



Compare and Contrast

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

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When we **compare** two things, we tell how they are *alike*.

When we **contrast** two things, we tell how they are *different*.  
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As you read the story, think about how different types of penguins are *alike*, and how they are *different*.

Penguins Large and Small

Penguins are flightless birds—in the air that is. In the water, they flap their wings and ‘fly’ along at speeds of up to 20 miles per hour. They can dive down more than 1000 feet. Penguins spend about half of their time in the water and the other half on land. They can stay underwater for up to 20 minutes at a time before leaping out of the water to get a gulp of air. Their coloring provides protection in the water. From below, their white bellies blend in with the sky above. From above, their black backs blend in with the dark ocean. Penguins can even drink sea water. They have a special gland that takes out the salt.

Penguins are well prepared for living in cold water and cold air. They have a thick layer of fat under their skin to keep them warm. They also have two layers of feathers. In the water, swimming helps to keep them warm. On land, they huddle together in huge groups to keep each other warm. Since it is warmest on the inside, the young penguins are given this spot. The others take turns on the cold outside rim of the huddle.

These lovable birds can often be seen diving off a cliff into the water, then jumping back out, climbing back up, and diving off again. It looks like a game, but it is also an easy way to spot and catch fish. Penguins also look like they are playing when they go sledding across the ice and snow on their bellies. Actually, it is a faster and easier to travel, instead of walking.

Many types of penguins can be found in Antarctica and other countries in the Southern Hemisphere. The largest type is the Emperor Penguin, which is about 4 feet tall and weighs about 90 pounds. The Emperor Penguin’s facial markings give it a dignified look. These penguins do not build nests. Instead, to locate family members, they use a complex set of calls. Babies, called chicks, also use these calls to beg for food. When a female lays her eggs, the male watches over it until it hatches. The males gather in large groups, with the eggs at their feet. They stay with the eggs for two months until they hatch, without eating a single meal. Once the eggs have hatched, the females come back and take care of the chicks.

The smallest type of penguin in the Antarctic region is the Adelie Penguin. It is about 2 ½ feet tall, and weighs about 10 pounds. Its body is wide, making it look somewhat chubby. Female Adelie Penguins make nests for their eggs by digging a hole in the ice and lining it with rocks. Male Adelie Penguins give females rocks as gifts. The male and female take turns watching over the eggs until they hatch, and then taking care of the chicks.

All penguins are extremely social and very curious. They do not seem to be afraid of humans. Explorers who have traveled in Antarctica with dogsleds report that even though the harnessed dogs go wild at the sight of a penguin, the penguin or group of penguins will waddle right up to the dogs. Then the birds squawk and shake their heads, as if to say, “What do all you ridiculous things want?”

Some of these details are true of just one type of penguin. Some are true of both types. Some are not true of either type. Read each detail, and select the best answer.

1. ...coloring provides protection on land
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguins
 - D. Neither type of penguins

2. ...can drink sea water
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

3. ...dive off cliffs, and slide across ice and snow on their bellies
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

4. ...the female makes a nest for her eggs
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

5. ...facial markings give it a dignified look
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

6. ...looks a little bit chubby
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

7. ...the male takes care of the eggs until they hatch
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

8. ...do not seem to be afraid of humans
 - A. Emperor Penguins only
 - B. Adelie Penguins only
 - C. Both types of penguin
 - D. Neither type of penguin

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9. What is one other detail that is *alike* or *different* about the two types of penguin?
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## Answer Key

1. D
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. A
8. C
9. Accept any reasonable response.