids, and two dogs. When she's not making messes in her studio, Vanessa loves eating cookie dough, pretending to be on Broadway, and talking to kids about the messes she makes in her studio to create books. Visit Vanessa at [vanessaroder.com](http://vanessaroder.com).



**Marcie Colleen  
Curriculum Writer**

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU. In addition to creating curriculum guides, Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

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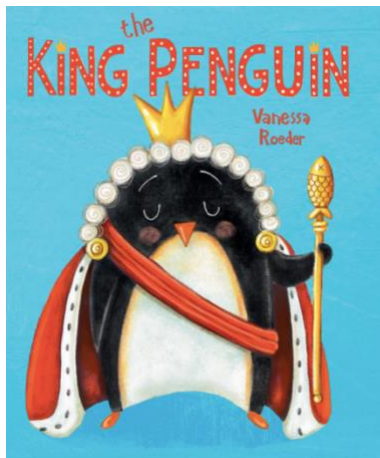
## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *The King Penguin* is designed for students in kindergarten through second grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *The King Penguin* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as teaching tools throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.

## Book Information



**The King Penguin**  
**Age Range: 3 – 8 years**

**Grade Level: Preschool – 2**  
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**King Penguin is off to find subjects who will listen to him—as long as they don't eat him first, in this cheeky tale by beloved author-illustrator Vanessa Roeder**

Percival the King Penguin doesn't think he's asking for too much when he makes all the rules—he is a king after all. But he's tired of the other penguins protesting, so he's off to find subjects who are more obedient and supportive.

But it won't be the seals.  
Or the whales.  
And definitely not the rude sardines.

As Percival gets chased away by every new group of potential subjects, he'll have to learn how to put his best flipper forward and live in a community, not a kingdom.

## NPR Best Book of the Year Selection

"Humorous alliterative asides, quick quips, and heavily anthropomorphized depictions of adorably squat penguins lift the mood of this whimsical tale that also has a sound message about the dangers of wielding power. A positively plucky look at government from a penguin's perspective." —Kirkus

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# English Language Arts

## Reading Comprehension

Before reading *The King Penguin*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: jacket, front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

- Look at the cover illustration. Describe what you see.
- How would you describe the penguin?
- How do you think the penguin feels? What makes you think that?
- Mimic what the penguin is doing. How does it make you feel?
- Look at the back cover. What three words would you use to describe the penguin here?
- Look at the copyright/dedication page. Describe what you see. How are the other penguins reacting to the king penguin?
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find in the cover and copyright/dedication illustrations?

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about.

- Describe Percival in your own words.
- What are some of Percival's duties as king?
- Do you think Percival likes being the king? Use examples from the text to support your response.
- Why do the others kick Percival out of the colony?



Percival tries several to rule over several different kingdoms. Fill in the chart below with who Percival tries to rule over and what the result is.

Kingdom #	Ruling over...	The result
1	seals	They tried to eat him.
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

- What happens when Percival bumps into the emperor penguin?
- Why do you think the colony was in chaos when Percival returned?
- Compare Percival’s royal decrees to the colony rules.
  - How are they similar?
  - How are they different?



## Who is Percival? ~ Character Study

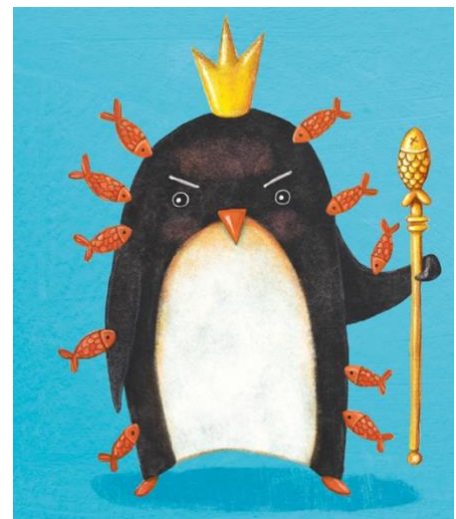
How a character acts and what a character says can tell readers a lot about who the character is.

Read The King Penguin paying close attention to the character of Percival. Scene by scene, record your thoughts, in a chart like the one below.

What he does	Why do you think he does what he does?	How would you describe him?	What might he say?
Example: Pampers himself and rules over the colony.	He believes he is king because he is a king penguin.	Pompous.	

After gathering information regarding Percival's character, use the scenarios below to write a new scene for The King Penguin. What would Percival do and say in one of the following situations?

- Sardines invade the colony.
- Another king penguin arrives and demands to rule.
- One of the colony rules is broken.



## Critical Thinking

In fiction stories, a character usually changes in some way. Do you think Percival changed in the story? How? (analyzing, inferring, giving support to an idea)

How would the story be different if Percival had not bumped into the emperor? (predicting, cause and effect)

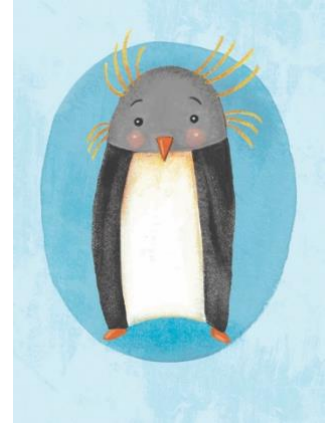
What do you think is the message of this story? (equality, power, community)

## Writing Activities

### I Think I'm Pasta ~ Point of View

Either as a class or individually, explore each scene in *The King Penguin* from the point of view of another penguin in the colony. What are they thinking and doing in each illustration? How do they feel? What would they say to Percival?

Advanced classes will be able to write *The King Penguin* from another penguin's point of view. However, classes can also create captions and thought bubbles.



### Creating Rules for Your Classroom Colony

It's important to understand the importance of classroom rules. This activity helps students participate in creating classroom rules everyone can agree upon.

Start with a discussion.

- What do you think is the purpose of classroom rules?
- Without rules, what happened to the penguin colony in *The King Penguin*?
- How are the rules set by a king different from those created by everyone in the colony together?

Then, in small groups or pairs, brainstorm rules that students believe are important for maintaining a positive classroom environment. Write down at least three rules.

Each group will then share their suggested rules with the whole class.

List each suggested rule on the board or chart paper.

Once everyone has shared their three suggested rules, discuss the common themes and ideas in the list.



The class will then work together to create a final set of classroom rules using the list of suggested rules.

Some rules might be able to be combined to create concise statements.

Be sure to use specific wording for each rule to make them clear and understandable.

Then, create a large poster to display the rules in the classroom.

## **Speaking and Listening Activities**

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *The King Penguin* to life in your classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills!

### **Mime**

- Ask students to silently act out a page from the book, exaggerating body motions and facial expressions. See if others can identify the page that goes along with the mimed action.

### **Drama**

- Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read *The King Penguin*.
- In small groups, act out *The King Penguin* as a play.
- Make and record a radio version of *The King Penguin*. Students decide what to use for the sound effects to create a mental picture of the story.

### **King and Subject**

Place students in small groups. One person will be the king. The others will be the king's subjects. The king will make different movements slowly; the subjects must try to do the exact same movements at the same time as the king—as if they are a reflection in a mirror. Then switch places, giving everyone the opportunity to be a king. Discuss the experience of being both king and subject. Which did you like best? Why? What were the difficulties or ease of each role?



# Math

## **Word Problems**

For younger students, the use of pictures or props can be helpful in figuring out word problems. Note to teachers: Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on the illustrations in *The King Penguin* or any other book of study.

The copyright page illustration:

- 1) How many snow penguins do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 1 snow penguin.

Draw 3 more snow penguins.

How many snow penguins are there now?

Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if 2 snow penguins melted away? How many snow penguins would be left?

Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

The "Hark! My feathered friends" illustration:

- 2) How many penguin eggs do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 3 penguin eggs.

Draw 7 more eggs.

How many eggs do you have?

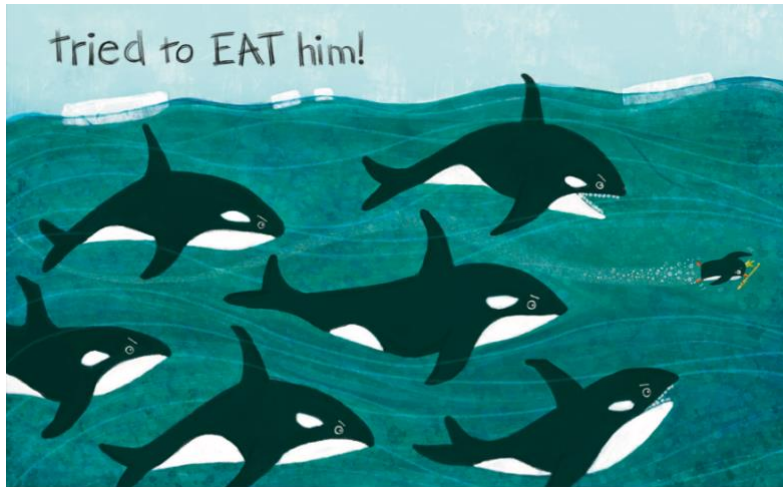
Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if 6 hatched? How many eggs would be left?

Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

## Under Where? Spatial Sense

Look at the following spread from *The King Penguin*.



Describe where Percival is.

[examples: in the water, under the waves, in front of the whales]

Pick one of the whales and describe where they are using common spatial words such as: in front of, behind, top, bottom, over, under, last, between, farthest, backward, in, on, etc.

Have students pick another illustration in *The King Penguin* and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

Now look around your classroom.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.
- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?



# **Science**

## **Penguin Research Project**

Every penguin in *The King Penguin* is a real type of penguin. However, they don't all live in the same area of the world.

Assign each student or pairs of students one type of penguin mentioned in the book to research.

Information to be gathered must include:

- What this penguin eats.
- Where this penguin lives.
- Draw a picture of the penguin.
- Write 3 words that describe this penguin.
- How can you tell this penguin from another kind of penguin?
- Interesting fact #1
- Interesting fact #2
- Interesting fact #3



Students may use the internet or the library to complete their research. Once all the needed research is done, students must create a poster visual with all the necessary information and present their findings to the class.

# **Social Studies**

## **What Makes a Good Leader?**

There is no single set of qualities and skills that makes someone a good leader. Every leader is different and different groups have varied needs.

Create a list of 15 to 20 adjectives that may or may not be qualities of a leader. These can be personality traits, physical characteristics, skills, etc. Write each word or phrase on a rectangle of colored paper.

On two larger sheets of paper, write the words "important" and "not important".

Tape the sheet with the word "important" on the left end of a wall or whiteboard and tape the sheet with the words "not important" on the right end of a wall or whiteboard so that there is plenty of space between them. Along the bottom of the wall or whiteboard, place enough pieces of tape so that there is one for each of the rectangles of paper with the adjectives on them.

Shuffle the stack of adjectives and distribute them evenly among the class. Each student should place the words they have been given somewhere along the spectrum created on the wall or whiteboard.

- If they feel that a word describes an important quality of a leader, they should tape that word towards the left of the spectrum.
- If they feel that a word describes an unimportant quality of a leader, or something that is insignificant to whether someone is a good leader, they should tape that word towards the right of the spectrum.
- If they feel that they have a word that is somewhat more ambiguous, or that it could be a quality of a good leader, but it depends on the situation, they can place it somewhere in the middle.

Once everyone has placed their words along the spectrum, discuss.

- Would anyone like to comment on why they placed a word where they did?
- Are there any words up here that are in a different place than you would have put them?
- Are there any words up here that might move if the situation were different?
- Are there any qualities of a leader that are missing that you would like to add to the list?
- Based on this discussion, what are your thoughts on what it means to be a leader?
- To words placed in the middle: Why was this word placed in between 'important' and 'not important'?

### **What is a community?**

Have each student draw a picture of their community.

Then, one at a time, share the drawings with the class for a discussion.

- What do you see? Be concrete and point to specific details.
- What do you think this person is saying about community?

- What do you wonder about this community?

Once every drawing is looked at, continue the discussion.

- What are some things that appear in every drawing of community?"

Work together to develop a shared definition of "community."

### **Our Community: A Public Mural**

Throughout history, art has been used to transform public spaces into places of beauty and reflection. Most importantly, these pieces of public art are used to bring about a tighter community and make those in the community aware of issues.

Look up examples of public art on the Internet: examples in subways, under bridges and in parks. Be sure to find examples of traditional murals painted on walls, but also sculptures and knit bombing.

Design a mural or a piece of public art for the school community.

1. Choose a space within the school that could use some brightening or some inspiration.
2. Brainstorm a mural or other piece of temporary art called "Our Community Rules" that can be created in this space.
3. Brainstorm how this mural can build community.
4. Involve as many people as possible in the creation.

