



# Classroom Guide

Title: **My Shadow**

Author: **Robert Louis Stevenson**

Illustrator: **Ted Rand**

**Theme:** Shadows are formed in the presence of light and may be functional as well as entertaining.

**Program Summary:** This is an illustrated version of the poem in which a child describes her relationship with her shadow. The episode examines the interplay of light and shadows — how they work, where they come from, and how they create such beautiful imagery together. LeVar shows how light and shadow can be used to tell the time, meets a shadow artist who creates shadow puppets, and visits a photographer who tells about her work.

## **Topics for Discussion:**

Before viewing the program, discuss how shadows are created. Have the class identify several light sources that can create shadows (e.g., the sun, a spotlight, a lamp, the moon, etc.). Discuss places where they have seen shadows.

After viewing the program, obtain a copy of the book so that students can examine the illustrations and discuss the different cultural settings represented.

Discuss with the students that “My Shadow” is a very old poem, written more than one hundred years ago and found in many poetry collections. Explain who Robert Louis Stevenson was and, if available, show them a volume of his poems. (Have them check to see if “My Shadow” is in it).

## **Curriculum Extension Activities:**

Have the students adapt a familiar story (that has a limited number of characters) into a shadow puppet play for an overhead projector.

Using a strong light source, such as a filmstrip projector, have students make silhouettes of each other’s heads. Cut them out, trace them on black paper, and display them. Have them guess the identity of each silhouette.

Using large pieces of black roll-type paper, have students make shadow shapes of what they would like to be (people, animals, etc.) if they could be something different. Encourage imagination. Have classmates guess each other’s shadow identities.

Revisit the book and examine the illustrations for words that depict various actions,



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e.g., ice skating, balancing, kicking, marching, bowing. Make a list of these words. On the playground on a sunny day, have the students pantomime some of the actions from the book and see what their shadows look like during the movement.

## Supplementary Booklist:

*Shadows and Reflections* by Tana Hoban

*Nothing Sticks Like a Shadow* by Ann Tompert, illustrated by Lynn Munsinger

## Related Themes:

- photography
- the sun
- electricity
- Groundhog Day

## Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #101 — Nosey Mrs. Rat
- Program #115 — Archibald Frisby

**About the Author:** Robert Louis Stevenson lived in Scotland in the late 1800s. He is one of the best-known writers of children’s poetry in history. His poems have been reprinted in numerous collections. Poems such as “My Shadow” and “The Swing” are familiar to people of all ages.

**About the Illustrator:** An accomplished watercolor artist and illustrator of a rapidly increasing body of work, Ted Rand had no formal art training and came to children’s book illustrating relatively late in life. His illustrations are featured in *Reading Rainbow* feature books, *Knots on a Counting Rope* and *Barn Dance*. Ted Rand illustrated several books written by his wife Gloria.