

Peter and the Wolf Activity 3

The Character of Instruments

Teaching Objective

Students will explore the physical traits of the characters from *Peter and the Wolf* and then use that experience to relate to the music.

Resources

- Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* found on track 10 of the accompanying Youth Concert CD
- *Peter and the Wolf* story line found on page 19 of this guide
- Pictures of the characters from *Peter and the Wolf* starting on page 31 of this guide
- Pictures of the instruments that represent each character in *Peter and the Wolf* starting on page 34 of this guide

Pre-Assessment

Ask students if they have ever pretended to be someone or something else. As an exercise ask students to briefly pretend to be a particular animal or character. Help students understand that in order to pretend to be another character one needs to identify what makes that character unique.

Teaching Sequence

1. Using the character pictures, briefly review the basic sequence of the story of *Peter and the Wolf*. Display the appropriate picture as you discuss each character.
2. Tell or remind the students that each character in the story is represented by a musical instrument. As you name each instrument, place its picture on the board next to the matching character picture.
3. Discuss with students how each of the characters might move in terms of speed, quickness, shape, size and weight. Discuss how each character might behave. Have students compare how Peter might move differently than the grandfather; how the duck's movements are different from the bird's, etc. Note students' responses on the board. Your list will look similar to this one:
 - Peter: carefree, light, playing, skipping, exploring
 - Grandfather: big, slow, serious, strict, stern
 - Bird: quick, fast, light, small
 - Duck: waddling, shaking itself, clumsy, plump
 - Cat: sneaky, steady, smooth, pause to arch back
 - Wolf: heavy, licking lips, sniffing the air, mean looking,
 - Hunters: alert, brave, quiet, slow, deliberate
4. Assign students into 7 groups – one for each character. Allow them time to practice imitating their assigned character. Invite students who are good at a certain character to show off their acting individually. Then invite others to imitate.
5. One at a time, listen to the opening themes of each of the characters from *Peter and the Wolf*, identifying the representative instrument of each one. Help students understand how each instrument sounds like its character in terms of speed, quickness, shape, size and weight. Ex: Does the bassoon's heavy tones sound slow and old like the grandfather? Is the clarinet's sound steady and smooth like the cat? Do the French horns sound low and heavy like the wolf? Do the strings sound loose and carefree like Peter?

Culminating Activity

As you play each character's theme, have the students (or an individual or your small groups) stand up and move appropriately with the music while the others practice their best audience etiquette.

Evaluation

Did students explore the physical traits of the characters from *Peter and the Wolf* and then use that experience to relate to the music?

TEKS Connections

English Language Arts: 110.11b(4,6,8); 110.12b(4A,9); 110.13b(6,9)

Physical Education: 116.2b(1-2); 116.3b(1-2); 116.4b(1-2)

Music: 117.3b(1,3B,4B); 117.6b(1,5B,6A); 117.9b(1,5C,6A)

Theater: 117.4b(1,2,3,5); 117.7b(1,2,5); 117.10b(1,2,5)