Penguins of Antarctica

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: Read the passage **twice**: once to enjoy it, and once to look for details. Then answer the questions. Look back at the text to **prove** your answers.

Leveled reading: this passage is written at guided reading level N, a typical level for Grade 3. Read it aloud once, then read it again silently.

Penguins of Antarctica



Antarctica is the coldest place on Earth. In winter, the temperature can drop below minus 40 degrees Celsius, and icy winds howl across the land. Yet one bird lives and raises its young right there: the emperor penguin.

Emperor penguins are the largest penguins in the world. They can stand more than one metre tall. Their bodies are covered in tightly packed feathers and a thick layer of fat called blubber, which help keep them warm.

In winter, a mother penguin lays one egg. She carefully passes it to the father, then walks to the sea to eat. The father balances the egg on his feet and covers it with a warm flap of skin called a brood pouch. He does not eat for about two months!

To stay warm, the fathers huddle together in a big group. They take turns standing in the middle, where it is warmest, and on the outside, where it is coldest.

When the chick hatches, the mother returns with food. The fluffy grey chick stays on its parents' feet until it is big enough to survive on the ice.

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1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. What is the coldest place on Earth?

(a) Antarctica
(b) Canada
(c) The Moon

2. Who keeps the egg warm during winter?

(a) The mother
(b) The father
(c) The chick

3. What is blubber?

(a) A thick layer of fat
(b) A kind of fish
(c) A snowstorm

4. Why do the penguins huddle together?

(a) To play
(b) To stay warm
(c) To hide from the sun

2. Write your answer

Answer in complete sentences. Use details from the text.

1. **What two things help emperor penguins stay warm?**

2. **How does the father take care of the egg?**

3. **Why do you think the penguins take turns in the middle of the huddle?**

Answer Key

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1. Check your understanding

1. What is the coldest place on Earth?

- **a** **Antarctica**
- **b** Canada
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3. What is blubber?

- **a** **A thick layer of fat**
- **b** A kind of fish
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4. Why do the penguins huddle together?

- **a** To play
- **b** **To stay warm**
- **c** To hide from the sun

2. Write your answer

Sample answers. Students' wording will vary.

1. **What two things help emperor penguins stay warm?**
   Tightly packed feathers and a thick layer of blubber.
2. **How does the father take care of the egg?**
   He balances it on his feet and covers it with his brood pouch for about two months without eating.
3. **Why do you think the penguins take turns in the middle of the huddle?**
   So every penguin gets a chance to warm up and no one stays on the cold outside too long.