

# Pete the Cat

## STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Pete the Cat as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as related activity sheets. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

### **Background**

Our play is based on the Pete the Cat series of books by James Dean and Kimberly Dean.

### **The Story**

- Pete, a rock and roll cat and his animal friends are living a life of freedom and jam sessions when they wander into a yard and Pete is caught by the cat-catcher. His punishment is to spend a week as a housecat with a family.
- Pete meets his host family, the Biddles. He becomes roommates with Jimmy Biddle, a second grader who is nervous about the idea and has a lot of rules about behavior he wants Pete to follow. However, Pete likes to play it cool and is not a rule-follower.
- Jimmy brings Pete to school and his math test turns into an art class. Jimmy is flustered and copies another student's painting because he can't think of his own idea for a picture. He gets in trouble and has to create an original picture in order to pass second grade.
- To help him, Pete takes Jimmy in the VW (Very Wonderful) bus to find inspiration for his perfect picture. They travel to the beach, the moon and Paris and when Jimmy finally learns to let loose and jam with magic sunglasses on, he paints the perfect picture.

### **Before Seeing the Play**

1. You may want to read some of the Pete the Cat books and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Ask your students about their pets. Have them describe some activities they do with them.
3. One character in the play has a list of rules he likes to follow. What sort of rules do you have in your classroom? Discuss with your students why rules are important. What happens when someone breaks the rules?

### After Seeing the Play

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Pete the Cat books you read. How was it the same? Discuss the actor who played Pete. How do you think he/she prepared for her role? How would you portray a cat on stage?
2. If your cat or pet could speak, what would you ask it? What do you think it would want to talk about? How would your family life change with a talking animal in the house?
3. Why did Jimmy copy the painting? What happens if you copy someone's work at school? Why do you think it was hard for Jimmy to come up with a painting of his own?
4. Jimmy had a lot of rules for being a roommate. Pete didn't follow rules. What do you think is better: to have rules or not? Discuss how rules are important in some cases and maybe not important in others.

### Activities

#### *Creative Dramatics* (ELA Common Core Standard SL.4 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas)

Have your students re-enact scenes from the play. First, have the students discuss specific scenes – who were the characters, where did it take place, what happened? Examples of scenes might be:

- Pete and his friends jamming on their instruments
- Riding a VW bus to different places in the world
- Trying magic sunglasses for the first time
- Playing an “air” instrument: guitar, drums, piano

#### *Creative Writing*

##### 1. *Character Maps* (ELA Common Core Standard RL.3 Key Ideas and Details)

Use the attached character maps to describe Jimmy and Pete. After students have listed some traits in the bubbles, have them write a paragraph describing the characters using the trait words. Discuss what traits are the same and different for Pete and Jimmy. Students can combine their paragraphs into a story and bind it into a classroom book for all to share.

##### 2. *Journal Writing* (ELA Common Core Standard W.3 Text Type & Purposes)

In the play, Jimmy needs inspiration to create the perfect painting. Have students write a journal entry using one of the following prompts:

- If I could go anywhere in the world...
- I would use magic sunglasses to...
- My perfect pet would be...

##### 3. *Fill in the words* (ELA Common Core Standard L.4 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use)- Use the attached sheet to complete the sentences using the words in the text box.

*Artistic Expression* (ELA Common Core Standard SL.5 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas)

Jimmy gets inspiration to paint his picture when he wears the magic sunglasses.

Talk about what things would look like if you had magic sunglasses. Students can then illustrate their visions and create a bulletin board or poster of the magic pictures of the whole class.

*Research*

**All About Cats** (ELA Common Core Standard W7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge)

Learn about cats by doing some research. Do cats really act like Pete does in the play?

Explore your library or the Internet for information. Students can work individually or in groups and create presentations displaying their work.

Here are some facts to get you started:

- Cats can sleep up to 16 hours a day
- Cats can make 100 different sounds, dogs can only make about 10
- The proper name for a hairball is “bezoar”

**Breeds of cats**

The International Cat Association lists 53 different breeds of cats. The 10 most popular, according to Catster are:

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Persian    | 2. Maine Coon         |
| 3. Exotic     | 4. Siamese            |
| 5. Abyssinian | 6. Ragdoll            |
| 7. Birman     | 8. American Shorthair |
| 9. Oriental   | 10. Sphynx            |

Learn all about cats at: <http://www.vetstreet.com/cats/>

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

James and Kimberly Dean have collaborated on 30 Pete the Cat Books including collections of Picture Books, Song Books, I Can Read Books and Storybooks. The seven picture books are:

Pete the Cat: I Love my White Shoes  
Pete the Cat: Rockin in My School Shoes  
Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons  
Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses  
Pete the Cat and the New Guy  
Pete the Cat Saves Christmas  
Pete the Cat and the Bedtime Blues

**Internet:**

Learn about Pete the Cat and his authors, watch videos, listen to songs, play games and print out coloring and activities at Pete’s website:

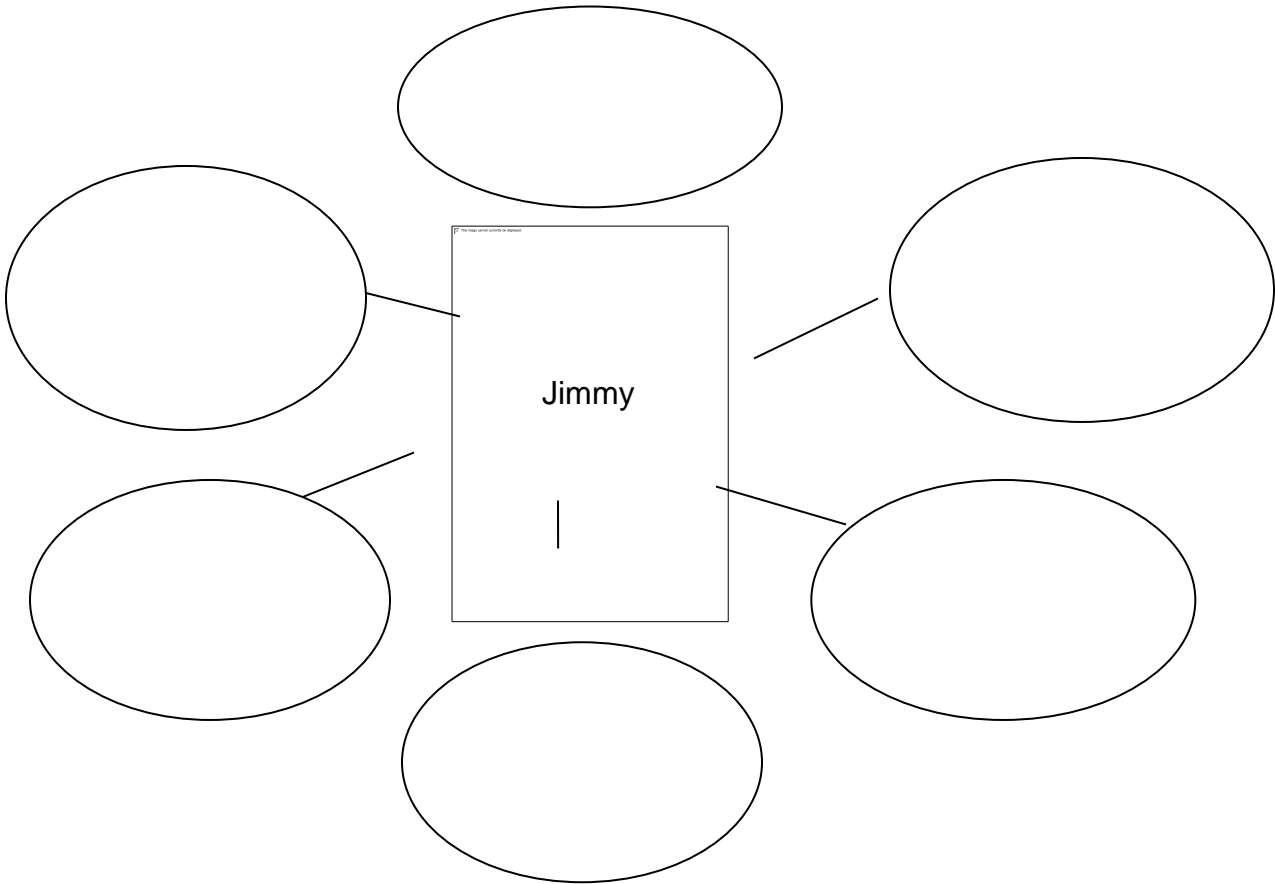
<http://www.petethecatbooks.com>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Jimmy Character Map

Use the character map to write words that describe Jimmy. Then write a paragraph about Jimmy using those words.



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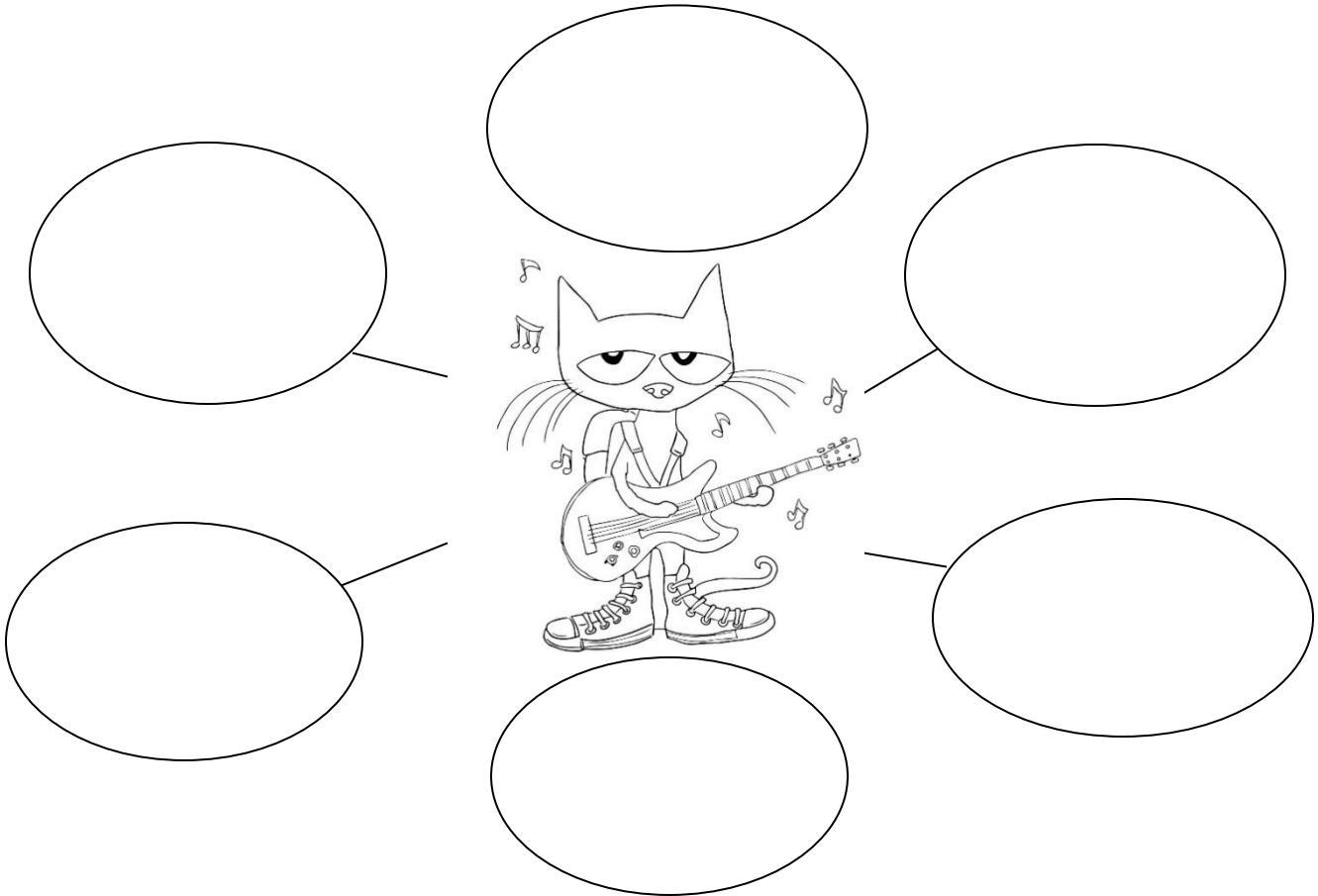
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pete the Cat Character Map

Use the character map to write words that describe Pete. Then write a paragraph about Pete using those words.



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:

Wonderful	disguises	couch	rules	housecat
astronaut	allergic	magic	painting	copied

1. Olive sneezed because she was \_\_\_\_\_ to Pete.
2. Jimmy explained his \_\_\_\_\_ to Pete when he moved into his room.
3. Jimmy \_\_\_\_\_ another student's picture in class.
4. When Jimmy was hiding, they found him under the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Pete took Jimmy for a ride in the Very \_\_\_\_\_ bus.
6. When Pete and Jimmy took the bus to the moon, they spoke to an \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Jimmy thought he could paint the perfect picture if he could use the \_\_\_\_\_ sunglasses.
8. To sneak into the café, Jimmy and Olive had to put on \_\_\_\_\_ to make them look like grown-ups.
9. When he put on the sunglasses, Jimmy suddenly began \_\_\_\_\_ a beautiful picture.
10. Being a \_\_\_\_\_ was a pretty cool thing, thought Pete at the end of the day.