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FOR THE TEACHER

This reproducible Little Novel-Ties study guide consists of activities to use in conjunction with the book Sylvester and the Magic Pebble, recipient of the 1970 Caldecott Medal. The picture book and its corresponding guide can become an important element in your guided reading program. The guide contains a synopsis; background information on the author/illustrator; suggested pre-reading activities; exercises that focus on vocabulary, visual literacy, story comprehension, and critical thinking skills; and extension activities that focus on fluency training and link the story to other curriculum areas.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING ACTIVITIES

Pre-Reading Activities – Before You Read

These activities are designed to activate children’s prior knowledge and build concepts or background information. They will motivate children to read and help them to understand the story better. Children can discuss answers to the questions with a partner, in a small cooperative learning group, or with the entire class.

Word Study – Word Puzzler

This page reinforces the meaning of six key words used repeatedly in the story. After reading the six words, children are asked to use them to complete a simple crossword puzzle.

Understanding the Story – Story Questions, Picture Questions

The story questions include a number of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions that help children focus on major story elements. The picture questions help children draw inferences from the illustrations.
BEFORE YOU READ

1. Read the title of the book. 
   Sylvester is a little donkey. 
   Do you see his picture on the front 
   or the back cover of the book?

2. Do you think this story is about 
   real animals or make-believe animals? 
   What makes you think this?

3. **Pair and Share:** In this story, Sylvester 
   becomes lost. Have you ever been lost? List words that 
   tell how you felt. Then share your list with a partner.

4. Have you ever wished on a star? 
   Have you ever wished on a birthday candle? 
   Draw a picture of something you would wish for.
STORY QUESTIONS

1. Who is the most important character in the story? What is his hobby?

2. What does Sylvester’s pebble look like? What can it do? How does Sylvester test the pebble’s powers?

3. What do you think Sylvester should have wished for when he saw the lion? Why didn’t he?

4. Why doesn’t wishing work after Sylvester turns into a rock?

5. How do Mr. and Mrs. Duncan feel when Sylvester does not come home? What do they do?

6. How long is Sylvester a rock? How do you know this much time has passed?

7. How does Sylvester become a donkey again?

8. Why does Mr. Duncan lock up the pebble? Do you think this is right? Tell why or why not.