



## The Tale of Peter Rabbit - 2nd Grade Book Guide

by Beatrix Potter

### 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?



### Skills Focus

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7:** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

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**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.8:** Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

**Social-Emotional Connection:** respect, actions & consequences, problem solving



### Teacher Overview

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 directions. Invite children to consider the choices Peter made compared to the choices of his siblings and the different consequences they encountered. Invite students to consider what better choices Peter could have made and what lesson he learned. Discuss point of view and invite students to consider how the story would be different if told from the point of view of another character. Highlight the multiple-meaning words featured in the text during small group instruction.



## Vocabulary

Write the vocabulary words on index cards or sentence strips and display them in a pocket chart where children can see them during the read-aloud. Display the chart as the book is being read for reference. Discuss the vocabulary prior to the read-aloud to aid comprehension.

- **mischief:** behavior that is often playful, but can be irresponsible and dangerous
- **fir tree:** Firs are evergreen trees of the pine family with leaves are like needles
- **accident:** an event that happens by chance, especially a harmful one
- **currant buns:** a sweet bun containing currants
- **currant:** a small seedless raisin
- **blackberries:** a berry that is black or very dark purple when ripe
- **french beans:** the pod of a green bean or wax bean
- **parsley:** an herb with curled leaf clusters to garnish or season food
- **thief:** someone who steals
- **frighten:** to cause fear in; scare
- **naughty:** not behaving or obeying; mischievous
- **implore:** to beg or plead urgently
- **exert:** to push into effort or action
- **tremble:** to shake from fear, weakness, or cold
- **damp:** slightly wet
- **puzzle:** to confuse
- **twitch:** to move or pull with a quick, sudden motion
- **supper:** an evening meal; dinner
- **fortnight:** fourteen nights and days; two weeks
- **camomile tea:** a tea made from a plant with scented leaves
- **cucumber frame:** a structure made to help cucumbers grow upwards to save space
- **gooseberry net:** a net set around a gooseberry plant to protect it from birds and other small animals
- **toolshed:** a place to store tools
- **sieve:** a tool that has a mesh or tiny holes on the bottom to separate coarse from fine parts of loose matter



## Before You Read

Say: Today we are going to read the story, The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

- I'm noticing the word "Tale" in the title. Have you heard that word before? I know it's spelled differently than the tail on an animal, so it must mean something different. A tale is an imaginary story.
- What other "tales" have you read? (prompt students with fairytale or folktale titles taught in class or featured in the classroom library)
- I'm noticing that he is wearing a blue coat with fancy gold buttons. Do rabbits usually wear clothes? What does that tell you about the type of book this is?
- What else are you noticing in this picture? What are you wondering?

 **As You Read**

Read The Tale of Peter Rabbit aloud to your students, or play the accompanying audio while projecting, pausing to model good reading strategies, defining words in the text, and asking discussion questions.

Ask:

- **Skills focus:** (page 1, after reading “Once upon a time”) A story element often found in fairy tales or folktales is the phrase, “once upon a time.” Why do you think some authors begin their stories that way?
- Beginning a story with “once upon a time” allows the reader to imagine the story happening anywhere and at any point in time.
- **Skills focus:** (page 2, after reading that Mrs. Rabbit warned the little rabbits not to go into Mr. McGregor’s garden) Let’s look at this picture closely. Does it look like Peter is listening to his mother carefully? How do you know?
- **SEL:** Who are the adults in your life that you must listen to?
- Mrs. Rabbit telling Peter and his siblings about Mr. McGregor’s garden seems very important. It might be a foreshadow. A foreshadow is when the author gives the reader hints and clues about what will happen later in the story. Let’s keep reading to find out!
- **Skills focus:** (page 3, after reading that Mrs. Rabbit said, “Now run along, and don’t get into mischief.”) What did Mrs. Rabbit mean when she told the little rabbits not to get into mischief? What is mischief? Mischief is behavior that is often playful, but can be irresponsible and dangerous.
- **Skills focus:** (page 5, after reading that Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail went down the lane to gather blackberries) What do you notice about this picture?
- That’s right, Peter is not with his siblings gathering blackberries. Where do you think he might be?
- Do you think he’s going to listen to his mother and follow her directions to only go into the fields or down the lane? Why or why not?
- **Skills focus:** (page 6, after reading that Peter ran straight away to Mr. McGregor’s garden) Was your prediction correct? Did Peter listen to his mother? What do you think is going to happen when Peter sneaks into Mr. McGregor’s garden?
- **SEL:** (page 7, after reading that Peter ate lettuce, beans and radishes) How do you think Mr. McGregor is going to feel when he sees Peter eating the vegetables in his garden?
- **Skills focus:** (page 8, after reading that Peter felt rather sick) I’m noticing he is holding his stomach. Why do you think he was feeling sick?
- **Skills focus:** (page 9, after reading that Mr. McGregor found Peter in his garden) Uh oh! How do you think Mr. McGregor is going to react when he sees Peter Rabbit in his garden?
- **Skills focus:** (page 10, after reading that Mr. McGregor called out, “Stop thief!”) Why is Mr. McGregor calling Peter a thief? Do you think Peter is acting like a thief? Why or why not?
- **Skills focus:** (page 11, after reading that Peter lost one shoe among the cabbages and the other among the potatoes) What do you think Mrs. Rabbit will say when she finds out Peter lost both his shoes in Mr. McGregor’s garden?
  - **SEL:** Have you ever lost something important to you?
- **Skills focus:** (page 12, after reading that his new blue jacket got stuck in the gooseberry net) Oh no! His blue jacket! If you were Peter, what would you do to try to get out of the gooseberry net before Mr. McGregor found you?

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- **Skills focus:** (page 13, after reading about the friendly sparrows) What do you think it means that the friendly sparrows “implored him to exert himself?” Do you think they were trying to be helpful? How do you know?
  - “Implored him to exert himself” means that they were urgently telling him to push himself free of the gooseberry net.
- **Skills focus:** (page 14, after reading about the sieve Mr. McGregor used to try to catch Peter) A sieve is a tool that has a mesh or tiny holes on the bottom to separate coarse from fine parts of loose matter. Do you think that was a good tool to use to catch Peter? Why or why not?
- **Skills focus:** (page 15, after reading that Peter jumped into a watering can) Do you think Mr. McGregor will find Peter in the watering can? Why or why not? Have you ever played hide and seek? Where is the best place you’ve ever hid?
- **Skills focus:** (page 16, after reading that Peter sneezed and Mr. McGregor was after him in no time) Do you think Mr. McGregor would have found Peter had he not sneezed?
- (page 17, after reading that Mr. McGregor tried to put his foot upon Peter) Rabbits are known to be very quick! Do you think Mr. McGregor will catch him?
- **Skills focus:** (page 18, after reading that Peter sat down to rest) I’m wondering if Mrs. Rabbit and the other little rabbits have realized that Peter is missing. Do you think they are out looking for him? Why or why not?
- **Skills focus:** (page 21, after reading Mr. McGregor was hoeing onions and his back was turned towards Peter) 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? If you were to give advice to Peter at this very moment what would you tell him?
- **Skills focus:** (page 22, after reading that Peter slipped underneath the gate, and was safe at last) Phew! Safe at last! He did it! What do you predict will happen next?
- **Skills focus:** (page 23, after reading that Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scare-crow to frighten the blackbirds) Mr. McGregor hung up Peter’s little jacket and shoes as a scarecrow to frighten the blackbirds out of his garden. Do you think Peter will try to go back into the garden and get it? Why or why not?
- **SEL:** (page 24, after reading that it was the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter had lost in a fortnight) That was the second little jacket he lost in a fortnight. A fortnight is 2 weeks or 14 days. If you were Mrs. Rabbit, what could you have asked Peter about what happened to his clothes?
- **Skills focus:** (page 25, after reading that Peter was not very well during the evening) Why do you think Peter was not feeling well that evening?
- **Skills focus:** (page 26, after reading about Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail’s supper) Bread, milk and blackberries were a special treat for the little rabbits to have for dinner. How was not enjoying the delicious supper with the other little rabbits a consequence for Peter’s actions?



## After You Read

Provide some or all of the following prompts to generate a classroom discussion. Give students time to ask questions and clarify things that might have been unclear.

Ask:

- **Skills focus:** Do you think Peter will ever try to sneak into Mr. McGregor’s garden again? Why or Why not?
- **Skills focus:** What lesson did Peter learn?
- **SEL:** Did Peter follow his mother’s directions?
  - No, he did not. Was he being respectful toward her by not listening and following her directions? Why or why not?
- **SEL:** What were some of the consequences Peter faced after sneaking in the garden?
- **SEL:** Did Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail make good or bad choices throughout the story? What were their (good) consequences? How were their consequences different from Peter’s?



## Adaptations

**For use with ELL students:**

- Pre-teach vocabulary words by putting the words and corresponding pictures on index cards. Have them visible for children to view throughout the story on a white board, bulletin board or in a pocket chart.
- Provide students with a graphic organizer (T-chart or Venn Diagram) and ask them to compare and contrast Peter Rabbit and a real rabbit. Have them include the similarities and differences between the food, clothing, actions, home, etc. of a real rabbit and a fictional rabbit (Peter) in their organizer.

**For use with small groups:**

- Discuss making good choices and the consequences of bad choices. Invite students to consider the events in the story and choose 3 bad choices Peter made in the text and the consequences of his actions. Then, have them “correct” those bad choices and consider what better choices he could have made. Students may draw and write their responses in a writing journal or on construction paper.
- This can be an opportunity to introduce/re-teach multiple-meaning words to students. Define homophones and tell students that some words, although pronounced the same, have different spelling and different meanings. Then, have students draw pictures to portray the multiple meanings of words. Invite them to add other examples of homophones they have seen in their reading such as, dear and deer, be and bee, bare and bear. Provide the following examples from the text:
  - An example from the book is, “tale and tail.” In the title, The Tale of Peter Rabbit, the word “tale” means an imaginary story. The homophone, tail, sounds the same but is spelled differently and has a different definition.
  - Another example from the book is, “meet.” “But round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor!” The homophone, meat, has a different meaning.
  - Also featured in the book is the homophone, four. “Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter.” The homophone, for, has a different meaning.



## Book Extension Ideas

- **Skills focus:** Discuss point of view and have students consider whose point of view the story is being told from. Then, have them write a short version of the story from Mr. McGregor's point of view.
- **Skills focus:** Write a letter! Using a friendly letter format, ask students to imagine they are Peter Rabbit and write an apology letter to Mr. McGregor as one of the consequences for sneaking into his garden.