

READING CHALLENGE

The Penguin Who Came Back Every Year

A man saved a penguin. Then the penguin swam 8,000 kilometres to see him again. Every year.

Level	A1 (Beginner)
Age Group	Teens (11-16)
Topic	True Stories
Duration	~12 minutes
Skill	Reading

This is a true story. It is about a man and a **penguin**. The man lives in Brazil. The penguin lives far away, near Argentina. But every year, the penguin swims thousands of kilometres to visit the man. Why? Because the man saved his life. This is the story of Joao and Dindim.

A Penguin on the Beach

Joao Pereira de Souza is a **fisherman**. He lives in a small village near Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Joao is a quiet, **gentle** man. He lives close to the **beach**. One day in 2011, Joao walked to the beach. He saw something on the sand. It was a small penguin. The penguin was very sick. He could not move. He could not stand up. His body was covered in thick, black **oil**. The oil was on his **feathers**, on his face, and on his feet. Oil is very dangerous for birds. It makes them cold. It makes them sick. Without help, the penguin was going to die.

Joao Saves the Penguin

Joao wanted to help. He picked up the small penguin very carefully. He took the penguin to his house. First, he cleaned the oil off the penguin. This took a long time. He used soap and warm water. He washed the penguin again and again. Slowly, the black oil came off. Under the oil, the penguin had beautiful black and white feathers. Joao gave the penguin a name: Dindim. Then Joao started to **feed** Dindim. He gave him small fish every day. At first, Dindim was too weak to eat. But after a few days, he started eating. He ate a lot of fish. He got stronger and stronger. Joao took care of Dindim for many weeks. The penguin stayed in Joao's garden. Joao's neighbours came to see the penguin. Everyone in the village loved Dindim. The **rescue** was a success. Dindim was alive and healthy again.

Time to Say Goodbye

After about eleven months, Dindim was very strong. His feathers were clean and shiny. He was a healthy penguin again. Then one day, Dindim walked to the beach. He looked at the sea. And he swam away. Joao was sad. He loved the little penguin. He thought he would never see Dindim again. "I said goodbye to him," Joao told a reporter later. "I thought that was the end." But Joao was wrong. A few months later, something **amazing** happened.

Dindim Comes Back

One day, Joao heard a noise outside his house. He went to look. There, on his garden path, was Dindim. The penguin was back. He had come back to Joao. Joao could not believe it. Dindim was happy to see Joao. He made happy penguin sounds. He rubbed his head against Joao's legs. It was like he was saying, "I am home!" Dindim stayed with Joao for a few months. He slept in the garden. He ate fish. He followed Joao around the village. Then, he swam away again. And then, a few months later, he came back again. This happened every year. Every year, Dindim **returned** to Joao. Every year, Joao was happy to see his friend.

The Long Journey

Dindim is a Magellanic penguin. These penguins live on the **coast** of Argentina, Chile, and the Falkland **islands**. They are not very big — about 60 to 75 centimetres tall. Scientists think

Dindim swims to Patagonia in Argentina or to the Falkland Islands. Then he swims all the way back to Brazil. That is a **journey** of about 8,000 kilometres. That is very, very far. It is like swimming from London to New York. Magellanic penguins are good swimmers. They can swim about 150 kilometres in one day. But 8,000 kilometres is still a very long trip. It takes Dindim many weeks to swim back to Brazil. He stops to eat fish on the way. He rests on beaches. Then he keeps swimming. All to see his friend Joao.

Why Does Dindim Come Back?

This is the big question. Why does a **wild** penguin swim 8,000 kilometres to visit a man? Scientists are not 100 percent sure. But they have some ideas. Penguins are very social animals. They live in big groups. They have strong feelings. They can remember other penguins — and other animals — for a long time. Scientists think Dindim sees Joao as part of his family. Joao saved his life. Joao fed him. Joao took care of him. For Dindim, Joao is not just a human — he is family. Joao says that Dindim does not like other people very much. When neighbours try to touch Dindim, he sometimes bites them. But he is always happy with Joao. He lets Joao hold him. He lets Joao wash him. He sits on Joao's lap. They are best friends.

Famous Around the World

In 2016, a Brazilian TV show told the story of Joao and Dindim. The video went on the internet. Millions of people watched it. People in every country loved the story. Newspapers in England, America, Japan, and many other countries wrote about the penguin who came back every year. Joao became famous. But he is still a simple fisherman. He still lives in his small house near the beach. And every year, he waits for Dindim. Joao usually knows when Dindim will **arrive**. It is usually in June. Dindim stays until about February. Then he swims away to the south. Joao does not worry. He knows his friend will come back. "He is my friend," Joao says. "I love him like my own child."

What This Story Teaches Us

The story of Joao and Dindim teaches us many things. It teaches us that animals can feel love. It teaches us that one small act of kindness can change a life. Joao did not do anything special. He just helped a sick penguin. He cleaned him. He fed him. He was kind. But that kindness created a friendship that has lasted for years. Many scientists study animal feelings. They know that animals can be happy, sad, scared, and even grateful. Dindim shows us that animals can also be loyal — he comes back to Joao every single year, even though the journey is long and hard. Next time you see an animal that needs help, think of Joao and Dindim. A little kindness can make a very big difference. And sometimes, that kindness comes back to you — in the form of a small, black and white penguin, walking up your garden path, happy to be home.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
penguin	a black and white bird that swims but cannot fly
beach	the sandy area next to the sea
feather	one of the soft, light things that cover a bird's body
oil	a thick, dark liquid that is bad for animals and the sea
rescue	to save someone or something from danger
coast	the land next to the sea
journey	a long trip from one place to another
island	a piece of land with water all around it
fisherman	a person who catches fish
feed	to give food to a person or animal
wild	living in nature, not kept by people
arrive	to get to a place after a trip
return	to come back to a place
gentle	kind, soft, and careful
amazing	very surprising and wonderful

Comprehension Quiz

1. Where did Joao find the penguin?

- A) In a park
- B) On a beach near his house
- C) In a zoo
- D) On a boat

2. What was wrong with the penguin when Joao found him?

- A) He was hungry
- B) He had a broken leg
- C) He was covered in oil
- D) He was too cold

3. How far did Dindim swim to visit Joao?

- A) 100 kilometres
- B) 1,000 kilometres
- C) 5,000 kilometres
- D) 8,000 kilometres

4. How many months did Dindim usually stay with Joao?

- A) About 2 months
- B) About 8 months
- C) About 1 month
- D) The whole year

5. What type of penguin is Dindim?

- A) Emperor penguin
- B) Magellanic penguin
- C) King penguin
- D) Little blue penguin

Answer Key

#	Answer	Question
1	B	Where did Joao find the penguin?
2	C	What was wrong with the penguin when Joao found him?
3	D	How far did Dindim swim to visit Joao?
4	B	How many months did Dindim usually stay with Joao?
5	B	What type of penguin is Dindim?