



# Penguin Chick

by Betty Tatham



## Essential Question

How do you know which facts are important?





**A** fierce wind howls. It whips snow across the ice. Here, a female emperor penguin has just laid an egg. It is the only egg she will lay this year.

Most birds build nests for their eggs. But on the ice in Antarctica, there are no twigs or leaves. There is no grass or mud. Nothing to build a nest with. Nothing but snow and ice.



The new penguin father uses his beak to scoop the egg onto his **webbed** feet.

He tucks it under his feather-covered skin, into a special place called a brood patch. The egg will be as snug and warm there as if it were in a sleeping bag.



One of the penguin parents must stay with the egg to keep it warm. But where penguins lay their eggs, there is no food for them to eat.

The penguin father is bigger and fatter than the mother. He can live longer without food. So the father penguin stays with the egg while the mother travels to the sea to find food.

The two parents sing together before the mother penguin leaves.

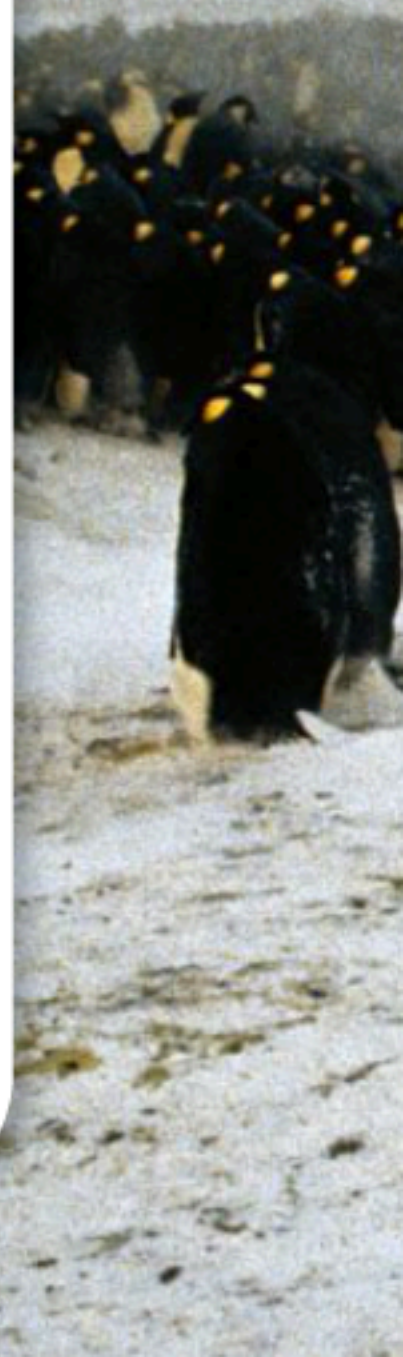





Along with many other penguins, the mother penguin leaves the rookery, where she laid her egg.

The mother walks or slides on her belly. This is called tobogganing. She uses her flippers and webbed feet to push herself forward over ice and snow.

Because it's winter in Antarctica, water near the shore is frozen for many miles. After three days the mother penguin comes to the end of the ice. She dives into the water to hunt for fish, squid, and tiny shrimplike creatures called krill.



 Back at the rookery, the penguin fathers form a group called a huddle. They stand close together for warmth. Each one keeps his own egg warm.

For two months the penguin father always keeps his egg on his feet. When he walks, he shuffles his feet so the egg doesn't roll away. He sleeps standing up. He has no food to eat, but the fat on his body keeps him alive.



### **STOP AND THINK**

**Main Ideas and Details** What is the main idea on this page?  
Which details support the main idea?

**TEKS** 2.3B, 2.14A





**Finally** he feels the chick move inside the egg. The chick pecks and pecks and pecks. In about three days the egg cracks open.

The chick is wet. But soon his soft feathers, called down, dry and become fluffy and gray. The father still keeps the chick warm in the brood patch. Sometimes the chick pokes his head out. But while he's so little, he must stay covered. And he must stay on his father's feet. **Otherwise** the cold would kill him.

The father talks to the chick in his trumpet voice. The chick answers with a **whistle**.



#### **STOP AND THINK**

**Author's Craft** Why does the author use the words **trumpet** and **whistle**?







The father's trumpet call echoes across the ice. The penguin mother is on her way back to the rookery, but she can't hear him. She's still too far away. If the mother doesn't come back soon with food, the chick will die.

Two days pass before the mother can hear the father penguin's call.



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- At last the mother arrives at the rookery. She cuddles close to her chick and trumpets to him. He whistles back. With her beak she brushes his soft gray down.

The mother swallowed many fish before she left the ocean. She brings some of this food back up from her stomach and feeds her chick. She has enough food to keep him fed for weeks. He stays on her feet and snuggles into her brood patch.

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- The father is very hungry, so he travels to open water. There he dives to hunt for food. Weeks later the father returns with more food for the chick.

Each day the parents preen, or brush, the chick's downy coat with their beaks. This keeps the down fluffy and keeps the chick warm.



### **STOP AND THINK**

**Infer/Predict** What has the father done so far? What do you think he will do next?

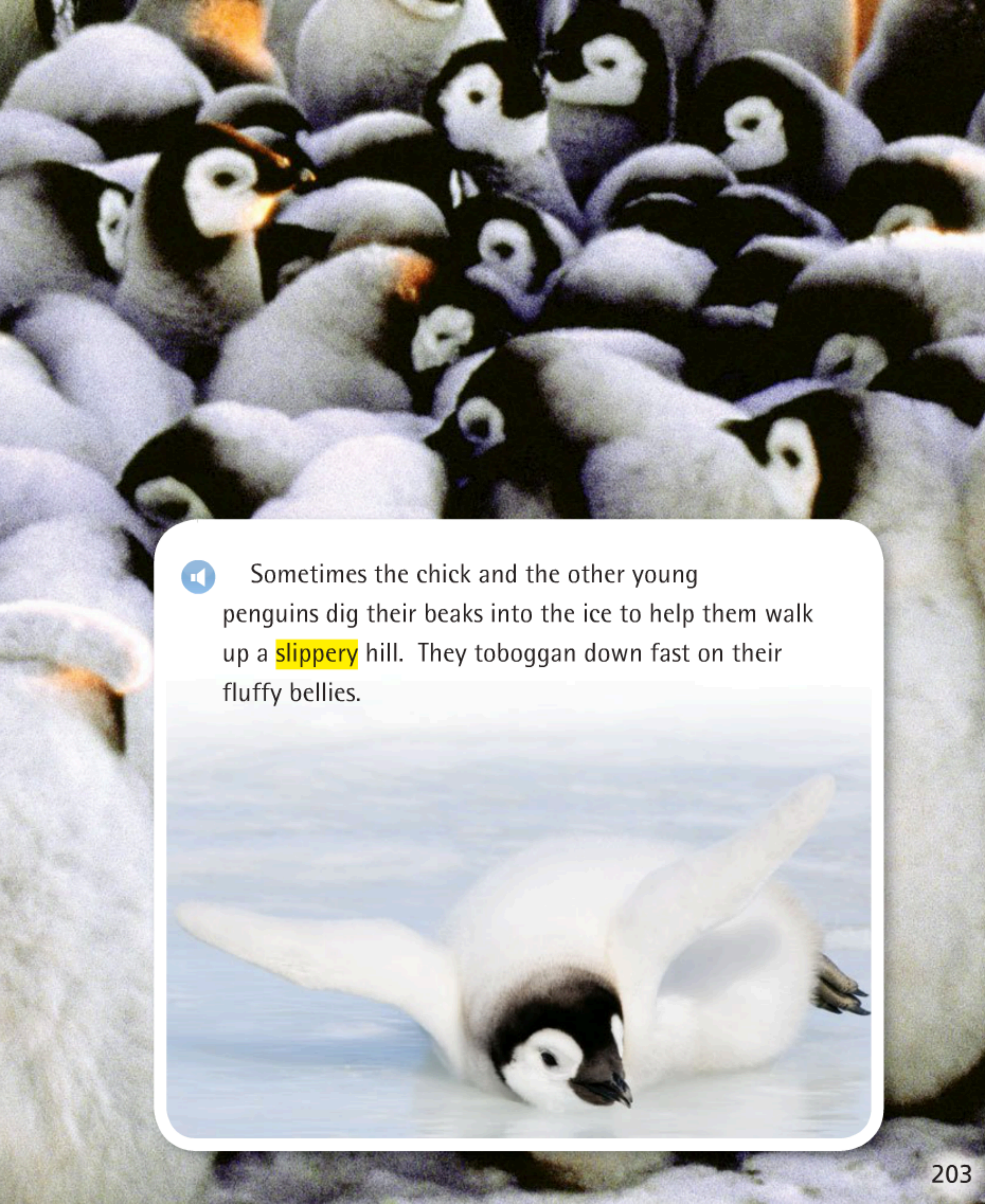
**TEKS** 2.3A, 2.14C



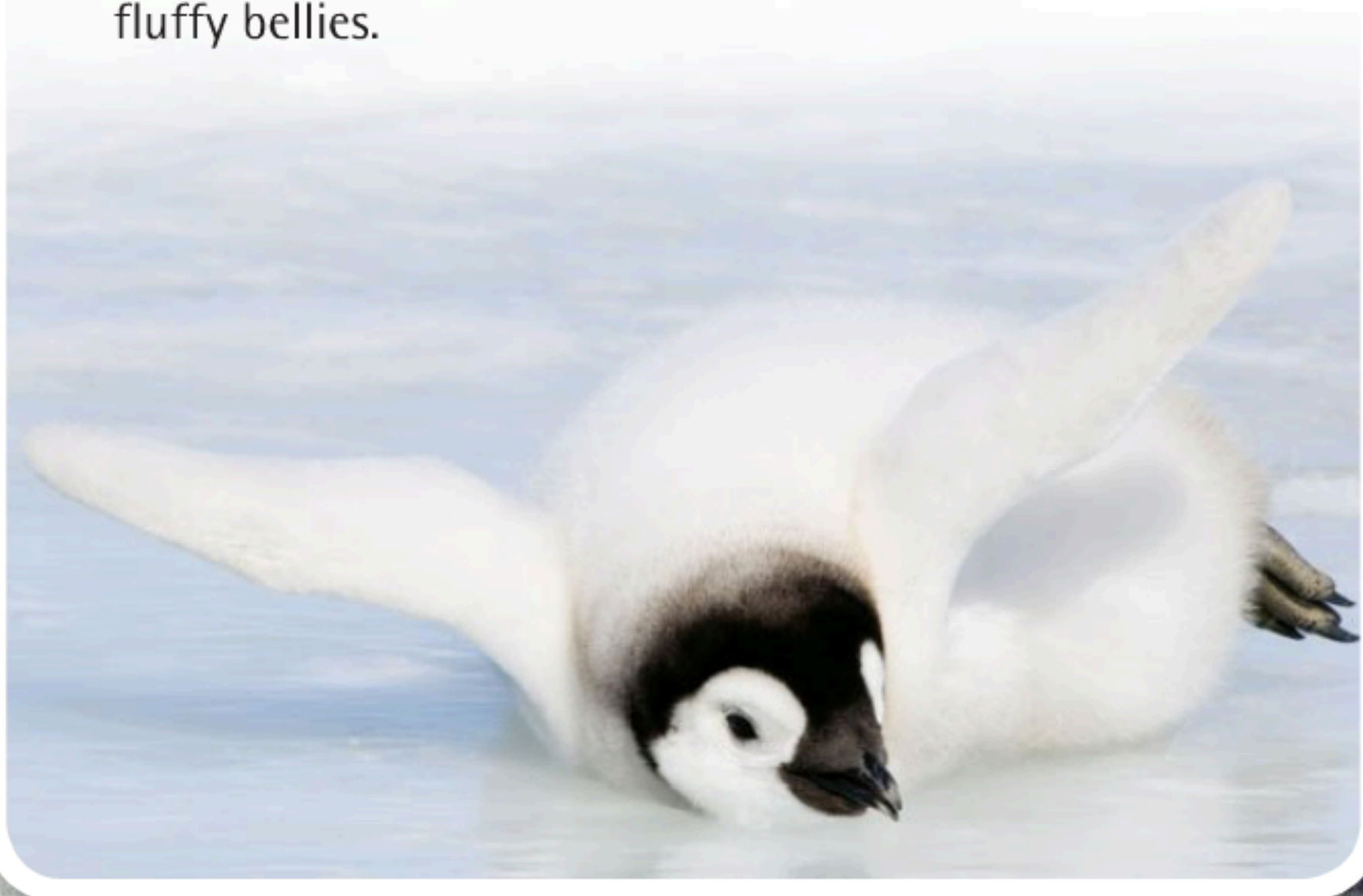


As the chick gets bigger, he and the other chicks no longer need to stay on their parents' feet. Instead they stay together to keep warm.

This group of chicks is called a crèche, or a nursery. The chick now spends most of his time here. But he still rushes to his mother or father to be fed when either one comes back from the ocean.



Sometimes the chick and the other young penguins dig their beaks into the ice to help them walk up a **slippery** hill. They toboggan down fast on their fluffy bellies.





The chick grows and grows. After five months, he has grown into a **junior** penguin. He is old enough to travel to the ocean.

Now he has a **waterproof** coat of feathers, instead of fluffy down. He can swim in the icy cold ocean because his feathers keep him dry and warm.



The young penguin spends most of his time in the water. He swims, flapping his flippers as if he were flying underwater. He uses his webbed feet to **steer** wherever he wants to go.

He catches a fish with his beak and swallows it headfirst.



Now the young penguin can catch his own food and take care of himself. In about five years he'll find a mate. Then he'll take care of his own egg until the chick can hatch.







# Your Turn

1. What happens after the mother penguin returns from her trip to find food?

- She feeds the father penguin.
- She feeds the chick.
- The chick hatches from its egg.
- She leaves again to find more food.

TEKS 2.14C

2.  **TARGET SKILL** **Main Ideas and Details**

How does the mother penguin take care of her chick?  
Write the main idea and details. **TEKS 2.14A**

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3.  **TARGET STRATEGY** **Infer/Predict**

Why does a penguin chick need its mother and its father? Tell a partner. Use facts. **ELPS 4J**

4. **Oral Language** Work with a partner. Retell the story of the penguin chick's life. Describe the order of events or ideas. **TEKS 2.14C**



**TEKS 2.14A** identify main idea/distinguish from topic; **2.14C** describe order of events/ideas in text; **ELPS 4J** employ inferential skills to demonstrate comprehension