

**chicago  
children's  
theatre**

# **PETER RABBIT & FRIENDS STUDY GUIDE & ACTIVITY BOOK**

**Recommended for Grades Pre-K - 3**







## ABOUT CCT'S PETER RABBIT & FRIENDS

Thank you for bringing your classroom or family to Chicago Children's Theatre's production of PETER RABBIT & FRIENDS. We hope you enjoy four classic Beatrix Potter stories, including the "The Tale of Peter Rabbit," "The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse," "The Tale of the Two Bad Mice", and "The Tailor of Gloucester", told with handmade puppets and original music. This study guide is intended to enrich your students' enjoyment of the production, while providing the opportunity to gain social-emotional learning skills from these timeless tales. We hope you have fun with the games and activities in this book!

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To identify emotions and practice acting on empathy.
- To practice emotional regulation tactics when things don't go as planned.
- To explore why we sometimes experience a change of heart.
- To reflect on choices and consequences.
- To celebrate how made-up stories can help us be thoughtful about our real lives.
- To create our own adventure stories as a classroom community.

# THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER

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This story is about a cat who learns to work cooperatively with a group of mice after first acting out impulsively. This story introduces the experience of having a change of heart based on the feelings or actions of others.



## GAME

**MEOW EMOTIONS:** In the story, Simpkin goes through a lot of emotions. Using only vocal expression, the actor helps the audience understand how Simpkin is feeling. Lead the class to make their own cat noises together. Ask: What does a cat sound like when it's angry? When it's hungry? When it's calm and happy? When it's chasing a mouse? When it's scared?

## ACTIVITY

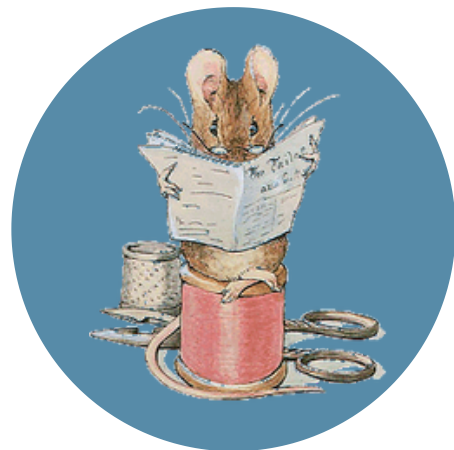
**CHANGE OF HEART:** Ask the students to draw Simpkin's heart before and after he decided to help the mice. What has changed?



## QUESTIONS TO ASK

Briefly discuss moments and images students remember from the play. Include the following questions:

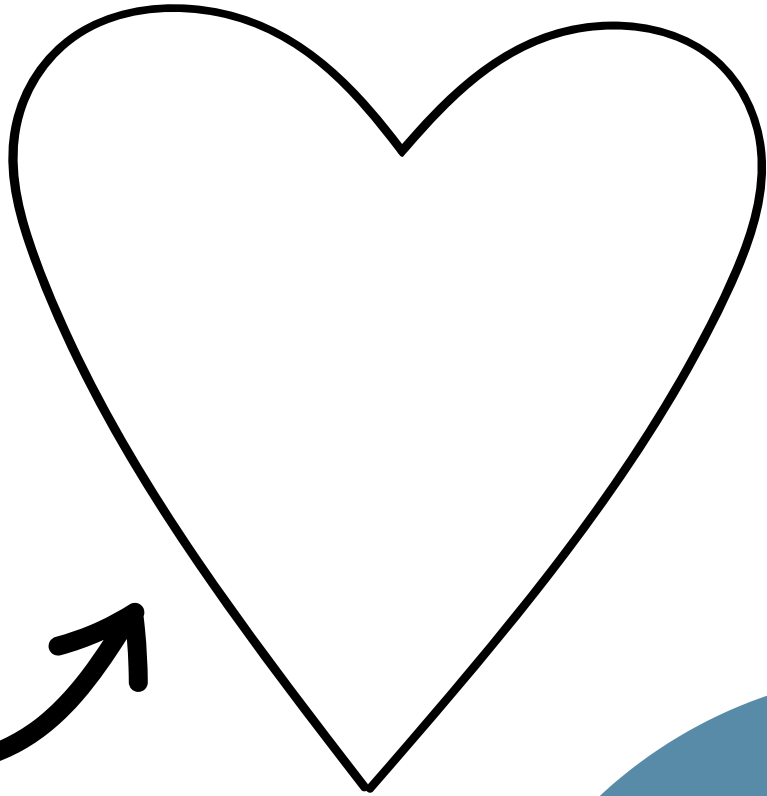
- At the beginning of the story, how did Simpkin feel about the mice? How could you tell?
- Why did Simpkin hide the thread?
- What was Simpkin's "big aha" moment? How did it change the way he felt about the mice? How did it change his actions?
- If this story continued and there was a "Simpkin Part 2," what do you think would happen now that the characters are friends?



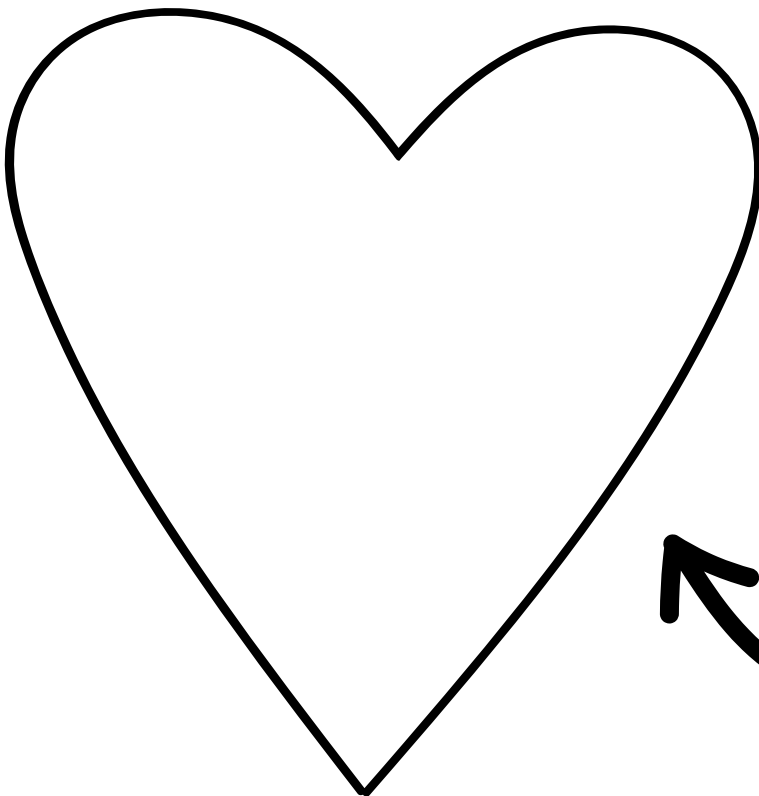
# SIMPKIN'S CHANGE OF HEART

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WHAT DID  
SIMPKIN'S  
HEART LOOK  
LIKE WHILE  
HE WAS  
ANGRY WITH  
THE TAILOR?



WHAT DID  
SIMPKIN'S HEART  
LOOK LIKE  
AFTER  
REGRETTED  
HIDING THE  
TAILOR'S  
THREAD?





# THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT

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This story is about a rabbit who disobeys his mother by going into a farmer's garden. He is chased by the farmer and gets lost, but is eventually able to find his way back home. This story helps us consider that in real life, choices have consequences, and that made-up stories give us the opportunity to experience danger in a safe way.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

Briefly discuss moments and images students remember from the play. Include the following questions:

- What did Peter's mother tell him not to do? What consequences did Peter face for choosing to break the rules?
- Why did Peter's mother tell him to stay away from the garden?
- How do you think Peter's mother and sisters felt while Peter was missing, waiting for him to come home?



## GAMES

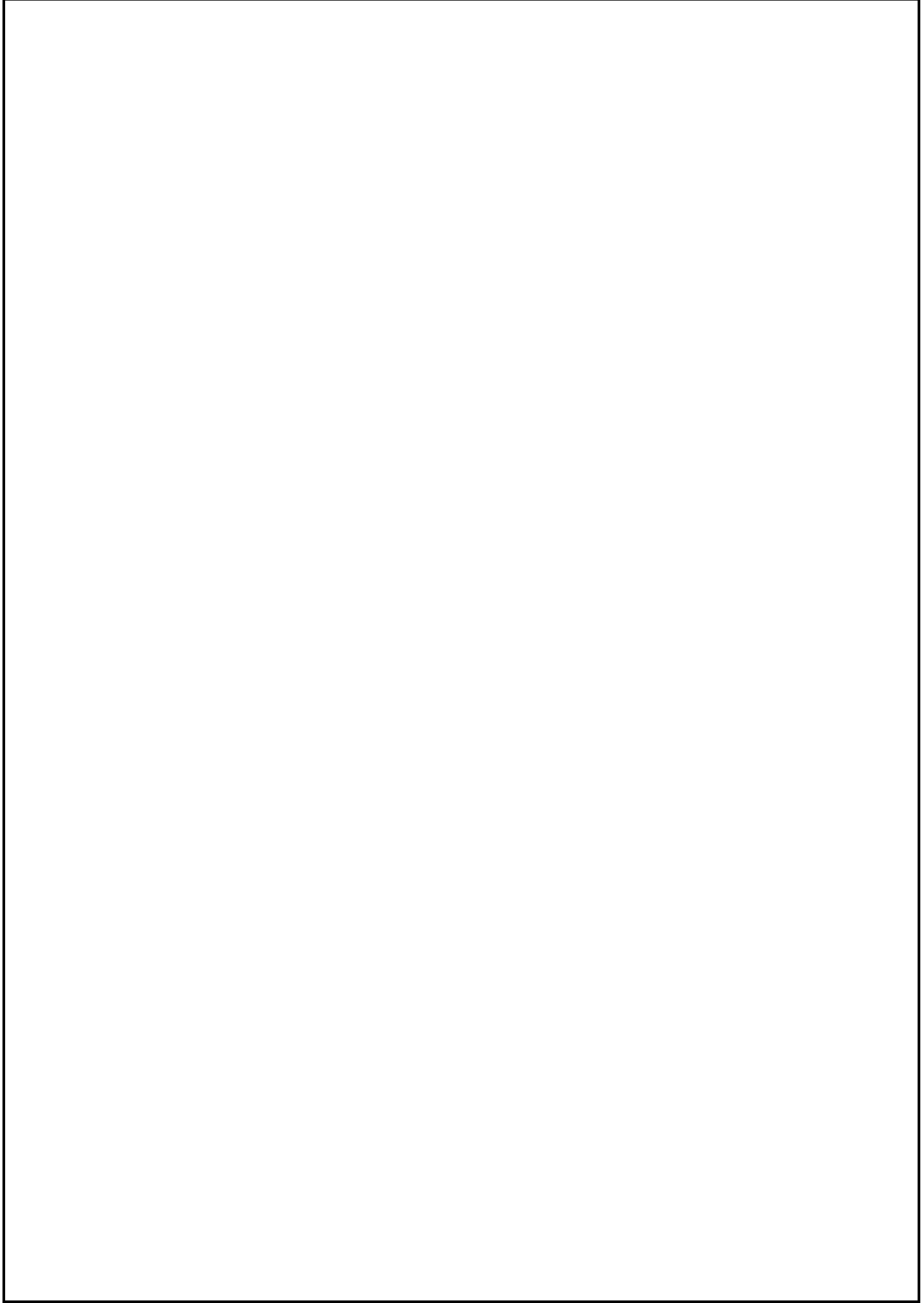
**INVISIBLE ADVENTURE:** For this game, everyone stands in place and performs the actions of a made up adventure as it unfolds. Instruct everyone to stand up and put on their invisible super hero gear. Tell them they're on a quest for something valuable and let them suggest what it is. Tell them that this valuable object is far away, across oceans, mountains, deserts, and possibly space. Tell them a forest has just grown up around them. Model running in place and have the students do the same. Say, "Alright, we're almost out of the forest, but I think I see an ocean coming up ahead, how are we going to get across the ocean?" Take a suggestion from one of the students and model the action they suggest. Once you get across the ocean, pick the next type of obstacle or landscape the class must traverse. Repeat until you're ready to find the object, at which point, find it!

## ACTIVITY

**PUPPET BUILD:** CCT's BEATRIX POTTER AND FRIENDS features many handmade puppets. We can make our own puppets and backdrops out of paper (see image right). As individuals or in groups, have the kids create a paper 'backdrop' with an exciting location we saw in the play today, and an animal puppet version of themselves. If you were an animal from the Potter stories, which one would you be? Encourage each student to think of a single line or action for their puppet to say or do in the chosen location.



**USE THIS SPACE TO CREATE A PAPER BACKDROP**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw or create a paper backdrop. It occupies the central portion of the page.



# MRS. TITTMOUSE

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This story is about a mouse whose home is disrespected. In the end, others help by cleaning up the mess and she is able to throw a tea party for her friends. This story introduces the skills of respecting others' space and personal belongings, identifying when others are distressed, and choosing to be helpful rather than hurtful.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How did Mrs. Tittlemouse feel about her home? How could you tell?
- What upset Mrs. Tittlemouse? Has something similar ever happened to you?
- If you were there with Mrs. Tittlemouse and Mr. Jackson, what could you have done?

## GAMES

**SOUNDSCAPE:** Mrs. Tittlemouse's House is full of noises. Use your mouth, lips or hands to make sounds like the insects and objects in Mrs. Tittlemouse's house. Practice the haughty laugh of the lady bug, the vigorous gibberish of the beetle, the purring butterfly, the squelching steps of Mr. Jackson, the 'buzz' of the bees. Perhaps there are other noises in the house, like the sound of the breeze through the trees outside, the tea kettle on the stove, and more types of insects. Perhaps two insects meet underground and have a conversation in a made up language. Once you've mastered some favorites, take turns playing Mrs. Tittlemouse, asking the sounds to "Please stop!" or "Please begin!"

## ACTIVITY

**GIFT MONSTER:** Think of someone you love who could use some comforting. Close your eyes and imagine you are transforming into a wonderful monster that has 3 magical powers to help comfort that specific person perfectly. Take turns describing what you look like, who you comfort, and what your magical powers can do. Example: "I'm a scale-y purple monster from outer space and the person I comfort is Amra. My 3 magical powers are: I smell like strawberries and strawberries are Amra's favorite food. When I walk into a room, the room cleans itself. I have 8 mouths to sing really good dance music." Consider sharing your monster with your loved one as a gift.



# THE TALE OF TWO BAD MICE

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This story is about two mice, Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca, who break into a doll house. They go looking for food, and to their surprise, see that none of the food is real. Tom Thumb and his wife Hunca Munca become really angry at this and decide to make a mess in the doll house. This story introduces the emotion of anger and how to manage our actions when our feelings are too intense. It also shows us how one can get into trouble when you disrespect someone else's property.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Why did Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca wait for the dolls to leave for a stroll before entering the house?
- What do you think caused both mice to be so angry?
- How did the mice show they felt bad for their actions?

## GAMES

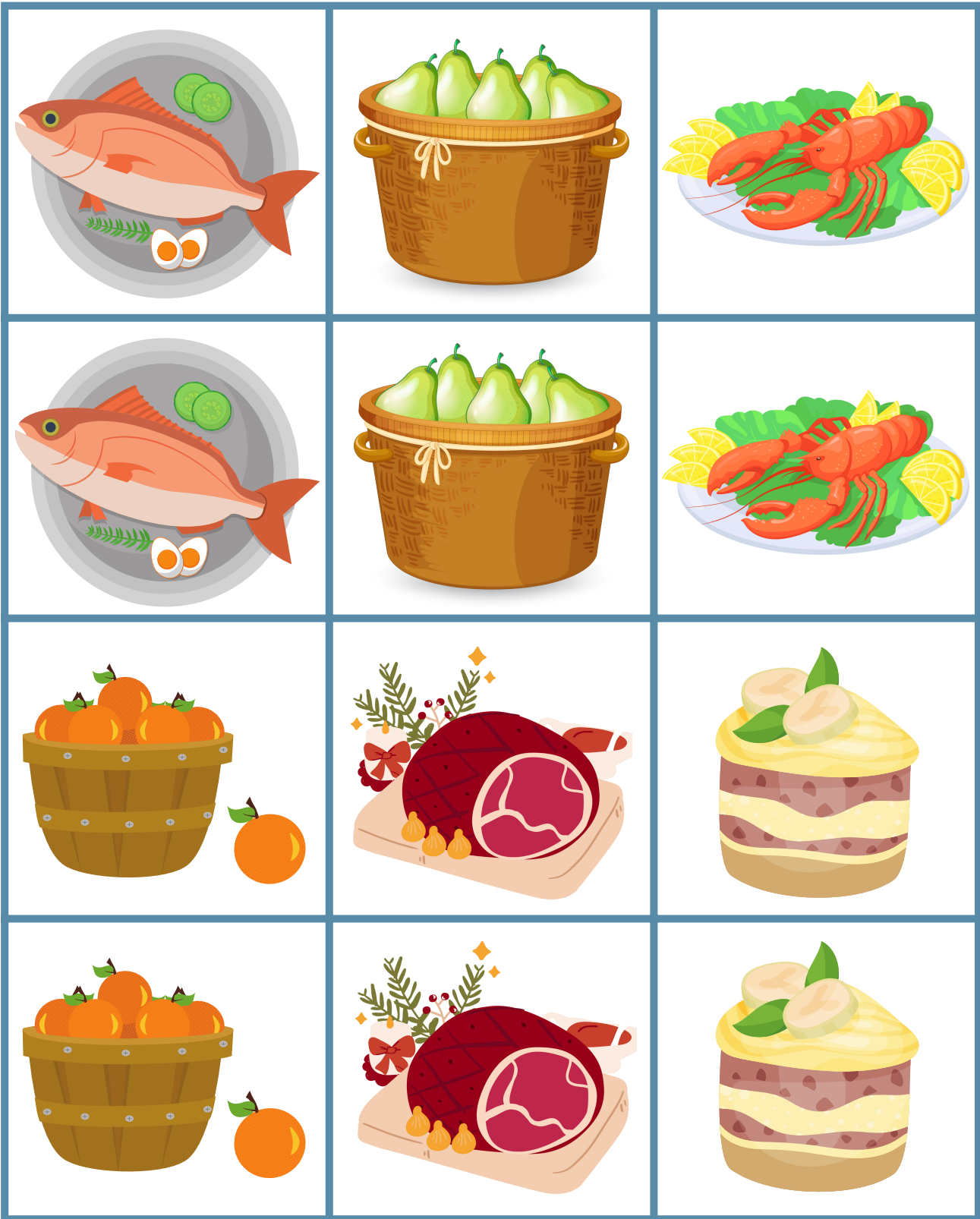
**EMOTION STATUE:** The performers in the show use their faces to help the audience understand how the characters are feeling. Take turns making faces to represent various emotions -- anger, fear, happiness, sadness, anything you choose. One person makes a face while the other(s) guess the emotion. Once the emotion is identified, everyone poses like that emotion. Everyone is encourage to choose their own interpretation of each emotion rather than copy the original.

## ACTIVITY

**MATCH GAME:** Use the images on the following page to create a match game! The images represent the doll food that Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca tried to eat. Cut each square, once you have all of them cut out, turn them over with the blank side facing up and then try to guess which one matches the other!



# CUT OUT THE IMAGES AND MATCH THEM!



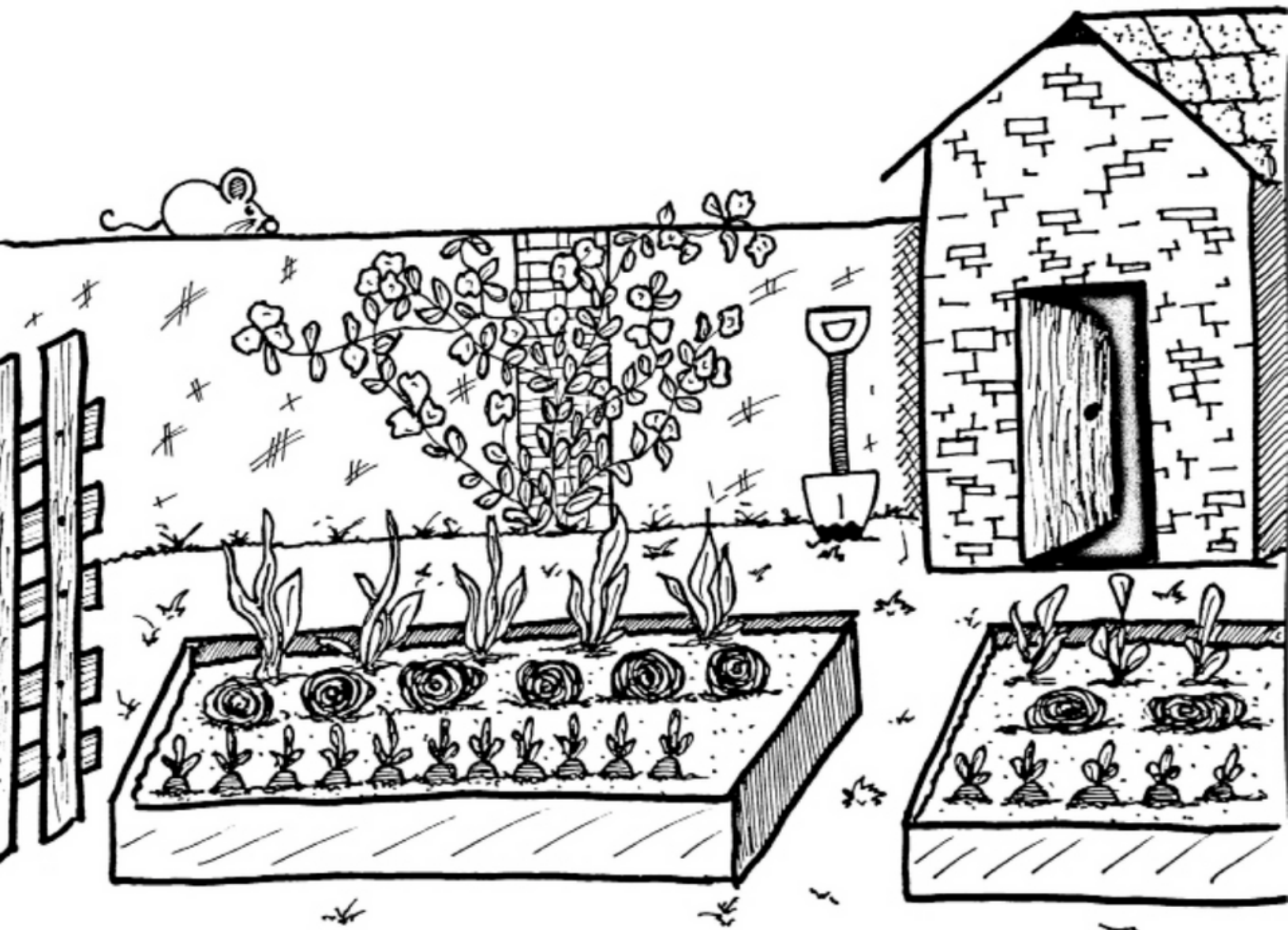
# WHAT WOULD YOU LOOK LIKE AS AN ANIMAL FROM THE POTTER STORIES?

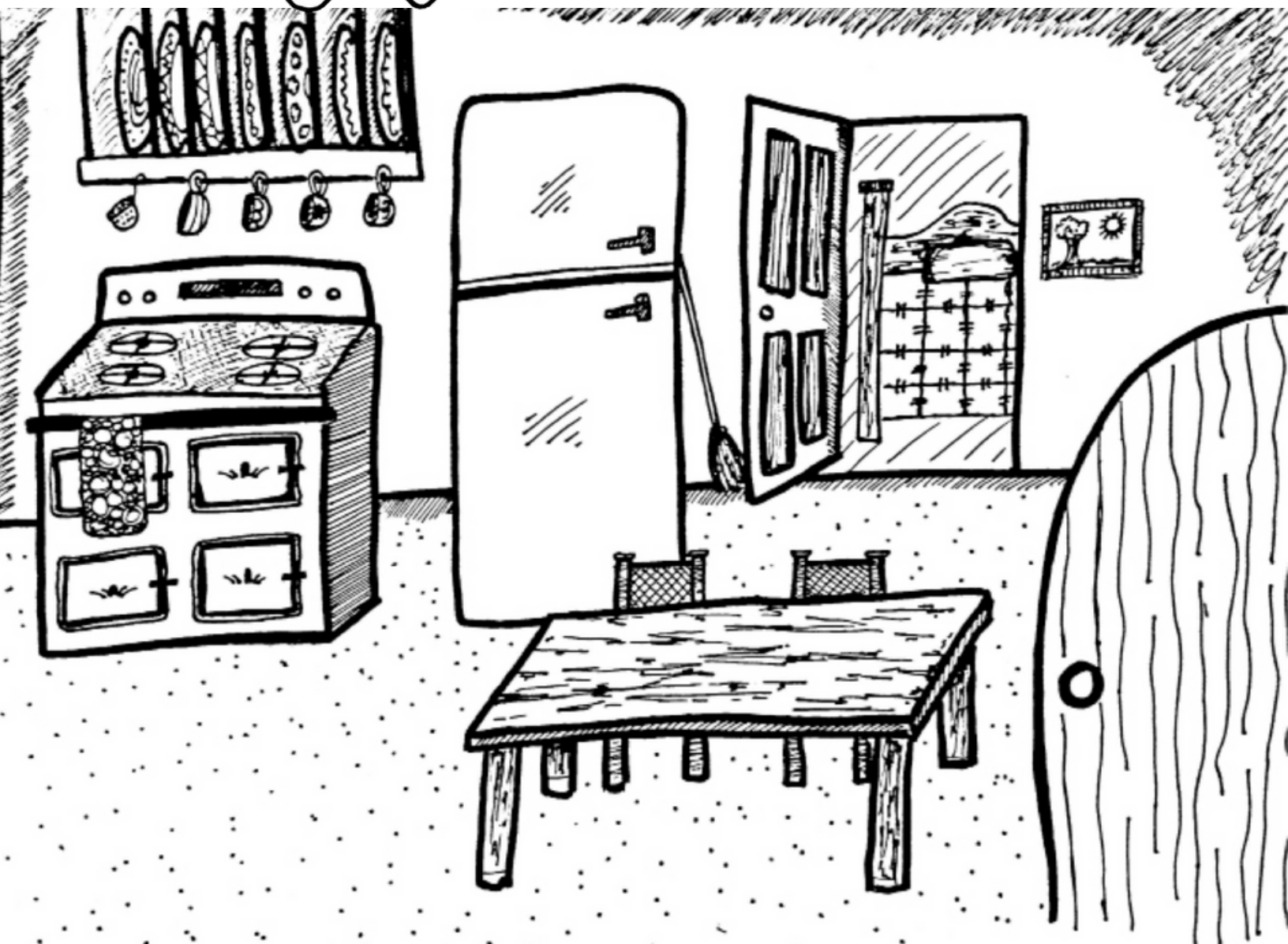
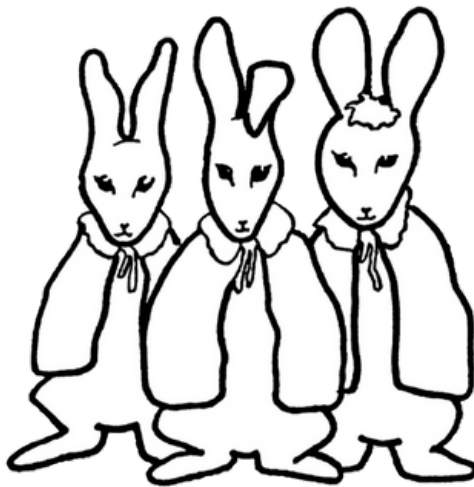
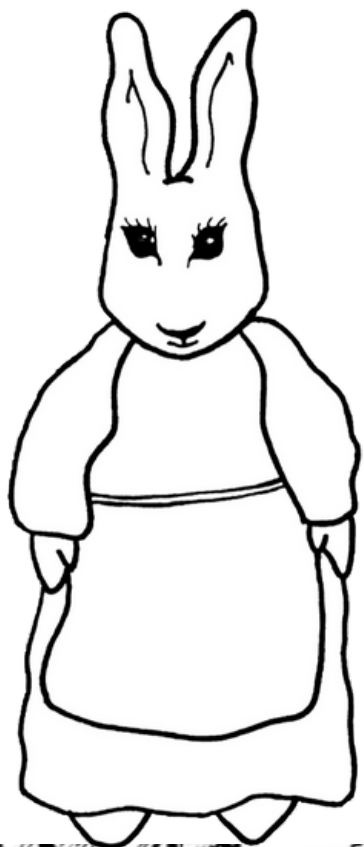
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Out of all the animals that you saw today in the play, which one is your favorite? Who would you like to transform into? Draw your animal in the rectangle below, color it, cut it out and watch it transform into a puppet!











# EXTRA GOODIES

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## VOCAB YOGA

### THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER

**Tailor** – A person who makes and fixes clothing.

Motion: Mime sewing by hand.

Sentence: The tailor made the coat.

**Silk** – Very smooth and expensive fabric made by silk worms.

Motion: Slide your hand down your arm as if feeling a smooth silk sleeve.

Sentence: They felt very fancy in their silk clothes.

**Furious** – Extremely angry.

Motion: Shake clenched fists up and down.

Sentence: I was furious when recess ended early.

**Sparrow** – A kind of bird.

Motion: Flap your hands like little wings.

Sentence: The sparrows chirp every morning.

**Guilty** – Feeling bad after doing something wrong.

Motion: Hunch your shoulders.

Sentence: He felt guilty for being mean to his friend.

### MRS. TITTMOUSE

**Hedge** – a fence or boundary formed by closely growing bushes or shrubs.

**Cloak** – an outdoor overgarment, typically sleeveless, that hangs loosely from the shoulders.

**Parlor** – a sitting room in a private house.

**Thisle** – a type of plant of the daisy family, which typically has a prickly stem and leaves and rounded heads of purple flowers.

**Articles** – A particular item or object.

### THE TWO BAD MICE

**Muslin** – A type of curtain to create curtains.

**Perambulator** – a baby carriage; a pram.

**Scuffling** – engage in a short, confused fight or struggle at close quarters.

**Oilcloth** – fabric treated on one side with oil to make it waterproof.

**Coal-box** – a box for holding coal.

**Cheesemongers** – a person who sells cheese, butter, and other dairy products.

### THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT

**Frightened** – Very afraid.

Motion: Crouch down and shake with an exaggerated fearful facial expression.

Sentence: I was frightened by the storm.

**Unfortunate** – A way to describe something unlucky happening.

Motion: Point both thumbs down.

Sentence: It was unfortunate the store closed before we got there.

**Tremble** – Shake with fear or nervousness.

Motion: Cross your arms in front of you and tremble.

Sentence: I trembled with fright.

**Suddenly** – When something happens quickly without warning.

Motion: Mime a quick “surprised” face.

Sentence: Suddenly, he saw the gate.

**Brew** – To prepare tea or coffee by mixing it with hot water.

Motion: Mime pouring liquid into a cup and sipping it.

Sentence: It smells so good when my dad brews coffee.

# MORE GOODIES

## BEATRIX POTTER FUN FACTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Beatrix Potter based her characters on animals she kept as pets. The "real" Peter was a rabbit named Peter Piper. Beatrix Potter loved her pet rabbit Peter, and he went everywhere with her for nine years. She even took Peter for walks on a leash! In her schoolroom at home she had rabbits, hedgehogs, frogs, mice, and even a bat! **What's your favorite animal?**

Beatrix Potter originally wrote "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" as an illustrated letter to her friend's son Noel, who was ill at the time, and needed some cheering up! It had lots of pictures of rabbits. **What's your favorite thing to draw?**

Beatrix Potter published her first book, "The Tale of Peter Rabbit," all on her own when she was 36 years old. **What's your favorite book?**

Beatrix Potter was an artist and a scientist, drawing and studying the world around her. She wrote a scientific paper on fungi (mushrooms), proposing her own theory on how they reproduce, which was presented on her behalf at the Linnean Society, which at the time did not allow women at their meetings. Mushrooms are delicious. **What's your favorite food?**

In 1903, Potter designed and created the very first Peter Rabbit doll. She sewed the doll using cotton fabric and used brush bristles for whiskers. **Do you like to make things?**

In CCT's BEATRIX POTTER AND FRIENDS, Ray Rehberg, our composer, plays 3 instruments. **Do you play an instrument? If not, what would you like to play?**

When Beatrix Potter was a little girl, games like jump rope, marbles, yo-yos, follow the leader, and tug of war were popular. **Do you have a favorite game or sport?**

Beatrix Potter was an award-winning sheep farmer and in 1943 was the first woman elected President of the Herdwick Sheep Breeders' Association. A sheep could be a nice pet. **What kind of pet would you like if you could have any creature, real or imaginary?**



## JOKES

What sports do cats play? Hairball.

What kind of shoes do mice wear? Squeakers.

Why are frogs so happy? They eat whatever bugs them!

What kind of books do rabbits like to read? Stories with hoppy endings!

What do you get when you cross a frog and a bunny? A ribbit!

What kind of music do bunnies like? Hip Hop!

How do you know carrots are good for your eyes? Because you never see rabbits wearing glasses!

**STUDY GUIDE CREATED BY KAY KRON, ELIJAH EILER, AND MARIA CLARA OSPINA**

**THANK YOU AGAIN FOR BRINGING YOUR CLASS OR FAMILY TO CHICAGO CHILDREN'S THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF PETER RABBIT & FRIENDS. WE HOPE OUR SHOW CREATED BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME!**