

Little Puffin's First Flight

Written by Jonathan London

Illustrated by Jon Van Zyle

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Little Puffin's First Flight follows a family of puffins from the time the parents greet one another off the coast of Alaska and prepare to raise a family, through the care of their fragile egg and ravenous chick, to Little Puffin's first flight across and into the sea. Young readers are introduced to factual concepts about the life cycle of the Horned Puffin by following one little *puffling* through its first weeks of development.

Reading/Writing/Language Arts:

Read *Little Puffin's First Flight* and answer the following questions:

1. What time of year do puffins lay their eggs? When do the chicks hatch? Why do you think that is?
2. Where do puffins build their nests? Why do you think they choose that location instead of somewhere else? How do puffins prepare their nests for the egg?
3. Look at the pictures in the book. How is a baby puffin different from its parents?
4. How do the puffin parents care for their baby? How is it the same as or different from other birds or animals you've seen?
5. What do puffins eat? Where does the book tell you that? How could you find out what other foods puffins eat?
6. What challenges do puffins face in raising their young? What predators do Mother and Father Puffin have to avoid?
7. How does the baby puffin learn to fly?
8. How old will the puffin be when he first has a mate of his own?

Writing

1. *Little Puffin's First Flight* takes Little Puffin from an egg to his first flying leap from a rocky cliff. Think about a time you learned to do something new. Describe the steps you took to learn that new skill.

2. Research an animal, and describe how its babies are born and raised until they can fend for themselves.
3. Puffins have many nicknames: Sea Parrot, Underwater Acrobat, Clown of the Sea. Think of a nickname for a different animal, and explain why you chose that name.

Vocabulary

Teacher note: Some of these terms may be above grade level for your group. Pre-teaching vocabulary in context should help students with comprehension. These terms fall under Tiers II and III for the Common Core State Standards.

acrobatics	jagged	puffin	swiftly
burrow	nuzzle	scrawny	triumphantly
dazed	plummets	skimming	waddle
fragile	predator		

1. Assign each term to a pair of students. Have student pairs act out the term or design a visual display to teach the word to their classmates.
2. *Little Puffin's First Flight* Word Find:

s	c	r	a	w	n	y	e	t	d	k	z	
t	r	i	u	m	p	h	a	n	t	l	y	
a	l	p	s	p	h	p	n	a	n	q	s	acrobatics
w	u	u	n	l	m	n	b	c	f	z	k	burrow
f	s	f	p	u	f	u	u	r	m	w	i	fragile
j	w	f	r	m	r	z	r	o	u	a	m	jagged
a	i	i	e	m	a	z	r	b	y	d	m	nuzzle
g	f	n	d	e	g	l	o	a	m	d	i	plummets
g	t	n	a	t	i	e	w	t	u	l	n	predator
e	l	m	t	s	l	x	c	i	b	e	g	puffin
d	y	p	o	y	e	l	w	c	b	t	g	scrawny
w	w	f	r	g	b	p	o	s	g	y	p	skimming
												swiftly
												triumphantly
												waddle



Science/Natural History/Geography

(See also the questions in the reading and writing sections.)

Research the answers to these questions in your library or online:

1. There are three different species of puffins. What are they called? How are they similar, and how are they different? Where can each species be found?
2. How is a puffin's body specially designed to help it hunt and bring food back to the nest? (The Author's Note has some extra facts about puffin bodies.) Those body differences are called *physical adaptations*. How do *physical adaptations* help the puffin survive?
3. While puffins are not endangered, they do face some problems caused by humans. What are these problems, and what steps are being taken to solve them?
4. The author says puffins go to sea for years at a time. Research what happens after they leave Alaska's shore. Where do they go? How do they survive out at sea?
5. How many days does it take for a puffin egg to hatch? Research other birds, and create a chart that compares the length of time it takes each species' eggs to hatch.
6. Draw a map of the migration of Horned Puffins. Include resources along the way that feed, shelter, or otherwise help the birds.

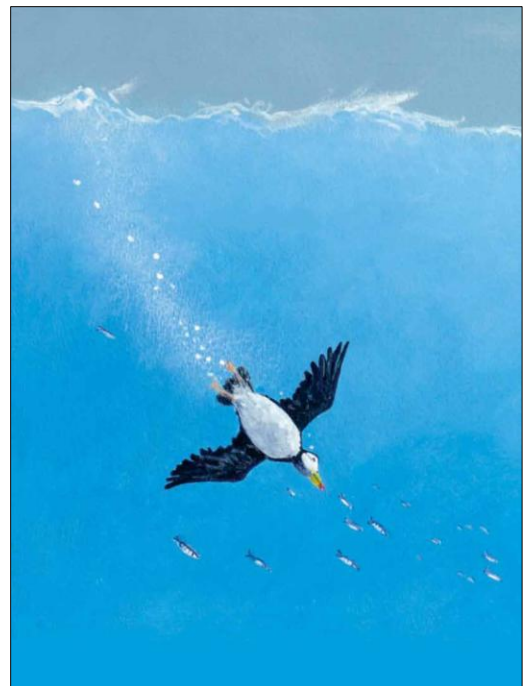
Math

Kindergarten: (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.C.7)

- Mother puffin caught 6 fish. Father Puffin caught 7 fish. Who caught more fish? How many fish did they catch in all?

Grade 1: (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.OA.A.1)

- Mother Puffin went out hunting and brought 8 fish back for the baby. Then Father Puffin took his turn. He dove in and brought back 7 fish for the baby. A gull swooped down and stole 5 of the fish. How many fish did Little Puffin get to eat?



Intermediate: (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.NBT.B.7)

- A puffin's wings flap 300 times per minute to keep it aloft. That's so fast the puffin's wings can look like just a blur! How many times do the puffins' wings flap for a short 3-minute flight over the waves?

Advanced: (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.MD.A.2)

- Mother Puffin weighs 462 grams, and Father Puffin weighs 576 grams. Little Puffin (called a *puffling*) came out of his shell weighing only 42 grams. How much more does Father Puffin weigh than Mother Puffin? How much more does Mother weigh than Little Puffin? How much more does Father weigh than Little Puffin?

Interesting puffin facts:

- Although they *can* fly, puffins are more at home in the water. When they swim, they look like they're flying under the ocean.
- Most birds have hollow, lightweight bones and long wings so they can fly easily. Puffins are different because their bones are heavy and their wings are short, which makes them excellent divers.
- Once a chick's feathers grow in at about six weeks, its parents leave. The chick has to find its own food, which is what prompts it to stumble off the cliff for its first flight. Once the chick leaves the nest, it never returns.
- Puffins are dull gray in the winter, but they can turn bright colors in the spring when they're looking for a mate. Since puffins spend the winter floating out at sea, humans seldom see their winter plumage.



About the author: *Jonathan London has written more than one hundred picture books for children, many of them about wildlife. He has sold more than 1.5 million books including his "Froggy" series. He lives with his wife in California. jonathan-london.net*



About the illustrator: *Jon Van Zyle's art has garnered him numerous honors. His prints, posters, and lithographs are prized by collectors. He lives in Eagle River, Alaska. jonvanzyle.com*

If you like this book, check out these companion books about a wolf cub and a grizzly cub by the same author and illustrator:

