

ANTARCTICA

MOIRA COURT

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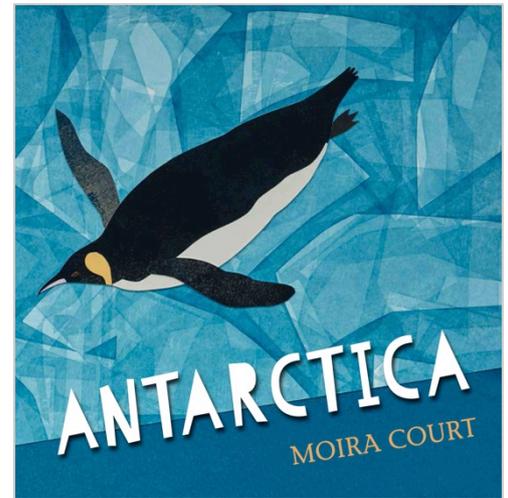
YEAR LEVEL: K-4

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY: Sustainability

ABOUT THE BOOK

Antarctica – an icy desert with mountain ranges and sleeping volcanoes, home to the spinning end of the earth and to a diverse array of quirky creatures.

Moira Court brings the diversity of Antarctica to life in this gorgeous new picture book, combining clever counting with lyrical prose and stunning artwork.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moira Court grew up in the West Country, England. She emigrated to Australia in 2001 and now lives in the Perth Hills with her husband, daughter and fur children. An artist and illustrator, she predominantly works in printmaking and likes to chop up the failures to use for collaging. Her work is inspired by nature, conservation, folklore and folk art. She has never been to Antarctica but really hopes to go one day.



THEMES

- Conservation
- Polar environments
- Antarctic animals and marine life

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

K-4 English

K-4 Biological Sciences

K-4 Geography

K-4 History

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: <https://moiracourt.wordpress.com>
- Australian Antarctic Division – Classroom Antarctica: <https://classroom.antarctica.gov.au>

CLASSROOM IDEAS

Geography

1. Locate Antarctica on a map of the globe.
2. How long does it take to journey to Antarctica from Australia? (Useful website: <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/tourism/frequently-asked-questions>)
3. What percentage of the continent is classified as the Australian Antarctic Territory? (Useful website: <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/australia-in-antarctica/australian-antarctic-territory>)
4. How many permanent research stations does Australia have? How many people live on each station? (Useful website: <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/history/stations>)
5. Define the term 'continent'.
6. Antarctica is the *driest* continent in the world, even though it is covered in ice. How are polar deserts similar/different to hot and dry deserts? Use a Venn diagram model to compare and contrast the two.

Discussion questions

1. What do the adjectives 'unique' and 'quirky' mean? Do you agree that Antarctica's animals warrant these descriptors?
2. What is an 'adaptation'? How do adaptations such as 'special blood and fat and feathers' help each creature to survive the harsh polar climate? (Hint: read the *Did You Know?* section at the back of the book!)
3. According to the book's imprint page, what media has the illustrator used? What do you like best about this illustrator's style?
4. What is your favourite illustration and why?
5. Maths challenge: How many animals can you count on each page? In the entire book?
6. Do you think you would like to visit Antarctica one day? Why/why not?

Creative writing

1. **Adjectives:** You may be unfamiliar with some adjectives used to describe Antarctica's quirky creatures, e.g. *lumpish*; *cumbersome*; *courtly*; *portly*; *crimson*; *vermillion*. Can you guess what these words mean by looking closely at the animals they describe? Use a dictionary to clarify.
2. **Rhyme:** How many rhyming pairs can you find in the story? e.g. *freckled speckled*; *inky slinky*. Does rhyme make the story more fun to read aloud? Create your own rhyming pairs.
3. **Alliteration:** What is alliteration? Find examples in the book, e.g. **polar plains**; **watery world**. Write your own sentence about an Antarctic animal using alliteration.
4. **Early Antarctic explorers:** In groups of four, choose either Captain James Weddell, Captain John Davis, Roald Amundsen, Ernest H. Shackleton, Otto Nordenskjöld, Jules-Sébastien-César Dumont d'Urville, Robert F. Scott or Douglas Mawson. Research your chosen explorer's contribution to the exploration of the Antarctic using the following subheadings: country of origin; historical dates; achievements; challenges; tragedies. Create 2–3 PowerPoint slides and present your findings to the class.
5. **Imaginative diary entry:** Compose a diary entry from the point of view of your chosen explorer above describing a day on the expedition.
6. **Short story:** Imagine that you are invited to spend a day at one of Australia's research stations in Antarctica. What will you wear to keep warm? How will you travel around? What animals will you encounter?

Visual art

1. **Styrofoam printing:** Etch a picture of your favourite Antarctic animal on an A5 piece of foam using a sharp pencil. Next, cover this etching with block ink using a roller. Finally, flip the etching over and, with the wet side facing downward, press firmly onto paper to create your very own Antarctic illustration! You may wish to repeat this process using different coloured ink to create multiple layers.
2. **Animal sculpture:** Create a sculpture of your favourite Antarctic animal using plasticine, clay or recycled materials. Then create a *shoebox diorama* of the Antarctic for your animal to call home!
3. **Puppet show:** Using a variety of geometric coloured cardboard shapes, felt, cellophane and recycled materials, create pop-stick puppets of the various animals in the book. Use your puppets to read along with the story.

Biological science and sustainability

1. **Antarctic animal facts:** In pairs, choose your favourite animal from the story and create a poster, pamphlet or PowerPoint presentation with the following information: name; physical characteristics; habitat; diet; life cycle; interesting facts; special adaptations; labelled diagram; conservation status.
2. View the ABC's Classroom Antarctica Short Video Series: *Living in Antarctica*, *Antarctic Animals* and *Why is Antarctica Important to Scientists?* (videos are approx. 4 minutes each):
<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/antarctica-special/10937004>
3. **Australian Antarctic Division – Classroom Antarctica:** Access free lessons, including *Mystery Antarctic Animals*, *Brr! A Polar Climate* and *Natural Resources and Waste Management in Antarctica*:
<https://classroom.antarctica.gov.au/years/3>
4. How are issues such as overfishing, increased tourism and global warming currently impacting Antarctica? What is the 'Antarctic Treaty' and when was it signed? How does it attempt to conserve the continent's unique environment and resources? What steps can you personally take to minimise your own contribution to global warming?

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

Why did you choose Antarctica as the setting of your latest book?

I chose Antarctica for the setting of *Antarctica* because I get a tinsy, winsy bit annoyed about the amount of misleading merchandise available which depicts penguins, polar bears and igloos together. Also, I have been fascinated with both Antarctica and the Arctic for years and find the stark landscape with blue, grey and violet light incredibly beautiful and inspiring.

Can you describe your process of printmaking and collage work in this book?

For each illustration I start with the background, some of which are screen-printed, some screen-printed and then block-printed over the top, some that are woodcuts and some that are collagraphs – I like to mix it up! The screen-printed ones are mostly made of many layers printed using paper stencils and transparent ink, and the collagraphs are printed from plates made from cardboard food packaging. The blocks are carved from lino and the woodcuts are mostly made from plywood offcuts. Once the background is done I start on my favourite part, making the animals. I build these from cutting up more screen-prints and woodcuts and where possible recycling/upcycling old prints that have gone wrong. When I am happy with my beasties I glue them onto the background.

What's the weirdest thing you've learned about Antarctica?

The weirdest thing that I have learnt about Antarctica is that it is a desert. With all that ice about I never would have guessed that it is dry with hardly any snow or rainfall. Or that you don't need heat, sand and camels to classify as a desert. And then there's the thing about starfish anatomy, which is really weird, but that probably applies to starfish worldwide, not just the Antarctic ones!

What's your favourite Antarctic animal and why?

My favourite Antarctic animal has to be the emperor penguin. Not only are they remarkably tough, they also have stunning plumage and are a great shape to draw. They are a little bit comical with their waddling and tummy tobogganing.

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