

Grade 5 Exemplars

Task: 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 that 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 effects of the spill, the difficulties in the rescue and what happens when people work effectively in a supportive system. It also shows how important it is for people to remain dedicated when protecting those who are vulnerable, even when there are major risks involved.

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” describe a terrible oil spill that happened off the coast of South Africa in 2000. They describe the effects of the spill, and the enormous rescue work efforts, all with the goal 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 gently with tooth brushes and warm water” 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 rescuers even had to work in buildings filled with “the stench of penguin dropping, rotting spilled fish, perspiration and vomit” which made the work even harder. Yet, everyone did all they could to help.

The rescue efforts must have scared the penguins because of how the birds responded. When the workers arrived, the silence stunned them. “Penguins usually make loud, cacophonous noise, non-stop.”, but they met “total silence.” Even more, “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. 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 moving story, though it had a happy ending when the rescue succeeded and they were able to save 90% of the penguins. This work could only succeed by people working together in coalition for the greater good rather than their own individual benefit.

Task: 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. People caused this spill, but then came together in a rescue effort to help the endangered penguins hurt by the spill.

Save as Many Penguins as We Can' describes the devastating impact of the oil spill on all aspects of these birds' lives. The rescuers found the penguins "completely shiny black, drenched in poisonous oil", unable to catch food in the water which is their home, unable to see because of oil in their eyes and even "ingesting the oil" which could kill them. Since the penguins could not use their arms, they could sink and die in the oil filled water. These already endangered penguins now had no safe home, could not move easily and were now in even greater immediate danger of dying if they licked off any of the oil all over them. Their bodies and way of life was not only threatened, but their very lives became at risk as a result of the impact of this spill.

Fortunately, many volunteers came together to help the penguins and even put up with pain themselves. The news article describes the details of the event such as how they built makeshift warehouses to help clean them off, ensuring "the birds had to be washed gently with tooth brushes". It took several people working together to clean off each penguin. Others provided dead sardines to feed the penguins, but they had to force feed them and literally shove the dead fish down their throats because penguins are used to eating live fish. Some people even got bit, and the penguins' jaws were so strong, they "lacerated right through my leather jacket." People needed to coordinate and direct the best ways to clean the penguins, then had to care for each other when they got hurt. Without the support of other workers and effective leadership, many more penguins would have lost their lives.

People caused this tragedy, but then people also cared enough to show up to help. 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. Despite the risks and losses, they succeeded because they worked in coalition to protect the vulnerable and work toward the greater good.

Below

Oil spills are very bad for penguins and have many bad effects. There were pictures in all of the articles that showed the spill in South Africa and where the oil spill happened. The oil hurt the penguins because the articles say an effect was burning their eyes. The articles and the video show us what the environment looked like before the spill and how the environment was very natural, rocky, and full of fish. The thousands of penguins could play and have fun on their clean, "cold, and windy, rocky beach." Pictures in the video also show the effects of the spill like pictures of the penguins with the black oil on their bodies and how miserable and sad they look. This makes people think about how horrible the penguins must have felt then. But the video also shows the penguins being cleaned off and being helped by the volunteers. The video also tells us how the rescue efforts worked: "They must restrain the penguin, pry its beak open, and shove the fish down its throat." The articles and video did not talk about how the spill happened and how it could be prevented.