

A School Trip to the Aquarium

by Gabrielle Sierra



Erica was very excited. Today her teacher, Ms. Lane, was taking the entire class on a field trip to the aquarium. Erica had been to the zoo with her family, but she had never been to the aquarium.

On the bus ride to the aquarium Erica and her best friend Samantha talked about what they wanted to see the most.

"I want to see the penguins," said Samantha.

"I want to see the fish," said Erica.

When they got to the aquarium Ms. Lane lined the class up.

"We have to stay together," Ms. Lane said. "This way no one will get lost."

Erica listened to Ms. Lane and grabbed Samantha's hand, and the class moved forward in one big group.

Their first stop in the aquarium was to see the penguins. Samantha was so excited that she

ran right up to the glass.

Erica thought the penguins were cute, even though they smelled pretty bad. They walked funny outside of the water, but were graceful when they were swimming. As the class watched the penguins move around the rocks, Erica noticed that some of them walked together. Others had little baby penguins by their side.

"How come some of those penguins stay together?" Erica asked Ms. Lane.

"Well, some kinds of penguins stay together for a long time," said Ms. Lane. "They keep each other warm, and they protect their babies. King penguins live in colonies with hundreds of other penguins."

"Do they talk to each other?" asked Samantha.

"They do," Ms. Lane said. "They use vocal signals. Or they use visual signals."

"Like you do when you hold up your hand for us to be quiet," Erica said.

"Yes, it's like that," said Ms. Lane. "You see my signal and you know to be quiet because I have something important to tell you. Penguins use signals to let other penguins know if there is danger."

Ms. Lane pointed at a little baby penguin. "By staying in a group the older penguins are also able to keep their baby penguins fed," she said. "Without the group the babies would get lost or go hungry."

"I am glad they help each other," said Samantha. Erica agreed.

Ms. Lane asked the class to line back up and to find their partners.

"Look, we are like the penguins," said Samantha as she waddled next to Erica. That made Erica laugh.

The class moved as a group to the next room where there was a big tank full of fish. There were fish of all different shapes and sizes. Some were bright colors and some were darker colors. Most of the fish swam around on their own but there was also a group of little fish all swimming together.

"Why are all those little fish swimming together?" asked a boy in Erica's class.

"Sometimes fish swim in a group for protection," said Ms. Lane.

"What kind of protection?" Erica asked.

"Well, since they are small, if they were on their own other bigger fish could eat them," said Ms. Lane. "But when they all swim together, they look like a bigger fish."

The class looked into the tank at the group of little fish. Ms. Lane was right; when they all swam together they looked a lot like a big fish.

"This way when a bigger fish sees them, it doesn't realize that they are a whole bunch of small fish," said Ms. Lane. "A group of fish that swim together is called a school."

"Like us," said Samantha. "We are a school because we all stay together, and no one gets lost."

"Some schools of fish stick together in order to survive in their environment," said Ms. Lane. "For instance, if it is cold, some fish will move together to warmer water."

Erica watched the fish swim together. She liked that the fish and the penguins helped each other by staying in a group. Animals were smarter than she thought.

A School Trip to the Aquarium

by Gabrielle Sierra (Adapted by ReadWorks)



Erica was excited. Today her teacher was taking her whole class to the aquarium. Erica had been to the zoo before. But she had never been to the aquarium.

On the way to the aquarium Erica and her friend Samantha talked about what animals they wanted to see.

"I want to see the penguins," said Samantha.

"I want to see the fish," said Erica.

When they got to the aquarium, the teacher made the class stand in a line.

"We have to stay together," the teacher said. "That way no one will get lost."

Erica was listening and took Samantha's hand. The class moved forward as one big group.

The first animals that the class saw were penguins. Samantha was so excited that she ran up to the glass wall between her and the penguins.

Erica watched the penguins. They smelled bad. But she still thought they were cute. They

walked funny outside of the water, but in the water they swam smoothly. The class watched the penguins waddle around the rocks. Erica saw that some of them walked together. Others had baby penguins by their side.

"How come some of those penguins stay together?" Erica asked her teacher.

"Some kinds of penguins stay together for a long time," said her teacher. "They keep each other warm. And they also protect their babies. One kind of penguins called king penguins live in colonies with hundreds of other penguins."

"Do they talk to each other?" asked Samantha.

"They do," the teacher said. "They use voice signals. Or they use visual signals, which are signals that you can see."

"Like you do when you hold up your hand for us to be quiet," Erica said.

"Yes, just like that," said her teacher. "You see my signal and you know to be quiet because I have something important to tell you. Penguins use signals to let other penguins know if there is danger."

Erica's teacher pointed at a baby penguin. "The older penguins also stay in a group to keep their babies fed," she said. "Without the group the baby penguins would get lost or go hungry."

"I am glad they help each other," said Samantha. Erica was glad too.

The teacher asked the class to get back in a line and find their partners.

"Look, we are like the penguins," said Samantha as she waddled next to Erica. That made Erica laugh.

The class moved as a group to the next room. There was a big tank full of fish in the room. The fish were different shapes and sizes. Some were bright colors and some were dark colors. Most of the fish swam by themselves. But there was a group of little fish swimming together.

"Why are those little fish swimming together?" asked a boy in the class.

"Sometimes fish swim in a group for protection," said the teacher.

"What kind of protection?" Erica asked.

"Well, since they are small, a bigger fish could eat them if they swam alone," said her teacher. "But when they all swim together, they look like a big fish."

The class looked into the tank at the group of little fish. Their teacher was right! When the little fish swam together they looked like a big fish.

"This way when a bigger fish sees them, it doesn't know that they are small fish," said the teacher. "A group of fish that swim together is called a school."

"Like us," said Samantha. "We are a school because we all stay together, and no one gets lost."

"Some schools of fish stay together to survive," said the teacher. "For example, if it is cold, a school of fish may move together to warmer water."

Erica watched the fish swim together. She liked that the fish and the penguins helped each other by staying in a group. Animals were smarter than she had thought.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kinds of animals does Ms. Lane's class see at the aquarium?

- A. lions and insects
- B. lions and fish
- C. penguins and fish
- D. penguins and insects

2. Where does most of the story take place?

- A. in a classroom
- B. at an aquarium
- C. on a school bus
- D. in the ocean

3. Penguins and humans are similar in some ways.

What evidence from the story supports this statement?

- A. Penguins and humans both use visual signals.
- B. Samantha is excited about seeing the penguins at the aquarium.
- C. Sometimes small fish swim in a group for protection.
- D. Ms. Lane's class watches the penguins move around the rocks.

4. What is something that fish, penguins, and the students in Ms. Lane's class have in common?

- A. They take a class trip to the aquarium.
- B. They walk funny outside the water but are graceful when swimming.
- C. They live in colonies and smell bad.
- D. They help each other by staying in a group.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A. the fun that people can have as a family
- B. the dangers of getting lost on a class field trip
- C. the fear that people have of things they do not understand
- D. the importance of staying together in a group

6. Read the following sentences: "Their first stop in the **aquarium** was to see the penguins. Samantha was so excited that she ran right up to the glass."

What does **aquarium** mean?

- A. a place where children go after school and wait for their parents to pick them up
- B. a place where people go to hear musicians sing and play instruments
- C. a building where people can go to see animals that live in and around water
- D. a building where people go for help when they are hurt or sick

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Samantha is excited to see the penguins; _____ Erica is excited to see the fish.

- A. on the other hand
- B. therefore
- C. as an illustration
- D. before

8. What is a school of fish?

9. According to the story, why do fish sometimes swim in a group?

10. Reread the last paragraph of the story: "Erica watched the fish swim together. She liked that the fish and the penguins helped each other by staying in a group. Animals were smarter than she thought." What makes animals smarter than Erica thought? Support your answer with evidence from the story.
