



# PETE THE CAT'S TRAIN TRIP

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR: JAMES DEAN

**\*\* REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! \*\***

## OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Pete the Cat is back in New York Times bestselling artist James Dean's beginning reader Pete the Cat's Train Trip. Pete can't wait to visit Grandma, especially because he gets to take a train ride to see her! The conductor gives Pete a tour of the train, and Pete gets to see the engine and honk the horn. Pete even makes new friends and plays games on board. What a cool ride!

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Born 1957 in Fort Payne, Alabama, James Dean spent the majority of his early years watching his father, a self-taught artist, reproduce the art of the masters as a hobby. James, only in first grade, began drawing from cartoons such as Disney and Snoopy.

In 1999, James adopted a kitten from a local shelter. A scrawny black kitten won out and found a new home. James named him Pete. While Pete was a kitten, he spent a great deal of time sitting on James' lap. James had never spent so much time with a kitten and soon felt as if Pete was his child.

Then one day the skinny, mischievous kitten stopped running and sat still. James sketched a picture of him and decided to paint it. He puzzled over the color – black? But what if everyone else thought black cats were “bad luck”? So James opted for blue.

Pete became the muse. James started painting Pete doing “cat” things: sitting in the laundry basket, hanging on the screen door, sleeping. Then James noticed Pete with his paw in his coffee cup, so Pete became a coffee loving cat. Pete would sit on top of James' old VW bug while he worked on the engine, so Pete began driving VWs. The possibilities and ideas were endless.

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

*Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:*

- Look at this cover. Do you recognize this character? Have you read books with Pete the Cat character before? Can you remember what they were?
- What else do you notice on this page? Can you predict what this book is about?
- Read the title and the name of the author
- Let's count how many words are in the title.
- Do you think this is a non-fiction or a fiction story? Thumbs up for fiction, thumbs down for non-fiction and sideways if you're not sure. Why do you think so?

### PETE THE CAT'S TRAIN TRIP

#### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Travel
- Trains

#### VOCABULARY:

Conductor, engineer, rumble, caboose

#### *Tips for every book!*

#### POWER PHRASES:

*I WONDER...*

*I NOTICE...*

*TELL ME MORE...*

#### DIGGING DEEPER:

*“Tell me more, why do you think that?”*

*“How do you know that?”*

*“Why do you think they feel like that?”*

*“Interesting, did you notice anything else?”*

## DURING THE STORY

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Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

- (p.4) How many tickets did Pete's mother buy? Show me with your fingers how many tickets your family would need to ride the train.
- (p. 7) Bob tells Pete that the train speeding by is a cargo train? I'm wondering what a cargo train is? What kind of things do you think travel on a cargo train?
- (p.11) What do you think the conductor's job on the train is? Can you tell from the story?
- (p.13) The train rumbles! What are some other things that make a rumbling sound?
- (p.15) I wonder what happens in the caboose of the train? Do you have an idea?

*The caboose served several functions, one of which was as an office for the conductor. A printed "waybill" followed every freight car from its origin to destination, and the conductor kept the paperwork in the caboose. The caboose also carried a brakeman and a flagman. In the days before automatic air brakes, the engineer signaled the caboose with his whistle when he wanted to slow down or stop. The brakeman then would climb out and make his way forward, twisting the brakewheels atop the cars with a stout club. Another brakeman riding the engine would work his way toward the rear. Once the train was stopped, the flagman would descend from the caboose and walk back to a safe distance with lanterns, flags and other warning devices to stop any approaching trains. Once under way, the trainmen would sit up in the cupola and watch for smoke or other signs of trouble from overheated wheel journals (called hotboxes). The caboose served several functions, one of which was as an office for the conductor. A printed "waybill" followed every freight car from its origin to destination, and the conductor kept the paperwork in the caboose.*

- (p.21) Pete met the engineer. Look at the pictures in the book and see if you can figure out what the engineer's job is?

## AFTER READING

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Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- How do you think Pete and his family will get home from visiting grandma? Why do you think that?
- What Are the different ways they could travel? What do you think the fastest way would be? The slowest? What would be your favorite?
- What did you Decide? Is this story non-fiction or fiction? Why do you think that?
- Are there some non-fiction parts? What would they be?

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

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- (p.9) Have you ever ridden a train? Thumbs up yes, thumbs down, no. Where did you go? If you haven't ridden a train, where would you like to go? (Share your own experience if you have one)!

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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- (p.26) Turn to your neighbor and talk about what you would do to keep busy if you were riding on a train! Share back with the group.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

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- If you have time, provide paper and crayons and have the students draw picture of a place or a person they would like to take a train to visit. If able, have them add a sentence or label their picture. Share with the group.