

Grade 5 Exemplars

Prompt: Describe the effects of the spill on the penguins and the rescue efforts that followed. Support your piece with information from all three sources.

Exemplar A:

A few years ago near South Africa, the effects of an oil spill and the rescue effort that followed threatened thousands of endangered penguins. A first effect was that just moving their bodies through the water became difficult because the penguins would wobble and roll in the dense oil. This must have threatened their ability to catch the food they need in the water. By the time the humans came to rescue them, the penguins were so frightened. They scratched, bit and attacked the people. This shows that the oil must have frightened them too, which made the rescue efforts even more difficult because they were so scared. Finally, the rescue work of cleaning and feeding them, the repulsive smell in the warehouse from penguin droppings, dead fish, and sweat must have made people want to give up. No one did. Maybe no one gave up because of how much they cared about the threatened penguins. Overall, this story shows the huge effects of the oil spill and the difficulties in the rescue. It also shows how much everyone cared.

Exemplar B:

The two texts and one video, “Save as Many Penguins as We Can”, “Penguin Under Threat”, and “Endangered Penguins Caught in Oil Spill” all describe the effects of the spill, and the enormous rescue work efforts people took to help and save the frightened penguins. An effect of the spill was that it created enormous work that was not glamorous. As an example, oil is sticky and thick so the 20,000 penguins needed to be washed for at least an hour each. This shows how a major effect of the oil spill was the time it took to help the birds. The rescue efforts must have scared the penguins because of how the birds responded. As the Penguins Under Threat text states, “Powerful wing slaps, sharp spines on tongues, strong jaws and razor-like beaks” met the surprised workers who had just come to help. Imagine if you were a penguin, it would just feel terrible to be ‘scrubbed’ by a possible attacker. Another challenge of the rescue effort was feeding the penguins in order to save their lives. As stated in “Penguins Under Thread,” the penguins had to be “hand fed dead fish” and they had to hold the penguin down and force it to eat the dead sardines. A penguin is used to catching fish alive and eating them live. Without eating, the penguins would die so the rescuers had to do this. These effects and the rescue efforts tell a sad story, though it had a happy ending when the rescue succeeded and they were able to save 90% of the penguins.

Prompt: Describe the effects of the spill on the penguins and the rescue efforts that followed. Support your piece with information from all three sources.

Exemplar C:

The articles “[Save as Many Penguins As We Can](#)”, “[Penguins Under Threat](#)”, and the video “[Endangered Penguins](#)” all describe an oil spill off the coast of South Africa, and the rescue efforts to help the penguins hurt by it. While all three describe the disaster, they give different angles on the enormity of effects, the challenging rescue, and the effects on the natural environment. ‘Save as Many Penguins as We Can’ describes its impact from a concerned animal expert and describes her emotion during the event, explaining how “my eyes misted” and “my heart beat raced”. This first person account give a sense of what it felt like to be right there at the time. On the other hand, the news article describes the details of the even with great details such as using “specially designed vacuums” to clean up the oil. These kinds of details enable the reader to step back and create a picture of what is happening with greater details. The video shows the birds drenched in oil, looking soggy and sad, suggesting how miserable the penguins were. These different angles give one a more complete sense of the sad effects. The first article and video tug on the readers’ heartstrings more, while the news article enables one to really imagine what happened, with greater depth of detail. They describe and show the area differently, but the negative after effects are clear in all. Each source draws the reader into the story differently. It is frustrating that this oil spill happened, but encouraging that so many people cared enough to help by volunteering, by writing well about it and by making sympathetic videos.

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Exemplar D:

The articles “Save as Many Penguins as We can”, “Penguins Under Threat”, and the video “Endangered Penguins” describe an oil spill and the rescue efforts to help the penguins hurt by this spill, off the coast of Cape Town in South Africa. While all three highlight the tragic element of this disaster, each source takes a different angle on the enormity of spill’s effects, the difficult rescue efforts, and the changes to the natural environment.

The authors use varied point of views, pictures and text captions to describe the vast spill. The aid worker emphasized its impact on the volunteers and the penguins. As a concerned animal expert, she describes her emotion during the event, explaining how “my eyes misted” and “my heart beat raced”. “Penguins under threat!” emphasizes the details of the event such as the statistics around how many penguins were harmed (14,000 adults and 6,000 chicks) and exactly how they used vacuums and special chemicals to clean the oil off of the penguins. The video and real life pictures of the penguins even further depict how horribly the oil affected their bodies. They show them just covered in oil, looking soggy and sad, suggesting how miserable the penguins must have been at that time. The pictures and the text captions bring the words and the story alive and help the reader understand the impact of the oil spill on the lives of those penguins.

Each author conveys the challenges surrounding how the rescue efforts, again through different lenses. Both articles and the video describe how the penguins lashed out at the volunteers because they didn’t understand the humans were trying to help them, not hurt them. In “Save as Many Penguins as We Can”, the reader feels right there and perceive the penguins not as dangerous but as to be cared for. For example, the author writes, “I felt overwhelmed with sentiment as I watch the sea of fatigued workers and volunteers leaving the area, and many staying behind to work through the night”, which reminds of the emotional side of the experience and gives the angle of helping rather than being afraid of the dangers they posed. “Penguins Under threat also focused on the positive outcomes. Not even listing how many humans were harmed, they celebrate the details of how “90% of the oiled birds were rehabilitated and released. Another 19,500 non-oiled penguins were relocated successfully.” The video showed how, “They must restrain the penguin, pry its beak open, and shove the fish down its throat. The warehouse stench is so powerful that many people throw up when they first arrive. But not even the smell keeps people away.” Impressively, each text illustrates how the volunteers persisted even when the penguins resisted.

Finally, in the articles and the video it is easy to feel what the island must have been like before the oil spill destroyed it, which highlights the damaging effects, and again given from different perspectives. Once again the differing media and perspectives give alternate angles, but convey the same sense of desperation in the changes to the environment. The video described the habitat as one that would be well suited to penguins, as “a cold and windy rocky beach.” Both articles describe how the water had formerly been “pristine blue” and “Deep-blue water and rocky beaches that had just been some of the most breath-takingly beautiful areas in the world were suddenly rendered into frightening, sticky messes.” The video shows the beautiful island and the natural habitat as looking a bit like paradise for the penguins prior to the spill. The oil spill changed their environment from safe to dangerous, from beautiful to ugly.

Each author, through differing media and perspective, equally draws the reader into the story of the spill’s effects, the rescue efforts, and changes to their homes from the beautiful place it once was. The descriptive details make the reader feel like as if the reader were right there on the island with those endangered penguins. All of the authors described the event with so much passion not only for the penguins, but for the volunteers who remained so dedicated as well, as well as for the natural beauty that was there beforehand. The authors described the challenges in such details, it makes the reader want to get on a plane and help those adorable penguins!