

MISSION LANGUAGE LAB

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2012

"Emperor Penguin: The World's Greatest Love Story" from VOA.



I'm Steve Ember. And I'm Faith Lapidus with EXPLORATIONS in VOA Special English.

Today, we tell about a very special bird called the emperor penguin. This bird struggles to survive in one of the most extreme climates in the world.

There are seventeen kinds of penguins in the world. All of them live in the southern hemisphere. Only a few species live on the continent of Antarctica at the bottom of the world. The emperor penguins are the largest. They are about one hundred centimeters tall and weigh about thirty kilograms. Their special method of mating makes them different from all other penguins.



For thousands of years the emperor penguins have lived on the freezing continent of Antarctica. These black and white birds live in large groups or colonies. There are about forty emperor penguin colonies on Antarctica. In total, there are about four hundred thousand birds.

These birds spend the summer swimming in the ocean in search of food such as fish and squid. Penguins are not able to fly, but they are excellent swimmers. They can dive as deep as four hundred and sixty meters and

hold their breath for up to twenty minutes. But when summer ends, so does this easy time spent by the water. The penguins jump out of the water and onto the ice. They know it is time to find a mate and reproduce.

(MUSIC)

In order to mate, the penguins must travel many kilometers inland from the ocean. They do this to find a safe area to spend the many months needed to produce and develop an egg. They must find an area with some shelter from the freezing winds.

WHAT'S NEW

10/1/14 - [The Mystery of Dreams](#) - VOA

10/2/14 - [The Lady or the Tiger](#) - VOA

g+ 10

WELCOME!

This website is dedicated to all learners of English as a Second Language. Here, you can learn grammar, conversation, reading, listening, and more. Every day, you'll find a new article in the "What's New" section. Next, you'll find links to the conversations, grammar practices, and stories. Visit us often. There's a lot to do right here. Also, your comments are always welcome.

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A MENU OF LINKS

These are some links to important indexes for convenient reference.

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[Exchanges Index](#)

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Hundreds of penguins walk in a single line for up to seventy kilometers to find a mating place. This trip is a long and cold one. Winter is beginning. The days are getting shorter and temperatures are quickly dropping. The trip takes many days. The birds must walk carefully on their short legs through icy areas. When their feet get tired, they slide themselves on their stomachs across the ice.

Once they arrive at the right place, the mating process begins. Males and females walk around and make singing noises as they decide on a mate. They must also memorize their mate's special song. Penguins are unusual because they stay with the same mate for the entire period of producing a baby penguin or chick.

After the female produces an egg, she must carefully slide it onto her feet. Then she must pass it to her mate. This can be a very difficult act. If the birds are not careful, the egg will fall on the freezing ice. If the egg touches the ice or breaks, the chick will die. All of their hard work will have been wasted. Once the female passes the egg to the male, he places it on his feet and protects it with his body. Both male and female penguins have a special place on their body to protect their young. A piece of skin under their stomachs forms a pocket or pouch where an egg or chick is protected from the cold.

The male penguin incubates the egg for about two months. This means that he keeps it warm while the baby penguin inside the egg develops.



During this time, the mothers must leave the colony and walk many kilometers back to the sea. The females are tired from mating and producing an egg. They are also starving from more than one month without food. During this period, female penguins can lose up to one-third of their body weight. Many do not survive the long walk back to the sea. The ones that do survive dive into the ocean to catch fish. They eat for several months to gain weight. They must also get food for their chicks.

While the mothers are feeding, the hundreds of male penguins work together to survive. They stand very close to one another to form a tight group. This helps them keep warm. They continuously change places. The colder penguins on the outside of the group move to the warmer places on the inside of the group.

(MUSIC)

Winters in Antarctica are difficult for the penguins. There are only a few hours of sunlight a day. Temperatures can drop to minus fifty degrees Celsius. Air masses called catabatic winds blow over the continent at speeds of up to two hundred kilometers per hour.

The penguins have developed special bodies to survive such freezing temperatures. They can control their body temperature with a special system of blood exchange. The centers of their bodies keep warm, while the outer parts of their bodies stay almost as cold as the outside temperatures.

Another way they survive the cold is by releasing a special oil from their skin. This oil helps waterproof the feathers that cover their bodies. A layer of air between their skin and the oil provides protection from the cold. Also, they have a thick layer of body fat that further protects them from the cold.

Two months later, the females return to the colony and must find their mates. Many of the chicks have hatched and come out of their eggs. The family is united for the first time. However, the father must leave immediately to go feed in the ocean. He has not eaten for more than three months and has lost a great deal of weight. Before he leaves, though, he must learn the voice of his chick. The chick also memorizes his father's voice. When the father returns, he must be able to identify his chick in order to bring it food.

(MUSIC)

The male and female penguins continue to take turns caring for their chick and bringing back food from the sea. When the chicks are about one month old, they start to spend time outside their parents' pouch. When they get bigger, the chicks stay together in large

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[New Mission Journal](#)

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LINKS TO ARTICLES

[ESL Note Pad](#)
 "The Extinct Woolly Mammoth" and other science news from VOA -

*This is SCIENCE IN THE NEWS, in VOA Special English. I'm Bob Doughty. And I'm Barbara ...

[Stories and Articles](#)
 "The First President of The United States" from VOA -
*Welcome to THE MAKING OF A NATION - American history in VOA Special English.The...

[ESL Listening](#)
 "The Mobile Phone Revolution" from VOA - *This is the VOA Special English
Technology Report. Falling prices are fueling growth in high-speed Internet services, espec...

[esl audio files](#)
 A Menu of Links -
"Blue Water Lillies" by Claude Monet, 1916
*These are some links to important indexes for convenient ...

[ESL Five to Nine](#)
 INDEX TO EXPLORATIONS -
- *Antarctica: Scientific Laboratory* -
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groups. Their parents still bring them food. But when they are about five months old, the chicks must feed themselves. They make their first trip to the ocean.

However, not all the chicks survive this long. About twenty-five percent die due to starvation or cold. Some chicks are hunted and killed by large birds called giant petrels. However, if the chicks survive their first year, they generally live through adulthood. When they reach the age of five years, it is time for the young penguins to mate. A new generation begins this special mating

process of travel and survival.

(MUSIC)

In two thousand five, a French filmmaker named Luc Jacquet released a film about these special birds. The film is called "March of the Penguins." It beautifully shows how the birds survive in the extreme environment of Antarctica. This rare look at their lives is truly special.

You can see the penguins walking across the white ice of Antarctica. Diving deep into the ocean waters. Moving their egg carefully from the mother's feet to the father's feet. Crowding together to keep warm in a snowstorm. Kissing their newly hatched chicks.

"March of the Penguins" is the first full-length film to show the life of the emperor penguin. The crew chose to film a colony of penguins that was near a scientific research center. This way, the filmmakers had a base where they could live. They were also able to cooperate with the nearby Institute for Polar Research.

Producing this film was very difficult. The movie crew had to survive the extreme cold for a whole year of filming. If the weather was too bad, they could not go outside and film. Also, trying to film the birds from very close up was not easy. The filmmakers had to be very careful not to harm the penguins. They made special devices that helped them get close to the penguins without interfering with them. Luc Jacquet even hired a specialist to film the underwater scenes.

"March of the Penguins" was difficult to make for other technical reasons. The crew had to have special cameras made that could work in extremely cold temperatures. Also, they could not watch what they had filmed. This is because they did not have the equipment to develop the film. So, they had to remember the details of every picture they took and hope they turned out well. When they finished filming, they had more than one hundred twenty hours of film.

Director Luc Jacquet says his film crew had to treat the penguins with care and consideration. He says his movie is a story of bravery and excitement. He also calls his movie about the emperor penguins one of the most beautiful love stories on Earth.

(MUSIC)

This program was written and produced by Dana Demange. I'm Faith Lapidus. And I'm Steve Ember. Join us again next week for EXPLORATIONS in VOA Special English.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. Emperor Penguins begin to mate and bear chicks _____ .

- a: during the winter
- b: at the end of summer
- c: during the summer
- d: at the end of spring

2. When a penguin father returns, he can find his chick by the chick's _____ .

- a: appearance
- b: flying movements
- c: song
- d: mother

Leader of the Lakota Sioux* - *Pocahontas: Native American Princess* - *Chief J...

American History in VOA

INDEXES TO PRONUNCIATION

Consonants for ESL Students



Consonant Index - *"Window Over a Garden" by Marc Chagall, 1917* Final Consonants - *Final "f"* * - Final "v"- Final "k"- Final "g"- Final "p"- Final "b"- Final "t"- ...

Vowels For ESL Students



INDEX OF THE VOWEL SOUNDS - Consult the Vowel Chart to see the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbol for these fifteen different vowel sounds. They are: - The F...

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Basic English Grammar



Present Tense of "be", Negative - *"At the Railway Station" Edouard Manet, 1877* *1. Tom tired, just hungry. answerisn't ... he...

ESL Grammar Practice



Hopes and Wishes - *"Gonconda" Rene Magritte, 1953* (Click on the picture to enlarge it) *A...

ESL Writing Practice



Simple Past and The Infinitive - *"The Seaweed Collectors" Paul Gauguin* *1. I to New York last year. (go) went2. I want there ...

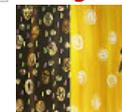
CONVERSATION PRACTICE

ESL CONVERSATION



Exchanges 8, Page 2 - *16.A: I like to go swimming.B: W...

Dialogue Workout



Dialogue Workout, 1 to 18 for Beginning Students - "Acrylic and Oil" by Hemi Bawa,

3. The word "hatch" means _____ .

- a: the mother brings out the egg
- b: the egg is protected by the parents
- c: the egg passes from father to mother
- d: the egg breaks and the chick is born

4. _____ are not a threat to newborn chicks.

- a: Giant petrels
- b: Winter storms
- c: Hungry fathers
- d: Freezing temperatures

5. Probably the least difficult part of producing "March of the Penguins" was _____ .

- a: editing the 120 hours of film
- b: getting close ups of the penguins
- c: shooting film during extreme cold
- d: shooting underwater scenes

6. Director Luc Jucquet calls "March of the Penguins" one of _____ love stories on earth.

- a: most beautiful
- b: the more beautiful
- c: the most beautiful
- d: the beautifulest

7. If chicks survive their first year, they _____ adulthood.

- a: generally live through
- b: might reach
- c: sometimes live through
- d: still might not reach

8. A special oil penguins release from their skin helps to _____ .

- a: keep their wings from becoming too stiff
- b: keep them from starving
- c: waterproof their feathers
- d: make their journey from the sea smoother

9. "Catabatic" is a type of _____ .

- a: penguin
- b: fish in the sea penguins catch
- c: very powerful wind
- d: extremely cold ice found on Antartica

10. While the mother penguins are feeding in the sea, the male penguins _____ .

- a: fly in search of warmer territory
- b: band together in a tight group to keep warm
- c: march to the sea
- d: fight each other over precious eggs

Luc Jacquet calls his movie about the emperor penguins one of the most beautiful love stories on Earth. Why does he call his movie a beautiful love story? Discuss this question with a friend or partner. Or, write your answer in the comment field at the end of this post.

Here is the trailer for the film, "March of the Penguins"

Contemporary Artist from India Click on the link to a Dialogue Workout. Each page has a recorder and a text. Click...

ESL GRAMMARTALK



GRAMMARTALK INDEX - * "The Promenade", Marc Chagall, 1917* * - Grammartalk

One, Page One - Contrast Present Simple Tense and Present Progressive Ten...

LANGUAGE LAB CLASSES

ESL FIVE



"Can a Woman Read a Man's Face?" from VOA - *This is SCIENCE IN ...

ESL SEVEN-EIGHT



"Music Around the Globe" from VOA - *Shangaan street dancer* ...

ESL THREE



English as a Second Language Videos - *Pamona Playing With Tadpoles, Picasso, 1954*

"It's and Its" Jennifer ESL
*"In and On" Two Prepositions of Time, Jennifer ESL * *"Past Tense Verb 'Be' Q...

MISSION LANGUAGE LAB BLOG LIST

Cool Stuff For ESL Students



Miles Davis "Kind of Blue" Full Album -

Listen and Read



"Betty Friedan Fought for Women's Rights" from VOA - *I'm Faith Lapidus. And I'm Steve

Em...

NEW MISSION JOURNAL



"This World We Live In" by Che'neka Wilson - *Thinking about who I am inside myself, not

knowing what to do in this crazy life, in this world to come. Seen things I never seen before, with m...

Reading Comprehension For ESL Students

- *This is Rich Kleinfeldt. And this is Sarah Long with THE MAKING OF A NATION, A VOA Special English prog...

teacher's corner

Fall 2014 - *8/21/14 -* *A