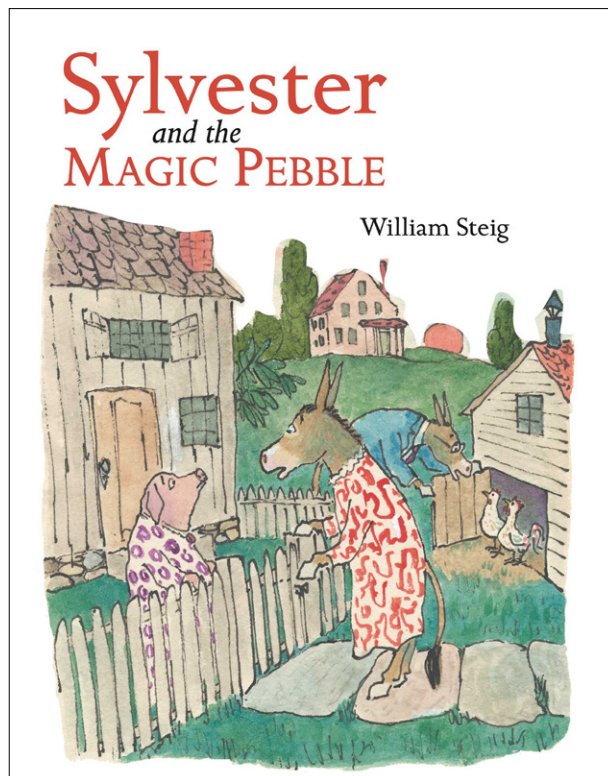




A TEACHER'S GUIDE

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 2ND - 3RD



SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM STEIG

Watch the video of actor
Reid Scott
read this story at
storylineonline.net



ABOUT THIS STORY

SYNOPSIS

On a rainy day, Sylvester finds a magic pebble that can make wishes come true. But when a lion frightens him on his way home, Sylvester makes a wish that brings unexpected results. How Sylvester is eventually reunited with his loving family and restored to his true self makes a story that is beautifully tender and filled with magic.

THEMES IN THE STORY

Family, Magic, Decision-making

READING AND WRITING

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 2ND - 3RD

ELA COMMON CORE STANDARD

Reading Literature: Students read and respond to works of literature with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence. *Standards listed below are for 2nd and 3rd grades but can be adapted to 4th grade standards.*

BEFORE VIEWING

Standards: CCSS.SL.2.1, CCSS.SL.3.1

Objective: Tap knowledge and build background to prepare for reading the story.

Procedure:

Step 1: Build background with the following questions:

- Ask student's if they have ever had a problem that they wished they could solve magically?
- If you found a magic pebble what would you wish for?
- When might using magic to solve a problem not be a good thing?

Step 2: Introduce the book and ask students what they think might happen in the book. What kind of magic will the pebble have?

Step 3: Explain to students that the story *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* was written and illustrated by William Steig. It was awarded the Caldecott Medal – a medal given for best illustrations in a picture book. It was also selected as one of the 100 best books of the century by the National Education Association. As you listen to the story, look for reasons why you think the book received these honors.

DURING VIEWING

Focus: Illustrations

Standards: CCSS.SL.2.2, CCSS.SL.3.2, CCSS.RL.2.7, CCSS.RL.3.7

Objective: Students will listen to story to explain how illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words.

Procedure:

Step 1: Partner students for the read aloud.

Step 2: Pause occasionally to ask questions and pose prompts, focusing on illustrations, characters, and unfamiliar vocabulary words. Encourage partners to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and make predictions. Model how to gain the meaning of a unfamiliar word by using context clues and illustrations.

Step 3: After reading, ask the students if they think the book deserved the awards. Allow students to share their opinions first with a partner, then with the class.

AFTER VIEWING - VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Standards: CCSS.L.2.4, CCSS.L.3.4

Objective: *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* is filled with rich vocabulary – a perfect story for vocabulary development. The list below contains words your students may be unfamiliar with. Use this lesson as practice for your students to find the meaning of these words, or any other unfamiliar word, using context clues during the second reading of the story.

Students will use context clues and word parts to understand the meaning of a word:

Unfamiliar Word List

hobbies	fetlock	nook
unusual	eager	gully
extraordinary	startled	budded
flaming	panicked	aimlessly
remarkable	perplexed	alfalfa
gradually	bewildered	sassafras
ceased	muttered	embraces
vanished	frantic	fond
existed	longed	exclamations
gratified	scold	

Materials: Vocabulary Log
Computer or tablets for individual or pairs of students
Computer with projector for class instruction
Internet access – *StorylineOnline.net*

Procedure:

- Step 1:** Explain to students that they will reread the story to find the meaning of unfamiliar words. They should stop and look for context clues or word parts to figure out the word's meaning.
- Step 2:** Review the vocabulary strategies of using context clues or word parts to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
- Step 3:** Have students log on to *StorylineOnline.net* and find *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. Read the first page and pause the story. You may need to instruct your students on how to pause the video. The first page contains the words “hobbies” and “unusual.” Model how to use the strategies with these words.
- Step 4:** Show students how to use the *Vocabulary Log* to record the meaning of these words.
- Step 5:** Explain to students that they will use this strategy during the second read of the story. When they come to a word they don't know, pause the video, look for clues to gain the word's meaning, and record the word with its meaning on their *Vocabulary Log*.
- Step 6:** Before students begin, tell them that the author using the word “stone-dumb” to describe Sylvester. What do you think that means? Tell them to make sure they pause when they come to this word and look for clues to figure out its meaning.
- Step 7:** Have students read independently or with a partner to complete the activity.
- Step 8:** Gather students together to discuss the meaning of “stone-dumb” and other words on students' lists.

READING RESPONSE

Standards: CCSS.RL.2.1, CCSS.RL.3.1

Objective: Students will answer the prompt using at least two details from text to support the response.

Reading Prompt: Do you think it was a good thing or a bad thing that Sylvester found the magic pebble? Use at least two details from the story to support your response.

WRITING — SENTENCE WRITING

Standards: CCSS.L.2.2, CCSS.L.3.2

Objective: Students will write a question sentence and an answer statement using correct capitalization and punctuation.

Materials: Paper
Pencils


Procedure:

- Step 1: Remind students that Sylvester was away from his parents for a very long time. Ask them to think about what his parents might want to know about Sylvester's experience. Partner share.
- Step 2: Call on a student and ask them to give you a question Sylvester's parents may have had. Write the question for the class to see. Remind students about using a capital letter to begin the sentence. Ask students to tell you what mark of punctuation goes at the end of a question. Have a student put the question mark at the end of the sentence.
- Step 3: Call on a student to give an expected response for this question and write it under the question.
- Step 4: Ask students what you need to use to start the statement and what mark of punctuation is needed at the end. Write the statement. Have a student come up and put a period at the end.
- Step 5: Explain to students that they are going to practice writing question and answer statements. Review the punctuation for each kind of sentence.
- Step 6: Have students write three questions Sylvester's parents might ask him about his adventure.
- Step 7: Have students exchange papers with a partner to write an answer statement.


WRITING — OPINION WRITING

Standards: CCSS.W.2.1, CCSS.W.3.1

Objective: Students will write an opinion piece using grade appropriate sentence structure and spelling.

Materials: Opinion writing *Graphic Organizer* ( [Google It!](#))
Writing tools
Teacher Prep: Find an example of an opinion essay.

Procedure:

- Step 1: Have students recall the class's previous discussion (DURING READING) or lead a discussion by asking the question: Do you think *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* deserved to be given the Caldecott Medal and to be selected as one of the top 100 books of the century?
- Step 2: Put the students into same opinion groups and let them discuss the reasons supporting their opinion.
- Step 3: Explain that an opinion essay begins with the writer's opinion and then gives reasons to support the opinion.
- Step 4: Show an example of an opinion essay. ( [Google It!](#))
- Step 5: Distribute the graphic organizer chosen and have students complete.
- Step 6: Use the Writing Process to complete the opinion essay.

EXTEND IT: Have students debate the issue using their writing as support.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE – WATER DENSITY EXPERIMENT

SCIENCE QUESTIONS — *Can a pebble float?*

Adding salt and sugar to water adds mass, or more weight, to the water allowing objects to float when they would sink in fresh water.

MATERIALS —

Recording sheet or Science Journal
3 large mason jars
Measuring cups
Water
Salt
Sugar
Pebbles (can be bought in a craft store)

PROCEDURE —

- Step 1: Ask the science question: ***Can a pebble float?*** Discuss the question with the class.
- Step 2: Tell the students that they are going to perform a science experiment to see if a pebble can float in water.
- Step 3: Fill each mason jar with 2 cups of water (room temperature or warm works best)
- Step 4: Add about 1/3 cup of salt to one jar.
- Step 5: Have students draw a picture of each jar and label one jar fresh water and the other jar salt water.
- Step 6: Ask students to make a prediction about what will happen when a rock is dropped into each jar. Do you think it will float? Make and write a hypothesis.
- Step 7: Drop the rock into fresh water and have students record observations.
- Step 8: Repeat with the salt water.
- Step 9: Check hypothesis and discuss results.
- Step 10: Ask students if we will get the same results when sugar is added to water. Discuss.
- Step 11: Add 1/3 cup of sugar to the third mason jar.
- Step 12: Have students draw and label. Make and write a hypothesis.
- Step 13: Drop a pebble into the sugar water and record what happens.
- Step 14: Discuss results with class and the science behind the experiment.

Note: You may need to add more sugar or salt to the water, depending on the size of the pebble.

TECHNOLOGY

Use an online dictionary and thesaurus.

STANDARDS —

CCSS.L.2.4E, CCSS.L.3.4E

MATERIALS —

Computers or tablets with internet

Computer with projector for class instruction

Suggested sites:

- www.learnersdictionary.com
- www.dictionary.com
- www.thesaurus.com

Vocabulary Log from the story

Vocabulary Journal or paper

PROCEDURE —

- Step 1:** Instruct students on how to use an online dictionary and/or thesaurus.
- Step 2:** Tell students they will use the computer to find the dictionary definition of the words listed on their *Vocabulary Log*. They should compare their meaning with the dictionary meaning to see if they were good detectives using context clues for meaning.
- Step 3:** Model using the word unusual: Look up the word in the online dictionary. Compare students' meaning with the dictionary definition.
- Step 4:** Next, write the dictionary definition of the word along with an original sentence in their *Vocabulary Journal*.
- Step 5:** Students can then use the online thesaurus to find synonyms/antonyms for these words.

ART — MAGIC PEBBLES

MATERIALS —

Small stones (can be found in craft stores)

Acrylic paint

Glitter glue

Large pieces of construction paper

Art supplies: crayons, markers, pencils

PROCEDURE —

- Step 1:** Have students choose a stone and create a magical design on it.
- Step 2:** After it dries, use the glitter glue to make it sparkle.
- Step 3:** Remind students that the story, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, received the Caldecott Medal for its illustrations. Good illustrations tell the story without words. Tell students they will create a comic strip showing an adventure they would have with their magic pebble. Be sure to include three wishes you would ask the magic pebble on this adventure.
- Step 4:** After the students have completed the comic strip, put the students into small groups. Each member of the group will take turns showing their comic strip to the group. The other group members use the illustrations to tell the adventure and guess the wishes.

ABOUT US

ABOUT STORYLINE ONLINE

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation's Emmy® nominated children's literacy program *Storyline Online*® streams imaginatively produced videos featuring celebrated actors to help inspire a love of reading. Storyline Online® receives millions of views every month in hundreds of countries. Visit Storyline Online® at storylineonline.net.

ABOUT THE SAG-AFTRA FOUNDATION

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation provides vital assistance and educational programming to the professionals of SAG-AFTRA while serving the public at large through its signature children's literacy program. Founded in 1985, the Foundation is a national non-profit organization that relies solely on support from grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual contributions to fund our programs. Visit sagaftra.foundation.

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