

## FLIGHT SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

Thank you for attending our show! This curriculum guide for Vital Theatre's company production of *Flight School The Musical* is designed to extend our work into your classroom community. Our curriculum guide is designed for grades K-3.

Produced by Vital Theatre Company

2162 Broadway, 4th Floor

New York, NY 10024

[www.vitaltheatre.org](http://www.vitaltheatre.org)

Book by: Cara Lustik

Music by: David Mallamud

Lyrics: by Joshua H. Cohen

Based on *Flight School* book by Lita Judge

### **Description**

It's the first day of Flight School, where they teach birds to fly. Penguin has the soul of an eagle and is ready to live on the wind. But he wasn't built to soar, as the other birds constantly remind him. Penguin's spirit won't be grounded. With some friends of a feather, and a little help on the technical parts, Penguin follows his dreams to flip, flap, fly!

### **Review and Recall**

1. What was your favorite part of the story? Why?
2. Who was your favorite character? Why?
3. What will you remember the most a week from now?
4. Why was Penguin upset?
5. What problem did Penguin have to solve? How was his problem solved?

### **Learning**

1. There were several types of birds in the show. List three.
2. Where was Penguin from?
3. Besides a penguin, name another bird that cannot fly.
4. How was the play different from the book? How was it the same? (Compare and contrast between the book and play.)
5. If you could turn any book into a musical, what would it be? Why?

### **Reflection**

1. If you were Penguin what would you do to fly?
2. Do you think it is okay for Pelican to tell Penguin he can't fly?
3. How did Owl help Penguin?
4. What did Penguin learn about flying?
5. What did the other birds learn about flying from Penguin?

## **Bird Words**

When we can discuss the book or musical, we'll need to learn some bird words to go along with our discussion.

**Aeronautic:** The practice of traveling through the air.

**Aviary:** A large cage or building for keeping birds in.

**Beak:** The horny projecting mouth of a bird.

**Bill:** The beak of a bird, especially belonging to web-footed birds.

**Eagle:** A large bird with long broad wings and talons. Eagles are known for their sharp sight and soaring flight.

**Feather:** The flat pieces growing from a bird's skin. Feathers help bird fly, show off, stay warm, and keep dry.

**Flamingo:** A tall bird with pink feathers, long legs, and a long neck that walks through water.

**Flightless:** A bird that cannot fly.

**Ostrich:** A flightless fast-running bird with a long neck, long legs, and two toes on each foot. The ostrich is the largest living bird.

**Owl:** A night bird with large forward-facing eyes and a hooked beak. Owls have a loud call that can sound like hooting.

**Pelican:** A large waterbird with a long bill and throat pouch that scoops up fish.

**Penguin:** A flightless seabird with flipper-like wings that swims underwater.

**Seagull:** A web-footed seabird that usually has white feathers

**Talons:** The sharp, hooked claw at the end of a bird's toe. Talons can be found on eagles and owls.

**Webbed Feet:** Toes that are connected or joined by a web. Webbed feet are designed for swimming. They act like paddles in the water, making it easier for birds like penguins and pelicans to swim.

**Wingspan:** The distance between the wing tips of a bird.

## **Bird Call**

Flight School features lots of different birds learning how to fly. What are these birds like in real life? Here are some fun facts about the birds featured in the book and musical:

### **Penguins:**

Penguins are the most aquatic of birds – meaning they really like being in water. Their round bodies and wings that look like flippers make it easy for them to swim. While penguins cannot fly in the air, they can fly underwater - traveling up to 15 miles per hour. And, they can stay underwater for 20 minutes or longer. Penguins like the cooler waters and are usually found in world's southern oceans. The biggest penguins are called Emperor Penguins and can grow up to 4 feet tall. The smallest penguins are called Little Penguins or Fairy Penguins. They only grow to be 18 inches tall.

### **Owls:**

Owls are nocturnal birds - they prefer to be out when it's dark. This is why you tend to hear owls and not see them. While most birds have eyes on the sides of their heads, owls have large eyes that face forward. This helps them see far away. And by turning their heads almost all the way around, owls can easily see behind them. They also have excellent hearing, picking up the tiniest sound made by an animal...even if it's under snow! The biggest owls are the Great Grey Owls and can grow up to 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  feet tall. The smallest owls are called Elf Owls and grow to be only 5 inches tall.

### **Pelicans:**

Pelicans are coastal birds – meaning they can be found by water. Pelicans have the largest bill of all birds. It can grow to be 18 inches long. Underneath their bills is their throat pouch. They catch fish in their pouch, tip it back to drain out the water, and swallow the fish. Pelicans cannot store fish in their pouch. The biggest pelicans are Dalmatian Pelicans found in Europe. They can grow to be 6 feet long. The smallest are the Brown Pelicans that can grow to be 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet long.

### **Seagulls:**

Most seagulls live near the ocean, but some live near lakes and reservoirs. Sometimes they're called garbage birds because they'll eat almost anything! They can drink both fresh and salt water, something most birds cannot do. The biggest gulls are the Great Black-beaked Gulls that can grow to be 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet long. The smallest are the Little Gulls that can grow to only about 12 inches long.

### **Flamingos:**

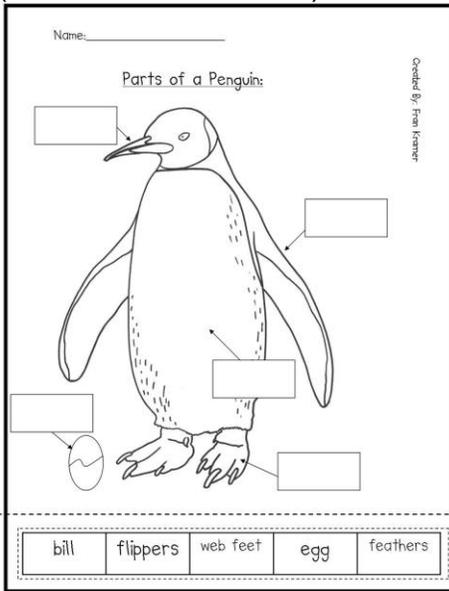
Flamingos are easy to spot – they're the large bright pink birds that stand on one leg. Although no one has figured out why flamingos stand on one leg...yet! They're tropical birds – meaning they like living in places that are really warm. And their long necks make it easy to plunge into water to grab a bite to eat. But unlike other birds, they'll eat upside down. It's easier to scoop up fish with their bills when their heads are upside down. The biggest flamingos are the Greater Flamingos that grows to 5 feet tall. The smallest are the Lesser Flamingos that can grow to be 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet tall.

### **Label Penguin:**

(Have EMPTY boxes with arrows pointing to parts on Penguin (see reference below, but DO NOT use reference in final guide)



Belly, Webbed Feet, Beak, Goggles, Flippers, Feathers  
 (Use this for reference)



### Bird Songs

Birds love to sing and they all have their own unique sound. Let's learn some fun bird songs!

### Five Little Penguins

Five little penguins swimming to shore,  
 One swam away, and then there were four;  
 Four little penguins swimming towards me,  
 One swam away, and then there were three:  
 Three little penguins swimming towards you,  
 One swam away, and then there were two:  
 Two little penguins swimming in the sun,  
 One swam away, and then there was one:  
 It swam away and then there was none.

## The Owl

There's a wide-eyed owl (*thumbs and forefingers around eyes*)  
With a pointed nose, (*forefingers make a v at end of nose*)  
Two pointed ears, (*forefingers extended up from head*)  
and claws for toes, (*fingers and arms bent in front of chest*)  
When he sits up in the tree, (*point to tree*)  
and he looks at you, (*point at a child in the group*)  
he flaps his wings, (*fold arms into armpits and flap*)  
And he says 'Hoo Hoo.'

## Bird Nests

Birds nest in many different places. Some live in cold places, like Penguin. Others live by the sea, like Pelican and Seagull. And some live in the mountains, like Owl. If you were a bird, where would you put your nest? Draw a picture to share with the class.

## Bird Crafts:

*Please NOTE: The following activities are designed for teachers and children to do together. Supervision of children with materials such as glue, scissors, etc. is strongly recommended.*

## Paper Plate Bird

Materials:

- Paper plate
- Paint & Paint Brushes
- Construction Paper
- Kids scissors
- Glue

1. Cut out the center of the paper plate. Keep the rim.
2. Paint the backside of the paper plate. Pick whatever color you'd like your bird to be. If you want to recreate a character from the show - Penguin is black and white, Owl is brown, Teacher is pink, and Pelican and Seagull are white and gray. Let the paint dry.
3. Paint the rim orange. Let dry. Cut triangles for beak and for feet.
4. Cut feather shapes from different colors of construction paper.
5. Cut two black circles for eyes (or can use googly eyes).
6. Glue the eyes and beak on the top of the plate and the feet on the bottom of the plate.
7. Glue the feather shapes on the back of the plate, so they stick out.

## Baby Birds Nest

Materials:

- Paper plate
- Paint and paint brushes
- Construction paper – brown and orange
- 3 Colored pom-poms

- Googly eyes
  - Popsicle sticks
  - Stapler
  - Glue
1. Paint the paper plate brown. Let it dry.
  2. Cut the paper plate in half and staple the rims together, leaving the top “nest” open.
  3. Shred or cut the brown construction paper into little strips.
  4. Glue the shredded paper onto the front of the nest.
  5. Glue a pom-pom onto the end of a Popsicle stick. This will be a bird. Make 3 birds.
  6. Cut 3 triangle beaks from the orange construction paper. Glue googly eyes and beaks onto the pom-poms.
  7. Slide the Popsicle sticks with the birds between the plates. Now you have 3 baby birds resting in their nest!

## **Make Your Own Birdfeeder**

### Materials:

- Empty milk carton
  - Scissors
  - Paint & Paint Brushes
  - Markers
  - Yarn or String
  - Stick
1. Paint the empty milk carton. Let it dry.
  2. Cut a rectangle opening near the top of the carton on one side.
  3. Decorate with a marker.
  4. Poke holes through the topsides of the carton and insert the string tying a knot on the top. This will allow the birdfeeder to hang.
  5. Fill the inside with birdseed.
  6. Poke a hole in the base and insert the stick. This will give the bird a place to perch.
  7. Hang outside.

## **Be a Hoot!**

Task: An improvisation game that will allow children to show of their acting skills while pretending to be a bird.

Directions: After learning about birds, students can act out a day in an aviary! Make groups of two or three. The students will create a two to three minute scene that will depict the life of 3 birds in an aviary. They should all pick a different bird and act out what happens when different birds meet each other for the first time.