

Ayuqailngua the flying penguin

Akiuk Memorial School / Cape Barren Island Primary School



ICE E-MYSTERY

Ayuqailngua

the flying penguin

A story written and illustrated by pupils at Akiuk
Memorial School, Alaska, USA and Cape Barren Island
Primary School, Tasmania, Australia



Cape Barren Island Primary School, Tasmania, Australia

Situated between mainland Australia and mainland Tasmania, in the Bass Strait, Cape Barren Island is a small island off the larger Flinders Island. The primary school has 12 students from K–6, with a nearby high school for grades 7–10. Students are all Tasmanian Aboriginals and practice traditional activities like muttonbirding in the late summer months on some of the nearby uninhabited islands. Transport is via light plane to Launceston, the northern Tasmanian city.

Cape Barren Island Primary School

Teacher: Merryn Bolger

Students:

Jade Maynard-Jones

Malaki Roland

Legana Hughes

Jakob Bingham

Patrick Bingham



Akiuk Memorial School, Alaska, USA

Located in the Yupik village of Kasigluk on the delta of the Kuskokwim River in western Alaska, this island school is home to about 50 students from K–12. Yupik is the first language of the students who live a life focused on the waterways. Frozen in winter, the rivers allow transport on snow machines and sleds to neighbouring hunting grounds and villages. In summer the open waters are filled with King salmon, whitefish and other staples of the village's diet. Getting about means either a boat or light plane.

Akiuk Memorial School Class 4–8

Teacher: Nicki Nechodomu



Chapter 1

The air was freezing and the sun reflected on the icy water. Three scientists trudged lazily over thick Antarctic snow that crackled and crunched under their heavy boots. Even though they were exhausted, they were excited to be heading back to the station for the night. As they approached the side of a shallow crevasse, Legana suddenly stopped.

“There’s something in the crevasse,” he whispered urgently to the others.

“It looks like an egg,” shouted Patrick in disbelief. “An emperor penguin egg!”

“What’s it doing down there? We’ll have to cut the ice to get it out. We can use our ice auger,” Jakob was already getting the equipment set up.

Legana reached into the hole and cradled the egg as Jakob carefully cut away the ice.

Fact stop: The Poles, Arctic, and Antarctic

The earth spins on an imaginary line called the axis, which runs through the very top and very bottom of the planet. We call these places the poles. The North Pole, located on the very top, is the furthest north you could ever go. The South Pole is on the very bottom, and is as far south as you can go.

Around both poles is a region of extreme cold. In the north, it is called the Arctic, and in the south it is called Antarctica. These two regions are very similar, yet also quite different. For instance, there are seals, ice, and water in both places, and they both stay cold all year. The Arctic has more animals and plants than Antarctica. The North Pole in the Arctic is ice-covered water, but Antarctica is ice-covered land. Another really big difference is that people live in the Arctic and have lived there for thousands of years. No people live in Antarctica except for scientists and tourists who come and go.



“Got it!” All three crowded around. The egg was as hard and cold as a block of ice. “It’s a bit bigger than an ordinary emperor’s egg,” Patrick said with a look of confusion on his face. There was definitely something strange about the egg. It had odd markings on it like claw scratches in the shape of feathers. Patrick unzipped his jacket and gently squeezed the egg inside. It had been a hard day’s work and they were all tired out, so they trudged through the snow back to the lab.



Chapter 2

Legana was slumped over in his chair at a desk as he studied a penguin book closely. He had been there for quite a while reading pages and pages, trying to match the markings on the egg, but he couldn’t find anything like them. He picked up the egg, cradling it in his hands. “I’m sad about this egg. Penguin eggs usually die when they get too cold,” he mumbled to himself. “But let’s try putting it in the incubator just in case.”

The scientists were all frustrated and sleepy, so they went to bed. Late that night, Jakob suddenly awoke. He could hear a blizzard howling outside, but there was also another noise... a noise from inside the lab. It was a creepy racket that crackled and scratched against the floor. What was that? He trembled as he woke the others, and they crept out to the lab. The first place they looked was the incubator. The lid was open and the eggshell was still inside, broken into three large pieces. They looked all around the station for the chick, but it was gone.

“How unbelievable,” said Patrick. “This chick’s egg survived out in the cold by itself.”

“Yes,” Jacob added, “and it hatched so quickly. They usually take 2-3 days to crack through the shell. Emperor penguins’ eggs are very thick.”

“And now it’s gone alone out into the blizzard,” said Legana.

“Quick. Get the torches,” yelled Patrick.

They quickly found their torches and parkas; Patrick grabbed a strong rope. “Stand still. I’ll tie us together to keep us safe in the blizzard.”

It was hard to see in the dark with the wind and blowing snow. They shone torches around, but they couldn’t see a thing.

Suddenly, Legana signaled the others to stop. "I think I see something. There ... to the left."

They all ran towards the figure, but it disappeared into the stormy night sky. In the place the figure had been standing, something surprising was stuck in the ice. It was a wonderful, unusual feather - black with smooth edges. They picked it up. It was so smooth they couldn't believe it. The markings on the feather were tiny, like tiny little feet. It was something they had never seen before.

Chapter 3

The bird struggled on in the blinding snow, up and away from the creatures with their loud voices and bright lights. He felt alone

Fact stop: Can penguins really fly?

Penguins don't fly in real life because they have adapted to life in Antarctica. They have flippers instead of wings, so they can swim underwater to get food and to get away from predators. The shape of their bodies makes them cut through the water swiftly. Their feathers are like scales, and they have a layer of fat that keeps them warm in the coldest land on earth. Their bodies make oil to lubricate their feathers and repel water.

Scientists think that penguins evolved from flying birds. This means that, over time, a species of birds started to change. New generations were born with slightly different bodies that were able to survive in their setting better. So, if once upon a time, penguins could fly, but through evolution, they turned into swimmers instead... could it be possible for them to some day evolve into flyers again?



in the white space that seemed to stretch forever. The storm's wind pressed against him so hard that he could only fly in one spot and couldn't move forward. He was cold and angry, so he started flying down towards the ice. When he landed, he folded his wings, put his head down and waited.

After the blizzard passed, he opened his wings and began to fly upwards into the sky again. Looking down, he noticed some smudges of darkness against the ice and as he got closer he saw the smudges were animals. Their feet and beaks looked like his, so he landed to find out what kind of creatures they were and ask them some questions.

“Hi, you friendly bunch. Have you seen some of my family? Do you know anybody who has lost a chick?”

The largest, ugliest penguin answered, “No, I’ve never seen any penguin that looks like you. And I don’t know anyone who has lost a chick.”

The flying penguin sighed. “You guys look familiar - kinda like I look. What are you guys?”

A skinny penguin with a high-pitched voice answered, “We’re emperor penguins. But you can’t stay here because you will eat too many fish and we only have a few fish left. There aren’t as many as there used to be. The fishermen have taken too many. Anyway you are not like us. We have flippers, but you have wings.”

“Yah, man,” agreed the large penguin.

Fact stop: Ice Melting

The earth is slowly getting warmer, and many other things are changing in the climate (normal weather for an area). One theory about climate change is called the Greenhouse Effect. There are many gases in our atmosphere. Some of those gases allow the sun’s light into our atmosphere, but then it traps the heat inside. That’s making the world’s temperatures increase. The world’s warmer temperatures affect lots of things, including the ice at the poles. For example, at the north pole the ice is now melting at 9% every ten years and is only half as thick as it was in the 1960s. Many animals, including seals, caribou, reindeer, moose, polar bears and penguins lose their habitats and have a difficult time surviving with these climate changes.



Chapter 4

So the bird unfolded his wings and took off across the ice. He was sad and wanted to belong somewhere - to have friends and family. After a while he saw some more penguins, smaller than the others. He swooped down and landed next to them. These penguins had colourful feathers on their heads and were shorter than he was.

“Hello. Will you be my friends and help me find my family? Do you know where there are any other penguins like me?” he asked.

The penguins looked at him in disgust. “I haven’t seen any other birds like you around before.” said a grumpy mother. “You don’t have colourful feathers like we do, and you aren’t short like us. So you couldn’t be a rockhopper. Anyway, I have other things to worry about. The ice is melting and I have to look after my own family,”

The bird flew away sadly. Was there any other type of penguin the same as him? He kept on flying in a straight line and found Macquarie Island. Malaki was on the island studying Arctic

Terns. He was sitting on a rock watching the birds fly above him. He saw a giant bird - the strangest bird he had ever seen. Was it an albatross? It was certainly large enough. He quickly sent a message back to Patrick, Legana and Jakob describing what he had seen.

The bird saw the terns and decided to approach them. "Can you please help me find my family? I am alone and I am beginning to think that I don't belong anywhere, that there are no other birds like me. I don't know where to go."

"I've never seen a bird like you before. But we have come from another land of ice, the Arctic. You could try looking up there for



Fact stop: Seasons

The earth's axis isn't straight up and down. It is actually tilted at an angle. One spin on the Earth's axis is a full day. However, the earth is also going around the sun at the same time. This takes much longer; one whole trip around the sun takes a year. But no matter what side of the sun the Earth is on, its axis keeps pointing the same direction. This means that half of the year, the North Pole is facing the sun while the south pole faces away from the sun. The other half of the year, it's switched; the South Pole faces the sun, and the North Pole faces away.

Because of this, each hemisphere (or half of earth) gets a season of longer, warmer days of sunlight (summer) and a season of shorter, colder days of little sunlight (winter). These will always be opposite for the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere. So when the Akiuk Student writers in Alaska were getting ready for winter break, their co-authors from Cape Barren Island, Australia were packing up for a nice summer break

your family. It will be a long journey but we will take you there when we migrate back to the north. It is right up at the top of the world," said a shaggy feathered female tern.

Chapter 5

It was hard for the penguin to try to keep up with the Arctic terns as they embarked upon the cold journey north. It was the first time he felt like he belonged to a group of flying birds. Since he started his lengthy flight from the Antarctic, he began to love flying through the silent air. He spent his days pestering the terns with annoying questions, and spent his nights asking even more



Even though he could fly like they could, he sadly knew he wasn't part of their species, and he would never fully belong.

He acted like he wasn't there for the rest of the trip. He simply followed them secretly. He would watch as they swooped down to the water to capture fish without ever landing. He tried to do the same thing, but every time he swooped down, he fell into the water. This is how he figured out that he was a good swimmer.

They were nearly to the Arctic, and the penguin was famished. He decided to dive for fish, even though he was very embarrassed and rarely succeeded at hunting food. He flopped and jiggled slowly towards the water. He tried to swoop gracefully like the terns, but belly-flopped with a sudden splash instead. Fortunately, he knew how to swim, so he chased the fish and caught it. He finally came back up to the surface and

and more questions.

One day, a mean old tern with wrinkled white feathers insulted the curious flying penguin. "You annoying freak of nature. Why don't you ever stop talking?" he said in a low, crackling voice between wheezing and coughing.

The poor penguin's beak dropped open in shock. Finally, he squeaked, "I thought I fitted in with you guys!"

The cranky old tern burst out in mean, obnoxious laughter. "Ha Ha Ha! Hey fella's! Look at this big, clumsy, fluffy bird. He thinks he's one of us!"

The penguin finally realized he did not fit in with the Arctic terns.

Fact stop: Arctic Terns

Arctic terns are a "one of a kind" bird. They make a very long journey two times each year from one pole to the other. Each direction is over 12,000 miles, which means they travel over 24,000 miles each year! This is the longest known regular migration of any animal in the world. After they've experienced summer in Antarctica and it's getting near to winter, they move to the Arctic, where it's getting warmer and becoming summer. This is where their breeding grounds are. When the Arctic summer is done, they move down to the Antarctic again. This way, they have two summers every year and get the more daylight each year than any other living creature. The traveling keeps them so busy that they spend almost their whole lives in the air. They eat while flying, and they only land once every one to three years to nest and mate in the Arctic



and wondered what that brown, white, and green thing was. As the penguin swam as fast as he could towards that mysterious brown-white-green thing, his curiosity got stronger and stronger.

He stopped close to the soft edge and started climbing as if he had no legs, slowly crawling with his wings. He was amazed at how soft and squishy the land was. Just like Antarctica, there was land as far as he could see. But in Antarctica, it was covered in ice and snow and the air was very dry and cold. Here, it was warmer and the ground was spongy and covered with colorful plants. There was orange, white, brown, and an abundance of green. There were lots of red dots lying all over the ground, and he smelled something strong and unusual. He followed the smell to a plant which had small green leaves.

As the penguin was sniffing and staring at the plant, he felt a

heard some obnoxious yelping Arctic tern laughter.

“At least I caught a fish!” he mumbled angrily while gnawing on his food. The Arctic terns moved on far above him. He heard the excited songs of the grumpy old tern singing, “Woohoo! The freak of nature’s gone!”

Chapter 6

The penguin looked around curiously, wondering where he was. He squinted his eyes and found a piece of land far ahead. He looked through one eye, and then he opened both eyes again. He rubbed his eyes with his wing tips rapidly, and stared

Fact stop: Tundra and Labrador Tea

The tundra is flat land in and around the Arctic. When you walk on the tundra, it feels like walking on a squishy mattress. This is because the ground is mostly covered in mosses and lichens, thick squishy plants that can grow in wet, soggy places. The tundra has frozen ground underneath it all year round, so large plants aren't able to grow, including trees.

*Labrador (*Ledum groenlandicum* Oeder) is a plant that grows wild on the tundra in Alaska and other northern areas. It's a low-growing plant with brown stems with skinny pine-shaped leaves. It has a strong scent that fills the tundra. The Yup'ik, as well as other people groups, use the leaves and stems to brew a tea that works as medicine. It can be used to treat a cold, the flu, stomach ache, sore throat, and other sicknesses.*

little breeze from above him and it became dark. He looked up at the sun, but saw a huge bird blocking the light, trying to land by him. The bird's enormous yet scrawny legs dangled wildly from her gray body. She slowly drifted down and gently landed beside the penguin without a sound.

"Hello, dear!" she said in a comforting tone.

The penguin looked surprised and then suddenly shouted, "I'm a deer!?"

"Oh no, honey," she giggled, "You don't have antlers, or four legs, and definitely don't look big enough to be one of them."

"Why did you call me a deer, then?" he asked.

"Aw, sweetie. I just call creatures that because that's a sweet nickname," she replied as she bent her long, slender neck down to grab a red dot.

"What are you eating?"

"Kavirliq," she said as she gobbled the red dot. Then she explained what it meant in English. "Pumpkin, Kavirliq means red berries in a different language - the Yup'ik language they speak here. At first, if you try these red berries, they will taste sour. Mmmmm, but they're really tasty!" She took one from her mouth and tried giving it to the penguin.

The penguin was grossed out and shook his head really fast.

"Ummmm, I think it would be better if I take one from ground." He looked down to the ground, took one carefully in his beak, slowly squashed it and made a smacking sound with his tongue. He looked up at the bird with his eyes squinted closed and his



beak open. He felt tears going down his cheeks.

"Why would a bird want to eat this?!" he shouted.

The bird interrupted him and said, "Some birds like them, and some birds don't. I'm a crane, and all cranes like red berries. How about you, sweetie, what are you?"

He hid his face and said sadly, "I don't know what I am. I came from Antarctica and I've been searching all over the world to find who I fit in with. But it looks like I don't fit in with any animal. I heard that there was frozen land somewhere around here," he paused. "Do you know which way the frozen land is?"



The crane politely replied, "Nakleng! Poor sugar plumb! I don't know the ways to the icy spots. All I know about is this tundra and all the grasslands. If you wait a little longer, winter will come and there will be lots of ice then. But right now it's spring, so there's no ice around. Unless you want to dig! The pleasant mice told me that there's frozen dirt and ice under this tundra. They call it permafrost. The mice have also told me that the permafrost is melting..." The crane realized that she was off the topic and stopped herself. "Sorry, sonny. I get carried away every time I talk. So don't mind me, kiddo."

"Well, I've got to go now," said the crane. "It's spring, so I'm going to go find me a man."

"A man? What do you mean..." The crane suddenly flew away before the penguin could finish his question. He sighed to himself and said, "I don't get it."

Chapter 7

He started walking towards the sun on the horizon. As he was walking, he saw a clump of white fluffy fur. "Snow!" He yelled in excitement! He started skipping around for joy on the springy tundra and sang, "I found snow! Nah nah nah nah nah," and as he was about to sing the last, "nah," he tripped on a big heap of land and fell on his rear end.



Fact stop: How the Arctic fox “rolls”

Arctic foxes are one of the many animals that have adapted to life in the cold arctic region. One way it has adapted has been through its fur. Twice a year, the fox grows a whole new fur coat and sheds the old one. In the spring time, he grows a thinner brown fur that will allow him to stay cooler in the summer temperatures and blend in with his setting. In the fall, he begins to shed his brown fur as he grows a new coat. This one is his thick, white fur that will help keep him camouflaged in the snow and keep him warm all winter long. Colour change helps him stay hidden so he’s safe from being hunted, but also keeps him hidden so he can sneak up on lunch without being seen. Other animals in the arctic have similar adaptations. The weasel, lemming, and ptarmigan all change colour with the seasons.



“Yo dude, calm down! Take a chill pill!” A fox shouted energetically as he strutted towards the penguin. “That’s not snow, that’s my fur. I’m moulting, dude. Check out my new fur,” he smirked. “I am so in love with myself. I mean, check out my new coat. Isn’t it sweeeeet?!?”

“It’s not that bad’ the penguin replied. “But what’s all that white stuff sticking out?”

“Oh that’s how we Arctic foxes roll. That white fur you thought was snow was my winter coat, dude. But now it’s summer! Time to roll out the soft thin brown fur for the summer!”

The flying penguin noticed the Arctic fox’s large, white, sharp teeth and long, pointy claws. He cautiously stepped away and said, “I’m going to get going Uh... youh.... dude.”

He walked nervously towards the horizon once more. He wanted to ask the Arctic fox a question about the snow and land of ice, but he was too afraid.

As he was walking towards the horizon he saw a small, brown ball moving towards him. He thought the thing looked creepy and staggered backwards.

The moving ball said in a squeaky voice, “What are you doing? You must be brave or just plain crazy! It would be crazy for me to go see the fox because it’s so dangerous. He eats lemmings like me and all different kinds of animals. How he eats is NASTY!”

“I’m curious, as usual. What DOES the fox eat,” the penguin questioned.



“You wouldn’t wanna’ know,” said the lemming with look of fear on her fluffy face. Her tiny legs looked like they could hardly balance her, and they trembled as she talked in her squeaky voice. Her eyes widened as she spoke, and her whiskers twitched rapidly.

“Ok. Fine by me. Do you know the way to the Arctic,” asked the penguin.

“Sorry, but I don’t know. I just stay near my habitat—that hole behind you,” she said while she was walking towards the hole.

The penguin replied, “Ok, thanks for talking to me, though. I’ll catch you later.”

“I-lai! Oh my,” shrieked the lemming as she ran quickly to her nest.

“No, I didn’t mean it like I was going to eat you. I meant like... I’ll see you later,” bellowed the penguin, but when he looked back, the lemming was already gone.

Chapter 8

He walked for one long, stressful day. In the morning, he realized he was by a hill that was full of trees. He was surprised by the trees because he had never seen them before from the ground. They were huge plants, and they had gigantic leaves! By the trees, he saw a big brown, shaggy hill with branches that seemed to be moving.

“I wonder if I could slide down that moving hill,” he thought.

He scampered over to the hill and tried to climb it. It felt strange, almost like the Arctic fox’s fur, but a little rougher. He climbed

Fact stop: You must be brave or just plain crazy!

Is this penguin crazy for talking to so many strangers? Animals have instincts that warn them about situations that could be dangerous. But many of these instincts have to be learned through experience. This penguin is from Antarctica, where they are the largest land-animal. They’re not used to being scared of anything, like humans. They are scared of water, though, because there are seals there that eat them.



"I'm sorry I was standing on your back! I thought you were a hill because I was standing behind you."

"Do ya' think I look hill-ish?" the creature replied slowly. The penguin could hear that he was offended by the tone of his voice.

"No ... I didn't mean it that way ... " said the penguin frantically. "I meant it like ... I though you looked like one ... I mean, cos, you know. Aw, shucks... I meant to say I thought you were a hill cos your fur matches the tundra. I didn't see anything other than your fur, so I thought it was a hill. But really! You don't look like a hill. No offense," He fumbled through his words. "Like, really, you look small. Too small to be a hill!"

"You're one crazy liddle creature. You're just full o' insults. I ain't small. Look at me. I could take down all those trees, no problem. Wanna' see?" the face said defensively.

to the top and shouted, "Woohoo!" As he got ready to slide, the hill shook and made a grunting sound. The penguin grabbed on to the two hard branches tightly and began to scream, "Earthquake!"

Suddenly he a heard a big voice below him, "What`cha doin'?"

The penguin started to look around. He flew off the hill and searched around, hovering in the air. He spotted a face beneath the branches that he couldn't see from the top of the mound.

He felt embarrassed that he hadn't realized that the hill was actually an animal. He swooped down near the face and started to apologize.





“No, you don’t have to prove anything. I can just imagine it.”

“Yah, well ya’ better keep that in mind,” snarled the animal.

“Yah, I’m sure I will. Could I ask you a question,” the penguin inquired softly.

“Is it insulting?”

“No, no, no, no. Not this time. Could you give me the directions to the Artic please?”

“Sure, I know some parts of the path, but not all of it. You go that way,” He swung his head to the right.

“Any more directions?”

“No, I just know ya go that way.”

“Ok. Thank you very much... Mr ... what are you?”

The creature said, “You never stop insulting, eh? I’m a moose A moose that’s always offended by ya. Now I’m going to leave before ya make me cry, ya hear? Now get out of my way because this ‘hill’s’ about to move.” The moose stood up, raised his chin, and started stomping away. He stopped, looked back, and fixed his sentence. “This big, gigantic hill’s moving,” he said proudly.

The penguin felt really bad that he had accidentally offended him so much, so he started walking in the direction the moose had motioned.

Chapter 9

He flew, walked, and swam for several days to the north, until one day, he realized that the land was changing. The air felt chilly and there was more ice than he had seen since he left Antarctica. The days even seemed long to him. He couldn’t even remember the last time he saw the sun set. He noticed there was hardly any land the further he got. There was more water and ice, instead.

Early one morning, while the penguin was walking on a medium sized ice-float on the ocean, he was shocked when he bumped into what seemed like a soft cushion. He looked around to figure out what he bumped into, but all he saw was white snow and ice. He waddled forward again, and crashed into

the invisible wall once more. The penguin was so surprised that he leapt up and his foot slipped on the smooth, slick ice. He fell hard on his backside, which was still painful from his last fall. He gazed up at the peaceful sky and as he was looking, a huge white face appeared in front of him. It said in a deep, rumbling voice, "What are you doing? Are you ok?"

The penguin gasped. "Um... I fell d-d-down... I b-b-bumped something... s-s-something huge... b-b-b-but soft... uh, yah, ... I'm ok," the penguin stuttered.

"I felt something behind me a second ago. It was my backside you bumped into, you fool. I'm camouflaged so I can blend in with the snow," said the face, smiling.

The penguin tried to get up, but his backside hurt too much. "Ow! Owwie! Can you help me up?" The penguin felt sharp claws poke



his belly as he floated up in the creature's paws.

The penguin squealed as he saw the white creature drop his slobbery jaw and open his mouth. "I beg for mercy!" he squealed again.

The creature gently put the penguin down on his feet and exclaimed, "What the snowflake are you pleading about?"

The penguin stuttered, "I thought-t-t you were ab-b-b-bout to eat m-m-m-me!"

"What were you thinking? I wouldn't eat you, cos you have feathers. I would hate them if they get stuck in my teeth. I'd rather eat seals."

“Those poor seals!” the penguin was mystified. “What’s a seal?”

The white creature explained, “Seals are an animal that us polar bears like to eat. They taste soooo good. You might want to try one.”

“I would rather eat fish, and maybe some berries-but that’s only if I had to.”

“You really look different than every animal I have ever seen. What kind of animal are you?”

The penguin had a flashback to what the crane had asked him. He turned away from the polar bear and said, “Well... I don’t really know what I am. I’ve been traveling all over the world



and it seems that I don’t fit in anywhere.” He turned back and looked at the polar bear. “I met the emperor penguins, but they didn’t have enough fish for me and they said I was different cos I can fly. Then I met another kind of penguin, the rockhoppers. But they had too much to worry about to let me stay. Then I moved on. I met the Arctic terns. At first I thought I fit in with them because they could fly, but, sadly, I didn’t fit in. Then I met the crane, but I didn’t fit in because I didn’t like the same food as her. Then I met an Arctic fox, but he was too cool to fit in with. Then I met the cowardly lemming, but he was too afraid of me. Then I met a cranky old moose, but he hated me. And now I’m here with you, talking. But you eat seals and look nothing like me. I sure know that I don’t fit in with you!”

“That’s a bummer,” replied the polar bear as he glanced at the penguin. “You are pretty different. Ayuqailnguq.”

The penguin suddenly looked at him. “What does that mean? Another Yup’ik word?”

The polar bear said slowly, “Yaaaaaah. Ayuqailnguq means different. HEY, that’s a perfect name for you! Ayuqailnguq, Ayuqailnguq, Ayuqailnguq!”

“Uh-yuke-guy-ngook?” Said the penguin in frustration.

“Close enough,” said the polar bear with a sweet voice and a smile. He reached his paw over toward the penguin’s wing and shouted enthusiastically, “Welcome to the North Pole!”

“I thought he was sending me to the Arctic! That darn moose didn’t know what he was talking about,” the penguin said



Fact stop: What does “Ayuqailnguq” mean?

What does this name mean? Our partner school in Australia asked us at Akiuk school a question. The question was, “should we give the flying penguin a Yup’ik name? And they said yes. First, we brainstormed a description of him and listed his character traits. Some of them were lonely, independent, crazy, brave, nice, clumsy, polite, smart, curious, and adventurous. Then we translated them into the Yup’ik language: Lonely (Kimetaralria), Smart (Elisngalria), Curious (Paqnatalria), Different (Ayuqailnguq), Brave (Alinguailnguq), and Adventurous (Ayagayungetuia). We gave our ideas to our Australian partners, and they picked “Ayuqailnguq” or different.

Yup’ik is a language, race and culture of a certain group of Eskimos who live near the Arctic. Even today, Yup’ik people continue traditions of subsistence living (living off of the land) through hunting, fishing, and collecting berries, tea, and medicinal plants from the tundra. We also keep our culture alive through the use of our native tongue, Yup’ik, and passing on of traditional arts such as string stories, story knives, and story telling. Yup’ik music and dance have also survived in many villages, and is practiced regularly. All of us students from Akiuk School are proud to be Yup’ik, and speak the Yup’ik language.

angrily. He reached his wing out to grab the polar bear’s paw, and they shook.

The polar bear chuckled and giggled and said, “this IS the Arctic, Ayuqailnguq!” He put his giant paw down and said, “The North Pole is in the Arctic. You’re on the top of the world!”

The penguin screeched, “The moose was right! I’m on top of the world!” Ayuqailnguq bunny-hopped around the polar bear while singing, “I’m on top of the wor-ld! I’m on top of the wor-ld!”

The polar bear caught the penguin’s attention. “Hey! Stop it! You might slip again...”

The penguin stopped abruptly, his beak fell slowly, and a tear slipped out of the side of his eye. He asked miserably, “But where are all the penguins?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. There are no penguins here. They’re all in Antarctica, I guess.”

The penguin thought hard for what seemed like an hour. He stood there in silence, his eyes stared into space, and he nervously nibbled at his wingtip. Finally, made a decision.

He told the polar bear, "I want to go back to Antarctica. At least I sort of fit in with the emperor penguins. Do you know the way to Antarctica?"

"Yes, I do. You go south!" answered the polar bear.

"Er ... which way is south?"

The polar bear chuckled, "Everything's south from here! Every direction you go is south. That way, this way, that way, and this way! Just make sure you go straight the whole way in any direction, and you'll make it to Antarctica."

The penguin said, "Thank you for telling me the way. I guess I'm going now."

"I hope you find a family. I'm going to miss you. Good luck," said the polar bear.

Chapter 10

Ayuqailnguq began his lengthy journey south. He flew during the long days, and rested on land during nighttime. Sometimes he ate berries, but he always made that puckered face when he ate them. Other times, he swam, caught fish, and ate them. The journey seemed long—much longer than when he travelled with the Arctic terns. It felt like a decade. As he got closer to the equator, he noticed it was getting hotter and hotter. He started to swim, instead, because it was too difficult for him to fly in the heat. Finally, the air started getting cooler, and he knew he must be getting closer.

At last, he saw rocky land ahead of him. He recognized the funny little rockhopper penguins hopping on top of the boulders. He wanted to stop, but he also wanted to get back to Antarctica. So he started swimming again, faster than before because he was excited that he was almost there.

He swam towards the sunset. When the sun disappeared below the horizon, he stopped swimming and noticed that he was standing on the gleaming ice of Antarctica. He got so excited that he started dancing. He stopped himself when he realized that he might slip.

He looked around and saw hundreds of emperor penguins waddling towards him. He started walked towards them with a happy bounce in his step. As he got closer, he noticed that they were all beautiful, cheerful women. They started sprinting and waddling quickly in his direction. They were yelling in excitement, and sliding on their bellies.

"Wow," he thought, "they recognize me! They love my feathers! Or wait – they love me!"

"See ya!" "Get out of our way!" "Ouch - get off my foot!" "You're blocking my way!" the ladies yelled as they rushed past the penguin like a herd of muskoxen. All of the sudden, he saw a snotty-looking penguin strut towards him with a nasty grin on her face and her beak in the air. He tried to get out of her way, but she bumped into him before he had a chance. He fell so hard he cracked the ice and everything slowly went dark.

When he opened his eyes, he saw a penguin staring at him. Her eyes were beautiful as the white, sparkling snow, untouched by

clumsy penguins. There was an air of kindness and sweetness around her that made Ayuqailnguq relax. It seemed that all the pain in his bottom and in his head disappeared. All of the sudden, the kind woman spoke in a sweet voice. "Are you okay?"

Ayuqailnguq was speechless. Even after travelling through the whole world, her voice was the sweetest thing he had ever heard.

"Can you speak," she asked.

A moment later, he was able to talk. "Ah...yes," he said quickly.

She giggled and said, "What were you thinking? Never get between a woman and her fish!"

"I thought you guys were running towards me," groaned Ayuqailnguq.

"You are so silly. They were running toward the fish. They've been walking about 75 miles for these fish, and they finally made it!"

"Okay...why 75 miles," questioned the flying penguin.

The lady replied, "You're a penguin-you should know. They just came from the breeding ground. They left their eggs and men behind so that they could come eat. There's no food around the breeding ground, so they had to walk this whole way. Um, speaking of men... why aren't you with them...or wait, how old are you," She said, even though she could tell that he was as young as she was.

"I guess I'm about a year old," he said proudly.

Petunia shouted, "I knew it! Come join us, you're supposed to be with our group, not these old mummies."



Ayuqailnguq asked, "What group?"

"Us young ones. Just come with me," she said with a smile.

"Really? Do I really fit in here?" said Ayuqailnguq as he tucked his wings behind his back and rocked back and forth nervously.

"Certainly!" she giggled. "You look like an emperor penguin. Welcome to our rookery! Are you hungry? Let's go and eat. You can stay with us until we go back to breeding grounds in three years."

The flying penguin shuffled his toe timidly and said, "Okay."

They glanced each other, and the woman smiled. "My name's Petunia."

"My name's Ayuqailnguq," he said, and he smiled really big.

Before they got into the water, Petunia looked at Ayuqailnguq's wings and said, "Sorry for asking you, but can you swim?"

Ayuqailnguq replied, "Yeah, of course I can. I've been swimming almost all my life." Petunia continued staring at his wings. "Okay," she said as she walked towards the water. Ayuqailnguq followed her.

Chapter 11

The two started hanging out together and spent every day and every night with each other for the next three years. They would not leave each other. Ayuqailnguq spent his days telling her about his adventures around the world. Petunia loved his stories about all the different animals she had never heard of before. They spent their time playing, swimming, chasing fish, escaping seals, and flirting with each other. He had been looking for a place to fit in his whole life, and now he had found friendship right away. Ayuqailnguq knew that she was the right one.

He was having so much fun with her that time went by quickly, and the three years were soon done. Ayuqailnguq had changed a lot. The feathers on his wings had fallen off from all the swimming he had done. He was also more serious about things, and wasn't as curious anymore. Petunia had also changed. She had become more careful and had started acting more like the old mommies. One day they realized that they had become adults and it was time to go back to the breeding grounds that winter.

They swam until they reached the ice, where there were thousands of other penguins jumping out of the sea onto the ice.

They started their 75 mile journey to the breeding grounds, even though they were very tired. They walked many days and when they got to the breeding grounds, they were excited to see other groups of penguins arriving there, too.

Mating season had come, and thousands of penguins were now calling out to their partners. They all had different songs they sang as they looked. Older couples called out to find the familiar call of their life-long mate. Younger penguins sang out excitedly, yet nervous to discover who their mate would be



Petunia and Ayuquailnguq didn't have to call long, because they were right next to each other. When they called out, Ayuquailnguq looked at Petunia and smiled like he was in love. They faced one another and stared into each other's eyes for a long time, just like all emperor penguins do when they find their mate. They knew they were the perfect mates for one another.

Chapter 12

At the end of the month, Petunia laid an egg and kept it warm between her stomach and her feet. She hadn't eaten in about two months, and most of her food had gone towards the baby and the hard work of laying an egg. She was starving and had lost a lot of weight. Petunia rolled the egg quickly towards Ayuquailnguq, and he pulled it under his stomach as fast as he could. As Ayuquailnguq took the egg, he was afraid he wouldn't take good care of it. He knew that if it stayed in the cold and snow too long, it would freeze and die.

Petunia joined the other women as they walked towards the sea. She looked back for one last time and called out to the flying penguin so he could remember her wonderful song through those long winter nights. Ayuquailnguq felt as lonely as he had years before, when he had travelled around the world searching for a place to belong. The days passed by, and a harsh blizzard came along. The penguins huddled together, trying to keep themselves and their eggs warm. While they were huddled, Ayuquailnguq thought about the egg and worried that the chick would have feathered wings instead of flippers, like he had when he was hatched. He wanted his chick to feel like it belonged.



Several weeks later, the eggs started to hatch. The shattering shells sounded like the ice breaking up in the summer—a crackling, echoing sound. As the other eggs hatched all around him, Ayuquailnguq stared at his own egg, hoping it would crack open before Petunia came back to feed it. Finally, Petunia and the hundreds of other female penguins came along and started calling out to their mates.

Ayuquailnguq was worried about his egg and was stressed about the little chick inside it. He had wanted it to hatch before Petunia came, and she was almost there. He panicked; He bent

over and began talking with the egg. "Please don't be dead! I want her to be proud of me... I mean us. Don't do this to me!"

Petunia came while he was talking to the unhatched egg. She looked beneath Ayuquailnguq's stomach and gasped, "What have you done to my darling baby?"

Ayuquailnguq whispered, "I'm sorry. I tried my best to take care of our chick."

Then suddenly Ayuquailnguq felt something shake beneath his stomach. There was tapping and cracking sound that made him smile. After some time, the baby penguin had hatched and was smiling up at his parents weakly. He seemed healthy and normal, like all the other baby penguins. Ayuquailnguq was relieved. He looked down at the chick as it waved hello at them with one flipper and giggled happily.

Just then, Petunia and Ayuquailnguq both spotted a single fluffy black feather under the chick's flipper. Petunia smiled.

The End

Ice E-Mystery

This book is one of a series of e-books resulting from a collaborative writing project between Australian and Alaskan school classes based around polar science. The ICE E-MYSTERY: Global student Polar e-books project ran through 2008/9 and involved over 400 students in 24 classes from these two countries.

The Ice e-Mystery Project explored polar science through an innovative approach to science, art and literacy education. Students from throughout Australia and North America worked together (paired classes across the hemispheres) to write and illustrate on-line e-books in a predominately mystery genre focused around the themes of polar science. Students were guided by Teacher Associates trained in Antarctic science, classroom teachers trained in the project methodology and polar sciences and resources from national research organisations such as the Australian Antarctic Division, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Antarctic related Cooperative Research Centres. Classroom activities were augmented by visits to museums, science organisations and contact with researchers in Antarctica.

A key outcome of the project was the development of an international learning community of school students, teachers, postgraduate students and scientists.

The project workspace can be viewed at www.iem.tmag.tas.gov.au where students drafted their collaborations and posted comments to each other on developmental ideas. The full range of e-books in the series is also viewable at this site.

The project was coordinated by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Key partners were the Australian Government, National Science Foundation (USA), University of Alaska (Fairbanks), the University of Tasmania and the Education Departments of Tasmanian, Queensland and Alaska.

Acknowledgements

Andy Baird	Project Coordinator
Sandy Zicus	Deputy Coordinator
Elena B. Sparrow	Alaskan Convener
Martha Kopplin	Deputy Alaska Convener
Alan Miller	Project liaison Alaska
Joel Pedro	Post Graduate Teacher Associate
Jacqui Foster	Post Graduate Teacher Associate
Alex Fraser	Post Graduate Teacher Associate
Alison Lester	Editor
Jess Atkinson	Graphic Designer
Brian Martin	Web Designer

© Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery 2009

This material has been developed as a part of the Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training as a part of the Boosting Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Teaching (BISTMT) Programme.

Tasmanian Museum
& Art Gallery



