

Integrated subject areas:

- Music
- English Language Arts

Grade(s): 4-8

Lesson length: 40 minutes

Instructional objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe the characters within a story along with their corresponding traits and musical themes
- Identify instruments and instrument families of the orchestra

Materials:

- **Peter and the Wolf** story
- **Musical recordings** of featured repertoire
- **Sound system** (e.g. laptop and speakers, iPhone® dock, Spotify®)
- **Paper and writing utensils**

Featured Repertoire*

- Sergei Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf*
[Version without narration](#)
[Version with narration](#)



*Click on the links above to listen to these examples on Spotify. A free account is required to listen.

Please note that excerpts referenced within this lesson will not have narration. At a later time, you can have students listen to the entire piece with narration.

NEGAUNEE
MUSIC
INSTITUTE
at the
CHICAGO
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Peter and the Wolf

DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will hear the story of *Peter and the Wolf* and, using musical excerpts, become familiar with the various characters. Students will also learn about select instruments of the orchestra and instrument families.

Assessment Strategies

In this lesson, students should be able to successfully do the following: understand the story of *Peter and the Wolf*; identify traits for each of the characters and predict how their theme will sound in music; identify instruments and instrument families of the orchestra. Learn more about assessment strategies on page 5.

Learning Standards

This lesson uses Common Core and National Core Arts Standards. You can find more information about the standards featured in this lesson on page 4.

These lessons were created as part of a long-standing CSO school partnership program offered from 1998–2015.

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PROCEDURE

¹ *Classics for Kids*. Web. May 2016
<http://www.classicsforkids.com/pastshows.asp?id=234>

*This biography is provided for your information. It is not required background information for students.

² In an alternate ending to the story, the Duck survives the encounter with the Wolf. In some versions, the Duck hides in a hole in a tree when the Wolf appears to eat him “off-screen.” In other versions, the Wolf spits out the Duck when Peter catches him with the rope. Please use the version you feel is most appropriate for your students.

³ Accessed July 2016 from Detroit Symphony Orchestra Kids (dsokids.com).

ABOUT THE COMPOSER*

Russian composer and pianist **Sergei Prokofiev** was born in 1891 in Sontsovka, a small village in Ukraine. Early on, it was clear that he had musical talent. His mother, who was a very good pianist, encouraged him, and taught him to play the piano. Sergei began composing at the age of five. When he got a bit older, he and his mother moved to St. Petersburg, so that he could study music there.

After Prokofiev graduated from school, he traveled around Europe to learn more about music. World War I and the Russian Revolution made living and working in Russia very difficult, so Prokofiev left the country in 1918. Paris eventually became his home, but he also spent time in the United States and the Bavarian Alps. But the whole time he was away from Russia, Prokofiev longed for his homeland. In 1936, he made the unusual decision to move back to the Soviet Union.

Prokofiev was a master at using music to tell a story. One of his most famous musical stories is *Peter and the Wolf*, which was written for Russia's Central Children's Theatre. You may have seen it performed in school, or on the concert stage.

In addition to symphonic music, Prokofiev wrote ballets, operas, and music for films—like *Lieutenant Kijé*.¹

INTRODUCTION

1. **Read** the story of *Peter and the Wolf* to your students. You can use the version linked below, or any storybook version you may have².

<http://www.dsokids.com/media/10581/Peter-and-The-Wolf-Story-Sheet.pdf>³

2. With help from students, **write** a list of characters in the story on the board, or project a list.

TEACHING STEPS

1. **Read** the story again and have students write a list of character traits for each character.

PROCEDURE

- 2. Ask** students to share what they wrote for Peter's character traits. Have students **describe** how they think his music might sound, then **play** [Peter's theme](#). Does it sound the way they thought it would?

Explain that Peter's Theme is played by the [string section](#) of the orchestra. Listen again, and this time have students imagine Peter in the meadow.

- 3.** Next, without telling students whose theme it is, **play** the bird theme. Have students guess what character is represented by the music, then reveal the correct answer. **Discuss** what makes the bird's theme sound like a bird. **Tell** students that the excerpt is played by the [flute](#), which is commonly used to depict the sound of a bird. The flute is in the woodwind family.

- 4. Ask** students to share what traits they identified for the duck and the cat. **Play** each theme separately, without revealing the character beforehand. Have students **describe** each theme. Does one sound like a duck gliding on the water? Does one sound like a hungry, confident cat walking through the forest?

Listen to each theme again before revealing the correct answer. Explain that the duck is portrayed by the oboe and the cat is portrayed by the [clarinet](#). The oboe and clarinet are both part of the woodwind family, but have very different sounds.

- 5. Repeat** the same process from above, then **listen** to the theme of Peter's grandfather. Did it sound like what they predicted? **Listen** again and explain that he is being portrayed by the [bassoon](#), which is the lowest instrument of the woodwind family.
- 6. Ask** students what they think the music for the wolf will sound like. Do they think it will sound light and bouncy or dark and graceful? **Listen** to the theme of the wolf. Did the music sound like their predictions? **Listen** to the theme again, telling students that French horns play the theme of the wolf and are part of the brass family.
- 7.** Finally, **ask** students what instruments they think will represent the hunters. **Listen** to the hunters' theme, and tell students that they are depicted by woodwinds *and* trumpets, with gunshot sounds on timpani and bass drum, which are part of the percussion family.
- 8.** Now that every theme has been identified, you can further their understanding by playing the themes out of order and having students guess which theme they hear.

Repertoire:

Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67

- [Peter in the meadow](#)
- [The Bird](#)
- [The Duck](#)
- [The Cat](#)
- [Grandfather](#)
- [The Wolf](#)
- [The Hunters approach with their guns](#)

Click on the links above to listen to these examples on Spotify. A free account is required to listen.



VOCABULARY

Theme: a melodic idea or subject present in a piece of music. In the case of *Peter and the Wolf*, each theme represents a character.

LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core Standards

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4](#)

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

National Core Arts Anchor Standards

Anchor Standard 7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

ASSESSMENT

- Observe student understanding of the story and characters through student suggestions of character traits.
- Observe students' comprehension and analysis of the music and how it relates to the character traits they previously identified.

NOTES

