

Grade 3 Informative/Explanatory Writing Standard W.3.2

Grade 3 Informative/Explanatory

W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students were given several texts to read about the physical and behavioral characteristics of Antarctic penguins and how those characteristics help them survive. The students listened to the texts read aloud, read the texts independently, and then worked with the Focusing Question “*How do the physical and behavioral characteristics of penguins help them survive?*”

This question requires that students group information from multiple texts and connect that information to the survival of a species into a well-focused, well-developed essay.

Note: Some of the pieces in this set did not originally have titles. Each was given a basic title for ease of reference.

Focus of the Writing Task

How do a penguin’s physical and behavioral characteristics help them survive in their environment?

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is it embedded in curriculum/content?

- ★ *Class: 3rd grade integrated ELA / science curriculum*
 - focus on the survival of the species
- ★ *Curriculum unit*
 - students study the physical and behavioral characteristics of various animals and the relationship to their survival
 - emphasis on selecting and grouping information from multiple texts
- ★ *Standards*
 - Science: Local Curriculum Standards
 - Reading: RI.3.1, RI.3.3, RI.3.7, RI.3.10
 - Writing: W.3.2, W.3.7, W.3.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?

- ★ *Texts*
 - *The Flightless Bird*, an article re-written by the curriculum staff for this assessment
 - List of Penguin Facts from a variety of sources
- ★ *Reading and re-reading*
 - teacher read texts aloud while students read along in their heads
 - students re-read texts independently
 - students took notes on texts independently using common graphic organizers

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?

- ★ *Craft lessons*
 - students were just beginning to be introduced to basic expository structures (Painted Essay® in many forms and more) including such elements as introductions, grouping related information together, linking words, and conclusions
- ★ *Writing approaches*
 - students were reminded of the elements that make up a strong essay in the directions. They then wrote and proofread independently.

What was the timeframe?

Brief (2-3 class periods)

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Proficient

How Penguins Survive

Did you ever wonder how penguin behaviors and physical characteristics help it survive? First we'll talk about the behaviors that help it survive. First behavior is They seem to fly out of the water this helps it survive by letting it to get out of the water safely. The second behavior is how they can recognize each other by their calls so the mother can recognize her mate and her baby. The third behavior is they have a threat call to warn other penguins of dangerous predators. Now let's talk about some of their physical characteristics of a penguin. First they have stiff, tightly packed feathers that overlap to provide water proofing and another one is all penguins are dark on their backs and white on their chest it provides camouflage. Those are some of their physical characteristics and behaviors that help penguins survive.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Approaching

Penguin Survival

Hey you want to learn more about penguins physical characteristics and there behaviors? The behaviors that help them to survive are that they camouflage them self in the water because it helps them hide from prey and they call when danger is near.

There physical characteristics that help them survive are that they have water proof feathers to help them swim better. They also have flat wings to help them swim they have webbed feet to help them swim very fast from dangers prey.

This is what the behaviors and physical characteristics of penguins are.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Beginning

Penguins

The physical characteristics are penguin legs are short but strong and penguins have more feathers than most birds.

They survive by so you recognize their call so if a threat comes the dad will help them so they can hibernate and the dad goes looking for fish or krill so when he gets back the baby hatches.

The behavior is they have a good vision under water so if they see a threat coming they will hide away and if the dad goes looking for the son he will see him.

The conclusion is how to survive so they survive by if you were a shark looking down in the deep dark sea you would not notice a penguin and if you were looking up you would think that it's just a sun light.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Exceeds

Penguin Survival

I am going to tell you about a penguins' physical characteristics and their behaviors that help them survive. Penguins physical characteristics and behaviors ho help them survive are good to learn about because not only does it teach you about penguins, it teaches you about adapting.

The physical characteristics that penguins have to help them survive are first, their heavy bones all them to stay underwater for a long amount of time to catch food. Next, they have insulating blubber that keeps them warm. Then, they have good vision underwater to see their prey and catch it. Also, they have paddle like flippers to help them swim. Next is their tightly packed waterproof feathers that keep the penguin dry. Then, they have black and white skin that acts as camouflage to trick their predator. Finally, the have short legs, and webbed feet. Their legs help them steer the direction they want to swim, and their webbed feet is their key to speed underwater.

Penguins' behaviors that help them survive are first, they jump high out of water. This helps when they are being chased underwater. Next, they coat their feathers with oil from a gland near the tail. It keeps them warm and dry. Then, they have special calls that warn or tell something to other penguins. Also, penguins live in rookeries, and they become warm when they are in the rookeries by making body warming. Finally, they molt their feathers because their feathers become less waterproof, and they need new ones that are waterproof so they may go back into the water and catch food.

Those are all the physical characteristics and behaviors of penguins that I know.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Proficient

How Penguins Survive

Did you ever wonder how penguin behaviors and physical characteristics help it survive? First well talk about the behaviors that help it survive. Frist behavior is They sem to fly out of the water this helps it survive by letting it to get out of the water safely. The second behavior is how they can recognize each other by their calls so the mother can recognize her mate and her baby. The third behaviors is they have a threat call to warn other penguins of dangerous predators. Now lets talk about some of their physical characteristics of a penguin. Frist they have stiff, tightly packed feathers that overlaps to provide water proofing and another one is all penguins are dark on their backs and white on their chest it provides camouflage. Those are some of their physical characteristics and behaviors that help penguins survive.

Introduces the topic with a question, the focus/point of the piece of writing

Develops the topic with facts and details: although not separated into paragraphs, **related information** to support the point/focus is **grouped together** and organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas

Provides a concluding statement

Final Thoughts **(Gr 3 Informative: Proficient)**

Overall, this third grade essay shows solid understanding of the topic, the physical and behavioral characteristics that help penguins survive. Although the piece is a bit “list-y,” the writer uses facts from the source (*a threat call to warn other penguins of dangerous predators*) and conveys ideas and information clearly with some elaboration. For example, the first behavior the writer describes is how penguins “fly out of the water,” and he then goes on to explain how that behavior helps the penguin get out of the water safely. The concluding statement restates the focus of the piece.

A Word About Language and Conventions **(Gr 3 Informative: Proficient)**

Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Approaching

How Penguins Survive

Hey you want to learn more about penguins physical characteristics and there behaviors? The behaviors that help them to survive are that they camouflage them self in the water because it helps them hide from prey and they call when danger is near.

Introduces the topic with a question, the point/focus of the piece of writing

Topic is insufficiently **developed with facts and details** from the texts

There physical characteristics that help them survive are that they have water proof feathers to help them swim better. They also have flat wings to help them swim they have webbed feet to help them swim very fast from dangers prey.

Groups related information into sections

Connects ideas **using** some **linking words and phrases**

This is what the behaviors and physical characteristics of penguins are.

Attempts to **provide a concluding statement**

Final Thoughts

(Gr 3 Informative: Approaching)

Overall, this third grade essay shows an understanding of the topic, the physical and behavioral characteristics that help penguins survive. The writer uses some facts from the sources (*flat wings*) and attempts to convey ideas and information with some elaboration. For example, the writer describes how penguins have “flat feet” that “help the penguin swim fast from dangerous prey”. However, the facts/evidence included are minimal. The concluding sentence attempts to restate the focus of the piece, but does not mention survival.

This student would benefit from support in revising the first section to include more evidence and elaboration.

A Word About Language and Conventions

(Gr 3 Informative: Approaching)

Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Beginning

Penguins

The physical characteristics are penguin legs are short but strong and penguins have more feathers than most birds.

Introduction is missing: the point/focus of the piece is unclear

They survive by so you recognize their call so if a threat comes the dad will help them so they can hibernate and the dad goes looking for fish or krill so when he gets back the baby hatches.

The writer attempts to **develop the topic with facts and details** but the reader is confused by what the writer has written.

The behavior is they have a good vision under water so if they see a threat coming they will hide away and if the dad goes looking for the son he will see him.

Attempts to use **linking words or phrases**

The conclusion is how to survive so they survive by if you were a shark looking down in the deep dark sea you would not notice a penguin and if you were looking up you would think that it's just a sun light.

The writer attempts to **group related information together** but the result is confusing to the reader.

A **concluding statement** is attempted at the beginning of the last section.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 3 Informative: Beginning)

Overall, this essay shows some understanding of the topic. However, the writer shows confusion about how the physical and behavioral characteristics actually help penguins survive. The focus of the piece is unclear with frequent extraneous ideas and randomly ordered sentences that confuse the reader.

Even though students were given a chart to record their notes as they read, this writer would benefit from practice with orally rehearsing the notes/evidence on his graphic organizer prior to writing.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 3 Informative: Beginning)

Minimal Control of Conventions: The writer shows little control over language and conventions. The lack of control of conventions and language interferes with the reader's understanding of the piece.

Standard W.3.2
Grade 3
Exceeds

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The physical characteristics that penguins have to help them survive are first, their heavy bones all them to stay underwater for a long amount of time to catch food. Next, they have insulating blubber that keeps them warm. Then, they have good vision underwater to see their prey and catch it. Also, they have paddle like flippers to help them swim.

Next is their tightly packed waterproof feathers that keep the penguin dry. Then, they have black and white skin that acts as camouflage to trick their predator. Finally, the have short legs, and webbed feet. Their legs help them steer the direction they want to swim, and their webbed feet is their key to speed underwater.

Penguins' behaviors that help them survive are first, they jump high out of water. This helps when they are being chased underwater.

Next, they coat their feathers with oil from a gland near the tail. It keeps them warm and dry. Then, they have special calls that warn or tell something to other penguins. Also, penguins live in rookeries, and they become warm when they are in the rookeries by making body warming.

Introduces the topic clearly by providing some context and stating the focus

The focus/point is clearly communicated and strongly maintained throughout the piece.

The writer **develops the topic** in depth with appropriate, relevant **facts** and concrete **details** from the two texts using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary.

The progression of ideas is logical from beginning to end. The writer consistently **uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.**

Related information is **grouped together** and organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion.

The writer **develops the topic** in depth with appropriate, relevant **facts** and concrete **details** from the two texts using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary.

Finally, they molt their feathers because their feathers become less waterproof, and they need new ones that are waterproof so they may go back into the water and catch food.

Those are all the physical characteristics and behaviors of penguins that I know.

Attempts to **provide a concluding statement**

Final Thoughts
(Gr 3 Informative: Exceeds)

Overall, this piece exceeds the standard for proficient. It meets all the criteria for proficient and shows a solid understanding of the topic, the behavioral and physical characteristics that help penguins survive in their environment. The writer consistently sticks to that focus, supplying and synthesizing evidence from the two texts read about penguin survival.

In addition, the piece contains in-depth evidence to develop the focus. Within that evidence, the writer uses complex and compound sentences, precise and sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary.

The writer would benefit from instruction in how to conclude, so that she will begin to understand the function of a well-crafted conclusion that supports, reflects on, and extends the information presented.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 3 Informative: Exceeds)

Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.