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Activity Guide

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The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night

ABOUT THE STORY

In this old folk song, a fox goes looking for supper for his pups. He comes to a farmer's house, spies the ducks and geese, and makes off with one of each. Farmer John blows his horn to summon help, but the fox runs back to his den, and he and his family enjoy a tasty meal that night.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Peter Spier was born in 1927 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He attended the Rijksacademie, an art school in Amsterdam, after serving in the navy, he worked on a newspaper and then moved to New York, where he began illustrating children's books. He has illustrated almost 150 books for other authors and more than fourteen books of his own for children. *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night* was a 1962 Caldecott Honor book. Spier and his wife, Kathryn Pallister, live on Long Island.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children what words they think of when they think about foxes. Write their responses on the board. Then tell them that the book they will read features a fox that might share some of the traits they have named.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "How does the fox see where to go?"
- "What does the fox take from the farm?"
- "What does the farmer do?"
- "What do the fox and his wife do when he gets back to the den?"
- "What did you think would happen to the fox? Was your prediction correct?"
(*Make Predictions*)

Vocabulary

Write these words from the book on the board. Then have children copy the sentences below and write the correct word in each blank.

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- When two people argue or fight, they experience _____.
- A _____ is a container or pen.
- A child's high-pitched, loud cry is _____.
- In fall, the weather is often _____.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Fox Vocabulary

Have children work in pairs to look in texts about foxes to find vocabulary words about them. Some possibilities include *den*, *vixen*, and *vulpine*. Ask each pair to find three fox vocabulary words, write them down, and write definitions. When children have finished, collect their definitions in a class Fox Dictionary.

Drama: Choral Reading

Divide children work into seven groups to choral read the book together. Each group can practice reading one verse of the song. Encourage them to read fluently and with expression. Urge them to provide sound effects for their reading, if possible, such as the sound of ducks quacking, footsteps, or Farmer John's horn. When groups have practiced their verses, each group can read their verse for the rest of the class.

Science: Fox Facts

Divide the class into four groups to research information about foxes. Ask each group to provide five facts on one of these topics: fox habitats, fox diet, fox families, or foxes and humans. Groups can read their facts to the class. Collect them in a class book of fox facts.

Social Studies: Where in the World?

Have children look in books about foxes or in encyclopedias to find out where in the world foxes are found. Children can focus on one species of fox, such as the red fox, arctic fox, or fennec fox. Encourage them to make a map showing the range of the fox they have chosen, or provide them with a blank world map on which they can color the foxes' range. Display the maps in the classroom.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Fox Stories

Foxes are featured in folktales from many different cultures. Have children use the keywords *fox folktales* to find a folktale featuring a fox. Ask them to print out the folktale, or to summarize it in their own words. Encourage them to note the culture from which the tale comes. Children can share their folktales with the rest of the class.