

Sample Pages from

**Objective Tests
for**

Mr. Popper's Penguins

By Richard and Florence Atwater

A 1939 Newbery Honor Book



A Teaching Pack

by Margaret Whisnant

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Mr. Popper's Penguins

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Chapter I *Stillwater*

Pages 3-8



Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Mr. Popper was a (A) bus driver, (B) gardener, (C) house painter.
- _____ 2. Mr. Popper was (A) sparkling clean and neat, (B) a rather untidy man, (C) always smiling and whistling as he walked along the street.
- _____ 3. As Mr. Popper made his way home on the late September afternoon, the children (A) smiled at him, (B) ran from him, for no one knew what went on inside his head, (C) paid no attention to him.
- _____ 4. No one guessed that one day Mr. Popper would be (A) a rich man, (B) the most famous person in the town of Stillwater, (C) the mayor of Stillwater.
- _____ 5. When Mr. Popper forgot what he was doing and painted a kitchen two colors, the other housewives (A) refused to hire him, (B) laughed at him every time they saw him, (C) admired it, and soon everybody in Stillwater had two-colored kitchens.
- _____ 6. Which of the following was **not** true of Mr. Popper? He (A) had been to several foreign countries, (B) had a wife and two children named Janie and Bill, (C) had never been out of Stillwater and was always dreaming of far-away countries.
- _____ 7. The thing that Mr. Popper regretted most of all was that he (A) had never seen the Poles, (B) did not become a famous explorer, (C) had never hunted tigers in India.
- _____ 8. Mr. Popper was an authority on (A) movies, (B) Polar explorers, (C) geography.
- _____ 9. Because it was September, Mr. Popper would have (A) more work to do than usual, (B) extra duties helping his children with school work, (C) no more work until spring.
- _____ 10. Mrs. Popper was worried about (A) money, (B) convincing Mr. Popper to redecorate the house, (C) not being able to keep Mr. Popper busy during the winter.

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Chapter II *The Voice in the Air*

Pages 9-14



Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Were the walls in the Popper living room at 432 Proudfoot Avenue hung with pictures from the *National Geographic Magazine*?
- _____ 2. Did Mrs. Popper work on her mending while Mr. Popper thought about the South Pole?
- _____ 3. Was Mr. Popper, like Mrs. Popper, worried that there would not be enough beans to last through the winter while he was out of work?
- _____ 4. Was Mr. Popper reading a book about the different people who had gone to the South Pole and what they had found there?
- _____ 5. Did Mr. Popper ever get tired of reading about the South Pole?
- _____ 6. Did Mrs. Popper think the South Pole must be boring because of all the ice and snow?
- _____ 7. Had Mrs. Popper gone to the Bijou with Mr. Popper to see the movies about the Drake Expedition?
- _____ 8. Did Mrs. Popper sometimes get rather cross when she was worried about money?
- _____ 9. Did Mr. Popper think the nicest part of the Antarctic was the penguins?
- _____ 10. To Mr. Popper, were penguins the funniest birds in the world and an animal he would like to have as a pet?
- _____ 11. Was Mrs. Popper willing to allow her children and her husband to have pets?
- _____ 12. Did Mrs. Popper agree with her husband that the penguins' habit of forcing one bird in the water to check for sea leopards showed that they were intelligent?

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Chapter III *Out of the Antarctic* Pages 15-21

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Because of the excitement of having Admiral Drake speak to him over the radio and not knowing what the Admiral's message meant, Mr. Popper did not sleep very well.
- _____ 2. As a way to pass the time, Mr. Popper repapered the living room while Mrs. Popper was away at the meeting of the Ladies' Aid and Missionary Society.
- _____ 3. When the expressman came to the door, Mrs. Popper was still away at her meeting and Jane and Bill had not come home from school.
- _____ 4. The large box that the expressman brought had traveled Air Express from Antarctica, and it was marked "Unpack at Once" and "Keep Cool."
- _____ 5. Opening the box, Mr. Popper had no idea that it contained the surprise from Admiral Drake.
- _____ 6. Part of the packing under the outer boards of the box was a layer of dry ice.
- _____ 7. The faint "Ork" that came from the box frightened Mr. Popper, for it was a noise he had never heard before.
- _____ 8. The penguin inside the large box held out its flippers and jumped over the packing debris.
- _____ 9. The penguin was about the size of a small child, but its markings made it look more like a little gentleman.

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Chapter V *Troubles with a Penguin*

Pages 31-36

canned shrimp
a five-dollar bill
ventilating holes
a handle
the service man
the policeman
Captain Cook
Mr. Popper



From the list above, choose the name or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **All answers will be used at least once. Some answers will be used more than once.**

- _____ 1. It made Mr. Popper sad to give this to the service man when he thought about how many beans it would have bought for his family.
- _____ 2. By the time he came to the back door, Captain Cook was going in and out of the refrigerator on his own.
- _____ 3. He walked over to the refrigerator service man and began to peck him curiously.
- _____ 4. The refrigerator service man came to 432 Proudfoot Avenue to put these in the refrigerator door.
- _____ 5. He stubbornly did not explain to the unsympathetic service man that he was going to keep a live penguin in the icebox.
- _____ 6. Inside the refrigerator, he curiously bit at the new handle and opened the door.
- _____ 7. Having been surprised by Captain Cook, he ran from the house leaving his tools behind.
- _____ 8. The service man picked up his toolbag and started to leave when Mr. Popper asked him to put one of these on the inside of the refrigerator door.
- _____ 9. Mr. Popper gave the service man the last one of these he had, and he was sure Mrs. Popper would be annoyed.
- _____ 10. Mrs. Popper went marketing for these for Captain Cook and wasn't home when the service man came.

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Whole Book Test

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank.

- _____ 1. Mr. Popper lived at 432 Proudfoot Avenue in Stillwater and worked as a (A) grocery clerk, (B) mailman, (C) housepainter.
- _____ 2. Mr. Popper loved books, movies, and thinking about (A) the North and South Poles, (B) early American explorers, (C) geography.
- _____ 3. Which of the following was **not** true of Mr. Popper? He (A) was exceptionally neat, (B) had a wife and two children, (C) was absent-minded.
- _____ 4. Which of the following was **not** true of Mrs. Popper? She (A) worried about money, (B) thought it would be fun to have a penguin as a pet, (C) liked to keep her house tidy.
- _____ 5. Admiral Drake spoke to Mr. Popper through the radio because (A) one of the men in the expedition was from Stillwater, (B) Mrs. Popper had written a letter to him about her husband, (C) Mr. Popper had written him a letter.
- _____ 6. The penguin Admiral Drake sent to Mr. Popper came from (A) the North Pole, (B) the South Pole, (C) the southern tip of South America.
- _____ 7. Mr. Popper named the penguin Captain Cook because (A) the sound it made sounded like "Cook," (B) the bird had been the explorer's pet, (C) it seemed to prefer the kitchen to any other room in the Popper's house.
- _____ 8. In order to give Captain Cook a comfortable place to live, Mr. Popper (A) had enough ice delivered to fill the bathtub, (B) built a swimming pool in the back yard and had it filled with ice and fish, (C) had ventilating holes and an inside handle put on the refrigerator door.
- _____ 9. When he called City Hall to see if he needed a license to keep a penguin, Mr. Popper (A) was told he didn't, (B) was transferred from place to place and wound up with the Automobile License Bureau, (C) had to take the bird before a judge.



About Your Novel Teaching Pack

The primary goal in creating the teaching packs for children’s novels is to provide a **classroom-ready**, non-threatening method for checking student comprehension and stretching thinking skills. **When used as a basic guide for teaching a novel, the materials offer many and varied opportunities for learning.**

Use your teaching pack as a guide and lead your students into discovering new ideas about

THE PLOT

Each test page is actually an outline of the plot. In your teaching pack, the chain of related events that tell the story has been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of questions. Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot; and consequently **comprehend** the story. This “plot rhythm” is the basic structure of the tests.

To further your students’ understanding of plot, try the following activities:

Summarizing the Story: Using only the chapter questions as a guide, have your students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven. For twenty questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Reporting the News: Have students write a newspaper article, based on the events from a set of questions, and add the *who, what, when, where, why* format. Some needed information may be located in previous chapters.

Twisting the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, or a different answer—and explain how changing a single (or several) events would change the story. To further illustrate the rhythm of a good story, try changing the answers to one complete set of questions. Your students will see how difficult, if not impossible, it is to tell a sensible story from a tangled set of events.

THE CHARACTERS

Questions that illustrate character motivation and personality are purposely included. Too often, when they are asked to tell what kind of person a story character is, the only answer many of our students can muster is “nice.”

In your efforts to remove “nice” from your students’ literary vocabulary, try this idea:

Character Charts: Display individual charts for the main characters. As the chapters are read, record **facts, behaviors, or events** that relate to the each character. Then connect the items with several appropriate words such as **empathetic, brave, calloused, bold, untrustworthy**, etc. The teacher can take the lead by contributing the first few words and then assigning the task of identifying more terms to students. Record the word collections on the charts with the story facts.

This information is a valuable student resource when displayed in the room for all to see and use during a writing assignment. In creating and using character charts, students will soon begin writing more fluently and insightfully about story personalities.

Use the charts to encourage your students to try some “predicting” or “detective” writing about what the character(s) might do next or what might have happened after the story ended. Let the charts help your students recognize **CHARACTER CHANGE (dynamics)**.

Another fun activity with the charts is to match a book personality with a zodiac sign. Students must justify their reason for thinking a character is a particular sign by citing his/her behaviors, words, reactions to situations, etc. that prove the match.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

(Implied Meaning)

Because the primary goal for the objective questions is **basic comprehension**, items requiring a student to **interpret** an event or a character’s behavior are not included. Always included, however, are questions that *establish the existence of a story component carrying an implied meaning.*

MAKING PREDICTIONS

(Recognizing Story Clues)

Authors subtly place clues in the story line giving the reader hints as to what is about to happen. Like the implied meaning, these clues are brought to the reader's attention in the form of a question. Once a student learns to spot the gems, his/her ability to comprehend and enjoy a story tends to leap forward.

Use "thinking-out-loud" class discussions to list all the possible meanings of the clue questions. Have your student write their individual predictions (no sharing or telling), store the papers until the novel is finished, and then retrieve them for reading. Sometimes, a wrong prediction makes a story as good as the original.

OTHER FUNCTIONS

The objective test pages are excellent discussion guides for both whole groups and small groups. They work well as homework reading guides and as conferencing tools. They are also useful management tools for teachers who wish to use multiple titles in one classroom.

IMPROVING/DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

Rather than always requiring your students to answer test questions on a printed page, surprise them (and save paper!!) by occasionally doing the test orally.

Try this technique:

Student Rules for an Oral Test:

The teacher will read each question *two times*. No comments or questions that interrupt this initial phase of the test are allowed.

When all questions have been read, individual students may ask for repeats of any question he/she wishes to hear again.

No interruptions/comments during the re-reading part of the test.

Teacher Rules for an Oral Test:

The teacher will read each question *two times*. Except to remind students that a re-reading phase will follow after the last question, he/she will not respond to comment/question during this period.

The teacher will repeat **any** and **all** questions (even if it results in reading the same question multiple times).

(The second teacher rule is a *vital* part of the exercise. Asking for multiple repeats of a question does not mean students aren't paying attention. It does indicate their desire to *understand* and *answer* the question correctly.)

As students become more comfortable and experienced with oral test-taking, the number of requests for repeated questions will diminish. An added bonus to this technique is that skills learned in these testing periods tend to translate into other situations where teacher-talking and student-listening are required components of learning.

Final Note

The Novel Teaching Packs are designed for use as supplementary material that supports a total reading program. It is my goal to provide busy teachers with a classroom-ready, practical resource loaded with motivational and learning opportunities for their students. It is my hope that your purchase will prove to be a hard-working instructional component for years to come. Thanks for choosing one of my products for your classroom.



Margaret Whisnant, Author