

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Peter Pan/Peter Pan and Wendy (Unabridged) by James M. Barrie

Book Information

James M. Barrie, Peter Pan/Peter Pan and Wendy (Unabridged)

Quiz Number: 517

Penguin Putnam, 1994

ISBN 0-14-036674-1; LCCN

242 Pages

Book Level: 7.2

Interest Level: MG

The adventures of Peter Pan, the boy who would not grow up, have delighted readers for nearly a century. This text also published under the title PETER PAN AND WENDY.

Topics: Classics, Classics (All);
Fantasy/Imagination, Misc./Other; Series,
Scholastic Classics

Main Characters

Captain Hook the pirate captain of the "Jolly Roger"

Cecco, Jukes, Cookson, Starkey, Skylights, and Noodler some members of Hook's crew

John and Michael Darling Wendy's younger brothers

Mr. and Mrs. Darling the parents of Wendy, John, and Michael, who mourn when their children are missing

Nana the Darling children's nurse, a dog

Peter Pan a boy who refuses to grow up and who brings Wendy and her brothers to Neverland

Smee the bo'sun aboard the "Jolly Roger"

Tiger Lily the Indian princess of the Piccaninny tribe

Tinker Bell Peter's fairy

Tootles, Nibs, Slightly, Curly, the twins the lost boys in Neverland

Wendy Darling a young girl who befriends Peter and mothers the boys in Neverland

Vocabulary

bo'sun an officer in charge of the rigging, anchors, and deck crew

cypher a person having no influence or value

perambulator a baby carriage

totting adding up, calculating

Synopsis

This fantasy of perpetual childhood begins in the Darling nursery. The Darling children, Wendy, John, and Michael, are cared for by their nurse, Nana, a Newfoundland dog. One night, on Nana's night off, Mrs. Darling sits with the children. Upon nodding off, she is awakened by a breeze from the nursery window and finds a boy clad in skeleton leaves. He is accompanied by a strange darting light. When Mrs. Darling screams, Nana rushes in and lunges at the boy. He escapes, leaving only his shadow in Nana's mouth. Mrs. Darling rolls it up and places it in a drawer until she finds just the right time to tell Mr. Darling. When he hears of the incident, he dismisses it as silly.

Soon afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Darling are invited to a dinner engagement. Nana is tied outside that evening after Mr. Darling loses his temper with her. The children are left with only the maid to look in on them. This is the night Peter chooses to return for his shadow. Wendy awakes when she hears him crying because he is unable to reattach his shadow. As she sews it to him, he tells her of Neverland, the place where he now lives. He had left home the day of his birth after hearing his parents speak of his growing up. He chose to go live with the fairies. The darting light of Tinker Bell, a fairy that had accompanied Peter, fascinates Wendy, but Tink is quite rude to her. Peter tells Wendy that he came to hear stories in the nursery and appeals to her to come to Neverland and be a mother to him and the lost boys on the island. Wendy wakes John and Michael, and Peter entices the children with stories of pirates and mermaids. He teaches them to fly, and they leave the nursery just as Nana and the Darlings are about to enter the room.

The lost boys, pirates, and natives populate the island of Neverland. After a jealous Tink fails in getting Wendy killed, the boys eagerly welcome Wendy and her brothers into their underground home. Wendy takes up all the motherly duties and

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Peter Pan/Peter Pan and Wendy (Unabridged) by James M. Barrie

revels in the responsibility. On one of their many adventures, Peter saves Tiger Lily, the native princess, from certain death at the hands of the pirates. The natives become the lost boys' allies and guard their home from the pirates led by Captain Hook.

Captain Hook's greatest desire is to capture Peter, for he had cut off Hook's right hand and fed it to a crocodile that now endlessly pursues him. The pirates plan to steal Wendy to be their mother and force the other children to walk the plank to their certain death. Meanwhile, Wendy and her brothers are beginning to worry about their parents and decide to return home. The lost boys accept Wendy's invitation to go, too, with the hope that the Darlings will adopt them. Peter declines the offer. Ascending from their underground home, the children are captured by Hook and his crew and are taken aboard the "Jolly Roger." Peter rescues them by killing the pirates one by one with clever tactics. In the end, Hook jumps ship into the jaws of the waiting crocodile.

Peter and Tink accompany the children back to the nursery where joy returns to the Darling household. The Darlings agree to adopt the lost boys, and Mrs. Darling strikes a compromise with Peter, letting Wendy return to Neverland each year for spring-cleaning.

The story ends with Wendy as a grown woman, allowing her child, Jane, to go with Peter. The hope of Neverland continues to live on in the minds of the children of future generations.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

Why is Peter the only one of the lost boys who remains in Neverland?

Peter's qualities, especially his forgetfulness of previous injustices, keeps him always a child, and thus Neverland could always remain his home. The other lost boys show qualities of emerging maturity, such as fear of punishment, remorse, anxiety, and a desire for security. They are willing to give up life in Neverland to meet their needs.

Literary Analysis

What advantages do the fantasy genre contribute to this story?

Since fantasy and childhood are intertwined, the fantasy genre allows both the author and the reader to explore the exciting possibilities of one's imagination. It is not tied to reality, and so whole new worlds can be created, governed by their own laws that may be different from the ones that exist in reality. It also allows fresh insights into things that may be taken for granted. The childhood dreams of flight, running from home, no school, and endless adventures can be explored in a delightful way with no fear of recrimination.

Inferential Comprehension

By observing the interactions in the story between Mr. and Mrs. Darling, what can you conclude about their personalities and relationship?

It appears that, in spite of Mr. Darling's aptitude for finances and shares, he is quite immature. His immaturity shows when he is asked to take his medicine and when he sulks for not being noticed by the lost boys. Once his mind is set, he is difficult to sway as witnessed by his self-recrimination by placing himself in the dog kennel. In contrast, Mrs. Darling appears rather mature, understanding, and flexible. The relationship fulfills certain needs for each of them within set roles. Mrs. Darling is grateful for her children and is a doting mother. If the smile she keeps in the inner box is any indication though, there is something missing from their relationship.

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Peter Pan/Peter Pan and Wendy (Unabridged) by James M. Barrie

Constructing Meaning

How has our culture's perception of native people changed since the publication of *Peter Pan*?

Answers will vary. At the time of the book's publication, the native cultures were seen and portrayed as savage while the European cultures were looked at as refined and civilized. Since that time, as history has been re-examined, people have come to find many native cultures were peace-loving people who were conquered by those set on colonizing their land and destroying their way of life. Insulting terms are being eliminated from common usage and a new appreciation of native cultures is developing.

Responding to Literature

Peter Pan and Neverland came from the imagination of J. M. Barrie. Have the students describe a place that existed in their imagination as a young child. What adventures took place in their world? Have the students illustrate their own imaginary world and the adventures that took place within it.

Teachable Skills

Understanding the Author's Craft Have the students go through the story and note wherever the narrator has inserted personal commentary. The students should assess the author's intent in breaking into the narrative at those times. Was it to clarify a point, add information, reassure a young reader, or for some other purpose? Would the story lose something if these commentaries were missing? What would be the result? Have the students explain their reasoning.

Comparing and Contrasting *Peter Pan* has enjoyed tremendous popularity as a play. Have the students obtain a copy of the play and compare it to the novel they have just read. The play was published first, and the novel followed. What additions or subtractions have been made? Which did they enjoy more and why? If they were asked to direct the play, whom would they cast for the various roles? Students could compare their cast list with other students' and defend their choice of actors.

Describing Actions or Events A big event in the story is the children's ability to fly. In *Peter Pan*, it takes faith and fairy dust. Humans have been fascinated with flight since recorded history. It might be fun for the students to research people's early attempts at flight. A time line could be constructed to illustrate the progress of aviation.