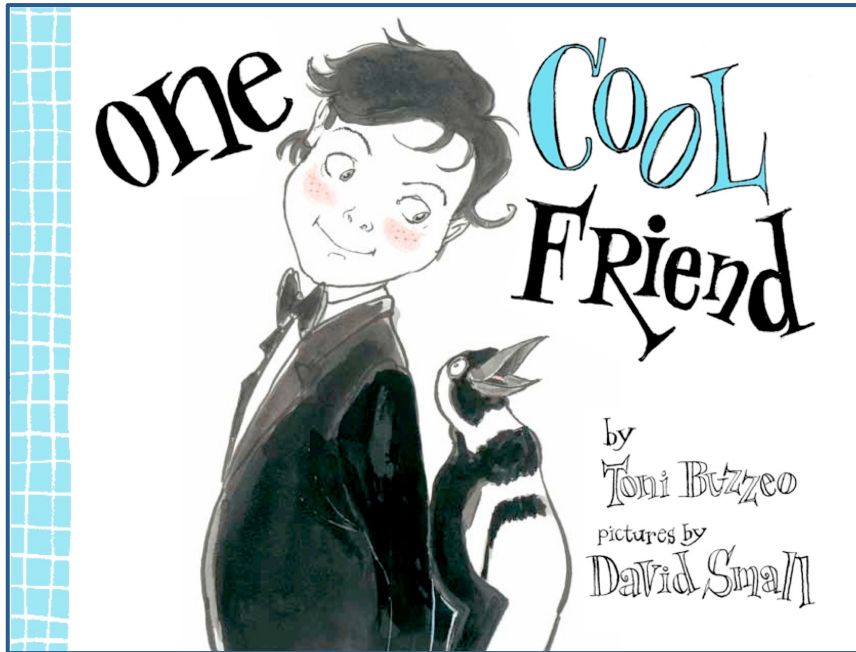


ONE COOL FRIEND CURRICULUM GUIDE



One Cool Friend

by Toni Buzzeo; illustrated by David Small
Dial Books for Young Readers, 2012

Author Toni Buzzeo



Toni Buzzeo is the award-winning Maine children's author of fifteen picture books with four more forthcoming. For sixteen years, she worked as a school librarian in Portland where she honed her knowledge of children's literature. Combining this knowledge with her love of children, Toni writes about characters of all stripes (including dinosaurs, loons, ducklings, teachers, and librarians) who explore their worlds, their relationships, and themselves in settings that include peaceful Maine lakes, rocky lighthouse islands, as well as aquariums and the interiors of fictional public and school libraries. Toni is well known for her lively spirit and her sense of humor.

WAS THERE A PENGUIN MISSING FROM THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM?

Begin by introducing the concept of an "urban legend." Explain that an urban legend is a type of folklore story that is shared widely and seems plausible but quite likely has no basis in reality. To make it seem true, the teller of the tale will refer to a reliable person who is said to have actually experienced the event. An urban legend will often also have an implied moral.

If time allows, present one of the "microwaved pets" legends to your students (see <http://www.snopes.com/horrors/techno/microwavedpet.asp> for examples). Discuss the plausibility of the tale, its origins, and its implied anti-technology moral.

Then, discuss the origin of *One Cool Friend*. Tell students the story that Toni Buzzeo heard in a teacher's room. Because she was uncertain that it was true, she did some online research and uncovered this information: <http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/animalsinsects/a/penguin.htm>. As a fiction writer, Toni didn't feel that she needed to legend to be true in order to write a fabulous book based on the story. Instead, she began with the "bones" of the legend and created a cast of characters to enact the story.

Discuss other ways Toni may have written the story after discovering that the urban legend wasn't true.

URBAN LEGENDS AS FICTION LAUNCHING PADS

After you complete the Urban Legend activity, invite your students, as a group or individually, to create a fictional story from an urban legend of their choosing. Ask students to focus on the plausible nature of facts of the legend and build a story that will entertain its readers.

Because many urban legends online are not appropriate for children, you may want to choose from one of the following:

1. The Package of Cookies
http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/fooddrink/a/package_cookies.htm
2. Albino Fawn
<http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/animalsinsects/ss/Albino-Fawn-Pictures.htm>
3. Elephant Paints Self-Portrait
http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_elephant_painting.htm
4. How to Cook an Egg with Your Cell Phone
http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_cook_egg_cell_phones.htm
5. Work Moose in Harness/Moose Logging
http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_work_moose_in_harness.htm

PENGUIN INVESTIGATIONS

[**Note:** This activity is part of a Picture Book Extender by Toni Buzzeo, originally published by EBSCO/Novelist (<http://www.ebscohost.com/novelist>)]

Magellan is a Magellanic penguin from South America. Like many penguins today, Magellanic penguins are threatened by commercial fishing, oil pollution in the ocean, and climate change.

With your students, undertake an exploration of a variety of penguin species and the threats to their health and safety today. Vulnerable, threatened, and endangered penguins include:

- African penguins
- Emperor penguins
- Erect-crested penguins
- Galapagos penguins
- Gentoo penguins
- Humboldt penguins
- Macaroni penguins
- Rockhopper Penguins
- Yellow-eyed penguins

An excellent source of this status information is the SeaWorld website at <http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/info-books/penguin/appendix-species.htm>

If time allows, post a world map on the wall or bulletin board and place a pin at the location of each threatened penguin species with a string attached to a fact card about the problem. Or, if you have a large globe, you may want to use it in the same way.

IT REMINDS ME OF MYSELF

One of the reasons that Elliot likes the penguins at the aquarium is that they remind him of himself. Begin by discussing the similarities between Elliot and Magellan, searching both text and illustrations for as many as you can find.

Next, supply students with an extensive collection of photographic nonfiction books from the library's collection. Include all families of animals, mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, as well as invertebrates.

Challenge students to find and place a sticky note on the page of any animal that reminds them of themselves. Once they have several marked, ask them to identify the characteristic that makes them similar to this animal. Is it something about the way the animal looks—Red hair/fur? Friendly expression?—or something the animal does well—Swim? Climb? Jump?

If time allows, ask students to create a pair of illustrations—one of themselves and one of their chosen animals. Display each pair of pictures together labeled with the common characteristic.

WHAT WOULD YOU BRING HOME?

[**Note:** This activity is part of a Picture Book Extender by Toni Buzzeo, originally published by EBSCO/Novelist (<http://www.ebscohost.com/novelist>)]

Something about the penguins “in their tidy black feather tuxedos with their proper posture” reminded Elliot of himself, so he wanted one of his own. But perhaps your students would rather bring home a different animal from the aquarium, aviary, or zoo.

Begin by reading fictional tales of children with unlikely pets. Suggested titles include:

- *365 Penguins* by Jean-Luc Fromental
- *Aaaarrgghh! Spider!* by Lydia Monks
- *Billy Twitters and His Big Blue Whale Problem* by Mac Barnett
- *Buying, Training, and Caring for your Dinosaur* by Laura Rennert
- *Don't Take our Snake for a Stroll* by Karin Ireland
- *No Place for a Pig* by Suzanne Bloom
- *That Pesky Rat* by Lauren Child
- *When Dinosaurs Came with Everything* by Elise Broach

Next, invite students to brainstorm a list of potential unusual animal pets. Once the list is complete, ask them to complete the matrix for the four or five of the choicest animals.

Animal	What does the animal need?	What problems might be caused?	What benefits might be gained?

Now, ask each student to choose one unusual animal they'd like to “adopt” and bring home from the aquarium, aviary, or zoo. Ask them to answer each of the three questions as applied to their chosen animal.

EXTENSION

If time allows or you would like to connect this activity to a science unit on animals, consider allowing students to conduct research on their chosen animal so that their answers to the three questions are based on facts about the animal's needs, habits, and extraordinary features, which may be either advantageous or detrimental.

As a final product, consider having each student write a persuasive paragraph from the animal's point of view arguing that it is the perfect pet.

SIX TRAIT WRITING GUIDE



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IDEAS: Where Do Ideas Come From?

Toni Buzzeo's idea for *One Cool Friend* came from an urban legend about a boy stealing a penguin from the New England Aquarium. After she borrowed that idea, her challenge was to add effective details to bring the story to life.

Send your students on a hunt for effective details in the text. Make a list of these details. Once you have an exhaustive list, return to each item and ask why each detail enhances the original idea Toni began with.

If time allows, return to the book and search for details that are not in the text but that illustrator David Small has added. Ask students to discuss the ways David's details convey more information to the reader and increase the humor of the story

ORGANIZATION: And Then What?

One Cool Friend employs a simple chronological structure. Invite students to go on a chronology hunt in the text, searching for phrases that indicate the passage of time such as, "On Saturday morning . . ." Make a list and then ask students to determine how much time passes from the beginning to the end of the book.

VOICE: Whose Point of View?

Once you have discussed the ending of *One Cool Friend* and each student has formed an opinion about what the father knew or did not know as the story unfolded, introduce or review the concept of point of view. Discuss the fact that the current story is told from Elliot's point of view and so we understand how he feels and thinks about events in the story.

Now, ask each student to imagine that the story is told from Elliot's father's point of view. How will it change the story? Prepare students to rewrite the story from this other point of view.

For younger students, you will want to complete this writing project as a group activity, but for more skilled writers, it will be fun to encourage each to write their own version of the story.

Supply the following story starter:

Mr. _____ was a very _____ man/father.

So when he read in the newspaper that it was Family Fun Day at the aquarium, he thought . . .

Ask students to pick up the story from Dad's point of view. Remind them that they are allowed to imagine what he thinks and feels as events unfold, but that we cannot know what Elliot is thinking or feeling!

SENTENCE FLUENCY: How Long Shall We Talk?

Ask students to search for all of the dialogue in *One Cool Friend*, pointing out that it is enclosed in speech bubbles. Make a list of each spoken remark with a double space to indicate when a new conversation begins. Once the list is complete, ask students to discuss the length of conversations in the book. How many times do characters volley conversation back and forth? Are conversations shorter than they usually are in your classroom? Why is this? Does it leave space for more humor in the book?

WORD CHOICE: Proper Speech

We learn on the first page of *One Cool Friend* that "Elliot is a very proper young man." After ensuring that students know what the word "proper" means and what it implies, re-read the book aloud, asking students to stop the reading with raised hands each time Elliot says something that proves that he is proper in his speech as well as his actions. Make a list of the things Elliot says. Then challenge students to imagine that Elliot is less proper, perhaps more like themselves. How would they rephrase or rewrite Elliot's remarks in this case?

CONVENTIONS: Bubble Up!

Illustrator David Small decided to add speech bubbles to all of the dialogue in *One Cool Friend*, making it very easy to locate dialogue in the text. Begin by sending students on a dialogue hunt. Now ask them to notice that some of the speech bubbles are differently formatted. Make a list of these and then, while studying them in context, ask students to discuss why David might have used different formatting for them.