

Table of Contents

About the Guide 1

Section 1

Story Synopsis 2

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills. 3

Section 2

Vocabulary 6

Cross-Curricular Activities 7

Independent Study 10

Section 3

Resources for Further Exploration. 11

About the Guide

This Winslow Press Teacher Guide has been designed to aid the classroom teacher by offering enrichment activities and discussion materials to complement *The Practically Perfect Pajamas*. These activities can help students to better understand and enjoy the story as well as assist teachers in implementing strategies and experiences that support their district's learning standards for language arts.

We start with a story synopsis, then provide story-related discussion topics (to sharpen critical thinking and creative problem solving skills), vocabulary words, cross-cultural activities and independent study ideas. All of the above cover a wide range of language arts skills development and meet the needs of multiple learning styles. The final part of the Guide lists additional resources (books, museums, reference materials, related Internet Web sites) for both teachers and students.

These Teacher Guides were developed to support the New York State Learning Standards for English Language Arts and should therefore support the highest standards in the country. The Standards can be downloaded from the New York State Education Department's Web site at <http://www.nysed.gov/rscs/stds/contents/.html>. If you have questions about specific standards applied to these activities, please call Winslow Press at 1-800-617-3947 or email me at MissLucy@winslowpress.com.

We hope this Teacher Guide will be a useful and positive part of your teaching experience!

Sincerely,

Diane F. Kessenich
*Chief Executive Officer
and Publisher*

Story Synopsis

The Practically Perfect Pajamas tells the story of Percy, a polar bear who is teased mercilessly by his peers for wearing pajamas—footed no less. When he decides to give up his comfy pj's to be more like the other bears, things don't work out as well as he expects them to. With the help of his friend Aurora the fox, Percy finds a way to teach the other bears—and himself—that being different can be practically perfect.

Critical Thinking and Creative Problem Solving Skills

A. Questions

Knowledge: Why did Percy love his pajamas? What did the other bears think of him for wearing pajamas?

Comprehension: Do you think Percy would ever really be happy without his pajamas?

Application: If you were being teased, how might you handle the situation? What if your friend were being teased?

Analysis: Can you list some reasons why it's important to be true to yourself?

Synthesis: Is there something you love that makes you different from the people around you? How might you share it with others?

Evaluation: What are some reasons people tease each other?

Critical Thinking and Creative Problem Solving Skills

B. Discussion

Percy loves his footed pajamas, but the other bears in *The Practically Perfect Pajamas* tease him for not looking like everyone else. Anxious to be liked, Percy gives up his pajamas in an effort to fit in, but it doesn't seem to help. The other bears *still* give him a hard time and he no longer has the comfort of his cozy pjs. Talk with students about peer pressure and teasing. What does it mean to “fit in”? Is it worth giving up something you love in order to win the approval of your peers? This is the beginning of how you come to know yourself and have confidence in who you are.

- Peer pressure and teasing

Discuss as a class the kinds of things that make each of us unique, and about what might be gained by being oneself and not “look[ing] like the rest of us.” What are some reasons people tease each other? In sharing his pajamas with the other bears, Percy finds a resolution that makes him a part of the group and brings pleasure to others. This kind of solution isn't always possible, but students will also have ideas about how to handle teasing. In acting out scenes from *Pajamas*, students can experiment with ways of resolving conflicts they may encounter on a day-to-day basis. Remind students that dramatic play or role-playing offers us both the freedom of pretending to be someone/thing else and also the opportunity to see things from someone else's point of view.

- What it means to have and be a friend

The things that make Percy different from the other bears are the things that make him appealing to Aurora the

Critical Thinking and Creative Problem Solving Skills

fox. And it is Aurora whose support and bright ideas help Percy to resolve his uncomfortable situation. Talk with students about what it means to be a friend. What do we do for our friends, and what kinds of things do they do for us? What do we value in our friends? Is it their sameness or their unique qualities? How does standing up for your friends strengthen your own character?

- **Favorite things**

In the end, it is clear that Percy has something special to offer his peers—and he doesn't have to stop being himself in the process. He shares something that brings him happiness. Talk with students about some of the things that bring them happiness. How might they share some of those things with others?

Vocabulary

Selected Vocabulary Words and Phrases

icicles

mocked

necessity

reluctantly

roughhousing

shivering

splendid

stylish

waterproof

whimpered

Cross-Curricular Activities

1. LANGUAGE ARTS: Delicious Words

a) Ask students, as a class, to create a list of “delicious words” found in *The Practically Perfect Pajamas*—that is, words they especially like for their sound, for the way the sound combines with its meaning, or for any other reason. As you put this list on the board, ask students to find synonyms for these words.

b) Use the list as a basis for discussion of the richness of the author’s vocabulary. Explain to students that they can create a list they can build on as they read other stories, and that they can “collect” these delicious words to use in their own writing.

2. DRAMA: A “Practically Perfect” Play

a) Have students perform *Practically Perfect* as a drama. Polar bear faces can be made from paper plates or cut-out faces glued onto grocery bags (don’t forget eye and mouth holes!), while polar bear paws can be made by gluing paper “claws” to lunch bags. Students may want to bring in pajamas or funny outfits of their own for the performance.

b) Talk with students about what it can mean to “get into” a role and to try seeing a situation through someone else’s eyes.

3. HEALTH/DRAMA: Friendship & Conflict

a) Using magic markers, paper, glue, and small sticks (tongue depressors or popsicle sticks), students can create simple finger puppets that represent themselves or invented characters.

Cross-Curricular Activities

b) Have students use these puppets to act out situations from *Practically Perfect* as they might occur on the school playground or in the classroom. Initiate discussion of questions like “How would you feel if you were in Percy’s shoes?” and “How would you feel if you were one of the other bears/kids?”

4. SOCIAL STUDIES : What is the Arctic? What is the Antarctic?

a) It’s important to Percy to keep warm because he lives in the Arctic, which is one of the coldest regions on Earth. Have students locate these regions on the map or globe. Identify some of the countries where polar bears live. A question to discuss with students: What *is* the Arctic, since it’s not a country or a state? What is Antarctic?

b) Together with students, develop a list of “arctic” questions to research. Have students use resources available in the school library to research the answers. Students may want to work in small groups to cover different topics. Examples:

- What is an arctic fox like?
- How *do* polar bears keep warm without pajamas?
- What does a polar bear eat?
- What are some of the other animals who live in the arctic?
- What is the arctic winter like?
- Which pole is the arctic? Which the Antarctic?

Cross-Curricular Activities

5. VISUAL ARTS: Design Your Own Pajamas

Talk with the class about Percy's pajamas and what made them practically perfect. Ask students what *their* idea of perfect pajamas is. Students can design and draw pajamas for themselves, keeping in mind the following:

- What is the season? Do you live in a warm climate or in a cold one?
- What kind of fabric are your perfect pajamas made of?
- Will you need pockets? Feet? Zippers or buttons?

Pajama designs can be displayed for the rest of the school to enjoy!

Independent Study

To help facilitate independent study, we have provided a starting list of ideas to help children get started. Some areas of interest may include the following:

- The lives of polar bears
- How animals keep warm
- Sleep and why we need it
- Clothing for different purposes and different climates

Resources for Further Exploration

(Note: More resources, games and activities can be found on Practically Perfect Pj's home pages here at www.winslowpress.com.)

Books

- Feldman, Eve B. *Animals Don't Wear Pajamas: A Book About Sleeping*. Illustrated by Mary Beth Owens. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1992. A good-night book for kids, featuring all kinds of human and animal families as they prepare for bed.
- George, Jean Craighead. *Arctic Son*. Illustrated by Wendell Minor. New York: Hyperion Books, 1999. This picture book by the author of *Julie of the Wolves* tells the story of Luke, a boy who is welcomed into an Inupiat Eskimo village and learns about life in the Arctic.
- Kenny, David, Cynthia Bickel, et al. *Klondike & Snow: The Denver Zoo's Remarkable Story of Raising Two Polar Bear Cubs*. Roberts Rinehart Publishers: Niwot, CO, 1995. Generously illustrated with photographs, this is the true story of two bears growing up in the Denver Zoo. For early-grade readers.
- Lesser, Carolyn. *Great Crystal Bear*. Illustrated by William Noonan. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996. A year in the life of a polar bear, told for kids in a lyrical narrative voice and illustrated with watercolors.
- Lester, Helen. *Tacky the Penguin*. Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990. Tacky is an "odd bird" who doesn't fit in. His unusual behavior annoys his friends until the incident that teaches them all about the importance of being yourself. Tacky's odd behavior saves the day!

Resources for Further Exploration

Mangelsen, Thomas D., Fred Bruemmer and Cara Blessly. *Polar Dance: Born of the North Wind*. Images of Nature Publications: Omaha, NB, 1997. From a nature photographer and a writer, a factual account of seasons in the life of four polar bears. A look at the bears' habitats, including plants and animals, and the life of an arctic fox. For adults (and a good read-aloud), with pictures for everyone.

Videos

National Geographic's Arctic Kingdom: *Life At the Edge*. approx. 85 min., NTSC Format, National Geographic, 1996. Not Rated. An hour-long documentary on life in the Arctic, followed by a presentation of behind-the-scenes wildlife footage.

Web sites

www.tqjunior.advanced.org/3500/polarbear.htm

Go here for some great info on polar bears, and other arctic animals too.

www.polarbearsalive.org/gallery.htm

A beautiful polar bear photo gallery.

www.polarworld.com/

Polar World has a "polar pic of the week," photo galleries and a make-a-polar-bear-puppet project.

www.birminghamzoo.com/animals/pbear.html

Find fascinating facts on the Birmingham zoo polar bear page.

www.tcgi.com/staff/murad/polar/page1.htm

Photo gallery of Klondike and Snow, the two polar bears born in the Denver Zoo in 1994. (Also see *Klondike and Snow*, in the "Books" section)

Resources for Further Exploration

www.nature-net.com/bears/polar.html

The Bear Den site has lots of facts about polar bears, and a “Cub Den” section for kids about bears in general.

www.seaworld.org/polar_bears/pbindex.html

This Sea World polar bear site includes tons of polar bear facts and a great section of “wild arctic activities.”

www.ucls.uchicago.edu/projects/1996-97/Hillocks96/arctic_fox.html

All about arctic foxes.