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# Activity Guide

800-788-1121

## Peter and the Wolf

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### ABOUT THE STORY

The story is the vehicle chosen by the composer Sergei Prokofiev to introduce children to the instruments of the orchestra. The intent of this Readalong is to acquaint the reader with the story before introducing the musical version. In this classic Russian tale, Peter knows he is not supposed to go into the meadow because a wolf might attack, but he is not afraid. When he sees the wolf swallow the duck, he plans his revenge. Will Peter get the wolf, or will the wolf get Peter.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/COMPOSER

Sergei Prokofiev was born in Ukraine in 1891. He studied music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and debuted as the pianist in 1908. He is the composer of operas, symphonies, ballets, and concertos. He composed the music for *Peter and the Wolf* in 1936. Prokofiev died in Moscow in 1953.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Charles Mikolaycak lived in New York City and taught book illustration at Syracuse University. He is the author and illustrator of several award-winning children's books, including *I Am Joseph* and *Babushka*. Charles Mikolaycak died in 1993.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever heard the story of Peter and the Wolf before. Explain that it is a classic Russian tale that is set to music. Tell the class that they will read the story of Peter and the wolf.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “What do the bird and duck think of each other?”
- “What does the cat plan to do?”
- “Why is Peter’s grandfather angry?”
- “Why does Peter tell the hunters not to shoot?” (*Draw conclusions*)
- “Grandfather says, ‘ And what if Peter had not caught the wolf?’  
What might have happened then?” (*Predict*)

### Vocabulary

Write these words from the story on the chalkboard. Point out to children that the words are either verbs that tell about an action or adjectives that describe something. Ask volunteers to act out each word and then define it. Then have children use each word in a sentence.

waddling	perched	fluttering
scrambled	nimbly	triumphant

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### Language Arts: What Scares You?

Peter is not frightened of the wolf in the story – but maybe he should have been! Ask children to write down one or two things that scare them on pieces of scrap paper. Then ask them to write whether their fear is based on a real danger or not. Collect the unsigned scrap paper and have volunteers read the fears aloud. Encourage class discussion about why people are afraid of some things that are not dangerous and not afraid of other things that are dangerous.

#### Music: Listening to Peter and the Wolf

Play the music for Peter and the Wolf for the class. Have them listen carefully to identify the music for each of the animals in the musical piece. When children have correctly identified each animal’s musical signature, they can call out the name of the animal when they hear its music. You may wish to write these instruments and the characters they represent on the chalkboard:

Peter - strings	bird - flute	duck - oboe
cat – clarinet	wolf – horns	hunters – drums
grandfather – bassoon		

#### Social Studies: Wolf Geography

Have children work in small groups to find out where in the world wolves still live. Provide each group with an outline map of the world. Ask them to fill in the map with markings to show where wolves can be found. If possible, children can label each area with the kind of wolf found there.

### INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

#### Wolves – The Facts

Have children work in small groups to find out information about wolves. Ask them to focus on one of these topics: wolves’ family life; what wolves eat; wolves and humans. Children can look on the Internet using the keyword *wolves* to find the information they need. Ask groups to report on what they learn in class.