

# Gay rights for penguins (Tue 15 Feb)

## WARM UPS

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about penguins / animal rights / gay rights / gay penguin rights / zoos / same-sex relationships / endangered species...Change topic / partner frequently to energize the class.

**PENGUIN BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with penguins. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**HOMOSEXUAL BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'homosexual'. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**PENGUIN RIGHTS:** With a partner pretend to be penguins. Write down three things you believe to be your penguin rights (perhaps similar to human rights). Talk about these. Change partners and share your penguin rights. Change partners enough times until you have a Penguin Rights charter. With a final partner, you must defend these rights. Your partner will say they are all nonsense.

**OPINIONS:** Talk about these with your partner:

- a. Penguins have rights.
- b. We should not keep penguins in zoos.
- c. If penguins are homosexual, then we should respect their sexuality.
- d. Talking about penguins' sexuality is ridiculous.
- e. It's OK to try to change a gay penguin into a straight penguin if it ensures the survival of the species.
- f. Gay rights activists are going too far in protesting about gay penguin rights.
- g. It's important for kids to talk about gay penguin or gay animal rights as it will reduce homophobia.
- h. The gay penguins should be 'cured' of homosexual tendencies.

## PRE READING EXERCISES

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries, or a search engine, to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'gay' and 'rights'.

**TRUE / FALSE:** Predict from the headline whether these statements are true or false:

- a. Gay rights campaigners adopted six homosexual penguins as a new cause. T / F
- b. The penguins are in same-sex relationships. T / F
- c. A zoo director took a very hot bath. T / F
- d. A zoo director tried to encourage gay penguins to mate with female penguins. T / F
- e. Six male penguins met six female penguins and fell in love at first sight. T / F
- f. Six homosexual penguins forgot about their same-sex partners after they were introduced to some sexy female penguins. T / F
- g. A zoo director wanted to 'cure' the gay penguins of being homosexual and make them heterosexual. T / F
- h. It is most unusual for penguins to be homosexual. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |     |              |              |
|-----|--------------|--------------|
| (a) | campaigners  | heterosexual |
| (b) | shape        | ties         |
| (c) | waddling     | conservation |
| (d) | hot water    | longed for   |
| (e) | straight     | shuffling    |
| (f) | bonds        | activists    |
| (g) | simulated    | threatened   |
| (h) | pined for    | big trouble  |
| (i) | preservation | pretended    |
| (j) | endangered   | form         |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases based on the article

- |     |                                |                                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| (a) | Gay rights                     | in the females                                 |
| (b) | adopted a new                  | for their same-sex partners                    |
| (c) | in the shape                   | grounds of penguin preservation                |
| (d) | same-sex                       | campaigners                                    |
| (e) | The birds in                   | of six male penguins                           |
| (f) | The male penguins pined        | question all had very strong bonds             |
| (g) | had no interest                | accusations that she was trying to 'cure' them |
| (h) | defended her experiment on the | is native to Chile and Peru                    |
| (i) | She denied                     | relationships                                  |
| (j) | The Humboldt penguin           | cause                                          |

## GAP FILL

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**BNE:** Gay rights campaigners \_\_\_\_\_ a new cause today in the shape of six male penguins in a German zoo. Six homosexual penguins, in \_\_\_\_\_, all very happy to be waddling along in their same-sex relationships. The director of Bremerhaven Zoo, Heike Kuuck, is in hot water with gay rights groups over her \_\_\_\_\_ to try to mate gay penguins with female penguins, and thus turn them straight. The birds in question all had very strong \_\_\_\_\_ to other birds of the same sex. However, when they simulated mating with each other, and sat on small egg-sized rocks, as a mother penguin does, it was time to try real \_\_\_\_\_. The gay birds were separated and put with female partners. Nothing happened. The male penguins \_\_\_\_\_ for their same-sex partners and had no interest in the females. Ms Kuuck has defended her experiment on the grounds of penguin preservation, "We're simply trying to help save a threatened species." She denied accusations that she was trying to ' \_\_\_\_\_ ' them of being homosexual and make them heterosexual. The Humboldt penguin is native to Chile and Peru, and is on the endangered list of species. It is close to extinction. The homosexual \_\_\_\_\_ of these charming birds are well known to zoologists.

*pined fact tendencies bonds adopted cure policy mating*

## DISCUSSION:

- a. What do you think of this article?
- b. Do gay penguins have rights that need protecting?
- c. Do insects have gay rights?
- d. Are gay rights groups over-reacting here?
- e. Isn't protecting the gay rights of penguins the same as protecting their other rights?
- f. If people think protecting gay penguin rights is stupid, they are probably homophobic. What do you think?
- g. Do you like penguins?
- h. Do you feel comfortable talking about homosexuality?
- i. If you had two penguin pets and they were gay, would it be a problem?
- j. If someone asked whether or not you had homosexual tendencies, what would your reaction be?
- k. If someone asked whether or not you had homophobic thoughts, what would your reaction be?
- l. Is it possible to change a penguin's, or a person's sexuality?
- m. Do you like zoos?
- n. If trying to force gay penguins to mate with female penguins is the only way to ensure the survival of the species, then it should be done.
- o. How can we help save the Humboldt penguin from extinction?

## HOMEWORK

**LETTER TO HEIKE:** Write a letter to Bremerhaven Zoo director Heike Kuuck telling her what you think of her actions.

**PENGUIN CONSERVATION:** Write a short article informing the world of what needs to be done to save the Humboldt penguin from extinction.

## INTERNET / WEB LINKS:

A gay rights web site's article on this news story:

<http://www.365gay.com/newscon05/02/021105penguins.htm>

A blog on this story by Apple Macintosh users:

<http://www.macaddict.com/forums/topic/52320>

The Humboldt penguin:

[http://www.zoo.org/educate/fact\\_sheets/penguin/penguin.htm](http://www.zoo.org/educate/fact_sheets/penguin/penguin.htm)

The endangered Humboldt penguin:

[http://www.bagheera.com/inthewild/van\\_anim\\_penguin.htm](http://www.bagheera.com/inthewild/van_anim_penguin.htm)

The homosexuality of Humboldt penguins:

<http://www.jeramy.org/gay/gayrelig/732.html>

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