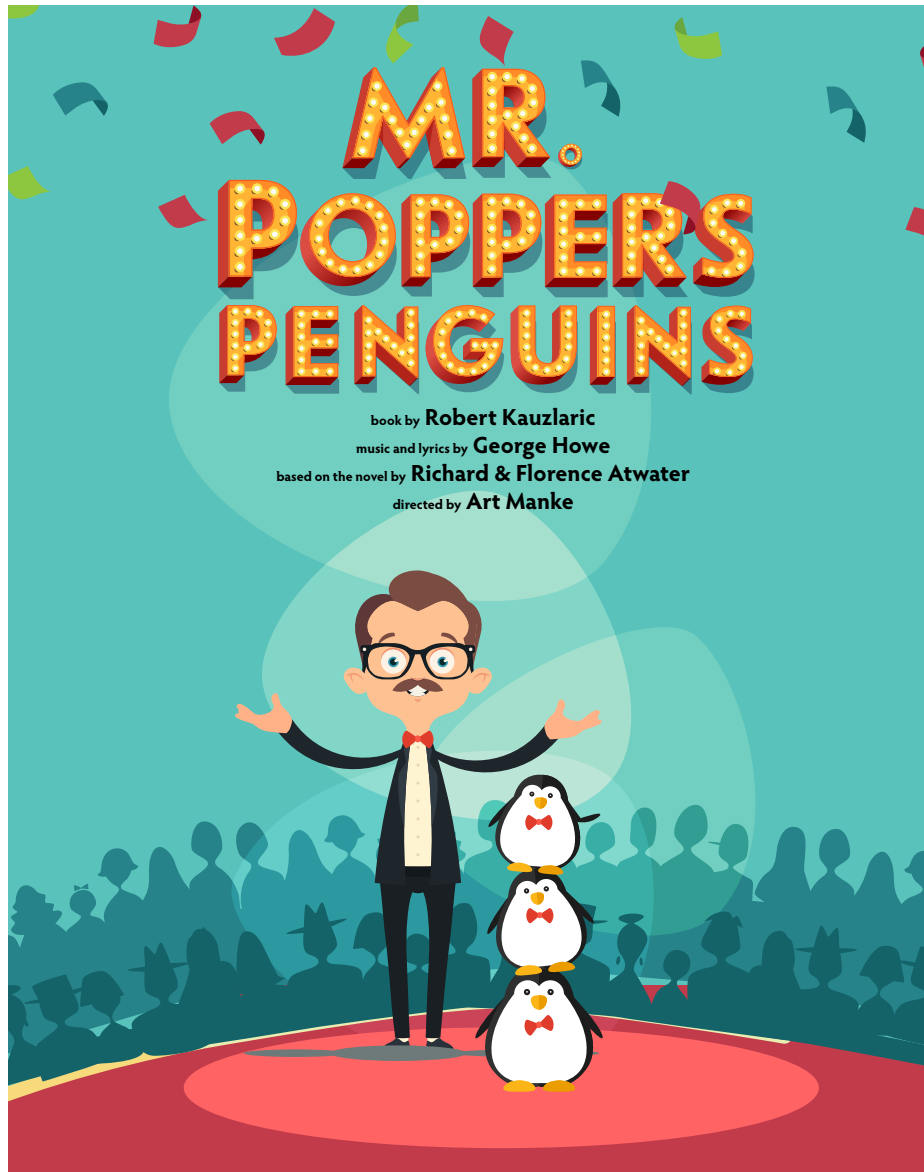


South Coast Repertory

STUDY GUIDE



Prepared by Luke D. White

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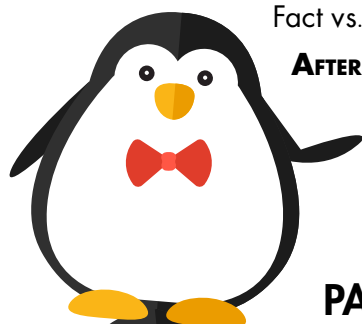
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Part I: The Play

THE CHARACTERS

People

Mr. Popper – A painter and interior decorator; a dreamer and a romantic

Mrs. Popper – A homemaker and part-time bookkeeper; a realist and a caretaker

Admiral Drake – A famous explorer, not particularly science-minded

Mr. Greenbaum – A big-shot in the entertainment business, rather self-important

Sven Svenson – A big, swanky Swedish entertainer and thug

Mr. Johnson – A friendly neighbor

Mrs. Callahan – A fussy neighbor

Animals

Captain Cook – A male penguin

Greta – A female penguin

Nelson, Columbus, Louisa, Jenny, Scott, Magellan, Adelina, Isabella, Ferdinand and **Victoria** – Baby penguins

Steffan – An argumentative seal

Other People

Delivery Guy, Barber, Gentleman, Reporter, Policeman, Curator, Bus Driver, Passenger, Theater Manager and **Copper**

THE STORY

In the town of Stillwater, at the end of a late September day in 1937, Mr. Popper is finishing up a painting job, but would rather be having an adventure in Antarctica. Mrs. Popper awaits his arrival at home, concerned about how much money they have since winter is coming and Mr. Popper will soon be out of painting work until the spring. When he finally arrives home, she tries to discuss the matter with him, but he would rather discuss the South Pole. Mr. Popper suddenly remembers that, on this very evening, the famous Admiral Drake is broadcasting on the radio from his Antarctic Expedition. He tunes in just in time to hear Admiral Drake reply to a letter Mr. Popper recently sent him. Shocked and elated, Mr. and Mrs. Popper hear the admiral tell him to “watch for a surprise!”

The next morning, a deliveryman arrives with a large box shipped all the way from Antarctica. Mr. Popper opens the box, revealing a real live penguin who utters an “Ork!” at him. With great curiosity, the penguin begins to explore the house, knocking some things over here and there. Mr. Popper takes the excited penguin for a stroll through the neighborhood, passing by several confused neighbors. Mrs. Popper arrives home later that day and meets the penguin, who greets her with an outstretched flipper and



an “Oook!” She says it sounds like he’s saying “Cook,” so Mr. Popper suggests they call him Captain Cook after the famous English explorer. Captain Cook then explores the icebox and decides to curl up there for the night.

A police officer comes by the next day, hearing that a penguin has taken up residence at the home. He tells the Poppers that they must pay an exotic livestock fee down at City Hall. Between the fee, all the fish needed to feed Captain Cook and the ice to keep him cool, Mrs. Popper begins to worry about their finances. She puts her worry aside though and, together with her husband, helps Captain Cook build his rookery, or nest.

A month passes. Though Mr. and Mrs. Popper have taken great measures to keep Captain Cook comfortable, they see that he is not well and they write to the curator at a nearby aquarium for advice. The curator believes Captain Cook is suffering from loneliness and sends them a female penguin named Greta to keep him company. They get along so well that, by December, Mr. & Mrs. Popper find Greta nesting on top of ten eggs, which hatch on Christmas.

Elated as they are, the fear about how they will support their growing family returns. Mr. Popper wonders if maybe they ought to sell the penguins, but Mrs. Popper argues that families need to stick together. She says that if seals can be trained to perform in theatres, then penguins must be able to as well. So, with determination and hard work, Mr. and Mrs. Popper train their penguins to perform a routine filled with fun tricks.

Soon after, music hall mogul Artie Greenbaum visits the town of Stillwater in search of exciting new vaudeville acts to take on the road—vaudeville was like a professional talent show, with a variety of different

types of acts. The Poppers and their penguins head to the local theatre to audition. When they arrive, they find the theatre manager in a panic because the last act of the matinee performance has failed to arrive. Mr. Greenbaum suggests they let the penguins perform for the audience as their audition. The manager and Poppers agree and the audience goes wild for the act. Mr. Greenbaum offers them a contract immediately after and the Popper’s Performing Penguins set out on a whirlwind national tour.

Months of travel and performing pass by. Mr. and Mrs. Popper find themselves no longer troubled by money problems, but they are growing tired of life on the road and are concerned for their penguins. They set matters aside for their big performance at the Royal Theater in Gargantuanberg. Unfortunately, Mr. Popper tells the cab driver to take them to the Regal Theater by mistake. At the Regal, they encounter Sven Svenson, who is there with his trained seals to perform their act. A chase ensues throughout the theatre between the seals, the penguins, and their owners. Finally, a police officer shows up to arrest Mr. Popper for causing the commotion.

At the jail, Admiral Drake comes to the rescue, offering to take Mr. Popper’s penguins on an expedition to establish a new breed in the North Pole. Then Mr. Greenbaum arrives to offer Mr. Popper’s penguins a film deal in Hollywood. In the end, Mr. and Mrs. Popper decide to do what is best for the penguins. They agree to let Mr. Greenbaum shoot a documentary about their penguins’ journey back to their home in the South Pole led by Admiral Drake. They all set off on their Antarctic adventure.

GOING BY THE BOOK: AN EXCERPT FROM *MR. POPPER’S PENGUINS*

Chapter III: Out of the Antarctic

WHAT WITH THE excitement of having the great Admiral Drake speak to him over the radio, and his curiosity about the Admiral’s message to him, Mr. Popper did not sleep very well that night. He did not see how he could possibly wait to find out what the Admiral meant. When morning came, he was almost sorry that he had nowhere to go, no houses to paint, no rooms to paper. It would have helped pass the time.

“Would you like the living room papered over?” he asked Mrs. Popper. “I have quite a lot of Paper Number 88, left over from the Mayor’s house.”

“I would not,” said Mrs. Popper firmly. “The paper on now is plenty good enough. I am going to the first meeting of the Ladies’ Aid and Missionary Society today and I don’t want any mess around to clean up when I get home.”

“Very well, my love,” said Mr. Popper meekly and he settled down with his pipe, his globe, and his book of

Antarctic Adventures. But somehow, as he read today, he could not keep his mind on the printed words. His thoughts kept straying away to Admiral Drake. What could he have meant by a surprise for Mr. Popper?

Fortunately for his peace of mind, he did not have so very long to wait. That afternoon, while Mrs. Popper was still away at her meeting, and Janie and Bill had not yet come home from school, there was a loud ring at the front door.

“I suppose it is just the postman. I won’t bother to answer it,” he said to himself.

The bell rang again, a little louder this time. Grumbling to himself, Mr. Popper went to the door.

It was not the postman who stood there. It was an expressman with the largest box Mr. Popper had ever seen.

“Party by the name of Popper live here?”

“That’s me.”

“Well, here’s the package that’s come from Air Express all

the way from Antarctica. Some journey, I'll say."

Mr. Popper signed the receipt and examined the box. It was covered all over with markings. "Unpack At Once," said one. "Keep Cool," said another. He noticed that the box was punched here and there with air holes.

You can imagine that once he had the box inside the house, Mr. Popper lost no time in getting the screw driver, for by this time, of course, he had guessed that it was the surprise from Admiral Drake.

He had succeeded in removing the outer boards and part of the packing, which was a layer of dry ice, when from the depths of the packing case he suddenly heard a faint "Ork." His heart stood still. Surely he had heard that sound before at the Drake Expedition movies. His hands were trembling so that he could scarcely lift off the last of the wrappings.

There was not the slightest doubt about it. It was a penguin.

Mr. Popper was speechless with delight.

But the penguin was not speechless. "Ork," it said again, and this time it held out its flippers and jumped over the packing debris.

It was a stout little fellow about two and a half feet high. Although it was about the size of a small child, it looked much more like a little gentleman, with its smooth white waistcoat in front and its long black tailcoat dragging a little behind. Its eyes were set in two white circles in its black head. It turned its head from one side to the other, as first with one eye and then with the other, it examined Mr. Popper.

Mr. Popper had read that penguins are extremely curious, and he soon found that this was true, for stepping out, the visitor began to inspect the house. Down the hall it went and into the bedrooms, with its strange, pompous little strut. When it, or he – Mr. Popper had already begun to think of it as he – got to the bathroom, it looked around with a pleased expression on its face.

"Perhaps," thought Mr. Popper, "all that white tiling reminds him of the ice and snow at the South Pole. Poor thing, maybe he's thirsty."

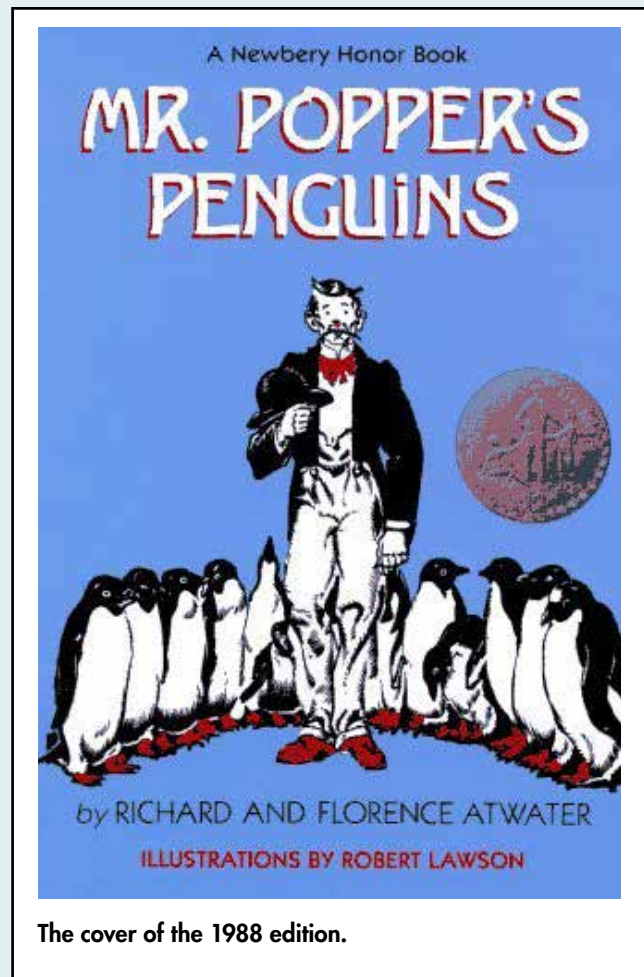
Carefully Mr. Popper began to fill the bathtub with cold water. This was a little difficult because the inquisitive bird kept reaching over and trying to bite the faucets with its sharp red beak. Finally, however, he succeeded in getting the tub all filled. Since the penguin kept looking over, Mr. Popper picked it up and dropped it in. The penguin seemed not to mind.

"Anyway, you're not shy," said Mr. Popper. "I guess you've got sort of used to playing around with those explorers at the Pole."

When he thought the penguin had enough of a bath, he drew out the stopper. He was just wondering what to do next when Janie and Bill burst in from school.

"Papa," they shouted together at the bathroom door. "What is it?"

"It's a South Pole penguin sent to me by Admiral



Drake."

"Look!" said Bill. "It's marching."

The delighted penguin was indeed marching. With little nods of his handsome black head he was parading up and down the inside of the bathtub. Sometimes he seemed to be counting the steps it took – six steps for the length, two steps for the width, six steps for the length again, and two more for the width.

"For such a big bird he takes awfully small steps," said Bill.

"And look how his little black coat drags behind him," said Janie.

But the penguin was tired of marching. This time, when it got to the end of the tub, it decided to jump up the slippery curve. Then it turned, and with outstretched flippers, tobogganed down on its white stomach. They could see that those flippers, which were black on the outside, like the sleeves of a tailcoat, were white underneath.

"Gook! Gook!" said the penguin, trying its new game again and again.

"What's his name, Papa? Asked Janie.

"Gook! Gook!" said the penguin, sliding down once more on his glossy white stomach.

"It sounds like 'Cook,'" said Mr. Popper. "Why, that's it, of course. We'll call him Cook—Captain Cook."

MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT: ROBERT KAUZLARIC

Robert Kauzlaric is a playwright, director, actor, musician, proud member of the respected Lifeline Theatre Artistic Ensemble in Chicago and an artistic associate of the Michigan Shakespeare Festival. He has written over a dozen theatrical adaptations which have been produced all across the U.S., as well as in England, Ireland, and Canada. They include the Lifeline productions of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (Non-Equity Jeff Awards: Best Production—Play and New Adaptation), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Non-Equity Jeff nomination: New Adaptation), *Neverwhere* (Non-Equity Jeff Award: New Adaptation), *The Moonstone*, *The Woman in White*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *Northanger Abbey* for the MainStage; and adapted *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!*, *Flight of the Dodo*, *The 13 Clocks*, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, *Lions in Illyria* and *Mr. Popper's Penguins* for the company's KidSeries.



Robert Kauzlaric



George Howe

MEET THE COMPOSER AND LYRICIST: GEORGE HOWE

George Howe is a composer, lyricist and musician based in Chicago. His credits include five musicals in a Click, Clack, Moo series; *Duck for President*; *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*; *The Emperor's Groovy New Threads*; and *Brave Potatoes*. His musical *Arnie the Doughnut* was chosen for the 2012 New York Musical Theatre Festival. He received both a Joseph Jefferson Citation and After Dark Award for Best New Musical for *Queen Lucia*. His musical *Sleeping Ugly* won an After Dark Award in 2006 for Best Original Score. He has been a member of the Chicago Cabaret Professionals since 2000 and is an adjunct faculty member at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University and at Columbia College.

MEET THE AUTHORS: RICHARD AND FLORENCE ATWATER

Richard Atwater (1892-1948), born Frederick Mund Atwater, met Florence Hasseltine Carroll (1896-1979) at the University of Chicago when she took a Classical Greek undergraduate course he was teaching as a graduate student. The two married in 1921. Richard enjoyed a career as a book editor, journalist and columnist for the *Chicago Evening Post* and *Daily News*. He completed his first children's book in 1931, *Doris and the Trolls*, followed by a children's operetta, *The King's Sneezes*, and the unfinished manuscript of *Ork! The Story of Mr. Popper's Penguins*, before suffering a stroke, which left him unable to write. Florence, having earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in French literature, supported their family, including their two children, by teaching high school English, French and Latin. She also began writing for *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic* before completing her husband's manuscript and publishing *Mr. Popper's Penguins* in 1938. It quickly became a national bestseller, earned several awards, including the Newbery Honor, and was translated into many languages.



Richard and Florence Atwater

Part II: Classroom Activities

BEFORE THE SHOW

1. Have your students read Richard and Florence Atwater's novel *Mr. Popper's Penguins* independently or aloud in class.
 - a. Ask the students to chart the story through four major plot points.
 - i. What do we learn in the introduction?
 - ii. When does the action begin?
 - iii. What is the climax?
 - iv. What is the resolution?
 - b. Ask the students to identify the story's themes and underlying messages.
 - c. Ask the students to identify what is unusual, funny, or fantastic about the story.
2. Mr. Popper is a man who often is caught dreaming about far-away places, but with hard work and determination, his dreams come true and he gets to sail off to Antarctica with his penguins. Either as a class discussion or writing assignment, ask your students:
 - a. How did Mr. Popper achieve his dreams?
 - b. What are some of the biggest dreams you have?
 - c. Which of those dreams do you think you could make come true and how would you do it?
3. Mr. Popper names his penguins after a few famous explorers and pioneers, including Captain James Cook, Horatio Nelson, Christopher Columbus, Louise Arner Boyd, Jenny Darlington, Robert Falcon Scott and Ferdinand Magellan. Start by defining what it means to be an explorer or pioneer. Then have the students research one of the penguins' namesakes or a famous explorer or pioneer of their own choosing. Have them present their research to the class. For extra enrichment, have them present their research as their chosen person, encouraging the use of costumes, different voices and gestures.
4. In the novel, a veterinary who checks up on a sick Captain Cook tells Mr. Popper, "...I am afraid it is a hopeless case. This kind of bird was never made for this climate, you know. I can see that you have taken good care of him, but an Antarctic penguin can't thrive in Stillwater." With this in mind, have the students discuss the ethics of keeping animals. Use the following questions as conversation starters:
 - a. What do humans need to live healthy and happy lives?
 - b. What do animals or pets need to live healthy and happy lives?
 - c. What are the similarities? What are the differences?
 - d. If we take animals out of the wild as pets or keep them in zoos, what do we have to do to keep them healthy and happy? How does that change if the animal naturally lives in a desert, tundra or rainforest?
 - e. What would a zoo displaying humans be like? What would the pros and cons be of living in a human zoo?
5. The stage version of *Mr. Popper's Penguins* is a musical adaptation. Start by defining the word adaptation.
 - a. Ask the students to provide examples of an adaptation they are familiar with between literature, theatre, film, television, music, theme parks, video games, etc. and identify how the story changes between each medium.
 - b. Ask the students if they have ever seen a musical. Discuss how actors, music, dance, costumes, sets and lights might help tell the story of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*.
 - c. Puppets and puppeteers will bring the penguins in the play to life. What could the puppets look like? How could they move? Have the students design their own penguin puppets.
 - d. Now, have the students adapt something of their own!
 - i. Have them provide a detailed description of the original story and how it is told through its specific medium.
 - ii. Next, have them describe how they would adapt it into a new medium. How might the story change? What might stay the same? What would the challenges be and how might they be solved?
 - iii. Finally, have them provide a small sample of their imagined adaptation. This could be a short scene read or performed, a short film, song lyrics, storyboard sketches, concept art, etc.
6. Discuss all the different jobs involved in bringing a production like *Mr. Popper's Penguins* to life. Have students research the occupations on this list and share what they find with the class.
 - a. Actor
 - b. Director
 - c. Playwright
 - d. Composer
 - e. Choreographer
 - f. Costume/Set/Lighting designer
 - g. Stage manager
 - h. Stage crew

AMERICAN HISTORY IN MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS

Mr. *Popper's Penguins* takes place in 1937, a time when America was still struggling to overcome difficulties caused by the Great Depression. The Great Depression occurred after the stock market crashed in 1929. Businesses failed, many people lost their jobs and many families became very poor. Even before Captain Cook arrives, we see the Popper family worrying about having enough money for food and whether they can keep their home. It was a common struggle for American families at the time.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who served three terms and began a fourth from 1933 to 1945, developed a program called the New Deal that helped strengthen the country's economy. Under this New Deal, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created to put many unemployed Americans back to work. Early in the play, we see Mrs. Popper try to get work with the WPA. Unfortunately, only men were allowed to complete most of the work available which included heavy manual labor building public roads, buildings and parks.

There are many structures built by the WPA left in Orange County that you can visit today. Some of these include Anaheim and

Laguna Beach High School; Newport Beach Elementary School; many of the elementary, middle and high schools in Long Beach, as well as its municipal airport; Hart Park and the Plaza Station Post Office in Orange; and the Police Department and Museum Center in Fullerton. The WPA also supported many artistic projects, including beautiful murals which can be seen at the airport, Main Library and Harvey Milk Promenade in Long Beach.



Dedicated as Fullerton's City Hall in July 1942 and now occupied by the Fullerton Police Department, it is one of the most dramatic and impressive examples of WPA architecture in Orange County.

MR. POPPER'S DOLLAR WORDS

Dollar words are interesting words that are worth more than other words because they are descriptive and specific. Match these dollar words with their definitions and then listen for them during the performance!

Word	Definition
1. Antarctica	a. Something foreign or unusual
2. Aquarium	b. A commitment to achieving something even though it is difficult
3. Believe	c. A trip to explore a distant place and do research
4. Curiosity	d. A flightless, aquatic bird that lives in and around the South Pole
5. Dedication	e. Something one can learn to do extremely well with practice
6. Determination	f. A place where fish and other aquatic animals are kept for people to view and study
7. Exotic	g. Something that is new, different, and interesting
8. Expedition	h. To accept something as true
9. Explorer	i. The ice-covered continent surrounding the South Pole
10. Novelty	j. Something one does naturally well, without much practice
11. Patron	k. A person who gives money and support to an explorer, artist, or organization
12. Penguin	n. A feeling of strong support for someone or something
13. Pioneer	o. Unusual, not typical, one of a kind
14. Skill	p. A person who travels to new places in search of geographical or scientific information
15. Talent	q. A desire to learn more about something or someone
16. Unique	r. A person who develops a new way of doing something or is one of the first people to live in a new place

Answers on page 16.

FACT VS. FICTION OF POPPER'S PENGUINS

Mr. Popper's Penguins: Proper Pets?

A live action film adaptation of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, starring Jim Carrey, opened in 2011. The film's plot differs from the book's, but both versions contain plenty of adorable penguin antics. This *National Geographic* article looks at what the film got right about penguin behavior--and what is a fun fantasy.

by Alexandra Tilsey

Families are flocking to *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, which grossed \$18.2 million in its opening weekend. The film, based loosely on a 1930s children's book by Richard and Florence Atwater, stars Jim Carrey as Tom Popper, a businessman whose life is thrown off course when he receives six Gentoo penguins in the mail. He hates them at first, but soon bonds with the creatures, who help him realize there are more important things in life than work.

It's hard to watch Carrey's waddling co-stars—apparently, at least eight real, trained penguins were involved—without entertaining the thought that a penguin would make a great pet (if that was legal). But would they? We asked Dyan deNapoli, aka “The Penguin Lady,” who worked with them for nine years at the New England Aquarium and wrote the book *The Great Penguin Rescue*.

She cleared up a few misconceptions in the film:

- Mr. Popper's penguins arrive in a wooden crate filled with dry ice. Seems easy enough, but you can't really ship a penguin like that. At the very least, deNapoli says, they would need ventilation, and if it's a long trip, you might even need to ride along in the cargo plane, making sure the animal is hydrated and cared for.

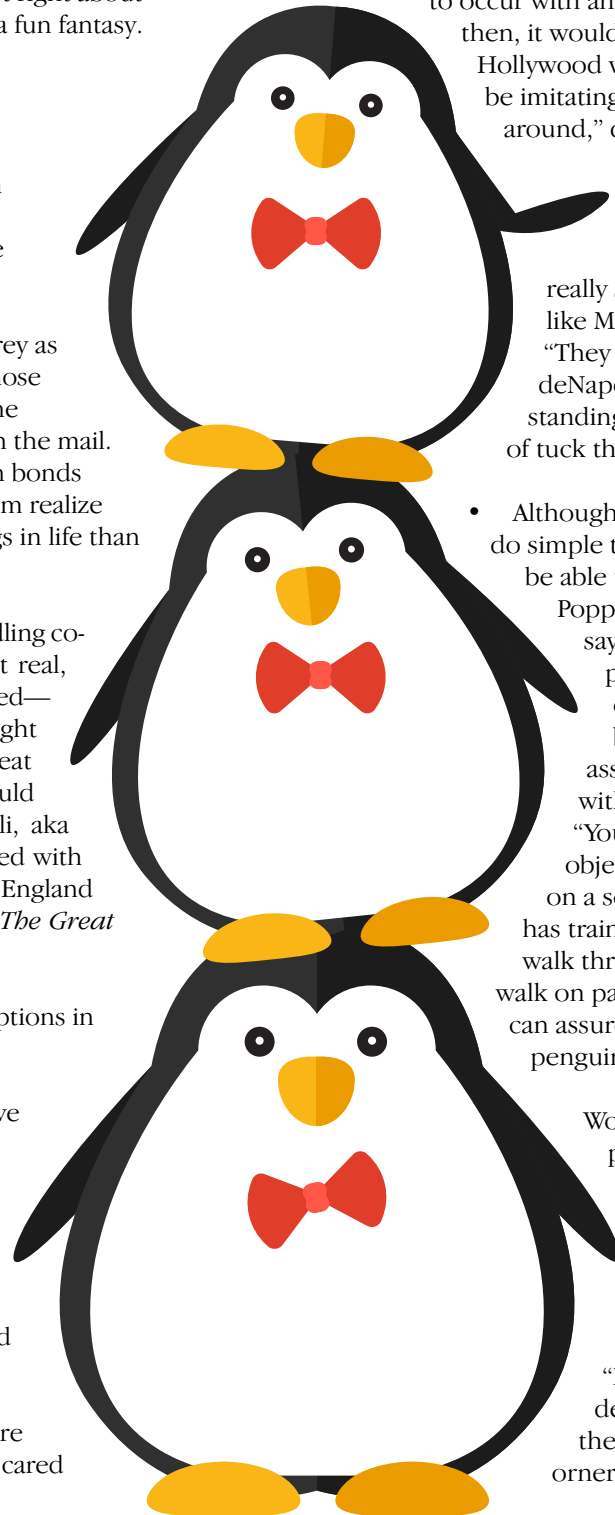
- In the film, the penguins follow Mr. Popper everywhere and imitate his behavior. Some of this might happen, deNapoli says, if a penguin is raised by humans from the beginning, but it is unlikely to occur with an adult penguin—and even then, it wouldn't be as entertaining as the Hollywood version. “It's not going to be imitating you, but it may follow you around,” deNapoli says. “It's probably not going to do a shuffle-ball-change.”

- A Gentoo wouldn't really sleep by your feet at night, like Mr. Popper's penguins do. “They don't sleep lying down,” deNapoli says. “They can sleep standing up and they usually will kind of tuck their beak under their wings.”

- Although penguins can be trained to do simple tasks, it's unlikely you would be able to potty train them the way Popper does. “They're very smart,” says deNapoli, explaining that penguins respond to operant conditioning, a process by which animals come to associate a particular behavior with a particular consequence. “You can train them to target an object. You can train them to step on a scale. One of our aquarists has trained a couple of penguins to walk through a paint tray and then walk on paper so they leave prints. But I can assure you, you cannot potty train penguins.”

Would the mess be worth it? If pet penguins were possible, would they love you the way Bitey, Loudy, Captain, Stinky, Lovey and Nimrod love Mr. Popper? Don't bet on it.

“Penguins can be affectionate,” deNapoli says. “But in general, they're not. They're kind of ornery.”





AFTER THE SHOW

Discussion About the Theatre

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance and ask the students about their experience attending live theatre.

1. What was the first thing you noticed about the theatre? What did the stage look like?
2. Discuss the technical elements of the production — the set, the costumes, the lighting and the sound. Ask the students what they liked best and why. How did these elements help to tell the story of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*?
3. Discuss the ways in which the play was surprising. Was the story told in the same way that you imagined it would be?
4. What did the songs in the play add to the storytelling?
5. An ensemble of six actors and puppeteers plays more than 30 characters in the musical. Discuss how the actors differentiated their many roles using their voices, physicality and costume pieces. How did the puppets and puppeteers interact with the rest of the actors? How did seeing the story be performed by such a small number of actors affect your understanding of the story?
6. How is attending a live performance different from attending a movie? How does your experience change when you know that the story is happening in the same room as you and that the actors can see and hear you?

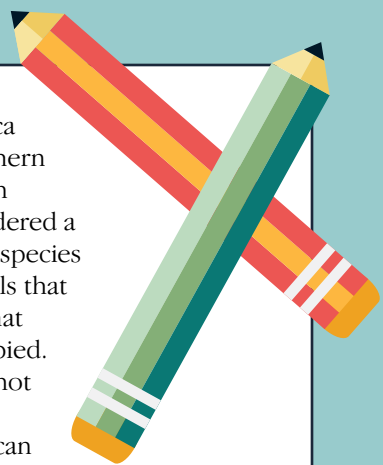
Discussion About the Play

Now guide the discussion through the content of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*.

1. What was your favorite moment in the play? What was the funniest? What was the most surprising?
2. If you read the novel, did you notice anything different between the novel and the musical adaptation? How did that change your understanding of the story?
3. Describe Mr. and Mrs. Popper at the beginning of the play. What did they want and what were their worries? When the penguins come into their lives, how do things become easier and how do they become more difficult?
4. At the beginning of the play, Mr. Popper is reading a book called *Antarctic Adventures* and suggests, "Since we can't afford to travel, reading about far-away places is the next best thing." By the end of the play, he and his wife get to share an Antarctic adventure of their own.
 - a. What was the connection between reading and achieving his dreams?
 - b. Has reading ever inspired you to do something?
5. Mr. and Mrs. Popper train their penguins and begin to rehearse their show during a song called "Determination." They sing that it takes "persistent dedication, some luck and perspiration," and that "your dreams can come true!"
 - a. How do you think they accomplished the task of training their penguins?
 - b. Have you ever tried to teach yourself, a sibling, friend or pet to do something new?
 - i. How did you accomplish it?
 - ii. What was difficult?
 - iii. How did you feel afterward?
6. In the original novel, which was published in 1938, it was Mr. Popper's idea to train the penguins and at the end he leaves Mrs. Popper behind as he sails off to Antarctica with the penguins. In this musical version, written in 2015, it is Mrs. Popper's idea to train the penguins and at the end she leaves with Mr. Popper on the ship to Antarctica.
 - a. How does that change to the story affect your view of Mrs. Popper?
 - b. Why do you think that change was made?
7. When Mr. Popper and his penguins are rescued from the jail cell, Mr. Greenbaum offers the penguins a life of riches and fame in Hollywood movies and Admiral Drake offers them the chance to be part of an expedition to establish a new breed of penguins in the North Pole. However, the family concludes that the best option would be for the penguins to return to the South Pole "where Nature intended them."
 - a. Why do you think the family has grown tired of performing and believes their penguins are not suited for a life of entertaining in Hollywood?
 - b. Why do you think the family believes that Admiral Drake should not have sent the penguins in the first place?
 - c. If you were one of Mr. Popper's penguins, where would you want to go? To the North Pole, Hollywood or back to your home in the South Pole?

ACTIVITIES

1. Mr. and Mrs. Popper teach their penguins to perform new tricks and get them to rehearse a whole show. Hold a talent show in your classroom! Have each student share a talent of theirs, whatever that may be. After they demonstrate their talent, have them share how they learned they had that talent, if or how often they practice that talent, and how they envision their talent being useful in the future.
2. The novel *Mr. Popper's Penguins* was begun by Richard Atwater, who suffered a stroke that left him unable to write. Luckily, his wife Florence, who also was a talented author, finished writing the story for him and published the book. Almost 80 years later, Robert Kauzlaric and George Howe adapted their story into a musical. Have the students simulate the process of co-writing and adaptation.
 - a. Begin by writing a short first-half of a story with only a beginning and middle.
 - b. Next, swap this half-written story with a neighbor and complete the story you receive with a climax and resolution.
 - c. Swap the completed story with a different neighbor and rewrite the story you receive, making three changes.
 - d. Finally, pass the completed story back to original writer.
 - e. Discuss the story you receive back from your neighbor.
 - i. How has your original story changed?
 - ii. Do you like the direction your initial idea was taken? Why or why not?
 - iii. How easy or difficult was this assignment?
3. The play ends with an important example of compromise. Mr. Greenbaum gets to shoot a documentary of the penguins for the public, Admiral Drake gets the needed money to fund the expedition, the penguins get to return home and Mr. Popper gets to go on an Antarctic adventure. In a writing assignment, have the students answer the following questions:
 - a. What does it mean to compromise?
 - b. Think of a compromise you have had to make.
 - i. How was the compromise reached?
 - ii. What did you lose and what did you gain?
 - iii. What did the other party lose and gain?
 - iv. Was it an easy or difficult choice to make? Why or why not?
4. Mrs. Popper tells Admiral Drake, "You shouldn't have sent Captain Cook to us in the first place. These birds belong where Nature intended them."



Penguins are native to Antarctica and nearby regions in the southern hemisphere. A penguin living in North America would be considered a non-native species. Non-native species are species of plants and animals that are introduced to a new area that they have not historically occupied. Sometimes certain species cannot survive naturally in a different environment, sometimes they can survive in new environments and sometimes they thrive in new environments at the expense of other species who are native to that environment; these are referred to as invasive species.

Have your students research an example of a non-native and/or invasive species. Have them answer the following and share their findings with the class.

- a. Where did your species originate?
 - b. How did it get to its current non-native environment?
 - c. How has its presence in its new environment affected other species of plants and animals that are native to that environment?
 - d. Have there been any efforts to remove your species from its new environment?
5. Have the students write a short scene or design a poster for a sequel to *Mr. Popper's Penguins*.

Imagine that Mr. and Mrs. Popper have returned to their home in Stillwater from their expedition to Antarctica where they returned their penguins. Mr. and Mrs. Popper, always big dreamers, have conquered Antarctica and now want to go on a new expedition. Where will they go? Why do they want to go there? How do they get there? What challenge do they overcome once they get there? How do they return?

Have your students share their scene or poster with the class.

LETTERS OF THANKS

Give the students the opportunity to write letters of thanks to SCR describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, and what they enjoyed most about their visit to SCR.

South Coast Repertory, Attn: TYA
PO Box 2197
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197

Part III: At The Theatre

WELCOME TO THE ARGYROS

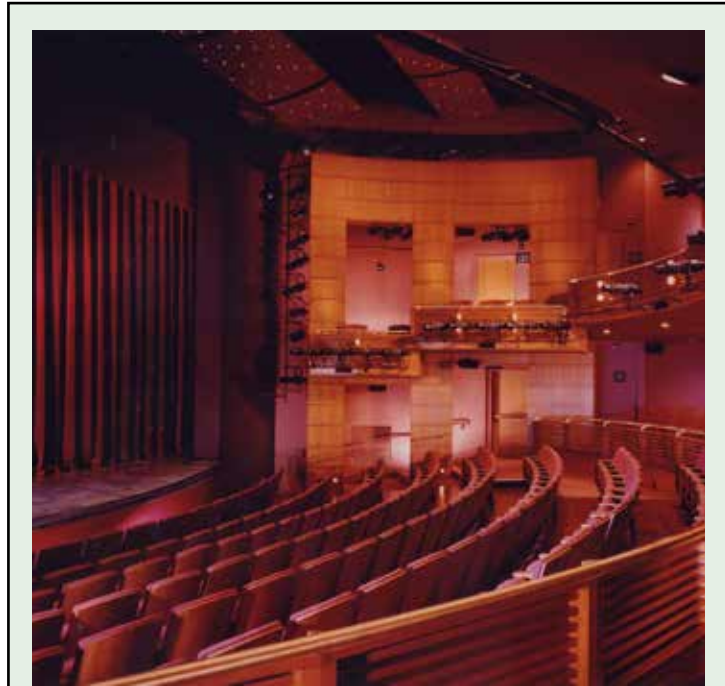
The 336-seat Julianne Argyros Stage opened in 2002 and we are delighted that thousands of Orange County school children fill this state-of-the-art facility each season to enjoy our Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Argyros is a proscenium theatre designed to provide audiences a feeling of intimacy, with no seat more than 39 feet from the stage.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Theatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. The artists and staff of South Coast Repertory are creating a special new world for you to visit. When you walk into the theatre, you will have a sense that behind the curtain lies the secret of that new world which is about to come to life before your eyes. Sometimes it's so exciting that you can barely hold still. But remember that once the play begins, you have a very important job to do. Everybody in the theatre is a part of the play. You are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage. Remember, you're all in the same room. The actors can SEE you, HEAR you and FEEL you, just as you can SEE, HEAR and FEEL them. Your attention, involvement, responses and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

STUDENT TIPS FOR THEATRE TRIPS

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Listen carefully to the SCR staff member who will board your bus with last-minute tips.
- Take your seat in the theatre before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.



Julianne Argyros Stage.

- Absolutely no chewing gum, eating or drinking in the building.
- No backpacks, cameras or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

PROGRAMS

Everyone who attends a Theatre for Young Audiences performance at SCR receives a program, also called a playbill. Patrons at weekend public performances receive their programs from the ushers upon entering the theatre. At the conclusion of each weekday matinee, teachers will be given programs for their students which can be distributed back in the classroom. In addition to the customary information about the play and the players, the program contains features and activities that students will have fun working on after the show, either in class or at home on their own.

Part IV: Education Station

Here are some of the California state standards that apply to attending this performance of *Mr. Popper's Penguins* and doing the activities in this study guide.

FROM VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS:

Theatre Content Standards for Grade Four

For other grades, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/.asp>

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre

Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as plot, conflict, climax, resolution, tone, objectives, motivation and stock characters, to describe theatrical experiences.

Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

- 1.2 Identify a character's objectives and motivations to explain that character's behavior.
- 1.3 Demonstrate how voice (diction, pace and volume) may be used to explore multiple possibilities for a live reading. Examples: I want you to go. I want you to go. I want you to go.

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing and Participating in Theatre

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

Development of Theatrical Skills

- 2.1 Demonstrate the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.



Louis Pardo and Alex Miller in the 2015 Theatre for Young Audiences production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*

Creation/Invention in Theatre

- 2.2 Retell or improvise stories from classroom literature in a variety of tones (gossipy, sorrowful, comic, frightened, joyful, sarcastic).
- 2.3 Design or create costumes, props, makeup or masks to communicate a character in formal or informal performances.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.



The cast of SCR's 2016 Theatre for Young Audiences production of *Pinocchio* by Greg Banks.

Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

- 3.1 Identify theatrical or storytelling traditions in the cultures of ethnic groups throughout the history of California.

History of Theatre

- 3.2 Recognize key developments in the entertainment industry in California, such as the introduction of silent movies, animation, radio and television broadcasting and interactive video.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

Critical Assessment of Theatre

- 4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for critiquing performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture and movement.
- 4.2 Compare and contrast the impact on the audience of theatre, film, television, radio and other media.

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

- 4.3 Describe students responses to a work of theatre and explain what the scriptwriter did to elicit those responses.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

Connections and Applications

- 5.1 Dramatize events in California history.
- 5.2 Use improvisation and dramatization to explore concepts in other content areas.

Careers and Career-Related Skills

- 5.3 Exhibit team identity and commitment to purpose when participating in theatrical experiences.

BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY

Acting The process by which an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character.

Action The core of a theatre piece; the sense of forward movement created by the sequence of events and the physical and psychological motivations of characters.

Ad-Lib To improvise stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.

Apron The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.

Audience The people who come to see a performance.

Backstage The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.

Balcony An upper floor of seats projecting out over the main seating area of a theatre.

Blocking The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.

Boxes Seats separated from the main seating area located on the upper level near the stage.

Box Office A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.

Business Any action performed on stage.

Character The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another's identity.

Choreography The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

Conflict The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.

Costume The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.

Cross The actor's movement from one stage location to another.

Cue The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.

Dialogue The stage conversation between characters.

Diction The clarity with which words are pronounced.

Director The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.

Downstage The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part further away.

Ensemble A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.

Flats Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.

Green Room A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room's name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or patch of grass).

Improvisation The spontaneous use of movement and speech, made up by an actor to create a character.

Lobby The public waiting area outside the theatre space.

Matinee An afternoon performance of a play.

Mezzanine Lower level seating area beneath the balcony overhang.

Monologue A solo speech during which the character reveals personal thoughts.

Narrator A character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience.

Orchestra Lower-level seating area immediately in front of the stage.

"Places" Direction given by the Stage Manager for actors to be in position before each act begins

Plot The "what happens" in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

Project To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

Props All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

Proscenium Stage A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage. SCR's Argyros Stage is a proscenium stage.

Rehearsal Time performers use to practice privately before a performance in front of an audience.

Run Length of time the play will be presented (i.e. two weeks, two months, two years).

Script The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

Set All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

Stagecraft The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e. scenery, lighting, costumes, props and recorded sound and music.

Stage Left That part of the stage to the actor's left when the actor faces the audience.

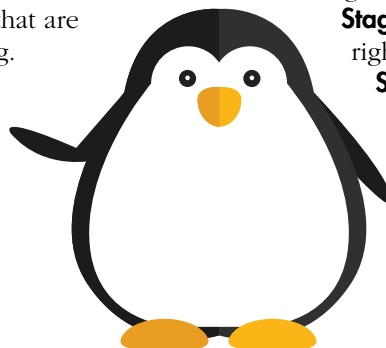
Stage Manager The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

Stage Right That part of the stage to the actor's right when the actor faces the audience.

Strike Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

Theme The central thought, idea or significance of the action of a play.

Upstage The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.



PART V: Resources

ABOUT MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS

- Publisher's website, including a Common Core Classroom Ready Guide:
<http://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/florence-atwater/mr-poppers-penguins/9780316058421/>
- A written and video biography of the Atwaters:
<http://www.amazon.com/Richard-Atwater/e/B001KDD896>
- Lifeline Theatre's original production of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, including their study guide:
<http://lifelinetheatre.com/performances/15-16/popper/index.shtml>

ABOUT PENGUINS

- A playlist of fun videos about penguins curated by *Nat Geo Kids*:
<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/youtube-playlist-pages/youtube-playlist-penguins/>
- General information about the Emperor Penguin:
<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/emperor-penguin/#emperor-penguin-group-snow.jpg>
- An overview of penguins, their environmental importance, and their current environmental threats:
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/penguin>

ABOUT THE GREAT DEPRESSION

- A website dedicated to New Deal history, including maps pinpointing local WPA projects:
<https://livingnewdeal.org/>

Answers to "Mr. Popper's Dollar Words" on page 8: 1i, 2f, 3h, 4q, 5n, 6b, 7a, 8c, 9p, 10g, 11k, 12d, 13r, 14e, 15j, 16o

