



## The Tale of Peter Rabbit: Pre-K Book Guide

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### Book Summary

Peter Rabbit doesn't listen to his mother's warning and gets himself into deep trouble! How will he escape Mr. MacGregor's garden?

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### Skills Focus [Back to Contents](#)

#### **LC.VR.c.1.PK:**

Makes inferences (local and global).

#### **LC.VR.c.2.PK:**

Makes predictions/hypotheses and makes/draws conclusions.

#### **LC.V.b.2.PK:**

Understands the meanings of and uses of new expressive vocabulary.

#### **Social-Emotional Connection:**

- Self-Management
- Responsible Decision-Making

#### **Essential Question:**

- Why are gardens important?



### Teacher Overview [Back to Contents](#)

In this classic tale, Peter Rabbit goes into Mr. McGregor’s garden against his mother’s advice and gets himself into lots of trouble! As a result, he has to deal with the consequences of his actions. Readers will enjoy following along on Peter’s mischievous adventures.

This charming story provides opportunities to discuss respect, actions and consequences, and the importance of following instruction. Invite students to consider the choices Peter made compared to the choices of his siblings and the different consequences they encountered. Highlight the multiple-meaning words featured in the text during “After You Read” discussion.

#### **Funds of Knowledge:**

- A garden is an area of land where flowers, fruits, and vegetables are grown. Flowers, fruits, and vegetables are planted or placed in the ground to grow. They need water, sunlight, and even rich soil—dirt with lots of nutrients for the flowers to blossom and the fruits and vegetables to grow long enough to be ready to be eaten.
- In this story, Peter the Rabbit explores Mr. McGregor’s garden and finds all kinds of different vegetables being grown: lettuce, french beans, radishes, parsley, cucumbers, cabbages, potatoes, onions. There are also different fruits being grown: gooseberries (a type of berry) and currants (a type of raisin).
- A gardener is a person who works in a garden. As a gardener, Mr. McGregor does NOT like rabbits in his garden. Rabbits will eat all the vegetables and fruit they find, leaving nothing left for the person who did all the hard work of planting and gardening to harvest or take up to eat for himself.
- Mischief is playful behavior or action that is silly, and sometimes annoying. It can be less playful and more irresponsible and thoughtless, even dangerous.

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- Being naughty is when someone or something is not behaving the way they should; they are being playful, silly, even annoying. Another similar word to “being naughty” is mischievous. In this story, Peter the Rabbit’s actions, behavior, and decisions are often naughty and mischievous.



### Vocabulary [Back to Contents](#)

**Words to Teach** – The words below are relevant across the text set and are regularly used in conversational English. Providing multiple exposures to these Tier Two words will encourage students to add these words to their everyday vocabularies.

Prior to your read-aloud, review the words with students and ask them to give you a “thumbs up” when they hear the word in the story or during the read-aloud discussion. This encourages active listening and allows you to visually assess focus and understanding.

Choose 3–5 words from the following list to focus on throughout your work on this theme.

- **garden:** an area of land where flowers, fruits, and vegetables are grown
- **plant//planting:** to place something in the ground like a seed to grow
- **mischievous:** playful behavior or actions that is silly, and sometimes annoying
- **naughty:** when someone or something is not behaving the way they should; they are being playful, silly, even annoying, mischievous to
- **frighten/ed//fright:** to scare someone and make them afraid
- **accident:** something not-so-good or even bad that happens because of a mistake or error
- **implore:** to ask someone for something that you have to have or want or need right now
- **exert:** to use a lot of strength or energy to do something that is difficult or hard
- **wonder:** to be amazed by someone or something

#### When you come across a word in a story, you should:

- **Encounter:**
  - ◇ Acknowledge that students heard the target word with a thumbs up.
    - “Good listening! You heard the word \_\_\_\_\_.”
- **Explain:**
  - ◇ Share a student-friendly definition of the word.
  - ◇ Restate the word in the context of the book.
    - “In this story, the character is *dabbling* in food by trying something new.”
- **Extend:**
  - ◇ Provide an additional example of how that word might be used.
    - “You might *dabble* in a sport or activity as you try it out to see if you like it.”
  - ◇ Ask students to say the word together.

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**Words to Explain** – The words below appear in the story you are about to read—it is likely that students will need a brief explanation of them in order to truly comprehend the story. As you read the story, pause at each of the words below and define it briefly, pointing out clues from the story and illustrations that help you to understand the meaning of the word.

- **tale:** another word for story
- **currant bun:** a type of bread like a roll that is small and has small seedless raisins (currants)
- **lane:** a path or very small road
- **thief:** someone that steals or takes something that does not belong to them
- **gooseberry:** a small, green fruit that grows on a bush
- **gooseberry net:** a type of net that surrounds a gooseberry plant and keeps it safe from birds and other small animals that might try to eat its fruit
- **fortnight:** 14 days; two weeks
- **camomile tea:** a type of tea that treats upset stomachs made from camomile plant (a plant with scented leaves)
- **supper:** a meal you eat in the evening; another word for dinner
- **sieve:** a tool with mesh or tiny holes on the bottom to separate coarse from fine particles of materials or matter like dirt, sand, or flour



### Before You Read [Back to Contents](#)

Invite students to begin thinking by offering them opportunities to share what they notice and wonder about the book based on the title and cover with the following prompts:

Say: Today we are going to read the story, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. As we read and discuss this story, I want you to be listening for our vocabulary words. When you hear one, I want you to give me a thumbs-up!

- **Words to Explain:** A tale is another story. The tale of Peter Rabbit means this book is a story about Peter Rabbit.
- What are you curious about in this picture? What do you notice or see?
- What do you wonder about?
- What are you curious about based on the title?
- What does it look like Peter is doing in this illustration?
- Have you ever seen a real rabbit? Does Peter look the same or different from a rabbit you have seen before?
- **Essential Question:** Why are gardens important?
- Why do people create and build gardens? What goes on in gardens?



### As You Read [Back to Contents](#)

Read the book aloud or play the accompanying audio while projecting, pausing to think aloud, define words in the text, and ask questions by using the following prompts:

## The Tale of Peter Rabbit: Pre-K Book Guide

### Page 3

- How many rabbits are in Peter's family? There are five: the four little rabbits and their mother.

### Page 4

- **Think Aloud:** I'm noticing that he is wearing a blue coat with fancy gold buttons. I know that in real-life rabbits do not wear clothes like this or talk. This lets me know that this book is fiction: an imaginary story about Peter the Rabbit. It is not real.
- **Pause and Ponder:** Let's look at this picture closely. Does it look like Peter is listening to his mother carefully? How do you know?
- **Words to Teach:**
  - ◇ **Encounter:** Good listening! You heard the word *garden*.
  - ◇ **Explain:** A garden is an area of land where flowers, fruits, and vegetables are grown. Peter's mother is telling her children to stay away from Mr. McGregor's garden.
  - ◇ **Extend:** My grandpa has a small garden where he grows tomatoes in the summer. Let's say the word *garden* together.

### Page 5

- **Words to Teach:**
  - ◇ **Encounter:** Good listening! You heard the word *mischief*.
  - ◇ **Explain:** Mischief is playful behavior that is silly and sometimes even annoying. It can even lead to getting into trouble! Mrs. Rabbit told the little rabbits not to get into mischief.
  - ◇ **Extend:** A little mischief is being silly when you are playing with friends. Let's say the word *mischief* together.

### Page 7

- **Words to Explain:** A lane is a very small road. Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail went down this little road to gather blackberries.
- **Pause and Ponder:** I'm noticing Peter is not in this picture. I'm wondering where he might be. What do you think?

### Page 8

- Did Peter listen to his mother about staying away from Mr. McGregor's garden?
- **Words to Teach:**
  - ◇ **Encounter:** Good listening! You heard the word *naughty*.
  - ◇ **Explain:** Being naughty is when someone or something is not behaving the way they should. Peter is being naughty because he is going to Mr. McGregor's garden even though his mother told him not to go there.
  - ◇ **Extend:** I notice that Peter is squeezing under the gate to get into the garden. That lets me know that he is being very naughty. He is going somewhere he should not be **and** not listening to his mother. Let's say *naughty* together.

### Page 9

- **Think Aloud:** I'm noticing this is the same picture from the front cover. This part of the story must be important. That's why this picture is repeated: used for the cover of the book AND in the book itself!

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### Page 10

- **Think Aloud:** Lettuces, French beans, and radishes are types of vegetables to eat. This lets me know that Mr. McGregor's garden grows lots of different vegetables. It is a vegetable garden.
- **Think Aloud:** I'm noticing Peter is holding his stomach. I'm wondering if it means that he ate too much!

### Page 11

- **Pause and Ponder:** What do you think Mr. McGregor is going to do when he sees Peter Rabbit in his garden?

### Page 12

- **Words to Explain:** A thief is someone who steals or takes something that does not belong to them. Why do you think that Mr. McGregor called him a thief? What did Peter take that did not belong to him?

### Page 13

- Peter lost both shoes! How do you think he feels about losing his shoes?

### Page 14

- **Words to Explain:** A gooseberry net is a type of net that surrounds the gooseberry—a plant that grows small green fruit. This net keeps the gooseberry safe from birds and other small animals that might try to eat its fruit.
- Oh no! His buttons on his jacket got caught in the net; he is stuck! Poor Peter!

### Page 15

- **Think Aloud:** The birds are trying to help Peter. I know this because they are described as "friendly" sparrows. I know that when you are a friend to someone you are kind and helpful.
- The friendly sparrows were trying to tell Peter to take action and push himself to quickly get out of the net.

### Page 16

- **Words to Explain:** A sieve is a tool that has a mesh or tiny holes on the bottom to separate coarse from fine parts of loose matter like dirt, sand, or flour. You might use this at the beach or in a sandbox.
- **Pause and Ponder:** Do you think that was a good tool to use to catch Peter? Why or why not?

### Page 17

- **Pause and Ponder:** Do you think hiding in the watering can was a good place to hide? Why or why not?

### Page 19

- **Think Aloud:** Rabbits are known to be very quick! I wonder if he'll be able to outrun Mr. McGregor.

### Page 23

- It seems like Mr. McGregor gave up looking for Peter and went back to doing work in the garden. Do you think Peter will be able to sneak past him without getting caught?

### Page 24

- Phew! Safe at last! He did it!

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### Page 25

- Mr. McGregor hung up Peter's little jacket and shoes as a scarecrow to frighten the blackbirds so they stay out of his garden.
- **Pause and Ponder:** How do you think that will frighten the blackbirds?

### Page 26

- **Words to Explain:** That was the second little jacket he lost in a fortnight. A fortnight is two weeks or 14 days. Peter has lost two jackets in two weeks!
- **Pause and Ponder:** Is that a lot of coats to lose in 14 days? What does that tell us about Peter?

### Page 27

- **Pause and Ponder:** Why do you think Peter was not feeling well?

### Page 28

- **Words to Explain:** Supper is another word for dinner. The other rabbits had bread, milk, and blackberries as a special treat for dinner. Why did Peter not have that for supper too?



## After You Read [Back to Contents](#)

Revisit the essential question based on new context from the story, and ask comprehension questions that reveal students' understanding by using the following prompts:

- Now that we have read this story and have learned more about Peter Rabbit and his adventures in Mr. McGregor's garden, let's reflect and discuss what we have discovered.
- Why were gardens important for Peter? For Mr. McGregor? For the other animals?
- Why are gardens important to me?
- **Essential Question:** Why are farms and gardens important?
- Why do people create and build gardens? How do people take care of gardens? Why do people take care of gardens?
- **Sentence Starter:** I like *gardens* because \_\_\_\_\_.
- **Sentence Starter:** My favorite type of *garden* is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- What were some of your favorite parts of the book? Why?
- What questions do you have about the story? What are you still wondering about the story?
- What would you want to learn more about after reading this book?
- If you were a gardener— a person who creates gardens and works in them — what would you be interested in planting? How would you want to deal with mischievous rabbits like Peter?
- Was Peter being respectful toward his mother by not following her directions to stay out of Mr. McGregor's garden?
- Why is it important to listen to adults and follow directions?
- Do you think Peter Rabbit will return to Mr. McGregor's garden? Why or why not?



### Adaptations [Back to Contents](#)

These adaptations are appropriate for all students, but are especially helpful for emergent multilingual learners, students with speech challenges, and students who might be shy or hesitant to speak up in larger groups.

#### For students needing additional support:

- Offer visual representations of vocabulary words. Put the words and corresponding pictures on index cards and have them visible for children to see and refer to throughout the story: reading and discussion.
- Create a thought web of ideas with the word Gardens in the center of the web. Encourage students to share their thoughts and ideas about the following questions:
  - ◊ Why are gardens important?
  - ◊ Why do people create and build gardens?
  - ◊ How do people take care of flowers, vegetables, fruit, and other plants in gardens?
  - ◊ Why do people take care of flowers, vegetables, fruit, and other plants in gardens?

#### For students learning multiple languages:

- Offer visual representations of vocabulary words. Put the words and corresponding pictures on index cards and have them visible for children to see and refer to throughout the story: reading and discussion.
- Encourage students to share what they know about gardens and what they would like to know and learn more about. Provide photos or images of different types of gardens. Make connections to the vocabulary words on the index cards and these additional pictures.
- Use **realia and video clips** to support student’s understanding of vocabulary words or phrases and build deeper connections to the text set focus of gardens.
- Create a K.W.L. Chart with students around Gardens:
  - ◊ What I Know (about Gardens)
  - ◊ What I Want to Know (about Gardens)
  - ◊ What I Learned (about Gardens)
- Pair students as they are sitting at desks or a rug. Tell them they are partners and will share ideas. When you pose a question, first have pairs **turn and talk** to each other about their thoughts on the answer(s) to the questions. Give a minute or two to talk, then have everyone come back to the group and share what both partners said. This encourages careful listening and is an opportunity for children to rehearse their contributions before participating in a larger group. It also helps students to summarize and present the thoughts and ideas of others.



### Book Extension Ideas

Offer the following interdisciplinary opportunities to extend students’ understanding of and engagement with the text:

- During his adventures in Mr. McGregor’s garden Peter lost his new shoes and blue jacket with brass buttons. Invite students to draw a new outfit for Peter that he can wear to replace the items he lost in the garden.
- Create a “Vegetable Picture Sort.” Provide students with pictures of vegetables (point out the ones featured in the text) and have them sort the vegetables in different ways (by color, by ones they’ve seen, tried, liked, disliked, etc.).