

## TEACHING NOTES

# Plume Series

Written and illustrated by Tania McCartney

Teacher notes by Sue Warren

Suggested for ages 4–10, Year Levels – Foundation/Prep to Year 4



## SYNOPSIS

Hitch a ride on the Albatross Express and travel the globe with Plume. This exciting new picture book series for little ones celebrates culture, diversity and the natural wonders of our world.

Plume is not your typical Antarctic penguin. Sporting a bright yellow plume on the top of his head, Plume is bored of black and white, of shuffling around and snoozing on icebergs. He much prefers to cook, read, knit and sky dive. He craves colour, adventure, excitement! He wants to seize the world he's discovered in the books of his fantastical, glacier library (the largest in the Southern Hemisphere).

In *World Explorer* Plume's great hope is to grow the hearts and minds of his penguin friends. Through his travels, children will engage with themes such as friendship, acceptance, understanding and the wellbeing of our planet.

In *Global Nibbler* we see how Plume loves to cook – and to eat. He loves a bit of spice and he's on a mission to fire up the tastebuds of his fussy-eater penguin friends. With the help of his dear friend Ava (of the Albatross Express), he leaves Antarctica in search of the world's most delicious local dishes and treats.

In *Festival Seeker* Plume is celebrating – what else? – celebrations! Throughout the year, the world is plump with astonishing festivals and Plume loves them all! Journey alongside this adventurous, colour-loving penguin as he jumps aboard the Albatross Express to enjoy a range of enchanting events across the globe.

In *Christmas Elf* it's Christmas in Antarctica and our favourite travelling penguin is popping with festive excitement. There are gifts to wrap, cards to write, fairy lights to untangle and gingerbread to bake. But things go awry when Ava arrives with terrible news. Santa's workshop is in trouble and toy production has stopped! With a little help from his penguin friends, Plume is off to the North Pole. Can he help Santa and make children's wishes come true?



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Tania McCartney is a book creator. She has made well over 60 books for children and adults, and has illustrated, edited and designed many of them too. Her works have both shortlisted and won an array of awards, and have reached the hands of children in over 20 countries around the globe. A children's literacy ambassador and the founder of Kids' Book Review, Tania spends her time writing, drawing, reading (and sometimes working) from her studio in Canberra, Australia. A voracious traveller, she has lived in Paris, London and Beijing.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

The *Plume* series follows the worldwide adventures of a little penguin with big ideas. Written with descriptive language, including words in mother tongues, and illustrated with Tania McCartney's distinctive digital artwork, *Plume* is a conduit to understanding other cultures for children as young as four years old.

## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English; Humanities and Social Sciences (Geography); The Arts, Science, Maths, Design & Technology  
General capabilities: Literacy; Personal and Social Capability; Ethical Understanding; Critical and Creative Thinking; Intercultural Understanding

## THEMES

While these themes are evident throughout the entire series, useful direct examples to illustrate are identified below.

### Theme 1

#### Diversity

- People may look different but we all have similarities
- Everybody deserves respect regardless of race, colour, culture, beliefs, ability
- The diversity of cultures brings colour and excitement to life
- Australia has a diverse population

World Traveller	pp. 3, 22–34
Global Nibbler	pp. 6–10
Festival Seeker	pp. 11–12, 15, 19, 23, 25, 30
Christmas Elf	pp. 21–32

### Theme 2

#### Inter-cultural understanding/promoting global harmony

- The more we understand other cultures, the more we are accepting of differences
- We are a multi-cultural country
- Friends learn about each other
- World peace depends on understanding and accepting others

World Traveller	pp. 12, 17, 22–36, 26, 29–34,
Global Nibbler	pp. 13–23
Festival Seeker	pp. 13, 17, 31
Christmas Elf	pp. 30, 35–36



**Theme 3**

## Celebrations

- We all celebrate special occasions
- Some celebrations are common around the world, even though the way they are celebrated may be different
- Some cultures have different celebrations and festivals
- Celebrations and festivals are a time for people to come together and be joyful

World Traveller	
Global Nibbler	
Festival Seeker	pp. 5, 13, 17, 31
Christmas Elf	pp. 1–6, 35–39

**Theme 4**

## Adventurous/Open-Mindedness

- We are adventurous when we try new things
- Willingness to try new experiences is a way to learn new skills/knowledge
- Risk-takers have a growth mindset
- It's exciting to try new adventures

World Traveller	pp. 5–9, 7–8, 11–13, 16, 24–26
Global Nibbler	pp. 11, 39–42
Festival Seeker	pp. 1–4, 25, 31–37
Christmas Elf	p. 18

**Theme 5**

## Resourcefulness

- Problem-solving is an important skill
- There are always different ways of doing things
- Collaborative action is desirable
- Creative thinking

World Traveller	pp. 36–42
Global Nibbler	pp. 11–16, 37–42
Festival Seeker	pp. 31–37
Christmas Elf	pp. 9–10, 17

**CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING****Before reading****Determine prior knowledge:**

- Looking at the cover (of each book) Plume is clearly the main character and is a penguin. How do we know this?
- For each book, ask students to predict what the title indicates e.g., what does *Global Nibbler* suggest?
- Ask students if anyone has visited another country (or has come from another country). Use a large world map to locate these.



- Tania McCartney's name is the only one on the cover. What does this mean? Can students predict how she might have created the illustrations?
- Are students familiar with any of Tania's other books? Arrange for a bulk loan from the school library. Include books about penguins, Antarctica.
- Use the hot potato strategy to create an anchor chart with students' knowledge of penguins e.g., where are penguins found in their natural habitats? What habits do they have? What are some different types? What type might Plume be?
- Create a [learning wall](#) to record language features such as verb and noun groups, adjectives, adverbs, figurative speech as well as plot details.

## After reading

### Literal

- What are some of the countries Plume visited? How many did he visit altogether (in each book or overall, in the series)? How many are in the Northern Hemisphere and how many are in the Southern?
- Using individual blank world map templates, locate the countries Plume visits and label. Use Google earth to virtually visit some/all of these. Plot Plume's flights from Antarctica to each country. [This could be a series of maps, one for each of the books].
- Research and collect recipes of some of the foods/dishes Plume experiences. Collate to make a class cookbook. Plan a class feast with an international menu (either in practical terms or hypothetical).
- Create vocabulary lists of the words in other languages, or subject specific e.g., a list of all the words to say 'hello', the various foods, or festivals, or Christmas words.

### Inferential

- What attributes does Plume have? How do these set him apart from the other penguins?
- Pose the question why does Plume want to travel? What words/phrases describe his feelings? *'How Plume wishes he could take off, too.'* [World Explorer, p. 20]
- How has Tania created a sense of continuity throughout the series? For example, each book has a similarly styled double spread of Ava and Plume setting off on their trip. Identify other aspects which perform this function.

### Applied Knowledge

- Where else are penguins found besides Antarctica?
- What would be a factor, or factors, making world travel difficult for Antarctica penguins? How might this be solved?
- What are special celebrations for students' families? How do they mark occasions such as birthdays, secular or religious holidays or special days such as ANZAC Day? What other celebrations are commonly marked by the students? Create a class calendar similar to Plume's with these marked.

### Digging Deeper

- What is the author's purpose in making a point of the 'black and white' compared with Plume's love of colour? [World Traveller: pp. 3–6, 38–40; Festival Seeker pp. 1–2]
- What does the author want the reader to think about with this series? [Guide students to suggest the themes]
- Utilise resources such as [Families Around the World](#) (Peace Corps) to stimulate discussions about similarities/differences between cultures and societal structures.
- In what ways could students demonstrate action e.g., acceptance of others/differences, conservation of penguin habitats?



## WRITING ACTIVITIES

- **Non-fiction Research project:** Plume has travelled to simply visit other countries, gain more knowledge about food, participate in festivals and compare Christmas celebrations. Create your own Plume adventure after researching another commonality between cultures e.g., birthday festivities. This could be either a joint collaboration or independent project work. John Green's Mental Floss video [28 Birthday Traditions from around the World](#) might springboard the research.
- **Non-fiction Research project:** Research penguins. Examine different types, compare sizes and characteristics, habitats and behaviour, distribution and special attributes, threats. Become a biologist and use one of the many penguin live cams to observe and record details, such as [U.S. Antarctic Program](#). Based on research and observations, classify Plume's species. Use a tailored template or guideline [many freely available] to scaffold the research for students [dependent on their level].
- **Non-fiction Research project:** Choose a country to research. This could be one that Plume has visited or another of own choice. A [structured template](#) will assist younger students and depending on level include: population, climate, capital city, customs, flora and fauna, special landmarks either natural or man-made, famous people.
- **Design Technology:** Design and create a digital poster designed to attract tourists to a specific country (perhaps the one researched). Compile these into a slideshow to share with others.
- **Poetry:** Tania uses onomatopoeia throughout e.g., drizzle, sniff, speckle, dollop. Write and decorate [onomatopoeia poems](#) for a classroom display.
- **Poetry:** The descriptive and figurative language lends itself well to a [cinquain](#). Write and illustrate these.
- **Recount:** Have students retell their favourite *Plume* adventure and illustrate.
- **Innovation:** Students write a new episode for one of *Plume's* adventures e.g., Ava and Plume might visit another location to sample a different food, such as Louisiana for shrimp gumbo, or visit Thailand during Songkran. This could stem from research or personal (family) experience.
- **Persuasive:** Students can refer to their chosen research project and prepare a short persuasive talk or presentation for an audience e.g., which country's cuisine is the best, which celebration is the most fun. This could use a springboard introductory activity such as Would You Rather? Or other games to focus on the techniques of persuasive text.
- **Descriptive writing:** Refer to examples of figurative language in the books e.g. "*Their gastronomic journey comes to the sweetest end...*" [*Global Nibbler* P 35]. Brainstorm interesting vocabulary and phrases. Write a description of chosen place/food/festival.
- **Six-word stories:** Have students sum up their favourite of the *Plume* books in six words or one sentence.
- **Travel Diary:** Write an entry from Plume's point of view to describe one of his visits which might include the name of their host, the city/location, highlights, feelings or emotions. Structure your guidelines to suit students' capability.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- **Plume Postcard:** Design and write a [postcard](#) from *Plume* to the penguins back at home, from one of the countries on his trip. (Free templates readily available)
- **Review & Reflect:** Create a [Bloom ball](#) for your favourite *Plume* adventure. (Free templates readily available)
- **Personal Bookshelf:** Plume has the biggest library in the Southern Hemisphere. Use a free [bookshelf template](#) to create an individual record of books read over a designated period of time, or favourite books.
- **Sum it Up:** Pen-and-paper or sidewalk chalk to reflect on chosen *Plume* adventure.



- **Character Analysis:** Use a free penguin template to create a character analysis. Focus on adjectives that describe Plume.
- **Geography Fun:** Create a bird's eye view of Plume's neighbourhood in Antarctica
- **Modelling/Drawing:** Draw or model Plume's house either the interior or exterior using illustrations from the books as a reference.
- **Collaborative Construction:** Build a classroom igloo as a collaborative project e.g., from used milk bottles.
- **Escher Art:** Create an artwork using [penguin tessellations](#) (slide symmetry).
- **Bunting:** Make chalkboard style tags like those on the penguins' Christmas Tree [*Christmas Elf* p. 40]. Each student could write a different positive message and combine to create classroom bunting. Write definitions for the words used in the illustration.
- **Fact File:** Compile a Fast Facts or Did You Know list about albatrosses and illustrate.
- **Flying High:** Use a paper flying bird template as a model, construct an albatross kite OR as a class project, construct a pair/pairs of life-size albatross wings to hang in the classroom.
- **Movie Makers:** Watch this stop-motion style video [Get to know...the albatross!](#) (Dept of Conservation NZ). Students could work in pairs or groups to create their own informative clip.
- **Mural:** Create a classroom display to recreate a scene with [origami penguins](#) and other media.
- **Digital Art:** Use a software program to create individual artwork. Watch Tania's [Work-in-Progress video/s](#).
- **Play with Plume:** Design a boardgame based on one (or all) of Plume's travels.
- **Mother Tongue Day:** Invite parents or others to come and tell stories from their own countries, teach some language, or demonstrate skills/activities. Combine or coincide with a local multicultural festival or special day such as [Harmony Day](#) or [Refugee Week](#).
- **Penguin Brain Breaks:** Penguin waddles, penguin yoga, penguin deep breathing, belly sliding, paper snowball throwing. (Freely available slide decks)
- **Sing & Dance:** Davy Jones wrote a song [Your Personal Penguin](#). Try singing and dancing to it.
- **Sculpt your own Penguin:** Use air-drying modelling clay or foam to create a penguin sculpture (many free step-by-step tutorials available).
- **Plan a Party for World Penguin Day [25 April]:** [Love the Penguins](#); [All About Penguins](#); [Celebrating World Penguin Day](#); [Days of the Year: World Penguin Day](#); [Sea World Australia: World Penguin Day Celebrations](#).
- **Visual Literacy:** Watch a penguin movie e.g., *Happy Feet* or *Penguins of Madagascar*. Access related activities in websites such as [Teach with Movies](#) or commercially available resources.

## RELATED READING

- **Maths:**
  - ✓ Understanding Units of Measurement (formal and informal) – Distances, quantities (cooking), capacity, volume, area, qualitative/relational comparatives.
  - ✓ Measurement and Geometry – Positional language, mapping, grid references, latitude and longitude, orientation, directions.
  - ✓ Measuring Time – Calendars, telling time, sequences, months of the year, elapsed time (e.g., weeks, days), time zones.



- **Science:**

- ✓ Living things have basic needs, including food and water.
- ✓ Living things have a variety of external features.
- ✓ People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things.
- ✓ Different materials can be combined, for a particular purpose.
- ✓ Exploring how science has contributed to a discussion about an issue such as loss of habitat for living things: ['Catastrophic' loss: Huge colonies of emperor penguins saw no chicks survive last year as sea ice disappears.](#)

## RELATED RESOURCES

### Books

*I Heart the World: A Celebration of Land, Sea, Flora, Fauna and People around the Globe* by Tania McCartney

[Antarctica: the waking giant](#) by Sebastian Copeland

*This Is Our World: Celebrate with Us!* by Valerie Wilding

Celebrations and Festivals series, Macmillan Young Library [out of print, but held still in many school libraries]

Australian Antarctic Program: [books for younger readers](#)

Other Tania McCartney [books](#)

Hardie Grant [penguin books](#)

### Websites

San Diego Zoo: [Penguin Cam](#)

Phillip Island Nature Parks: [Little Penguin Burrow Camera](#)

National Science Foundation: [All Things Penguin from Antarctica](#)

Armchair Antarctic 4: [Penguin Personalities](#)

Oceanwide Expeditions: [Meet all Six Antarctic Penguin Species](#)

[Wings of the Albatross](#)

Curiosity show: [Make a Flying Bird Mobile](#)

ABC Kids: [Our Celebrations](#)

[Scootle](#) Celebrations

### Free Sources for activities

<https://tessellations.org/>

<https://picklebums.com/draw-your-own-postcard/>

<https://www.craftsonsea.co.uk/penguin-template/>

<https://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/birds/penguins>

<https://www.mrsthompsonstreasures.com/product/reading-log-bookshelf-template/>

[https://www.123homeschool4me.com/free-animal-report-form-printable\\_12/](https://www.123homeschool4me.com/free-animal-report-form-printable_12/)

<https://www.origamiway.com/easy-origami-penguin.shtml>

<https://tuxpaint.org/>

<https://www.theotttoolbox.com/penguin-yoga/>

<https://www.theotttoolbox.com/penguin-deep-breathing-exercise/>

<https://tratatuha.com/clay-penguin.html>





**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM (VERSION 9.0) OUTCOMES**

<b>English</b>	
Foundation	<a href="#">AC9EFLA07</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLE02</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLE04</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLY06</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLY07</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLA08</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLE03</a> <a href="#">AC9EFLY05</a>
Year 1	<a href="#">AC9E1LA04</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LA09</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LE02</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LY02</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LY06</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LY07</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LA03</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LA06</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LA07</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LA08</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LE02</a> <a href="#">AC9E1LE03</a>
Year 2	<a href="#">AC9E2LA08</a> <a href="#">AC9E2LY02</a> <a href="#">AC9E2LY06</a> <a href="#">AC9E2LY07</a> <a href="#">AC9E2LE02</a> <a href="#">AC9E2LE03</a> <a href="#">AC9E2LY03</a>
Year 3	<a href="#">AC9E3LA09</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LA10</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LE02</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LY02</a> <a href="#">AC9E4LY02</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LY06</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LY07</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LE04</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LY05</a> <a href="#">AC9E3LE05</a>
Year 4	<a href="#">AC9E4LY06</a> , <a href="#">AC9E4LY07</a> <a href="#">AC9E4LA04</a> <a href="#">AC9E4LA11</a> <a href="#">AC9E4LE03</a> <a href="#">AC9E4LY03</a>
<b>HASS</b>	
Foundation	<a href="#">AC9HSFK02</a> <a href="#">AC9HSFS02</a> <a href="#">AC9HSFS04</a>
Year 1	<a href="#">AC9HS1S01</a> <a href="#">AC9HS1S06</a>
Year 2	<a href="#">AC9HS2S01</a> <a href="#">AC9HS2S02</a>
Year 3	<a href="#">AC9HS3K02</a> <a href="#">AC9HS3S01</a>
Year 4	<a href="#">AC9HS4K09</a> <a href="#">AC9HS4S01</a>
<b>Science</b>	
Foundation	ACSSU002
Year 1	ACSSU211
Year 2	ACSSU031
<b>The Arts</b>	
Foundation -3	AC9AVA2E01 <a href="#">AC9AVA2D01</a> <a href="#">AC9AVA2C01</a>
Years 3-4	AC9AVA4P01
<b>Design and Technology</b>	
Foundation	<a href="#">AC9HPFP03</a>
Years 1-2	<a href="#">AC9HP2P03</a>
Years 3-4	AC9TDE4K04

