

Creative Adventures with Literature

#11: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

Introduction

The *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months* focuses on three components of the **Domain: Creativity and Aesthetics**. The components are: **Music and Movement, Visual Arts, and Drama**. In this book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter, there is a primary focus on **Visual Arts**, but there are also activities to support the other two components.

Through the ages, children have enjoyed *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, one of the Peter Rabbit classics by Beatrix Potter. The words and the beautiful watercolor illustrations by Beatrix Potter create an endearing picture of a naughty rabbit named Peter.

Connection to Curriculum

Consider using this curriculum guide as a supplement to the **Adventures in Learning** Topic of Study: #7 Things that Grow – Vegetables, for additional activities about vegetables. For example, consider the following:

- Seed Book (page 7)
- Vegetable Garden (page 8)
- Container Vegetable Garden (page 8)

Story Preparation

- Read the book several times so that you are familiar with the story and can use your voice to convey the different actions in the story; for example, when Peter is frightened, when he cries and when he runs. Plan to read the story to a small group of no more than four to six children so all can see the illustrations in the small book.
- Develop felt or magnetic storytelling figures as a vehicle for presenting the story to a larger group of children. See Attachment: [The Tale of Peter Rabbit](#)

Story Presentation

Learning Goals:

SE2.1 Experiences, expresses, and regulates a range of emotions (*emotion expression*)

SE2.2 Interprets and responds to the feelings of others (*emotion expression*)

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge*)

Book: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter.

First Reading of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

- Be familiar with the book.
- Form a small group of no more than four to six children so all can see the illustrations in the small book.
- Show children the cover and say, "This is Peter Rabbit and the name of the book is *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter who is both the author and illustrator. This means she wrote the words and drew the pictures."
- Explain to children that the word "tale" means a story.
- Say to children that "Peter Rabbit is a very curious little rabbit. Curious means that he wants to know about things. Sometimes being curious gets him into trouble. Sometimes he is also naughty and that gets him into even more trouble. Let's read the story and learn more about Peter Rabbit and how he gets into trouble."
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Help children understand the meaning of words that may be unfamiliar to them; for example mischief (doing things you shouldn't), currant buns (rolls with raisins in them, French beans (green beans), gooseberry net (net put over gooseberry bushes to keep birds from eating berries).
- Follow up by inviting children to discuss the trouble Peter got into in the story and how he got out of trouble.
- Involve children in discussing when Peter Rabbit was frightened in the story and times they have been frightened and/or times they have gotten into mischief by doing something they weren't suppose to do.

Teacher Note: *Form additional small groups and present the story to them. Repeat this until all children have had an opportunity to hear the story.*

Second Reading of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

- Form a small group of no more than four to six children so all can see the illustrations in the small book.
- Show the cover and invite children to recall the title. Ask if they remember what the word “tale” means.
- Call children’s attention to Peter Rabbit on the cover and explain that Beatrix Potter used watercolors to create the pictures in the story. State that they will have an opportunity to use watercolors in the art center.
- Read the story so all children can see the illustrations in the book. Encourage children to comment about the story as it is being presented to them.
- Follow up by telling children that it is now their turn to pretend to be Peter Rabbit and to be a little naughty.

Show page 19 where Peter is squeezing under the gate. Say, “Get down low but stay in your place.”

Show page 20 where Peter is eating vegetables and say, “First let’s eat some lettuce and some French beans, and then eat some radishes from Mr. McGregor’s garden.” (pretend to eat vegetables)

Show page 27 and say, “Mr. McGregor is chasing after Peter who is rushing all over the garden.” (run silently in place)

Show page 31 and say, “Peter’s blue jacket is caught on the gooseberry net by the large brass buttons, but he wriggles free.” (wriggle from head to toe)

Show page 36 and say, “Peter rushed into the tool-shed and jumped into a watering can.” (make jumping motion in place)

Show page 40 and say, “There was water in the watering can. Peter sneezed, jumped out the window and ran some more.” (sneeze, jump in place and run in place)

Show page 51 and say, “Peter finally finds the gate, crawls under it and runs home.” (get down low, then stand up and run in place)

Show page 55 and say, “Peter never stopped running until he got home. He was so tired that he flopped down and shut his eyes.” (flop down on floor and shut eyes)

Additional Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child’s home language) (*follows directions*)

CA3.1 Explores feelings, relationships, and concepts through imitation, pretend play, and sociodramatic play (*exploration of drama*)

Teacher Note: *The page numbers are referring to the original edition by Beatrix Potter.*

Telling the Story, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

- Prepare the storytelling figures as described in the Story Presentation section.
- Take the book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, the storytelling figures and felt or magnetic board to the story reading area.
- Invite children to join you in the area. (This can be a larger group than for the reading of the story.)
- Show children the book and ask them to recall the title and some of the details of the story.
- Explain to them that you are going to tell the story without the book.
- Present the story using the storytelling figures.
- Follow up by involving children in discussing which way they liked the story the best; with the book or with the storytelling figures and to explain their choice.

Teacher Note: *Place the book, the storytelling figures and storyboard in the Library Center. Observe to see if children tell the story with book and/or with the figures.*

Creative Art Extensions

Learning Goals:

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*variety of tools*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Activity: Painting with Watercolors

Materials: watercolors and fine bristle paint brushes, cups of water for cleaning brushes, paper that is sturdy and absorbent, book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

Directions:

- Explain to children that you will be in the Art Center and will have watercolors with you.
- Show the children who join you the illustrations in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Recall with them that Beatrix Potter used watercolors to create the pictures in the book. Allow children time to examine the pictures.
- Review and/or demonstrate with children guidelines for using the water colors. For example:
Dip the brush in the water, and then swirl in the color of paint they want to use.
Guide them on how much water to use (less water makes it easier to control the flow of wet paint onto the paper.)
Thoroughly rinse the paintbrush before changing colors.
Do not keep adding water to the painting because the wet paper will eventually tear.
- Allow children to create their own paintings using watercolors.

Teacher Notes:

- *Large coffee filters, especially those made from recycled paper, are excellent for watercolors. They are inexpensive if purchased in bulk.*
- *You may want to cover the table with newspaper before children begin painting with watercolors.*
- *Refer to the Introduction to **Creative Adventures with Literature** for additional information about various art media in which children can participate.*

Activity: Displaying our Watercolor Paintings

Materials: display area such as poster board, paper from roll, tri-fold display or bulletin board at child's eye level

Directions:

- Use one of the display areas listed or your own ideas to create a gallery for displaying children's watercolor paintings. Label it: **Watercolor Paintings**
- Involve children in displaying their paintings in the art gallery.
- Suggest that children invite their families to view their watercolor paintings.

Teacher Note: *Respect children who choose not to have their art work displayed.*

Additional Learning Goal:

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*art appreciation and expression*)

Creative Drama and Dramatic Play Extensions

Learning Goal:

CA3.1 Explores feelings, relationships, and concepts through imitation, pretend play, and sociodramatic play (*exploration of drama*)

Activity: Mr. McGregor's Gardening Prop Box

Contents: blue shirt or jacket, small gardening tools, knee pads, small watering can, gardening gloves, empty vegetable seed packets (lettuce, beans, radishes, cucumbers, cabbage, potatoes), gardening magazines

Directions:

- Place the prop box in the Dramatic Play Center.
- Allow children to play with the props as they choose.
- Observe children and listen to their comments as they play with the props. Do they pretend to be Mr. McGregor or Peter Rabbit?

Creative Music Experiences

Learning Goal:

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

Activity: Sing about Little Peter Rabbit

Materials: none

Directions:

- Involve children in singing the following song:

Little Peter Rabbit

(Sing to tune of "Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose")
(Make appropriate motions to go with the words of the song)

Little Peter Rabbit
Was a naughty little rabbit.
Little Peter Rabbit
Was a naughty little rabbit
Little Peter Rabbit
Was a naughty little rabbit.
He was in trouble all the day.

Little Peter Rabbit
Was a frightened little rabbit.
Little Peter Rabbit
Was a frightened little rabbit.
Little Peter Rabbit
Was a frightened little rabbit
When Mr. McGregor came his way.

Little Peter Rabbit
Lost his shoes and blue coat
Little Peter Rabbit
Lost his shoes and blue coat
Little Peter Rabbit
Lost his shoes and blue coat.
When he tried to run away.

Little Peter Rabbit
Was a tired little rabbit.
Little Peter Rabbit
Was a tired little rabbit.
Little Peter Rabbit
Was a tired little rabbit.
He had a very busy day.

Additional Books

Other books written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter:

The Tailor of Gloucester
The Tale of Benjamin Bunny
The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck
The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle
The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin
The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies
The Tale of Tom Kitten

The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter, illustrated by David McPhail

Additional “Peter Rabbit” Ideas

- Read other Beatrix Potter books to children.
- Add other Beatrix Potter books to the Library Center.
- Develop an environmental print book. Title the book *I Can Grow Vegetables*. Create a page for each vegetable featured in the book. For example, on the first page write: I can grow cabbage. Add an empty cabbage seed packet to the page. Read the book with the children. Place the book in the Library Center.

