



PRESCHOOL TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Arts Start program is supported by  PNC  Grow Up Great

Pete the Cat

Friday, January 27, 2017

10:30 AM & 12:30 PM

SANGAMON AUDITORIUM 



Welcome!

This guide was created for use by teachers in the Springfield Urban League Head Start program, but it will also be sent to other teachers attending the performance who indicate they teach preschool students. Another Teacher's Guide, with content for older students, is available on the Sangamon Auditorium website at <http://www.sangamonauditorium.org/education/class-acts/>. We hope the information and activity ideas included in this guide will help your students better understand the performance they see.

We look forward to seeing you!



Youth programming in the *Class Acts* series and in conjunction with other Sangamon Auditorium events is supported in part by the Helen Hamilton Performing Arts Endowment for Youth Fund, gifts from Elizabeth and Robert Staley, and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.



The Arts Start program is an initiative of **University of Illinois Springfield's Sangamon Auditorium** and the **Springfield Urban League Head Start**, funded by **PNC's Grow Up Great**® initiative. Through this arts education program, Head Start students, their teachers, and their families will become involved in live performances, enhancing the students' educational opportunities and school readiness.



Write to Us

We would love to hear from you and your students! If your students write about the performance they saw or create artwork related to it, you are welcome to send it to us via email to azepp2@uis.edu or through the mail to

Class Acts
Sangamon Auditorium, UIS
One University Plaza, MS PAC 397
Springfield, IL 62703-5407

We love sharing student work with our *Class Acts* sponsors, so they can see the impact of their donations.



Attending a Live Performance

Please use the information below to help prepare your young students for attending a live theatrical performance. For many, this will be their first experience with live theater.

Going to a live theatrical performance is different than watching a movie or TV show – the members of the audience are very important, and the way they behave will affect the performance. That’s why theaters have their own special rules about behavior.

- Tell your students that when they arrive in the parking lot, there will be a lot of other buses there too. They will need to follow the instructions of their teachers and walk in a straight line (or maybe in a buddy-system line) to come into the building. Once inside, they need to stay in line because of all the other students who will be there.
- Ask your students how they think an audience should behave at a live performance. What are some of the things they should do and not do? If it is not covered by the student answers, make sure you talk about:
 - **Listen** to the performance (this ties into “don’t talk,” but it can be helpful to keep all the discussion points phrased in the positive and not in the “don’t-do-this” mode); use a “cupped ear” gesture to emphasize listening when it is mentioned
 - **Watch** the performance; point at both sides of your face near your eyes with your index fingers to emphasize watching when it is mentioned
 - **Clap** at the end of songs and at the end of the performance when the performers take their bows. Take the time to practice clapping with the students. Call one student forward who will pretend to take a bow at the end of a performance and the rest of the room will practice clapping for this student.

Repeat the gestures for the three points above and have the students do it with you.

- Let your students know that like in a movie theater, the area where the audience sits for the performance will be rather dark, but there will be lights on the stage and some small lights will remain on in the aisles. If they need to use the bathroom in the middle of the show, they can come to the end of the row and an usher will use a flashlight to make sure they can find their way to the correct bathroom.



Activities

The activities can be used together in any combination that works for the teacher. It would be best to do some activities before the performance, to help students understand the plot of the story, and some activities after the performance, to reinforce what they have seen.

About the Story

The play is based on the *Pete the Cat* series of books by James Dean and Kimberly Dean.

- Pete, a rock and roll cat and his animal friends are living a life of freedom and jam sessions when they wander into a yard and Pete is caught by the cat-catcher. His punishment is to spend a week as a housecat with a family.
- Pete meets his host family, the Biddles. He becomes roommates with Jimmy Biddle, a second grader who is nervous about the idea and has a lot of rules about behavior he wants Pete to follow. However, Pete likes to play it cool and is not a rule-follower.
- Jimmy brings Pete to school and his math test turns into an art class. Jimmy is flustered and copies another student's painting because he can't think of his own idea for a picture. He gets in trouble and has to create an original picture in order to pass second grade.
- To help him, Pete takes Jimmy in the VW (Very Wonderful) bus to find inspiration for his perfect picture. They travel to the beach, the moon and Paris and when Jimmy finally learns to let loose and jam with magic sunglasses on, he paints the perfect picture.

The activities in this study guide are designed to go with *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes*.

Pre-show Discussion Questions

Discuss the different types of performing arts (music, dance, theater) to help students understand that they are going to see people perform. Ask if they have ever experienced a live theater performance before. What did they see? What was it like?

How is live theater different than movies and TV?

- There are real people on the stage.
- The performance will never be exactly the same again.

Familiarize your students with the following words – theater, play, actor, stage, costume, usher

Literacy and Writing

This story is all about what Pete the Cat does during a day at school. Have your students write or draw about what they do during a school day. As a variation of this activity, to help reinforce sequencing skills, you can provide the list of activities and, as a class, you can put the activities into the correct order. You can also incorporate sequencing words – first, next, before, after, last, etc.

Vocabulary – Most of the words in this story will be familiar to your students, but there are a few you may want to review with them:

- rocking
- strolling
- library
- favorite
- grassy

Fine Arts

Music – The *Pete the Cat* storybook is a great opportunity to use some of the skills taught in Deborah Sunya Moore’s “Sing Me a Story” professional development workshop. Springfield Urban League Head Start teachers can refer to their workshop packets for the complete lesson plans, but as a review, here are some of the techniques you can use with this story. The book gives us the words for Pete’s song, but we’ll need to decide how it should sound when we say/sing it out loud.



- **Rhythm** – the pattern of short and long sounds and rests – You can speak in rhythm, even if you aren’t singing. Students can clap along with the rhythm of the words in Pete’s song.
- **Pitch** – the “highness” or “lowness” of sound – Some words in the song can be a higher or lower pitch than others.
- **Form** – the structure of the song
 - **Echo** – have students repeat a line of the song after you say/sing it. For example:
 - Leader: “I’m rocking in my school shoes”
 - Students: “I’m rocking in my school shoes”
 - **Call & Response** – the leader will say/sing the beginning of a line from the song (the call) and the students finish the line (the response). For example:
 - Leader: “I’m rocking”
 - Students: “in my school shoes”

Don’t forget to practice your gestures (pointing to yourself and then to your students) to help them know when it is their turn to speak.



Dance/Movement – Pete does many different activities during his day at school. Below is a list of all the action words in the story. Can your students think of an action for each of these words? Can you do the action as you sing these words during the story?

- rocking
- reading
- eating
- playing
- singing
- painting
- adding
- writing

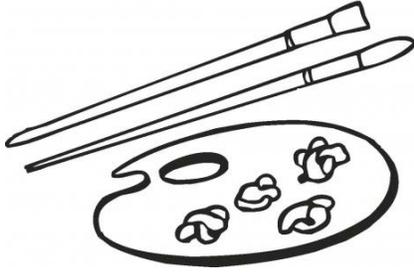
Theatre – In this story, we repeat variations of the sentence, “I’m rocking in my school shoes.” You can use this sentence to have your students practice speaking with different emotions. How can you change the way you say the sentence? Faster or slower? Higher or lower voice pitch? Louder or softer? Try saying the sentence in a way that shows each of these emotions:

- happy
- excited
- worried
- sad
- angry

What other emotions can you think of?



Depending on the age of your students, you can extend this activity into Language Arts by talking about the difference between a period, an exclamation mark, and a question mark. When you are reading, how does a sentence sound different if it ends with these different punctuation marks?



Visual Art – One of Pete’s activities at school is painting in his school shoes, so any paint activity would connect with the story.

The illustrations in this storybook include many bright primary colors, which you can use to reinforce learning color recognition. You can open the book to any page and ask students to point out objects of a particular color, such as red (Pete’s shoes and guitar), yellow (Pete’s eyes), and green (Pete’s lunchbox).

Other Activities

Take home activity – Before or after the performance, send home the coloring sheet found on the last page of this study guide.

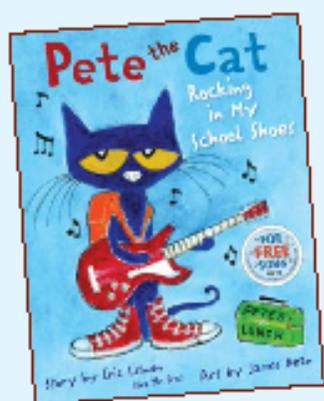
Math – Practice counting with your students by opening the book to any page and counting how many cats you see. Some pages have just one cat, while others have many; and some pages have pictures of cats (such as on the covers of books in the library) along with the cat characters.

Snack – In the story we see a picture of Pete’s lunch, which includes an apple, a carton of milk, a fish, and goldfish crackers; any of these can be included in your snack. Ask your students what kind of food a real cat eats. Maybe some of your students have a pet cat at home.

Post-show Discussion Questions

After attending the performance, it is very important to talk to your students about their experience, memory, and reaction to the live performance. These are some possible questions:

- Tell me about what you saw on the field trip.
- Tell me about what you heard on the field trip.
- What will you remember about the performance?
- What surprised you about our field trip?
- What was the most exciting part of our field trip for you?



Coloring in Your School Shoes

Pete rocks red shoes for school, but what about you?
Color these to match your ideal school shoes.



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