

# Working at the Zoo

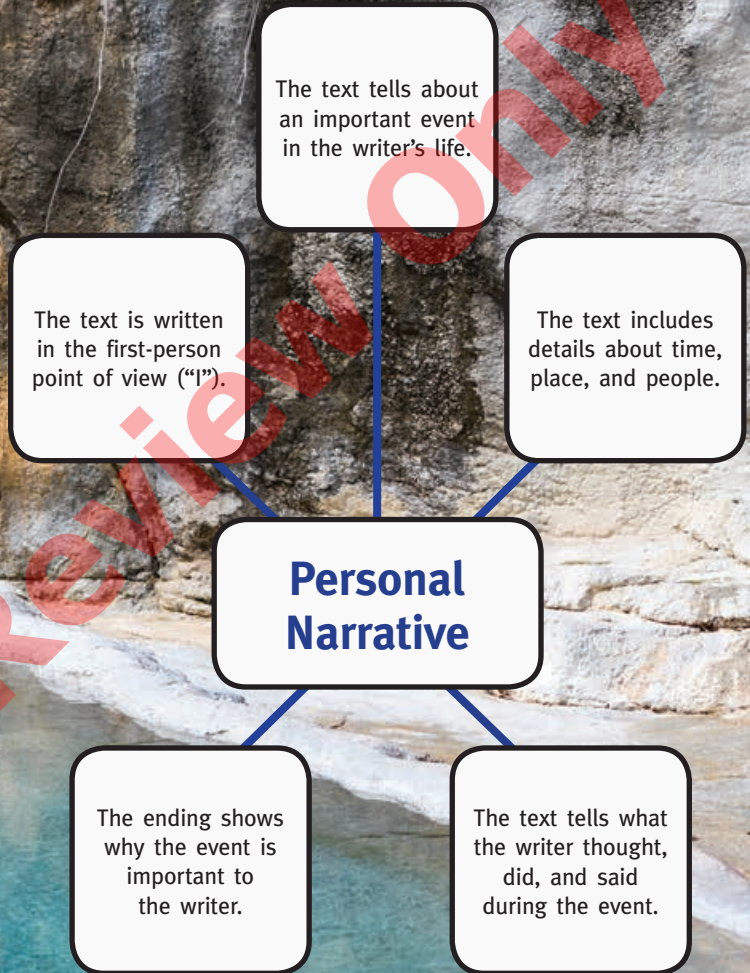


Level **L/24**

Lexile® **610L**

## Personal Narrative

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



© Benchmark Education Company, LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Printed in Guangzhou, China. XXXX-XXXX-XXXX

LEXILE® is a trademark of MetaMetrics, Inc., and is registered in the United States and abroad.

E-books and additional digital resources available at [benchmarkuniverse.com](http://benchmarkuniverse.com).

ISBN: 978-1-5322-5230-3

Toll-Free 1-877-236-2465

[www.benchmarkeducation.com](http://www.benchmarkeducation.com)

[www.benchmarkuniverse.com](http://www.benchmarkuniverse.com)

BENCHMARK EDUCATION COMPANY  
145 Huguenot Street • New Rochelle, NY • 10801

## INTRODUCTION

Gary Hartlage loves his work. He gets to spend his days with penguins at the Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison, Wisconsin. Gary is the main **zookeeper** for the penguin **exhibit**.

◀ Gary Hartlage cares for the penguins at the Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison, Wisconsin.







▲ The African penguin can be found along the coast of South Africa and its surrounding islands.

Penguins are birds that live around the world, in Antarctica, South America, and South Africa. The penguins at the Henry Vilas Zoo are African penguins.



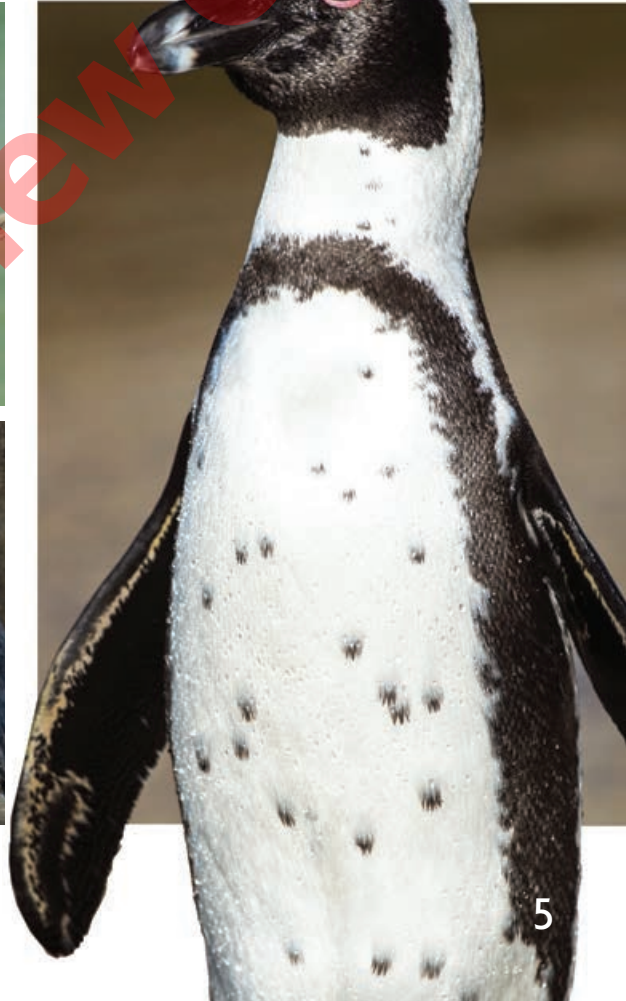


## Gary and the Penguins

I first became interested in penguins when I studied animal science in college. There I learned a lot about penguins and other animals, too.

As a zookeeper, I work closely with the penguins every day. I learn all about their likes and dislikes.

Like humans, the penguins have different personalities. Some of our penguins are sweet, some are curious, and some are grumpy. A few seek my attention. Others would rather be left alone.



▲ Penguins, like humans, can have different personalities.



We currently have nine African penguins in our zoo. African penguins grow to be 60–70 centimeters (about 2 feet) tall and weigh about 3.1 kilograms (about 7 pounds).

African penguins have black feet and black spots on the white part of their feathers. Other species of penguins do not have these traits. And just as every human has unique fingerprints, each penguin has a unique pattern of spots on its belly.



▲ Each African penguin has its own pattern of belly spots.



▲ Antarctic penguin



▲ African penguin

The African penguins are different from the Antarctic penguins. Penguins in Antarctica like cold weather. Our penguins like warm weather. They cannot handle the cold, because they do not have a thick blubber, or fat, layer to help keep them warm.



African penguins are also different from Antarctic penguins, because they are **burrow** nesters.

They dig their nesting burrows into the sand or soil. There they lay their eggs, **incubate** them, and raise the chicks. Antarctic penguins lay their eggs on nests of pebbles or, in the case of Emperor penguins, on their feet!

▼ African penguins dig nests in sand or soil.



# The Penguins and Their Zoo Home

The Henry Vilas Zoo has created a home for the penguins that looks and feels like their natural **habitat**. African penguins are great swimmers. They can dive, swim, and hold their breath for over two minutes.

- ▼ The penguin exhibit has a large pool for the penguins to swim in every day.

