



Teachers' Notes

Puffling

Written by Margaret Wild
Illustrated by Julie Vivas

OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Picture book
Title	Puffling
Author	Margaret Wild
Illustrator	Julie Vivas
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Previous publications (Margaret Wild)

Harry and Hopper (Omnibus Books, 2009)
The Pocket Dogs Go on Holidays
(Omnibus Books, 2008)
The Pocket Dogs (Omnibus Books, 2000)
The Midnight Gang
(Omnibus Books, 1996)
Our Granny (Omnibus Books, 1993)

Previous publications (Julie Vivas)

The Nativity, new edition
(Omnibus Books, 2005)
Our Granny (Omnibus Books, 1993)
I Went Walking (Omnibus Books, 1993)
Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge
(Omnibus Books, 1984)
Possum Magic (Omnibus Books, 1983)

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About the Story

Puffling begins as all puffins do, as an egg hatching in summer. His doting parents, Long Black Feather and Big Stripy Beak, welcome him to the world and take turns to leave the burrow and go out hunting to bring him back food to eat. They warn him to stay inside the burrow at all times, as the scary gulls are outside, watching for just such a morsel as a baby puffin.

Puffling can't wait to venture into the big wild world outside the burrow, but his parents say that he should wait until he is 'strong enough and tall enough and brave enough', and only then will he be able to make the trip all by himself along the cliff, jump off into the water and paddle away. Puffling is impatient, asking from time to time if he is ready for this moment.

Finally he is strong enough (which he shows by paddling his feet) and tall enough (he measures himself against Big Stripy Beak) and brave enough (his parents listen to his heart).

Puffling summons all his courage and makes the journey along the cliff, past the gulls waiting to swoop! But they miss Puffling, and he leaps into the swell and finds friends in the ocean who will keep him company until it is time to come home.

About the Author

Margaret Wild is one of Australia's leading children's book authors. She has worked as a journalist and an editor, and now writes full time. Her many award-winning titles include *Toby*, *Our Granny*, *Miss Lily's Fabulous Pink Feather Boa*, and *Woolvs in the Sitee*.

About the Illustrator

Julie Vivas worked in an animation studio before spending time in Spain, eventually returning to Sydney to live with her family. Her first book was *The Tram to Bondi Beach* and her second was *Possum Magic*. She has illustrated many other beautiful books including *The Nativity*, *Let's Eat*, and *I Went Walking*.

Writing Style

Margaret Wild has written a very special text about growing up and becoming independent. Julie Vivas's emotionally charged illustrations express beautifully the poignancy of the kind of parental love that allows children to develop towards independence without overprotecting them or hiding from the pressures of the real world outside. The short text encompasses the stages of Puffling's growth from dependence to cocky self-assuredness (while still keeping part of himself inside the burrow) to the moment when he is ready to stand bravely by himself and make the dangerous journey past the waiting seagulls to the shelter of the ocean and all the other friends he will find there. The repetition of Puffling's questions to his parents, and their answers to him, make for a structured story along traditional lines.

Study Notes for Teachers

1) *Puffling* is a useful book for introducing research concepts. Children could be directed to the library to find the answers for the questions below. As well as using reference books, students could use the internet to gather information. Project Puffin at <http://www.projectpuffin.org> is a website devoted to a puffin conservation project in the US. This website has interesting and accessible information about puffins in general.

- What part of the world are puffins found in?
- Where do puffins go when they are fledged?
- Why do puffins come back to the same place each summer?
- How many weeks does it take for a puffling to grow to full size?
- What do puffins eat?
- How did puffins get their name?
- How many fish can a puffin fit in its beak on one trip?
- Can you find a picture of a puffling in its natural environment?

2) *Puffling* can be used as a reference for word-association activities.

- *Puffling* is a book about families. Children might be asked to think of six adjectives that would describe Puffling's family.
- Children can be asked to brainstorm words they associate with birds.

- Puffling is the name given to baby puffins. Children can be asked to think of all the names they know for baby animals.

3) The illustrations in Puffling can be used as the starting point for a number of discussions.

- Children could be asked to identify their favourite picture in the book and describe why it appeals to them.
- Children could compare the illustrations with the pictures they found of a puffling in its natural environment. Do they think that the illustrations capture the landscape in which puffins live?
- The last page shows Puffling leaving the land and heading off into the ocean with other puffin friends. Children could be asked to talk about the emotions this scene suggests. Compare this illustration with the one on the half-title page (the very first page in the book).
- Older students could study the illustration style and compare it to other books by Julie Vivas. For these illustrations, Julie Vivas used pastel on textured papers of different colours. What do the different background colours suggest? How do the illustrations demonstrate how Puffling is growing up, and underline the repetition in the text?

4) Children can be asked to respond creatively to the text.

Making jigsaw puzzles

- I. Print out a picture of a puffling or paint your own using Julie Vivas' illustrations as a guide.
- II. Glue your picture to a piece of firm cardboard and make sure the image goes on smoothly without bumps.
- III. When the glue is dry, draw or trace a stencil of your puzzle shapes over the cardboard.
- IV. Use scissors to carefully cut out your pieces.

Making puffins using pompoms

(For younger children, a teacher could complete steps i, ii, iv and viii.)

- I. Cut out two ten-centimetre circles from a piece of cardboard.
- II. Cut a four-centimetre circle from the middle of your two circles.

- III. Then, placing your two circles together, begin to wrap wool (mohair is best as this is nice and fluffy) though the middle circle and around the outer one. Continue to do this evenly until you can no longer fit any more wool through the hole.
- IV. Carefully cut the outside edge of wool between your two cardboard pieces.
- V. Wrap a separate piece of wool between the two pieces of cardboard and tie this tightly.
- VI. Now you can remove your cardboard, fluff the wool and you will have a round body of a puffling.
- VII. Repeat this procedure with cardboard circles that are six centimetres and have a two-centimetre cut out circle in their centre. This is your puffling's head.
- VIII. Join the two pompoms together by passing a threaded needle through their middles (This is something a teacher can do for younger children). Make sure to knot the thread at each end.
- IX. Use felt to make the puffling's eyes and wings, and attach these with glue.
- X. Puffling feet can be made out of pipe cleaners and attached with glue.