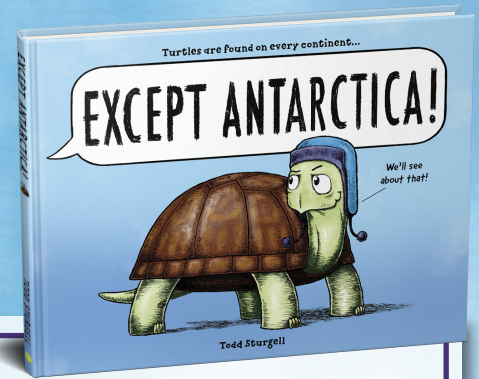


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR EXCEPT ANTARCTICA!

BY TODD STURGELL



Discussion & Activity Guide for Grades K, 1, 2, and 3
Prepared by We Love Children's Books

About the Book

Turtles are found on every continent EXCEPT Antarctica. But not for long!

Featuring a rogue group of cheeky animals who love nothing more than a challenge and a flustered, helpless narrator, this meta-leaning and hilarious picture book about animal habitats on every continent will have kids (and their adults!) laughing every time they pick it up.



@sturgellillustration
@sturgelldraws

About the Author

Todd Sturgell is an illustrator and author. He lives, draws, and hikes in the North Carolina mountains with his wife, kids and an overactive rescue dog named Max (after his favorite picture book character). He loves to draw dinosaurs, mysterious creatures, and characters with big dreams. He is drawn to stories that explore humor, imagination, STEM-related themes, and journeys full of wonder. Visit toddsturgell.com.

Praise for *Except Antarctica*

“Readers will laugh out loud at the animals’ recalcitrance and the narrator’s frustrations, all the while absorbing a great deal of information. **DELIGHTFUL AND HILARIOUS.**”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, STARRED Review ★

“Sturgell depicts his animal travelers with some naturalism, adding the occasional **PLAYFUL DETAIL** and, once they realize what Antarctica is like, comically dismayed expressions.”

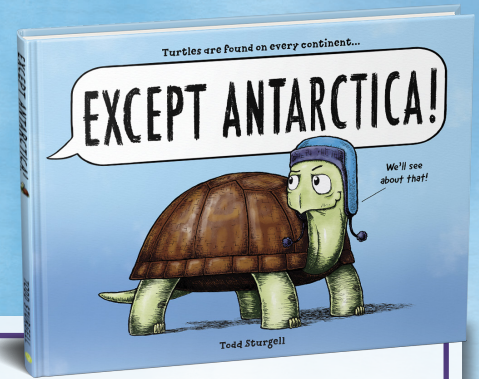
—*Booklist*

“[D]ebut creator Sturgell has a **SAVVY SENSE OF VISUAL PACING**, and the meta-comic repartee is spot-on.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

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Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

Discuss what a continent is. As a class, make a list of the continents. Do students know where Antarctica is located?

What do students know about Antarctica? What animals live in Antarctica and the seas around it?

Have students ever watched nature documentaries? What do the narrators of these movies sound like? How might they sound if the animals they were describing started talking back and disagreeing?

Vocabulary

As you read the book, have students raise their hands if they hear a word they do not know. As a class, figure out the meaning of the word from context. Help students make real-life connections to this word by discussing other situations where they could use it. Can students think of other words that have a similar meaning? In particular, the back matter—with its facts about animals and Antarctica as well as as the discussion of global warming—uses some words that might be unfamiliar to students.

Post-Reading Questions and Activities

Mapping Things Out

At the beginning and end of the book, there are maps of the world. What do the maps tell the reader about the story? Are the maps the same? How are they different?

Narrator vs. Characters

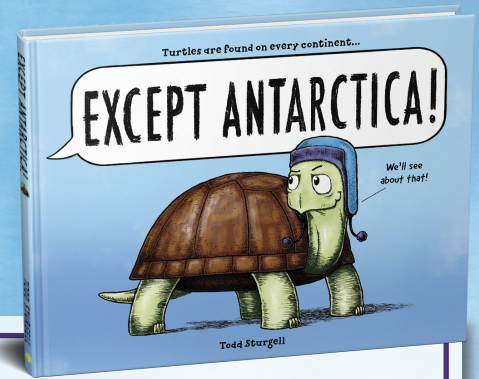
The Narrator is as much a character in this book as the animals who travel to Antarctica. What sort of book does the Narrator want this to be? How do the characters react? What is the relationship like between the Narrator and the characters? In the end, who gets their way? How does the narration and what the characters say work together to tell the story? How does the book show who is talking in each scene?

Who's in Charge?

This book is very funny and much of the humor comes from the characters refusing to do what the Narrator says they will do. Discuss with students the usual role of narration in a book, how it explains what is happening in the story, making the actions and motivations of the characters more clear. What happens in this book instead? Do students know of any other story—book, movie, or TV show—where the story gets “out of control” and does what it wants to do rather than what is expected?

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Question and Answer

The back of the book has information on the animals who are the main characters in this story. Use that section to answer the following questions:

- Do turtles live for a long time or a short time?
- Can dung beetles fly?
- How do owls sneak up on their prey?
- What do snakes use to smell?
- How do bees communicate with the rest of the hive?
- Do mice have short tails or long tails?
- Why do frogs have long back legs?
- How many eggs does an emperor penguin lay each year?

Travels with Turtle

When Turtle hears that there are no turtles in Antarctica, he decides to go there. On the way, he encounters new friends who join him on the trip. Together, the animals make it to their destination. How do they react when they first land in Antarctica? Why do they feel that way? How do their feelings change? What do they decide to do? Do students think the animals regretted going to Antarctica? Why or why not? What lessons can students take away from the story?

Getting to Know Turtle

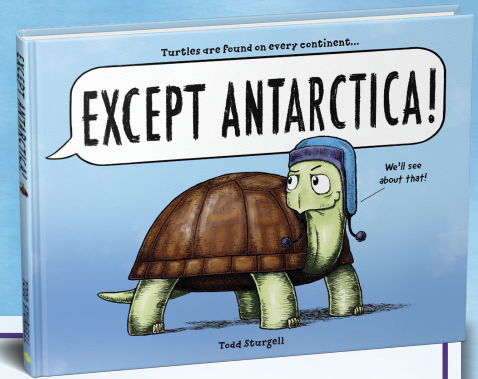
As a class, review how the book lets the reader know what Turtle is like. Do readers learn about Turtle from the narrator, from Turtle's dialogue, or from the illustrations? What does Turtle do in the book that shows what he is like? What does he say? Create a chart listing Turtle's character traits.

Science Time

After the story, there is scientific information at the back of the book about Antarctica and the animals that live there. Break students into groups and, working with an adult as needed, have each group research one of the topics and prepare a poster to share with the class that gives more information on their topic. Have each group explain their poster and then make an Antarctica Gallery in the classroom.

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Taking Action

The back of this book has information about Antarctica, and includes a brief section on climate change. Review the ideas in this section as a class, especially “You Can Help Too!” which lists some ways regular individuals—even kids!—can help make the world a better place for people, plants and animals. As a class, pick one of these, or make up a new one, and try to practice it for a week. Was it difficult? Do students think it helped? What if more people did it—or the class did it for longer?

Reader's Theater

Break students into groups to have them read and act out scenes from the book. Encourage students to develop a distinctive voice for their character, and have fun acting out the illustration. If you wish, work with an art teacher to help make backgrounds and masks for students to use.

And the Story Goes On

At the end of the story, the Narrator says, “Emperor penguins are found only in Antarctica.” In the next scene, Penguin is shown swimming after Turtle and his friends saying, “Wait for me!” What do students think happens next? How will Penguin react to visiting where his new friends are from? Working with an adult as needed, have each student write and illustrate their very own sequel to *Except Antarctica!* Have students share their stories and create an in-class library of new adventures.

