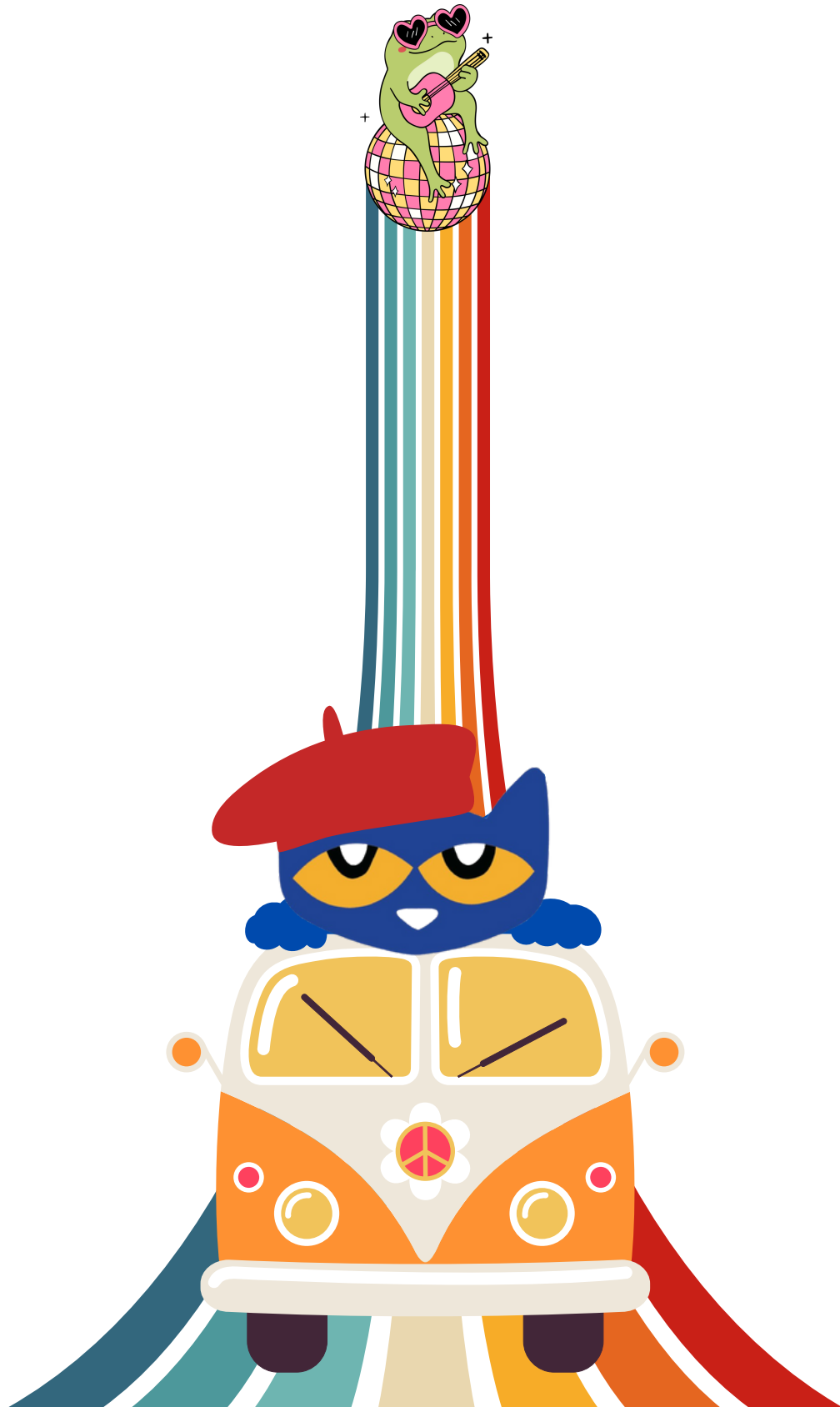


# Pete the Cat

## Study Guide

Prepared by Barter Theatre



# ***Pete the Cat***

Books and lyrics by Sarah Hammond, music by Will Aronson

Based on the *Pete the Cat* Book Series by Kimberly and James Dean

**By the Barter Players, Barter Theatre, Spring 2025**

**NOTE: Standards listed below are seeing a performance of *Pete the Cat* and completing the study guide**

## **Virginia SOLs**

**English** – K.1, K.5, K.6, K.8, K.9, 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.12, 2.14, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.9, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9

**Music** – K.11, K.13, 1.12, 1.16, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11, 2.13, 3.9, 3.10, 3.12, 4.8, 4.9, 4.13, 5.8, 5.9, 5.12, 6.7, 6.9, 6.10

**Theatre Arts** – 6.5, 6.18, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25

## **Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards**

**English/Language Arts - Reading Literacy:** K.1, K.3, K.5, K.7, 1.1, 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7

**English Language Arts – Writing:** K.1, K.3, 1.1, 1.3, 1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.7, 5.9, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.9.

**Tennessee Fine Arts Curriculum Standards Theatre** – K.4.1, K.4.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 2.4.1, 2.4.3, 3.6.2, 3.6.4, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 3.8.1, 4.6.1, 4.6.4, 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 4.8.1, 5.6.1, 5.6.4, 5.7.1, 5.7.2, 5.8.1, 6.1, 6.2

**Music** – K.7.1, K.7.2, 1.7.1, 1.7.2, 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 5.7.1, 5.7.2

**North Carolina Essential Standards Theatre Arts** – K.A.1, K.CU.1, 1.A.1, 1.CU.2, 2.A.1, 3.A.1, 3.CU.1, 3.CU.2, 4.A.1, 5.A.1, 5.CU.1, 6.C.1, 6.C.2, 6.A.1, 6.CU.2

**Music** – K.MR.1, 1.MR.1, 2.MR.1, 3.MR.1, 3.CR.1, 4.MR.1, 5.MR.1, 6.MR.1



# BARTER THEATRE

## A Brief History

A Brief History Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. When Porterfield and some of his actor friends found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City, Porterfield suggested they sojourn to his home in southwest Virginia where there was an abundance of food but no live theatre. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, "With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh." The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce; the concept of trading "ham for Hamlet" caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

In 1946, Barter Theatre was designated the state theatre of Virginia and became a launching pad for the careers of many iconic actors and actresses. Barter has also become one of the nation's longest running professional theatres, receiving countless awards and accolades.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, a former Barter actor and stage manager, became Barter's chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In October 1992, Richard Rose was named the Producing Artistic Director. During his tenure, attendance grew from 42,000 to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements were also made, including renovation of the main stage (now Gilliam Stage) in 1995 and the 2006 addition of The Barter Café at Stage II (now the Smith Theatre).



Rose also created Barter's Equity Resident Acting Company, who performs year-round, as well as a company of designers and technicians. Rose retired in December of 2019 and Katy Brown, who had been at Barter since 1998 as the Director of the Barter Players and Associate Artistic Director, was named the fourth Producing Artistic Director – and is the first woman to hold the position.

Barter represents two distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre's Gilliam Stage, and Barter's Smith Theatre. Gilliam Stage, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter's Smith Theatre offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. Barter Theatre is also home to The Barter Players, a talented ensemble of actors who produce plays for young audiences throughout the year.

In 2020, during the global pandemic, Barter was able to continue producing by creating a new venue at the Moonlite Drive-in, where the audience sat safely distanced in their parking spots while watching the actors on stage/simulcast on the big screen. History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.



Bartering for tickets with Robert Porterfield



## About the Playwright: Sarah Hammond



Sarah grew up in Hong Kong, Belgium, and South Carolina. Now based in South Philadelphia, she's a playwright, bookwriter, and lyricist. She began writing musicals, first as a bookwriter, then as a lyricist, and subsequently won the Kleban Prize in Musical Theatre for lyric writing. She wrote the book and lyrics for Theatreworks USA's *Pete the Cat* (Off-Broadway; four national tours) and the book for *String* (Village Theatre World Premiere 2018; Richard Rodgers Award; NAMT).

*String* was developed at the O'Neill Music Theatre Conference, NAMT '14, and the inaugural Oscar Hammerstein Festival at the Bucks County Playhouse. *String* also won the Frederick Loewe Award at New Dramatists, a NAMT residency grant, the Weston Playhouse New Musicals Award, and the Richard Rodgers Prize. Sarah has been the recipient of an Uncharted Residency at Ars Nova, the Lippmann Family "New Frontier" Award, Actors Theatre of Louisville's Heideman Award, commissions from South Coast Repertory and Broadway Across America, and a residency at The Royal National Theatre in London. Current musical works-in-progress include *Wind-Up Girl* and *Pete the Cat's Big Hollywood Adventure*. [www.sarahkhammond.com](http://www.sarahkhammond.com)

## About the Composer: Will Aronson

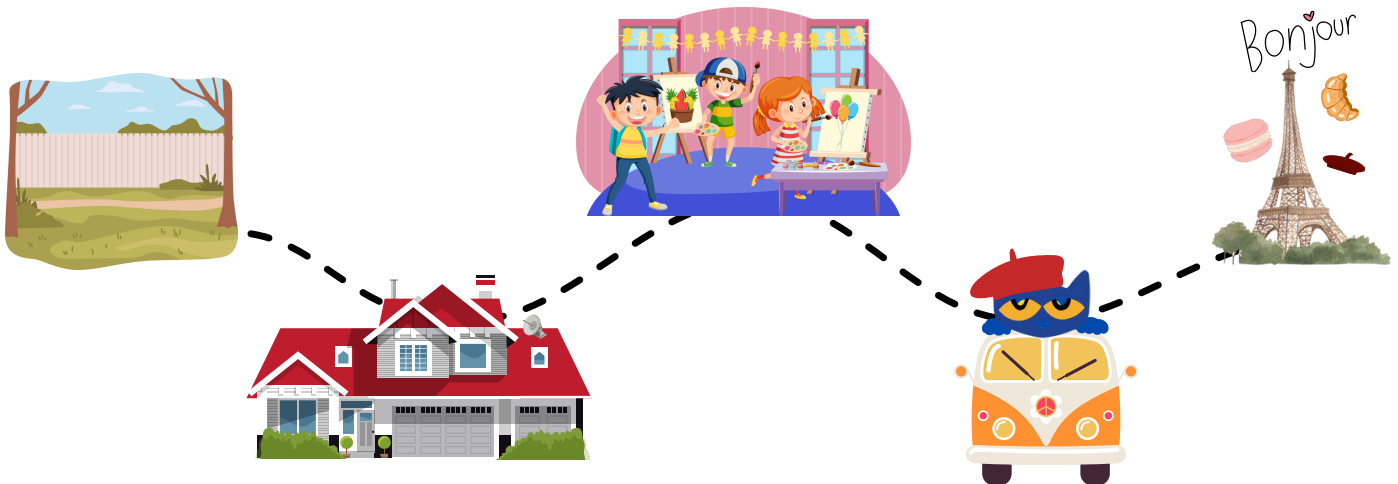


A theater writer and composer, Will Aronson's work includes *Maybe Happy Ending*; *Pete the Cat*; *Mother, Me & the Monsters*; *My Scary Girl*; and *Bungee Jump*. He holds a B.A. in music from Harvard University, an M.F.A. from the New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and he studied Music Theory as a Fulbright Scholar at the Universität der Künste in Berlin. Aronson has received numerous honors, including a Fulbright Grant, the ASCAP Frederick Loewe Award, an EST/Sloan Project Commission,

three Korean Musical Awards, and the Cha Beom-Seok Playwriting Award.  
[www.willaronson.com](http://www.willaronson.com)



**Setting:** A back yard; the Biddles home; a school; a VW Bus; and Paris, France.



**Synopsis:** For Pete the Cat, life is an adventure no matter where you wind up. So the minute the groovy blue cat meets The Biddles, he gets the whole family rocking - except for young Jimmy Biddle, the most organized second grader on planet Earth! But when Jimmy draws a blank in art class during the last week of school, it turns out Pete is the perfect pal to help him out. Together, they set out on a mission to help Jimmy conquer second grade art, and along the way, they both learn a little something new about inspiration. Join Jimmy and Pete on a musical adventure of friendship, all the way to Paris and back in a VW Bus!



## Characters

**Pete the Cat** – A super zen, rocking cat who lives in a VW Bus. He goes with the flow.

**Jimmy Biddle** – A very put-together second grader. He likes to prepare and tends to overthink things.

**Olive Biddle** – Jimmy’s rambunctious sister. In Pre-K. She just loves everyone and everything.

**Mom** – Jimmy’s nervous mom. Secretly, a rock star.

**Dad** – Jimmy’s nervous dad. Secretly, a rock star.

## Additional Characters

Mrs. Creech

Gus, the Platypus

Cat-Catcher

Grumpy Toad

Barnaby

Eloise

Mona Lisa

Shark

Astronaut

## Song List

*Life Is An Adventure*

Pete the Cat & Company

*Happy Roommates*

Jimmy Biddle & Pete the Cat

*Painting*

Pete, Jimmy, Company

*The Sneezing Song*

Olive Biddle & Pete the Cat

*Happy Housecat - Happy Roommates reprise*

Pete

*Under The Couch*

Pete, Jimmy, Mom, Dad, Olive

*It's A VW Bus*

Pete, Jimmy, Olive, Company

*Magic World*

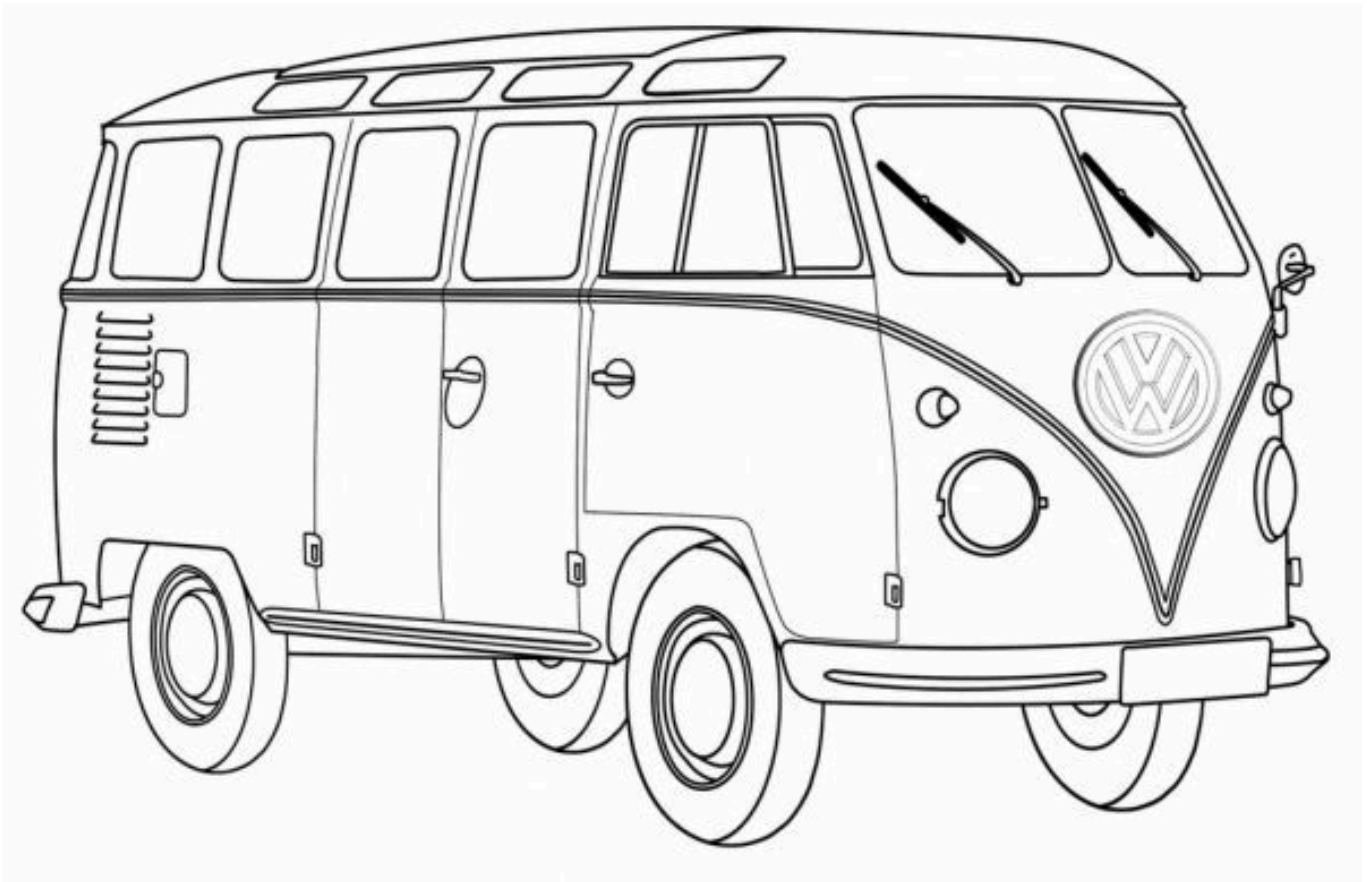
Pete, Jimmy, Olive, Company

*A Cat Named Pete*

Jimmy, Pete, Mom, Dad, Olive

In *Pete the Cat*, Pete, Jimmy, and Olive take a trip to Paris, France in Pete's groovy VW Bus.

Color your own groovy VW Bus! Where will it take you? What sites will you see?





## Fun Facts About Paris, France

### Location

Paris is the capital city of France, located in the north-central part of the country.

### Nickname

Known as "The City of Light" (La Ville Lumière) for its historical role in the Age of Enlightenment and its early adoption of street lighting.

### Landmarks

- Eiffel Tower: A world-famous iron structure completed in 1889.
- Louvre Museum: Home to the Mona Lisa, Winged Victory, and other famous artworks.
- Notre-Dame Cathedral: An historic Gothic cathedral built in the Middle Ages.
- Seine River: A river that flows through the city and is lined with beautiful bridges and scenic walkways.

### Culture

- Paris is a global center for art, fashion, and cuisine.
- French is the official language, and the Euro (€) is the currency.

### Famous Foods

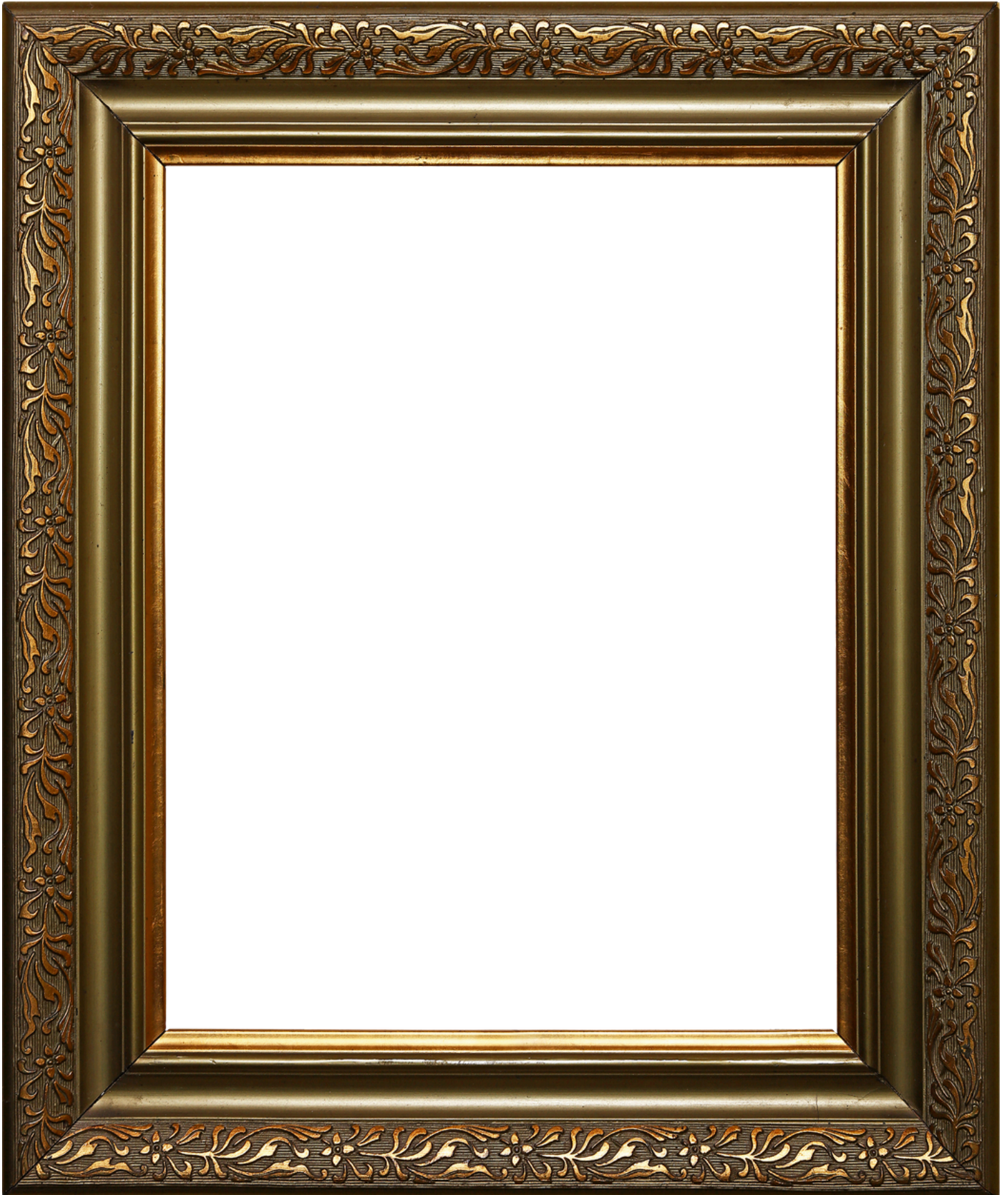
- Croissants, baguettes, macarons, and crepes are popular Parisian treats.
- Paris is also famous for its fine dining and patisseries.

### Transportation

Paris has an extensive metro system, and the city is pedestrian-friendly with many beautiful streets and parks.



Jimmy and his classmates each have to paint a masterpiece of anything they want. Create your own masterpiece in the frame below.



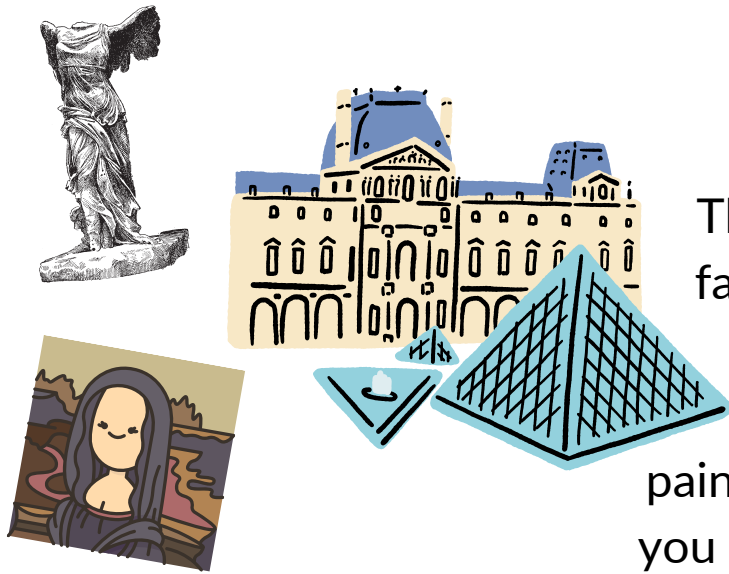
## Discussion Questions

1. What is Pete's philosophy on life? Create your own life philosophy inspired by Pete's courage and positive attitude. Share and discuss how philosophies guide our choices.
2. How does Pete show that he is a good friend to Jimmy? Can you think of a time when you helped a friend?
3. Jimmy is nervous about the art test but tries painting anyway. Have you ever done something new that made you nervous? What happened?
5. The Biddle family welcomes Pete into their home, even though they are unsure about getting a cat. How do they show kindness and care?
4. Pete takes Jimmy on an adventure in the VW Bus to find inspiration. If you could go on an adventure anywhere, where would you go and why?
4. Jimmy has many rules for his room, but he learns to relax a little when Pete moves in. Why is it important to listen and compromise with others?
4. Jimmy copies someone else's painting but learns to make his own. Why is it better to create something yourself instead of copying?
4. Pete paints with his tail and uses his creativity in unique ways. How do you like to express yourself, and what makes it special?



## Discussion Questions

What do you think it would be like to visit the Eiffel Tower? Would you want to go to the top? Why or why not?



The Louvre Museum has many famous artworks, including the Mona Lisa and Nike of Samothrace. What kind of painting or art would you make if you could display it in a museum?

Paris is famous for its food; including croissants, baguettes, macarons, escargot, crepes, pastries, and cheese. Which one would you like to try the most, and why?







# Word Search

Art  
Astronaut  
Baguette  
Barnaby  
Compromise  
Creativity  
Crepe  
Croissant  
Dad  
Eloise  
Escargot  
France  
Friendship  
Groovy  
Grumpy Toad  
Guitar  
Gus the Platypus  
Inspiration  
Jimmy  
Kindness  
Magic Sunglasses  
Masterpiece  
Math Test  
Mom  
Mrs. Creech  
Music  
Olive  
Paris  
Pete the Cat  
Rules  
Trust  
VW Bus

N	E	W	T	S	G	S	A	D	I	H	P	V	G	M
Z	W	V	I	U	S	U	W	R	J	E	L	F	U	A
Q	X	R	I	F	V	B	Q	W	T	L	L	P	S	T
S	A	T	I	L	F	W	C	E	C	C	I	J	T	H
P	A	F	I	K	O	V	T	Y	M	M	I	J	H	T
R	D	A	H	J	U	H	Y	V	O	O	R	G	E	E
M	M	A	S	T	E	R	P	I	E	C	E	R	P	S
E	R	Z	O	C	E	L	O	I	S	E	U	C	L	T
T	K	S	A	T	C	L	T	Z	S	L	O	S	A	C
T	S	T	C	R	Y	O	M	H	E	M	C	S	T	R
E	O	U	E	R	G	P	O	S	P	U	R	E	Y	E
U	C	P	R	R	E	B	M	R	O	S	O	N	P	A
G	E	N	A	T	E	E	O	U	L	I	I	D	U	T
A	J	C	A	R	J	M	C	Y	R	C	S	N	S	I
B	S	Q	E	R	I	A	O	H	B	G	S	I	J	V
E	T	T	O	S	F	S	D	E	Z	A	A	K	Z	I
E	K	K	E	B	L	A	S	T	R	O	N	A	U	T
F	R	I	E	N	D	S	H	I	P	G	T	R	L	Y
S	E	S	S	A	L	G	N	U	S	C	I	G	A	M
N	O	I	T	A	R	I	P	S	N	I	U	P	E	B



# Vocabulary

Define the following vocabulary words then write sentences using them:

Art	Eiffel Tower	Macron
Baguette	Expression	Masterpiece
Barter Theatre	France	Music
Compromise	Friendship	Paris
Creativity	Groovy	Stage
Crepe	Guitar	Rules
Croissant	Inspiration	Trust
Escargot	Kindness	VW Bus

**Remember:** anyone reading your sentence should be able to understand the word from the context in which it is used.

## Other *Pete the Cat* Books by James and Kimberly Dean

*Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*

*Pete the Cat's Groovy Imagination*

*Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons*

*Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses*