

# The Kindergarten Chronicles

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## Informational Writing - A Structure for Beginning Writers

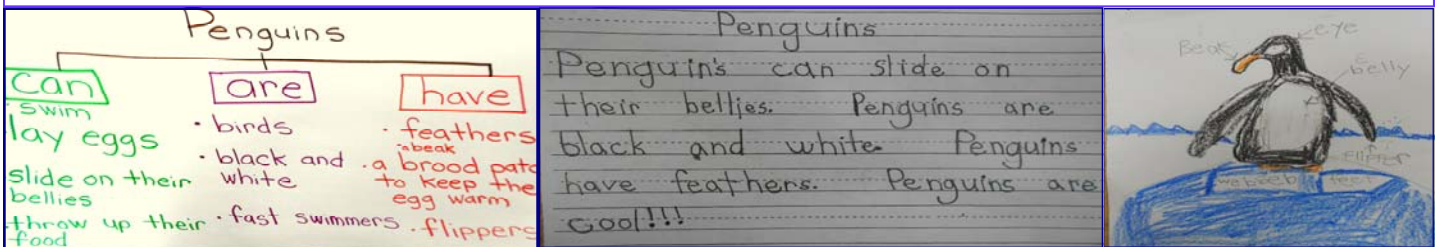
It's January! During the second trimester, students are to research an informational topic and write about it. Kindergarteners are curious by nature, so we have our work cut out for us. What a perfect time to teach a unit about penguins and polar bears. After gathering different levels of texts on penguins, I read different texts aloud to my students. We compared and contrasted fictional texts about penguins with informational texts about penguins. After I read several text types, we categorized the information we learned. We talked about what penguins can do and what they have on their bodies that assists them in living in Antarctica. During shared writing, we constructed a Tree Map, using information we learned. Using this structure as a scaffold, students were able to write complete sentences about penguins. In addition, I taught the students how to draw a diagram of a penguin and label the parts, an engaging way to teach about diagrams and labeling. After looking at pictures of penguins, the students drew their own penguins. The three pictures below show the progression of steps.

Next, we are going to follow this same structure and write about polar bears. This structure can be used with any informational topic and the connecting words at the top of the Tree Map "branches" can be varied (eat, live, etc.). I'm already thinking about groundhogs for February!

## Parent Engagement

Encourage parents to read texts with their children, specifically informational texts. Below are some questions parents can ask their children on the topic of the text they are reading.

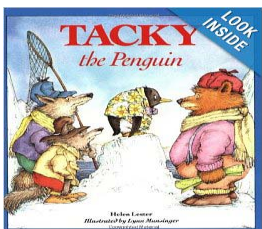
- \* What is the text mainly about?
- \* Can you retell some of the key details from the text?
- \* What is a word from the text that you don't know? Let's talk about what it means in the story.
- \* Who is the author of this text?
- \* Who is the illustrator?
- \* Can you show me the front cover, back cover, and title page of the book we are reading?



### Book Picks

*Tacky the Penguin* books by Helen Lester are a great addition to a penguin unit. This trimester, students are to compare and contrast the adventures of a character.

There are several books by this author that feature Tacky as the main character. The students love the humor of these books.



### Up on the Iceberg ("Up on the Housetop")

Into the ocean, penguins go.  
They spy seals way down below.

Zip through the water with no delay,  
Zigzagging penguins swim away.

Oh, oh, oh! Go penguins, go!  
Oh, oh, oh! Go penguins, go!

Leap to the iceberg,  
quick, quick, quick!

Back to the crèche to feed  
your chick.



RL.K.9 Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters.  
W.K.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects.

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