



Teacher Resource Guide and Lesson Plan Activities

Featuring general information about our production along with some creative activities which will help you make connections to your classroom curriculum, before and after the show.



The production and accompanying activities address **North Carolina Essential Standards in Theatre Arts, Goal A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances.** Look for this symbol throughout the resource guide for other curriculum connections.



Elephant & Piggie's We are In a Play!

Based on the **Elephant & Piggie** books by Mo Willems

Published by Hyperion Books for Children

Script and Lyrics by Mo Willems

Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

About Children's Theatre of Charlotte

Founded in 1948, Children's Theatre of Charlotte has been opening young minds to the wonders of live theatre for over half a century. Today it continues to be one of the most technically imaginative and resourceful theatres in the country. Annually it reaches nearly 300,000 young people and their families with multiple program areas: Mainstage productions, a professional Touring Company and a full scope of Education classes for both schools and the community. Children's Theatre of Charlotte is housed in **ImaginOn: The Joe & Joan Martin Center**. The facility is shared with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library: www.cmlibrary.org.

About the Play

Best friends Gerald and Piggie are surprised to find themselves on a fun musical adventure in front of an audience – you! – in this adaptation of Mo Willems's popular **Elephant & Piggie** books.

About the Author, Playwright and Lyricist: **Mo Willems**

#1 New York Times Bestseller Mo Willems began his career as a writer and animator for PBS's *Sesame Street* where he garnered 6 Emmy Awards for his writing. Mo also served as a weekly commentator for BBC Radio and created two animated series. Meanwhile, Mo began writing and drawing books for children. His debut effort, **Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!** became a New York Times Bestseller and was awarded a Caldecott Honor in 2004. Willems also received a Caldecott for **Knuffle Bunny: a Cautionary Tale** and **Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity**. In



addition to picture books, Mo created the **Elephant and Piggie** books, which were awarded the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal in 2008 and 2009 and Geisel Honors from 2011 to 2015. Mo's drawings and sculptures have exhibited in numerous galleries and museums across the nation including The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, MA, the High Museum in Atlanta and the Seongnam Arts Center in Seoul, South

Korea. Mo wrote the script and music for **Elephant and Piggie's We are in a Play** and well as **Knufflebunny: a Cautionary Musical**, both of which premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

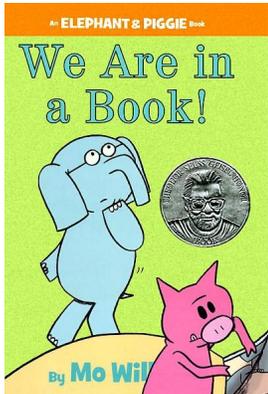
More about Mo can be found at www.mowillems.com.

“Life’s always better with an Elephant in the room.” - Piggie

Gerald and Piggie take to the stage in a rollicking adventure perfect for young audiences. An elephant named Gerald and a pig named Piggie are best, best, "bestus" friends. But Gerald worries that something could go wrong that would end their friendship. Piggie is not worried at all. She's even happier and more excited than usual. Along with their friends the Squirrelles -three singing squirrels who love to have a good time– Gerald and Piggie attend a party, dance, play the trumpet, share ice cream... and eventually realize that they are live before an audience! Such is a day where anything is possible.

Based on the Books

Elephant & Piggie’s *We Are In a Play* is based on six books in the Elephant & Piggie series. Read the books before (or after) the play and compare themes, plot details and topics that are present in both the books and the play.

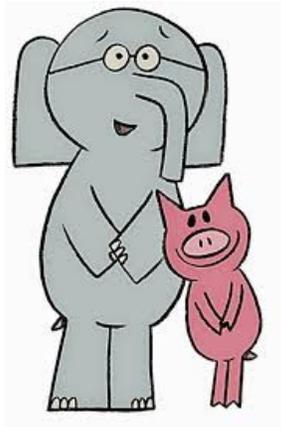


I Am Invited to a Party!
Listen to My Trumpet!
I Am Going!
Should I Share My Ice Cream?
I Love My New Toy
We Are In a Book!

Vocabulary Enrichment

invitation
predicament
elegant
contingency
ridiculous
complimentary
trumpet
impolite
interrupt
wondrous
gadget

trinket
gloomy
glamorous
obligatory
consequence
bleak
ping pong
quarrel
posh
scrumptious
maestro



Think “You Can”, not “You Can’ts”

The Elephant and Piggie stories teach many life lessons. Explore the list below and identify examples of each trait demonstrated in the production.

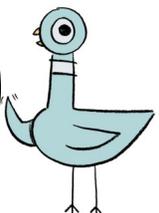
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Deal peacefully with disagreements
- Persevere: keep on trying
- Share
- Be loyal: stand by your friends and family members
- Be open minded: listen to others
- Stay positive and optimistic
- Apologize when you make a mistake or hurt someone’s feelings
- Accept your friends as they are
- When things don’t go exactly as expected, be willing and flexible to change to a new plan

Brainstorm some more themes from the play and the books!

Who Said It? Identify the speaker of each quote.

- “I’m excited because I have no idea what’s going to happen today.” (Piggie)
“What if we have a disagreement? Or a quarrel? Or some kind of tragic accident that leads to a predicament with unintended consequences?” (Gerald)
“You bet your sweet bippi!” (Ice Cream Penguin)
“You broke my toy.” (Piggie)
“You are blowing my little popcorn brain right now.” (Gerald)
“Everybody else left. You stayed.” (Piggie)

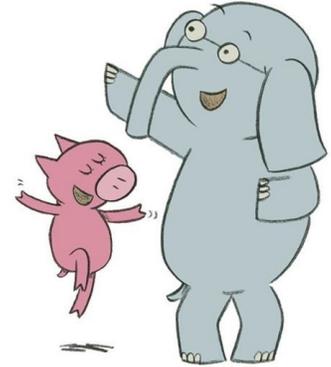
Did you know that Pigeon (a character from another book series by Mo Willems) is hidden inside each Elephant & Piggie book? Was Pigeon mentioned in the play?



Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: SL.K-5.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Questions for Discussion

1. Talk about the personalities of Gerald and Piggie. Gerald tends to be worrisome and cautious. Piggie tends to be energetic and optimistic. How do their personalities fit well together? Which character are you most like?
2. Gerald and Piggie are invited to a party, but they aren't sure what kind of party it will be. How do they prepare for the party? What kind of party does it turn out to be? If you could plan a party, what would be the theme?
3. Gerald is embarrassed that he cannot dance, so Piggie offers to teach him. What is something that you have learned from a friend? What is something you have taught to a friend?
4. When Piggie is playing the trumpet, how does it sound? How does Gerald kindly comment on Piggie's trumpet-playing?
5. Why is Gerald worried about eating his ice cream? Why is he waiting to eat it? What happens while he's waiting? How does this part of the story end?
6. Was it fair for Piggie to get angry with Gerald for breaking her new toy? Who's fault was it that the toy was broken? What lessons can be learned from this scene?
7. In the middle of the play, Gerald and Piggie noticed that there was audience. How did it feel to be acknowledged in the audience? What sorts of things did Gerald and Piggie ask you to do? What was your favorite thing about being an audience member?
8. **Elephant and Piggie's We Are In a Play** is a musical. There are several songs in the show. Which songs were your favorites? How can music add to the mood of a story?
9. Gerald and Piggie were trying to figure out what time the play ended. Who did they ask? Where did the voice come from?
10. How did Gerald feel about the play coming to an end? Has there ever been a time that you were having so much fun that you didn't want something to end?
11. What lessons do Gerald and Piggie teach one another about friendship?



Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: SL2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media; RL7: Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

Speech and Thought Bubbles



Mo Willems makes masterful use of speech bubbles and thought bubbles in his books.

Speech bubbles can be an effective tool for writing prompts, reading responses and inference.

To create hand-held speech bubbles, laminated poster board can be cut into shapes, glued to large popsicle sticks and written on with dry erase markers. Scholastic offers an article about using speech and thought bubbles in the classroom at www.scholastic.com.



Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy RL 2.6: Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

Theatre Corner

Every play produced by Children's Theatre of Charlotte is created in the city of Charlotte by a talented team of designers, carpenters, stitchers, props masters and lighting technicians, not to mention the director and the actors. Because it is presented live, a play is very different from a television show or a movie. As a class, discuss what you experienced when you went to the theatre.

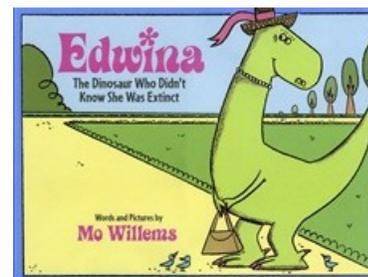
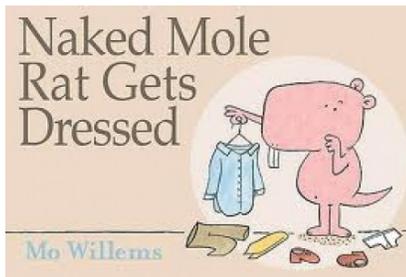
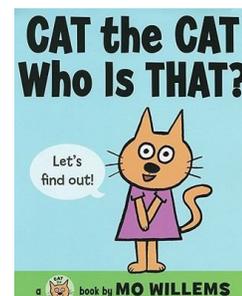
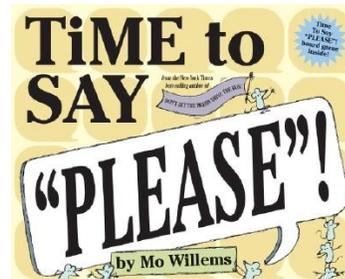
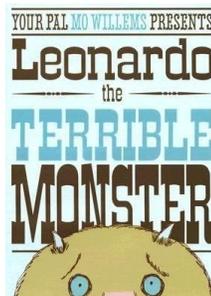
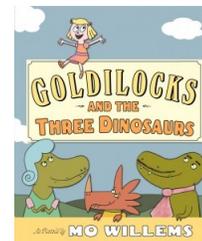
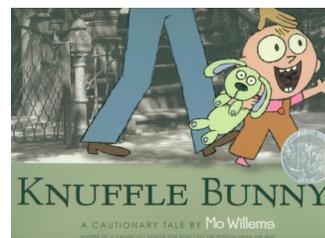
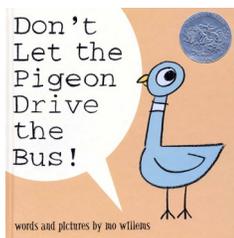
1. How were the actors, costumes and set pieces used to convey animal characters in the story?
2. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story?
3. Discuss the special effects that were used in this production. Which did you find most interesting or fascinating? How do you think the effects were achieved?
4. What did you like about the costumes? Did they fit the story?
5. What role did lighting play in telling the story? How did the lights enhance what you were seeing?
6. Talk about the actors. Were there moments you were so caught up in the story that you forgot you were watching a play? Talk about those moments.
7. Were there any actors who played more than one character? At what point in the play could you tell that it was the same person? What are some ways that you can be the same person but play different characters?
8. If you could adapt a story into a play, which story would you choose? Describe the characters, costumes, set, lighting and special effects you would use to create your play.



North Carolina Essential Standards in Theatre Arts
3.A.1.2: Evaluate formal or informal theatre productions.

Book Corner More books by Mo Willems

(there are over 40, so these are just a few!)



The Elephant and Piggie Book Series

My Friend is Sad
Today I Will Fly
There is a Bird on your Head
I am Invited to a Party
I Love My New Toy
I Will Surprise My Friend
Are You Ready to Play Outside?
Watch Me Throw the Ball
Elephants Cannot Dance
Pigs Make Me Sneeze
I Am Going
Can I Play, Too?

We are in a Book
I Broke My Trunk
Should I Share My Ice Cream?
Happy Pig Day
Listen to My Trumpet
Let's Go for a Drive
A Big Guy Took My Ball
I'm a Frog
My New Friend is So Fun
Waiting is Not Easy
I Really Like Slop
I Will Take a Nap

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www.ncarts.org

Children's Theatre of Charlotte is supported, in part, with funding from the Arts & Science Council and the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.