

An Teacher's Guide
Peter Sis: A Body of Work

The Wall

ISBN: 9780374347017 / \$18.99

Frances Foster Books

Farrar Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers

About the Book

Peter Sis tells the story of his childhood against the backdrop of World War II and the Cold War. Experiencing life behind the Iron Curtain, Peter had no freedom to express his passion for drawing and music, but he dreamed of being able to freely express his thoughts and ideas. As news from the West slowly begin to make its way through the Iron Curtain, Peter and his teen-age friends begin to hear about blue jeans, Coca-Cola, and rock music. But when Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Russians in 1968; all freedoms that had been gained were taken away, and people lived in fear. Peter continued to write and to draw - and to dream of freedom; eventually, he found that in America.

Discussion Questions

1. Peter Sis says of himself, "He joined a rock group and painted music." What does Sis mean by this statement?
2. What countries controlled Germany? How did the Iron Curtain separate Germany symbolically, physically, and ideologically?
3. What is the difference between socialism and communism?

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.5.1.6.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.5.1, 61; Comprehension and Collaboration; Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

Correlates to Common Core Standards L.5.1, 6.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts

As students read about the Iron Curtain, ask them to make a list of political terms and places that are used in the text. Then ask students, working in groups of two to three, to select words from their lists and to write their words and definitions on one-half of a 3 x 5 index card. Have students adapt a political map of Europe prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain adding their words and definitions to the map. Have students share their maps and post around the room.

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.5.1.6.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.5.1, 61; Comprehension and Collaboration; Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

History

In small groups, ask students to research the history of the Iron Curtain: why was the Iron Curtain established, how did it impact the peoples on either side, what contributed to the fall, how has life changed as a result of its fall, and who were the major players? Students can compile their information and produce a media presentation to share with other classes.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.2, 6.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.7, 6.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

The Tree of Life

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Frances Foster Books

Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers

About the Book

Charles Darwin was born in 1809. His father was a doctor, and he wanted Darwin to follow in his footsteps, but Charles had other ideas. He wanted to study nature and science, not the classics. In 1831 Darwin had the opportunity to join a voyage as a naturalist. He wrote books about his observations, and on his return home Darwin married and had children while continuing to work on his theory of evolution. At the time Darwin limited discussion of his idea to a few scientists within his field because it was such a highly controversial theory. When he published *The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection*, great debate broke out. Darwin died in 1882 after a long illness.

Discussion Questions

1. Who or what influenced the life of Charles Darwin?
2. What did Darwin study on his five-year voyage with Robert Fitzroy?
3. Why did Darwin keep his theory about natural selection a secret? In whom did he confide?

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.4.1, 5.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.4.1, 5.1;; Comprehension and Collaboration; Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

Curriculum Connections

Science

In small groups, ask students to investigate what naturalists do: their beliefs, their methods, their equipment, and their mission. Then ask each group to write and illustrate a brochure that informs others about naturalists. Students can contact area nature centers or nature preserves as a possible “audience” for their brochures.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.2, 6.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.7, 6.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

Social Studies

Ask students to research the debate between creationism and evolution and how the debate has changed since 1859. Each student should write a position paper and justify the side they choose with their research. Post the position papers around the room.

Correlates to Common Core Standards; Key Ideas and Details W.5.3, 6.3; Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.2, 6.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.7, 6.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

Language Arts

Darwin kept meticulous journals about his thoughts and what he observed as he traveled and studied. Ask students to keep a journal and to write every day about their observations of an event, a person, or something from nature. Students should date every entry, draw pictures, where needed, and maintain the journal for fourteen days. Have students share their favorite journal entries with the class.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.4, 6.4; Product and Distribution of writing. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Starry Messenger

HC ISBN: 9780374371913 / \$18.99

Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers

PB ISBN: 9780374470272 / \$7.99

Square Fish

About the Book

Galileo Galilei was a man before his time; courageous and brilliant, he changed the way people viewed the galaxy. As an extremely curious child, Galileo was fixed on the stars; later he attended the University of Pisa and studied mathematics and physics. At the age of twenty-five, Galileo became a professor, establishing himself as a genius. After the invention of the telescope, Galileo made many startling discoveries and proved that the planets revolved around the sun. As his popularity grew, however, the church tried and convicted him for not following tradition, and he spent the rest of his life under guard.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Galileo show his courage and genius to the world?
2. In what way did Galileo turn the world upside down?
3. Why were people so drawn to Galileo? How did his popularity contribute to his imprisonment?

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.4.1. 5.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.4.1, 5.1;; Comprehension and Collaboration; Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

Curriculum Connections

History

Galileo was born in 1564, a time of many outstanding artists, writers, and scholars. Working in small groups, ask students to select one of the men mentioned in the book or to select someone of their own choosing and, using a variety of sources, to research the man's life and contribution to the world. After all group members have become familiar with their individual's contributions, have students select one person to represent the individual and the other group members to be part of a group of reporters interviewing that person. Each group should present their interview scenario to the class. Props and costumes can be added to the presentations.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.2, 6.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.7, 6.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

Science

Because of his observations, Galileo changed the course of science and the belief system of the modern world. Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the laws of science Galileo discovered: The Law of the Pendulum, The Law of Falling Objects, or The Law of Floating Objects. Ask each group to write an explanation of the law, how it works, and how it has affected the way modern scientists believe. Have students present their explanations along with a demonstration or illustration of their explanation to the class.

Correlates to Common Core Standards; Key Ideas and Details W.5.3, 6.3; Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.2, 6.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.7, 6.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

Tibet through the Red Box

ISBN: 9780374375522 / \$27.50

Frances Foster Books

Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers

About the Book

As a child, Peter Sis's father was called away to film a documentary about the Lhasa Highway that was being built to open Tibet to China. During the many months that his father was away, Peter became gravely ill. As he lay in bed, unable to walk, his father returned from Tibet, and joy returned to Peter's heart. Peter listened to his father tell stories of his adventures until Peter grew up and, as will happen, became bored with his father's stories. The Red Box, containing his father's true accounts of his time in Tibet, was kept on a shelf in his father's office; as a child, Peter was not allowed to touch it. But when his father called him home, Peter's thoughts returned to the Red Box. As Peter reads the diary his father wrote during his time in Tibet, Peter remembers...

Discussion Questions

1. What is the relationship between Peter and his father? How does it change as Peter grows up and his father ages?

2. Who and what did Peter’s father rely on to keep him safe and alive during his time in Tibet? What dangers did he face?
3. Why did Peter’s father keep the diary in the Red Box from Peter when he was young?

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.5.1.6.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.5.1, 61; Comprehension and Collaboration; Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

Correlates to Common Core Standards L.5.1, 6.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Curriculum Connections

History

Ask students to work with a partner to research the Lhasa Highway and to determine when and how it was built, the route it takes, and the cities it connects. Have students draw a map of the highway showing the countries it crosses now and in the past. Then ask them to research the impact of this highway, both past and present, on the countries where the road is located. Have students write a brief explanation of the impact of the highway “as told by” one of the cities or countries on the map. Students can then share and post their explanations and maps.

Language Arts

Peter’s father tells him stories of a jingle boy, gentle giants, fish with human faces, and a Potala where the Boy-God-King lives. Ask students to select one of the stories, and after reading and investigating the story, ask students to write an argument for or against the truth or legend that supports the story. Have students to include illustrations of their stories and display arguments and illustrations in the classroom.

Language Arts

Tibet through the Red Box is a narrative memoir; a specific memory in Peter Sis’s life that he brings alive for readers. Ask students to think about a family story told about a special time or event. Then ask students to create a storyboard as a prewriting tool that chronologically includes the major details of the event and a statement of why the story is important to them personally. After writing about their special memory, students should share their stories in small groups.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.3, 6.3; Text Type and Purposes; Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Science

The yak was essential to the people in Tibet, supplying clothes, milk, meat, and transportation. What special knowledge and tools were required by the Tibetan people in order to harvest all they needed from the yak? Ask students to work in small groups to investigate the yak and Tibet in the mid-1950s and to create a visual presentation of their findings. Have each group share their findings with another group and post visuals in the classroom.

Correlates to Common Core Standards L.5.1, 6.1 Conventions of standard English; Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.5.1.6.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.2, 6.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.4, 6.4; Product and Distribution of writing. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.5.7, 6.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

The Pilot and the Little Prince: The Life of Antoine de Sait-Exupéry

ISBN: 9780374380694 / \$18.99

Frances Foster Books

Farrar Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers

About the Book

Born in France in 1900, Antoine de Sait-Exupéry had always dreamed of flying. His dream came true when he took flying lessons in 1921, so he could join the military. After his military service ended, he obtained his commercial flying license and flew passengers over Paris for scenic views. Antoine then became a mail pilot and practiced flying longer and longer trips, bundling up against the cold. With fellow pilots, he created new mail routes in South America, flew over all types of terrains, and attempted to establish new flying records. Although Antoine crashed several planes on his adventures, he was never severely hurt. In 1939 he became a war pilot for France and photographed the Germans' locations. After France fell to Germany, Antoine travelled to New York where he wrote the children's classic, *The Little Prince*. But Antoine missed France, so he returned to North Africa to fly missions over southern France. He never returned from his final mission on July 31, 1944.

Discussion Questions

1. Who or what influenced the life of Antoine de Sait-Exupéry?
2. How did Antoine de Sait-Exupéry work to achieve his goal? What sacrifices did he make?
3. What are some of the major accomplishments of Antoine de Sait-Exupéry?
4. What did Antoine de Sait-Exupéry contribute to aeronautic history?
5. In what ways did his writing career help him in other aspects of his life?

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.3.1, 4.1; Key Ideas and Details; Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.3.1, 4.1; Comprehension and Collaboration; Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

Curriculum Activities

Social Studies/History

Antoine knew planes from the ground up because he worked as an airplane mechanic before he became a pilot. Ask students to research the types of planes Antoine piloted; students should select one and create a fact sheet with illustration(s) for the selected aircraft. The fact sheet should include, where possible: name of aircraft, country of origin, manufacturer, years produced, number built, primary purpose or role, unit cost, and other interesting facts. Arrange and display projects in the classroom.

Social Studies/History

With a partner, ask students to write about the time in which Antoine lived (1900-1944) detailing what was occurring in the world during his life. Students should select from among the following: political climate, transportation advancements, medical breakthroughs, social customs, sports, natural disasters, important people, and other important events. Have students present their information in newspaper article format and, when appropriate, use illustrations. Compile all the student selections into a classroom newspaper from the period.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.4, 4.4; Production and Distribution of Writing; Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.7, 4.7; Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Correlates to Common Core Standards RI.3.1, 4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Language Arts

Using facts and details from the book, ask students to create a timeline of Antoine’s writing career. Then, based on the timeline and facts discovered, write an author’s biography explaining the author’s life and his work to be included as part of a book cover for *The Little Prince* or another of the author’s works. Display book covers with the author’s biographies around the room.

Language Arts

Ask students to investigate one of the adventures or plane crashes in which Antoine was involved, making notes about the historical events. Then, using their notes, ask students to write a first person narrative about the incident they selected and include sensory details and the character’s thoughts. Have students share their narratives in small groups. Optionally, students may include costumes or props for their small group share sessions.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.3, 4.3; Text Types and Purposes; Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.4, 4.4; Production and Distribution of Writing; Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.7, 4.7; Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Science

The early pilots used the stars as guides when they flew at night. Ask students to research stars and star constellations that the pilots would have used on their mail routes in the 1930’s. With a partner, ask students to find a map of the constellations and mark a flight pattern of one of the mail routes created in South America. Students should write a journal using the pilot’s voice describing their night flight. Post flight patterns and journals in the classroom.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.2, 4.2; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.3.7; 4.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects.

The Madlenka Books

Madlenka

HC ISBN: 9780374399696 / \$17.99

PB ISBN: 9780312659127 / \$7.99

Madlenka's Dog

ISBN: 9780374346997 / \$18.99

Madlenka Soccer Star

ISBN: 9780374347024 / \$16.99

Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers
Square Fish

About the Books

Madlenka lives in New York City on a block as big as the world. Her neighbors represent four continents, nine countries, and operate a variety of businesses. Madlenka shares the special events in her life by telling all of her friends the news of her lost tooth. Her neighbors pretend Madlenka's imaginary dog is real, and the animals on her street play soccer with Madlenka and her friend, Cleopatra. Madlenka's joy and her love for life brighten up the lives of her friends.

Discussion questions

1. What role do Madlenka's parents play in her life? Based on Madlenka's character, what do you know about her parents' beliefs and values?
2. What words would you use to describe Madlenka? How do you know she is a good friend?
3. How does Madlenka use her imagination?
4. What does Madlenka learn from her neighbors about their cultures?

Correlates to Common Core Standards RL.2.1, 1.1; Key Ideas and Details; Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Correlates to Common Core Standards SL.2.1, 1.1; Comprehension and Collaboration; Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 2 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Curriculum Activities

Social Studies

With a partner, ask students to select one of Madlenka's neighbors and to write a list of everything Madlenka learns about the culture of his or her country. Then have students create a flip book, illustrating each of the items on the list and writing a brief paragraph for each illustration. The flip books can be displayed in the classroom.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.2.2, 1.1; Text Type and Purposes; Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Correlates to Common Core Standards W.2.7; 1.7; Research to Build and present Knowledge; Participate in shared research and writing projects

Language Arts

Read all three books to or with the class. Then divide students into groups of three to four students and assign each of the groups one of the three Madlenka books to discuss. Ask students to discuss the book and, using a plot diagram, have them plot and illustrate the story's events. Then ask them to describe and add to their plot diagram an explanation of how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes it. Have groups share with the other groups who read the same book and also groups who read the other two selections. Post plot diagrams around the room.

Correlates to Common Core Standards RL.2.5, 1.5; Craft and Structure; Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.