

The Crystal Clarion

Our PETS™ Newsletter

Issue 2

Editor-in-Chief
Yolanda the Yarnspinner

Winter/Spring
2005



From the Editor's Desk

Greetings, everyone!

Finally! Issue Number 2. It's been a very, very busy year! Through it all, though, there have been just wonderful responses to my first newsletter — from all around the country. I can't wait to share them with you!

As many of you know, the PETS™ (or *Primary Education Thinking Skills*) curriculum introduces elementary students to those higher level problem-solving strategies used in convergent, divergent, visual, and evaluative thinking. In the years since Dudley, Sybil, Max, Isabel, Jordan, and I first developed this program, we know that many teachers across the country have not only tweaked our original ideas (improving them immeasurably, we're sure), but have also created wonderful, new activities. And our inquiring minds want these ideas, too!!!

In this quarterly newsletter (at least that's still the plan ...), we're inviting teachers around the world to share their ideas with the rest of us. In each issue, we'll spotlight one or two of these ideas. We're also including a question and answer column: you ask and we'll see who has an answer!

Sheba, Sammy, and Pras at Pieces of Learning agree with us that this is such a great idea that anyone whose ideas are **In the Spotlight** will receive a **\$20 POL gift certificate**. You *know* it doesn't get any better than that!



Clarion Contributors

Winter/Spring 2005



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Spotlight YOUR Ideas!

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or snail mail them to me at this address:

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A-MAZE-ing Journeys

On the following three pages, you will find a special maze that is designed to be a culminating, review activity for the whole PETS program. There are two student pages and an answer key.

Students need to complete the statements on page one and then follow their answers to find their way through the Crystal Pond Woods maze on page two. Or, conversely, if they can find their way through the maze before doing the statements, then they need to pull the words from the maze to fill in their blanks on page one.

This is a fun way to review some of the major concepts students have learned in the program. Once they find their way out of the Woods, they have, metaphorically of course, graduated out of the program.

Contributed by Dodie Merritt

Can You Find Your Way Through Crystal Pond Woods?

(From *PETS™* the Red Book — p.39)

I enlarged the entire page on a poster maker, laminated it, and made a **floor game** out of it to use with a small group of first graders. I use a large set of plastic attribute blocks for the pieces. Initially, it is used after making 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-attribute trains. The students enjoy playing the game and orally explaining “why” and “why not” for the attribute blocks played. I have also added “4 black lines” between the circles in two places on the path to allow for 4-attribute differences.

To add a fourth attribute to the blocks on page 38, I outlined the “thick” blocks with a marker to make the difference between the “thick” and “thin” blocks easier to see.

Contributed by Bev Pryor

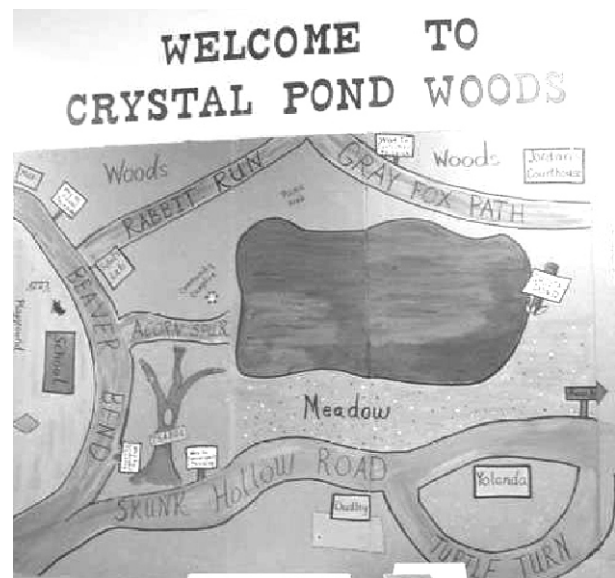
Or use the *PETS™* tiles in *PETS™ 2* the Green Book!

Where in the Woods is . . . ??

We have a BIG map of Crystal Pond Woods in our classroom. It has the places mentioned in the PETS stories, plus we named the roads — Beaver Bend, Skunk Hollow Road, Acorn Spur, Rabbit Run, Gray Fox Path, and Turtle Turn.

The students are constantly referring to the map. They try to figure out how Sybil gets to Isabel’s tree or which road Yolanda rides her bike on to get to Dudley’s. We also have pictures of all the characters and a special web for Yolanda.

Contributed by Cathie Weaver





From the Trenches

Inquiring Minds

This year I dressed up as the PETS characters to present some of the whole class lessons. I told each character's story in first person. The students in grades 1-3 loved it and really connected with the character. I went into the classroom four times as Dudley, Yolanda, Isabel, and Max.

For Dudley I used my husband's trench coat and a magnifying glass. Yolanda had a hat with a flowered band with a spider hanging down from it (her daughter) and a spider-web shawl with colorful words taped to it. Isabel had an overall dress with all sorts of things (a whisk and of course Brainfocals) in the bib pocket. Max wore a top hat and vest. I also brought a stuffed rabbit (Max's son) to help with the activity where the rabbit is rotated and students have to pick out the real Max.

I had the pictures of each character from the book colored to go with my costumes and I would show that to them as I introduced myself each time. Each week I would review the pictures and the type of thinking that character introduced. It was a lot of fun and the students always looked forward to the next visit, trying to guess who it might be.

Contributed by Kathy Laffoon

Is anyone else dressing up? We'd love to hear about your costumes or see pictures!!!



Send in YOUR questions and let's see how other PETS™ users have resolved your predicament!



Dear Yolanda,

I have utilized the PETS program many times previously and love it (so do the kids!!!) — but I have changed districts and have a group of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders. I'm planning on using this program with 3rd & 4th, but am not sure about 5th. Do you think the 3rd book is advanced enough for students who have never been exposed to this program before? Or is it too immature for them?

Sincerely, Anxious One

It all depends on the nature of your students. Some teachers actually use the Level 1 materials with kindergarteners, while, in our first year, Level 1 materials were used with all our 1st, 2nd, AND 3rd graders. No problems at all. As long as your 5th graders can enjoy working with the thinking specialists, then the activities themselves will be challenging and work just fine.

Remember ...

YOU can be a part of all this fun simply by ...

- using PETS™ in your classroom
- reading this newsletter
- giving us feedback:
 - What else would you like to see here?
 - Sending us your email address if you want to be notified directly when each new *Clarion* issue is posted on the POL website.
- sharing your ideas!!! To recognize your support of colleagues-in-need:
 - POL is offering a **free literature guide of your choice** (by N. Polette) to anyone whose ideas are used in **Brief Bytes**.
 - POL is offering a **\$20 gift certificate** for ideas used **In the Spotlight**.

Well ... what are you waiting for ... ???

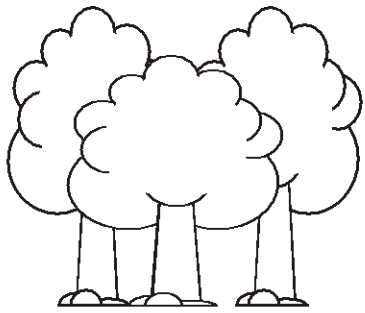
Name: _____ Class: _____



Can You Find Your Way Through Crystal Pond Woods?

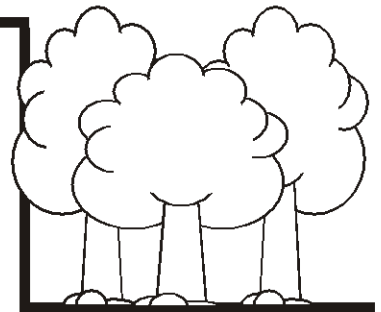
Answer the questions below about the Crystal Pond Woods thinking specialists.
Then find your way through the Woods by following your answers!

1. Dudley the Detective uses _____ to help him solve his problems.
2. Sybil the Scientist loves to study the parts of things and _____ them.
3. The first thing Dudley does when he has a problem to solve is to _____ some clues.
4. Secondly, Dudley _____ all the clues.
5. Finally, Dudley _____ about the clues in order to solve the problem.
6. _____ lots and lots of ideas is Isabel the Inventor's favorite kind of thinking.
7. Jordan the Judge always asks, "What are the _____?"
8. When all the possible answers are good ones, Jordan wants to figure out which one is the _____ choice.
9. Max the Magician is a _____ thinker who likes pictures and puzzles.
10. Dudley and Sybil want to end up with _____, and only one, right answer.
11. _____ the Yarnspinner loves to weave wonderful stories full of colorful words.
12. According to Isabel, it's OK to _____ on someone else's ideas when you're brainstorming in order to come up with a bigger and better idea!
13. Jordan the Judge is an _____ thinker.
14. A good detective never, ever, jumps to _____.
15. Best friends Isabel and Yolanda are _____ thinking specialists.
16. Isabel uses her _____ to look at things in new and different ways.
17. Best friends Dudley and Sybil are _____ thinking specialists.
18. _____ means thinking about thinking!



Can You Find
Your Way
Through Crystal
Pond Woods???

Start



reads

classify

find

sides

spider

piles

clues

thinks

knows

sings

help

kangaroo

brainstorming

detective

tops

best

answers

see

visual

coolest

considerations

evaluative

conclusions

one

Yolanda

piggyback

inventor

magician

two

judge

divergent

owl

brainfocals

scientist

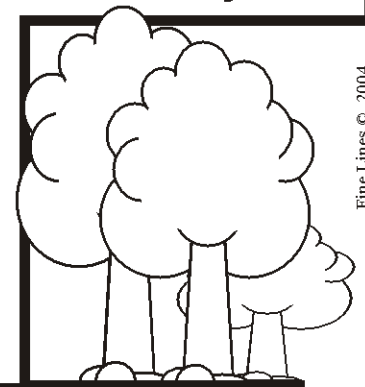
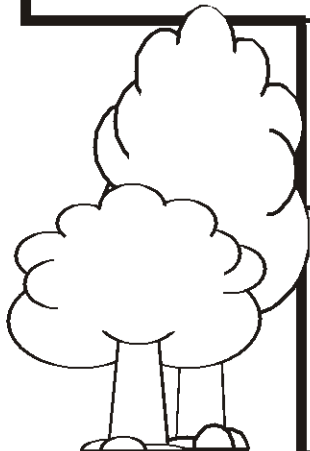
friends

writer

convergent

metacognition

Finish



Name: _____ Class: _____



Can You Find Your Way Through Crystal Pond Woods?

Answer the questions below about the Crystal Pond Woods thinking specialists.
Then find your way through the Woods by following your answers!

1. Dudley the Detective uses clues to help him solve his problems.
2. Sybil the Scientist loves to study the parts of things and classify them.
3. The first thing Dudley does when he has a problem to solve is to find some clues.
4. Then Dudley reads all the clues.
5. Finally, Dudley thinks about the clues in order to solve the problem.
6. Brainstorming lots and lots of ideas is Isabel the Inventor's favorite kind of thinking.
7. Jordan the Judge always asks, "What are the considerations?"
8. When all the possible answers are good ones, Jordan wants to figure out which one is the best choice.
9. Max the Magician is a visual thinker who likes pictures and puzzles.
10. Dudley and Sybil want to end up with one, and only one, right answer.
11. Yolanda the Yarnspinner loves to weave wonderful stories full of colorful words.
12. According to Isabel, it's OK to piggyback on someone else's ideas when you're brainstorming in order to come up with a bigger and better idea!
13. Jordan the Judge is an evaluative thinker.
14. A good detective never, ever, jumps to conclusions.
15. Best friends Isabel and Yolanda are divergent thinking specialists.
16. Isabel uses her brainfocals to look at things in new and different ways.
17. Best friends Dudley and Sybil are convergent thinking specialists.
18. Metacognition means thinking about thinking!

WELCOME TO CRYSTAL POND WOODS

