ANIMAL LEARNING CENTER · NOT CURRENTLY AT THE ZOO

AFRICAN PENGUIN

Spheniscus demersus

GRADES K–2

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
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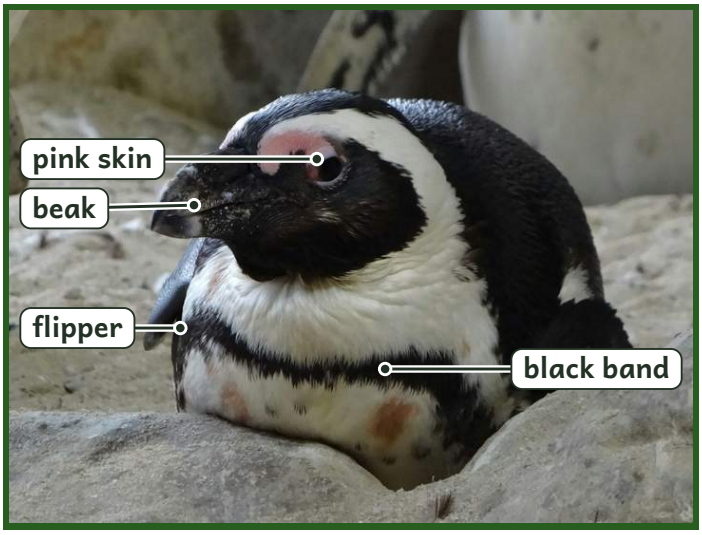
Teachers: read this page aloud, one part at a time (about 5 minutes). Children follow along and say the bold words.



An African penguin rests among rocks.

Its body

A penguin is a bird.
It cannot fly in the air.
It flies through water!
Thick feathers keep it warm.

Its home (habitat)

It lives on the coast of Africa.
It swims in the ocean.
This kind is in great danger.
Laws protect it.



■ Lives in parts of this area ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

Its food

K-LS1-1

It eats small fish.
It eats squid too.

Its babies (life cycle)

1-LS1-2

A baby penguin is a **chick**.
A mother lays 1 or 2 eggs.
Both parents keep the eggs warm.
A new chick is very small.

Fun facts

It calls like a donkey!
It is the only penguin from Africa.

Words to know

chick: a baby bird
coast: land next to the ocean
flipper: a stiff wing used for swimming

Talk about it

1-LS1-2

1. How does a penguin "fly" through water?
2. Who keeps the eggs warm?
3. What does a penguin sound like?

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/birds/african-penguin/ · **Sources:** IUCN Red List; BirdLife International; BirdLife South Africa; South African government; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Wilson (1985); Animal Diversity Web.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: K-LS1-1 (3.1.K.A) › Its food · **1-LS1-2** (3.1.1.B) › Its babies · Talk 2
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AFRICAN PENGUIN

Before and after you read

GRADES K–2

Page 2 of the African penguin fact sheet for grades K–2 · © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
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Name _____ **Date** _____

Before you read · 5 minutes

K-LS1-1 1-LS1-2

What do you think? Circle **YES** or **NO**.

1. African penguins fly in the air. **YES** **NO**
2. A penguin is a bird. **YES** **NO**
3. Both parents keep the eggs warm. **YES** **NO**
4. A penguin eats only grass. **YES** **NO**

Look closely · with a partner

Look at the photo on page 1. Check each one you see.

- ☐ beak
- ☐ flipper
- ☐ white feathers
- ☐ pink skin
- ☐ black band
- ☐ black feathers

Where does it live? Find the dark part of the map, then circle.

Africa · Asia · Europe · Australia

After you read · 10 minutes

Draw a penguin swimming in the water. Add a fish.

Draw here

A penguin can _____

I learned that _____

ADJUST IT Kindergarten: read everything aloud; children talk and draw, and an adult writes their words. **Grade 2:** children read page 1 on their own. **Grades 3–5:** use the regular African penguin sheet on Teacher Resources. **Second source:** read about this animal in your class database or a library book too, then ask what both said and what was new. **Answers:** 1 no, 2 yes, 3 yes, 4 no. Map answer: Africa.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/birds/african-penguin/ · Page 1 of this sheet has the words and picture this page refers to.
Science standards (NGSS · PA STEELS): K-LS1-1 (3.1.K.A) › Before 4 · **1-LS1-2** (3.1.1.B) › Before 3
Reading and writing, grade 1: Maryland and Delaware: RI.1.1 · RI.1.7 · RI.1.9 · W.1.8 · Pennsylvania: CC.1.2.1.B · CC.1.2.1.G · CC.1.2.1.I · CC.1.4.1.W
Reading, grade 2: Maryland and Delaware: RI.2.1 · Pennsylvania: CC.1.2.2.B
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