

# Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"

script and lyrics by **Mo Willems**  
music by **Deborah Wicks La Puma**



INDIANA  
REPERTORY  
THEATRE

## TEACHER GUIDE

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*Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"* with script and lyrics by Mo Willems and music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

The author of the best-selling *Elephant & Piggie* books brings you a rollicking celebration of friendship and fun in a colorful musical for children 3 to 8 years old and their families. With their back-up trio the Squirrelles, Elephant Gerald and Piggie sing, dance, and laugh their way through a day where anything can happen.

How does it feel to share something that's important to us? What is it like to learn something new and unknown? How can we apologize when we've made a mistake? Our youngest audiences will have the opportunity to learn these valuable lessons alongside Elephant Gerald and Piggie. Live theatre gives children the chance to explore feelings of empathy in a safe space, all while having fun. Join us as our Exploring Stages program premieres its first musical to bring students, teachers and families together for story time!

*Cover Art by Kyle Ragsdale*

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**STUDENT MATINEES** 10:00AM on February 19, 20  
10:00AM or 12:00PM on February 21, 22, 26, 27, 28 and March 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22  
**ESTIMATED LENGTH** 75 minutes, including pre- and post-show activities  
**AGE RANGE** Recommended for grades pre-K thru 3

**STUDENT MATINEES & ARTIST IN THE CLASSROOM**

Sarah Geis • 317-916-4841  
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### A NOTE FROM OUR TEACHING ARTIST TEAM

Thank you for your commitment to integrating the arts into your curriculum! We hope you find this guide useful. The activities inside have been designed to use in conjunction with the IRT's Exploring Stages productions. They have been compiled and altered from numerous sources. We encourage you to do the same! Take what is listed and meld it with another activity you like using. This material is compiled for teachers working with pre-K to 1st grade students in mind. However, with some modifications it is easily adaptable for older students. You don't have to use any of the material or suggestions that aren't appropriate for your institution. Additionally, in all activities we encourage you to take suggestions from the students, as it utilizes their imaginations and past experiences. Finally, remember that all activities can be modified to fit a particular study unit. For example, if you're studying life on a farm and how a farm works, then use the I Can Do It activity and give prompts like milking a cow, planting seeds, driving a combine, feeding free range chickens, etc. Explore, create, and have fun!

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Thank you for making a field trip to IRT part of your teaching! We are certain that you and your students will come away having had a fun and educational experience. This guide is designed to help make sure you can make the experience not only a fun trip, but also a chance to engage students in class before and after you visit. You will find activities for **BEFORE YOU VISIT** which we recommend reviewing and sharing with students in advance of your performance. You will also find activities for **AFTER YOU VISIT** which are designed to help students reflect on the experience. You will also find **ANYTIME ACTIVITIES** which can be used whenever you like based on the needs of your classroom. These activities are often great to adapt for other units not connected to a field trip to IRT! Finally, you will find **RESOURCES** such as websites and books that you can check out on your own as you continue teaching.

### ABOUT *ELEPHANT & PIGGIE'S "WE ARE IN A PLAY!"*

There are 25 books in Mo Willems' *Elephant & Piggie* series. The script for this production is based primarily on six of them. We recommend using the following books in preparation for your visit and afterward to reflect and remember:

*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!*

This play also introduces some new friends to Gerald and Piggie – The Squirrelles – three singing squirrels who love to party. Throughout the play Gerald, Piggie, and the Squirrelles will learn about sharing, listening, and being a good friend!

## BEFORE YOU VISIT | Get To Know Mo Willems

Mo Willems, a number one *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator, has been awarded a Caldecott Honor on three occasions (for *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, and *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*). *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* was also an inaugural inductee into the Indies Choice Picture Book Hall of Fame. Mo's celebrated *Elephant & Piggie* early reader series has been awarded two Theodor Seuss Geisel Medals (for *There Is a Bird on Your Head!* and *Are You Ready to Play Outside?*) and five Geisel Honors (for *We Are in a Book!*, *I Broke My Trunk!*, *Let's Go for a Drive!*, *A Big Guy Took My Ball!*, and *Waiting Is Not Easy!*). Mo began his career as a writer and animator on *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards.

You can find more about Mo and his books at these websites:

<http://www.mowillems.com/>

<http://www.gomo.net/>

<http://www.pigeonpresents.com/>

<https://mowillemsdoodles.blogspot.com/>

### More Books by Mo Willems

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*

*Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late*

*Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct*

*Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs*

*Hooray for Amanda and Her Alligator*

*Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*

*Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*

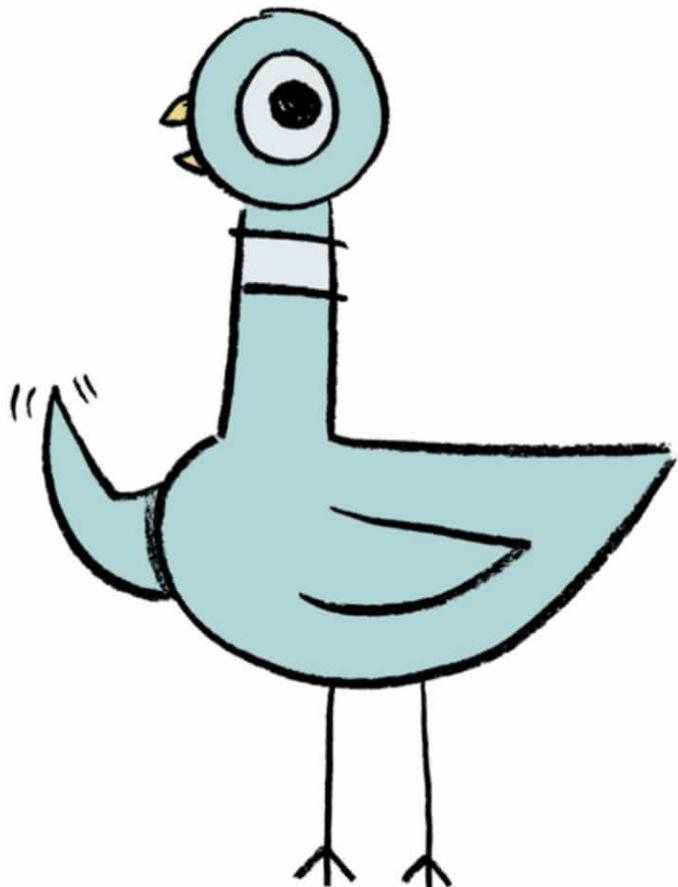
*Leonardo the Terrible Monster*

*Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*

*That Is Not a Good Idea*

*The Duckling Gets a Cookie?!*

*The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*



## BEFORE YOU VISIT | Watching a Play

Use the questions and answers below to help explain to students who have never been to the theatre what it is like to see a play!

### What is a play?

It may seem silly to ask, but going to a play is not something we are born knowing how to do. However, once we learn, it's an incredible experience we'll want to have again and again! The easiest way to describe a **play** is that it's like a movie or TV show, except that it is performed right in front of your eyes by real people!

To get technical, the most basic needs for a theatrical experience are a story to tell, actors to tell it, and an audience to hear it. **Playwrights** write plays that tell stories through dialogue and action. Taking the playwright's words from the printed page, people called **actors** use their voices, bodies, and creativity to develop characters that live on stage. **Designers** create scenery, costumes, lighting, and music that form a unique physical environment for each individual play. The person who leads this ensemble of artists is called a **director**, and they make sure that all the various elements and viewpoints come together for a unified statement that creates a satisfying experience for the **audience**. When theatre artists bring their best work to the stage, and when audiences receive that work with open minds and active imaginations, the results can be enlightening, enriching, and entertaining.



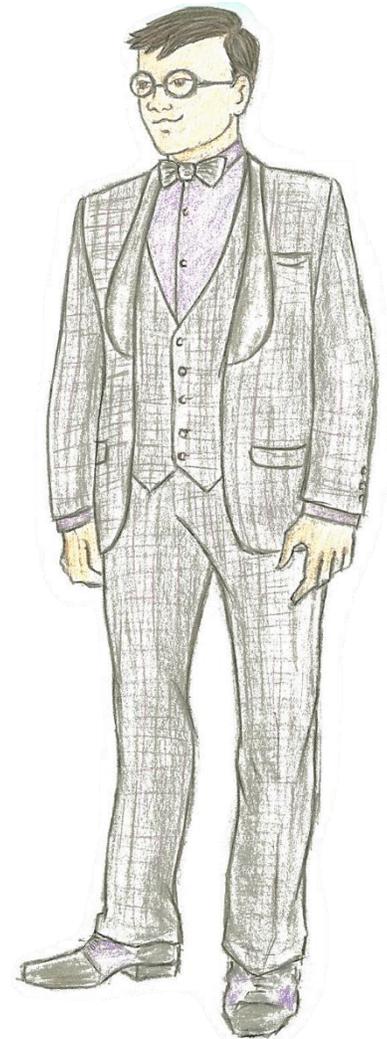
Costume rendering for Piggie by costume designer Guy Clark.

### So there will be elephants?

Sadly, no! While it would be fun to have a real elephant and pig onstage, part of what makes theatre special is getting to play pretend. In this performance, the actors pretend to be Gerald, Piggie, and the Squirrelles. They use their bodies, voices and imaginations to show the audience how an elephant, pig, and squirrels might act if they had voices and bodies like us and loved things like fancy costume pool parties. Unlike animals, actors can dance, sing, and talk. To become their animal characters, the actors will change their voices and movements. They will put on costumes, like a gray suit for Gerald and pink overalls for Piggie.

### Can I play too?

Yes! The audience is also an important part of the show. Your imagination is what helps bring the story to life. When you see something funny, you can laugh. When you see something you like, you can smile. Near the end of the show, the audience might even get to sing and dance along with Elephant, Piggie, and the Squirrelles. So even though the audience does not talk during the show, you may get to use your voice to sing!



Costume rendering for Elephant Gerald by costume designer Guy Clark.

### How should I behave?

When you get to the theatre, it's important to follow the directions of the adults helping you get to your seats. Teachers from the theatre will have instructions for you, so make sure you have your listening ears ready. Before the show begins, we will remind you to **stay seated on your pockets in the carpeted area**. In our theatre, the carpet is for the audience, and staying on it will keep you and the actors safe. We'll also remind you to **listen with your eyes, ears, heart, and body**. Listening to a play is how we learn the story, so we listen with our eyes by watching, our ears by hearing, our heart by feeling, and our bodies by staying seated. Remember, you are here to watch and have fun, but also to learn!



*Students prepare to see IRT's production of The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse in 2018. While you will be in this room, the stage will look very different! Photo by Zach Rosing.*



*Costume renderings for the Squirrelles by costume designer Guy Clark.*

### What if I feel scared?

When you do something new, it's ok to be a little scared. Just remember, everything in the play is pretend, and you are perfectly safe at the theatre. If you need a break during the show, just let the nearest adult know. Your teachers can take you to a quiet space.

### I might need additional support.

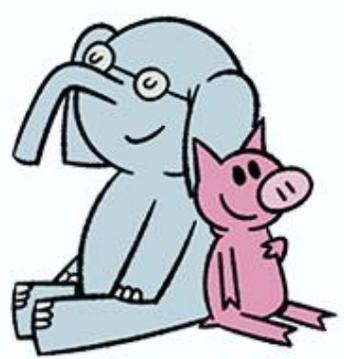
If you have students on the autism spectrum or who have sensory or processing sensitivities, we have resources available. Visit our website at [irtlive.com/accessibility](http://irtlive.com/accessibility) where you can find social narratives about the theatre, as well as an additional story guide designed specifically for students with disabilities. We will also have fidgets available during the show if a student feels overwhelmed.



*Scenic rendering for Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!" by scenic designer Kerry Chipman.*

## BEFORE YOU VISIT | Reading *Elephant & Piggie*

Before you come to IRT to see *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are In a Play!"* we recommend reading as many of Mo Willems' *Elephant & Piggie* stories as you can. Not only will they help you to prepare for the story you're going to see, they're just plain fun! While reading any *Elephant & Piggie* books will be helpful, we recommend reading the ones listed below, as these stories make up much of the story of the play. For each book, you'll find some discussion questions and/or activities you could use to help engage students. For *Elephant & Piggie* books not mentioned below, you can find materials and discussion questions at [pigeonpresents.com](http://pigeonpresents.com).



### *I Am Going!*

- In this story, Gerald is distraught when he thinks Piggie is going away for good! Ask children if they have ever had a close friend move away or leave town. For those that have, ask how it made them feel, and what they miss most about their friend.
- In trying to persuade Piggie to stay throughout their story, Gerald talks about all of the fun times they've had together, including skipping and playing ping pong. Have kids make a list of the top five favorite things they like to do with their best friends and share it with the group.
- At the end of the story, Piggie reveals that she is going...to have lunch! But where are some other places Elephant and Piggie could go? Ask children to draw one fun new place where Elephant and Piggie could go. Then have each child share their exciting locations!

### *I Love My New Toy*

- In this story, Piggie has a new favorite toy. Ask children about their favorite toy. What makes it special?
- Talk about the concepts of "by accident" versus "on purpose." Did Gerald break Piggie's toy by accident or on purpose? How did Gerald try to make it up to Piggie? What made them realize that friends are more important than things? Discuss whether the children have ever hurt a friend by accident.
- Play a fun drawing and guessing game based on the children's favorite toys from home. Ask each child to stand in front of the group and draw a special toy on a large pad or chalkboard. The audience can call out answers as the drawing develops, and the correct guess can win a small prize.

### *I Am Invited to a Party!*

- How did Gerald know what to wear to the party?
- What do you think Gerald and Piggie did at the fancy costume pool party? What did they eat? What games did they play?
- What was the best party you ever attended? Why was it so great?
- Read the story aloud, using props. As you pull out props, have children put them on. Props could include Elephant's top hat, a bow tie, a cane, giant gloves, earrings, flippers, water wings, goggles, a cowboy hat, or a bandanna.



*Listen to My Trumpet!*

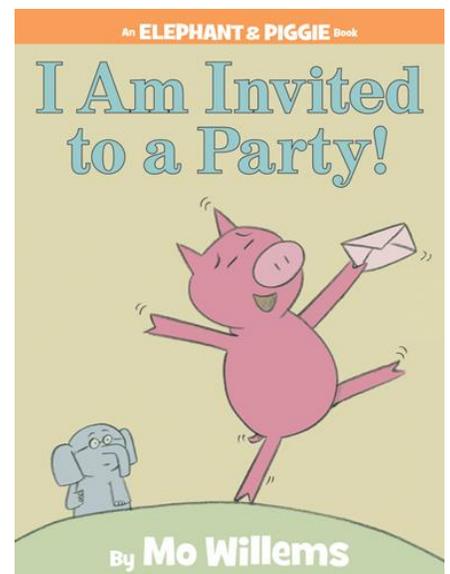
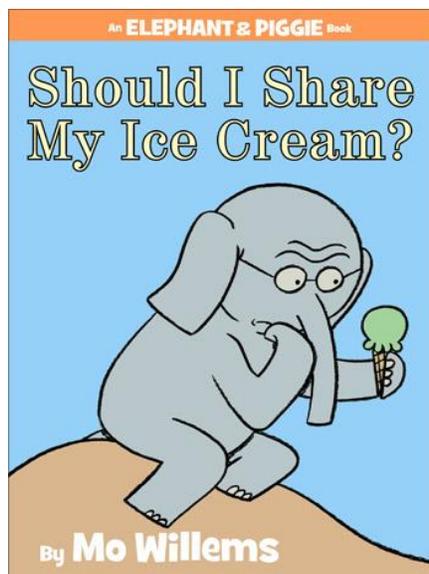
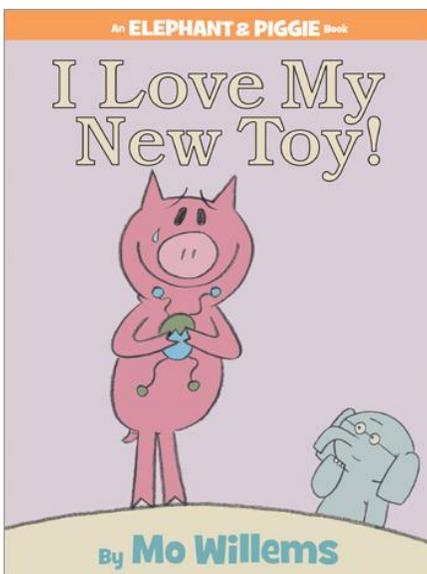
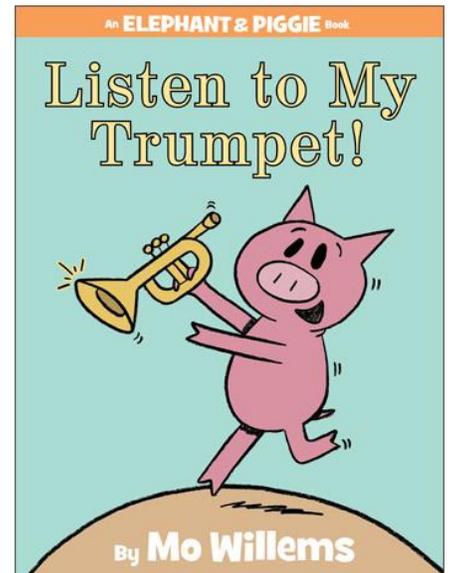
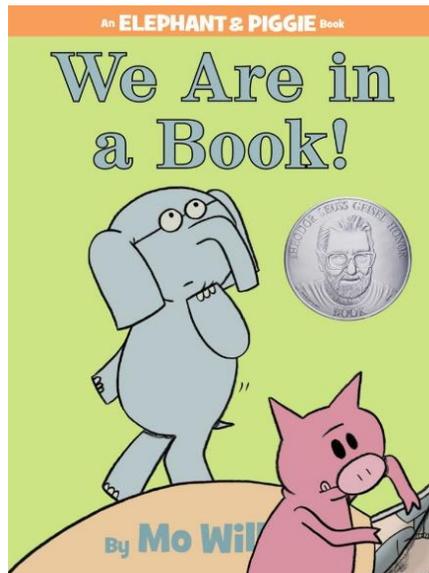
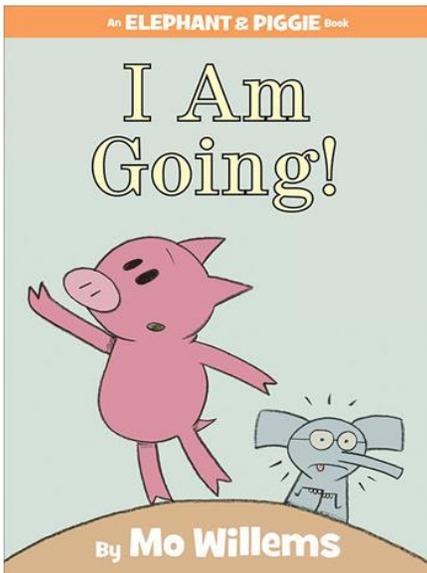
- In this story, Gerald struggles with how to respond to Piggie when she plays her trumpet. Talk about positive and negative ways to give feedback to a friend when you don't like what they are doing.

*Should I Share My Ice Cream!*

- In this story, Elephant has a very important decision to make – share his ice cream with Piggie...or not? Ask children about the importance of sharing and generosity when dealing with friends. Have each child share one instance where they shared a treasured object with a friend. How did the friend feel?

*We Are In a Book!*

- In this story, reading takes center stage as Gerald and Piggie discover that they are in a book! Ask children to talk about their favorite stories to read at bedtime. What makes their favorite stories so special?



## BEFORE YOU VISIT | Read Aloud Tips

The following tips will help make reading aloud in your classroom more fun and engaging for you and your students! Especially when working with younger students, repetition is a valuable tool for learning. These tips assume you will be reading the same story to kids more than once, and that you are coming to see a play. However, the strategies can be modified to any story time!

### The First Reading

Consider first reading the story without interaction from the children – simply use your most expressive reading voice! The more dramatic you are, the more interested students will be. This is also excellent preparation for a trip to the theatre! Encourage active listening by adjusting your vocal tones the way an actor might. For example:

- Choose low and high voices for characters, such as a deeper voice for Elephant Gerald, and a high voice for Piggie.
- Use accents. Maybe character from the country might speak in a slower drawl. Your kids won't critique your pronunciation!
- Embrace onomatopoeia – words that imitate the natural sound of things. Lean in to “buzzzzzzing” and “riiinging”.
- Make your own onomatopoeia. Make sure the bear is “grrrrrrrowling” or the bus travels a “loooooooong” way.

### The Second Reading

The second time you are reading through the story, encourage the children to be **physically and vocally interactive** with the story.

*Have the children repeat how you say words and phrases expressively.* Especially if a story features the repetition of a particular word or phrase, students will naturally want to join in as they pick up on your pattern.

*Lead them to interact physically.* Especially if your story features animals! Encourage children to scurry like mice, stomp like elephants, or zoom like a cheetah. For *Elephant & Piggie's I Am Invited to a Party!* students could mime putting on their fancy clothes. Most *Elephant & Piggie* illustrations are great for mimicking!

*Get them to think how the story relates to their own lives.* Ask them questions about the themes of the story. In a story about belonging, ask if they've ever felt left out. In a story about kindness, ask them how it feels when they help a friend.

### The Third Reading

The third time through the story is about making sure students are **following the plot**. This is especially important when you're planning to see the story as a play, like *Elephant & Piggie* at IRT!

As you go, stop to paraphrase the story. Reframe what has happened so far, or better yet, ask students to! Have students recall what they think is going to happen next. Or, if they can't remember, make predictions!

### Conclusion

Reading a story multiple times will not only help students with comprehension and other skills, it will also give them an experience akin to that of the actors they might see in a play. During rehearsal, the actors will read and work on the script for six hours a day for up to a whole month!

## AFTER YOU VISIT | Feel the Music!

*Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"* is a musical, which means that, in addition to talking to each other, the characters sang songs. The songs tell you a lot about the character and what is happening in the story. During the performance, watch and listen for how the performers communicate through their actions and words when they sing these songs:

"Lucky to See You!"  
"Swimmy! Fancy!"  
"Don't Go"  
"Ice Cream Hero"

"Ode to Toy"  
"Toy Breaker"  
"Elephant in the Room"  
"We Are in a Play"

"We'll Be Friends"  
"We've Been Lucky"

When you return from the play, talk with students about the music they heard in the play.

Which songs were the students' favorites?

How can music add to the mood of a story?

To explore the second question, have students listen to two pieces of music of differing styles. Play each piece or excerpt one after another, allowing students to offer words or phrases that describe the music: these may refer to the sounds, mood, fast or slow, instruments being played, etc. Talk to students about when they might hear these different songs. For example, would one make a good lullaby at bedtime, but the other belong in a superhero movie?

After discussing the different pieces of music, listen to the music again and have students draw a picture during the song. This can be a free draw based on their own feelings, or you could guide students to draw the situations previously discussed (i.e. bedtime, a superhero movie, etc.).

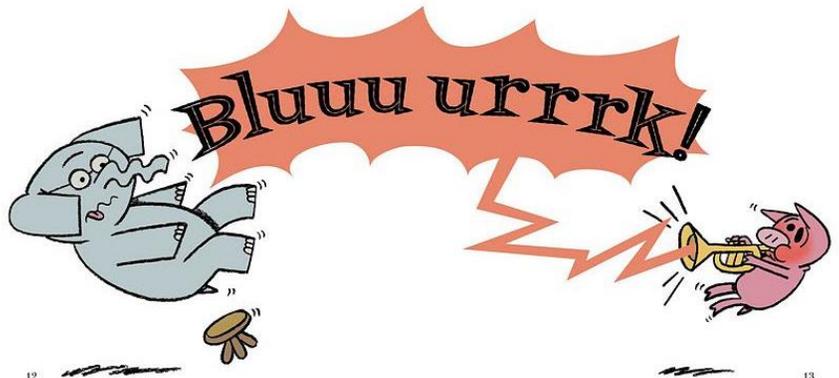
### Extension Activity

For students who are more advanced, consider doing a line drawing when you listen to the music a second time. Play each selection again. Instruct students to choose one color crayon, pencil, marker, etc., which they feel 'matches' the piece. (The book *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss can help students match color to mood.)

To create the line drawing, instruct students to start with their drawing implements at the corners of their papers. While listening to the music, students will draw how the music sounds or makes them feel without breaking contact with the paper. It may be helpful to model this practice for students using one of the pieces of music. This YouTube video also features a similar exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJ9tfyVbZ9A>

Discuss similarities and differences between students' drawings for each piece of music. As part of the discussion, it may be interesting to inform the students of the origins and uses of the piece of music.



## AFTER YOU VISIT | Everyone's a Critic

The job of a **critic** is to see a play (or a movie, or a TV show) and write about what they liked and what they did not like. This person is also sometimes called a **reviewer**. In this activity, students have the opportunity to review *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*

Begin the activity by leading the class in an initial discussion of the production:

- What events do you remember from the story? (After creating a list, ask students to put events into sequence.)
- Can they remember all of the characters' names?
- What kinds of costumes did the actors wear?
- What props do you remember?
- What did the set look like?
- What kinds of songs did they sing?
- What kind of dancing did you see?
- Did you see any instruments?
- What else can you remember from the performance?

Have students give the performance a rating of 1 to 5 stars. One star means they only liked it a little, while five stars mean they liked it a lot! Ask students to write a review of the play and provide specific examples that support their star rating. (For younger students, they could simply speak their review for you to write down.) To do this, for each star, students should discuss one thing they liked about the performance. For example, for a five-star rating, one would mention at least five things they liked about the performance.

For each star out of five left off the score, have your students describe one thing they did not enjoy about the performance. For example, a three-star rating would have three positive comments along with two things that needed improvement.

For the final part of their review, have students draw a picture depicting their favorite moment from *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*

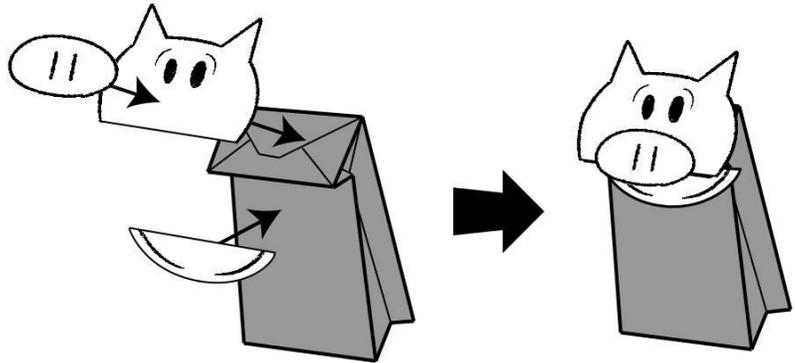


## AFTER YOU VISIT | Paper Bag Puppets

Follow the instructions below to create your own Piggie and Gerald puppets. Then use them to tell a story!

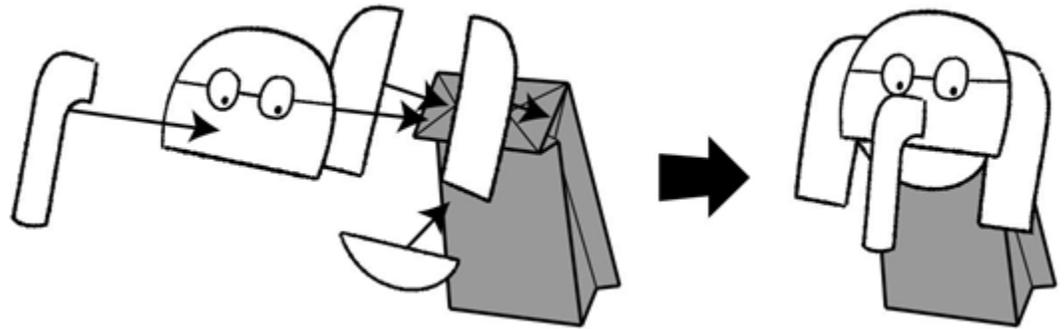
### PIGGIE Instructions

1. Print the Piggie page on pink paper, or print on white paper and color Piggie pink!
2. Cut out each piece along the dotted lines.
3. Glue or tape each piece to a paper lunch bag starting with the mouth, then the head, and finally the nose (as indicated in the picture).



### GERALD Instructions

1. Print the Gerald page on gray paper, or print on white paper and color Gerald gray!
2. Cut out each piece along the dotted lines.
3. Glue or tape each piece to a paper lunch bag starting with the mouth, then the ears, then the head, and finally the trunk (as indicated in the picture).

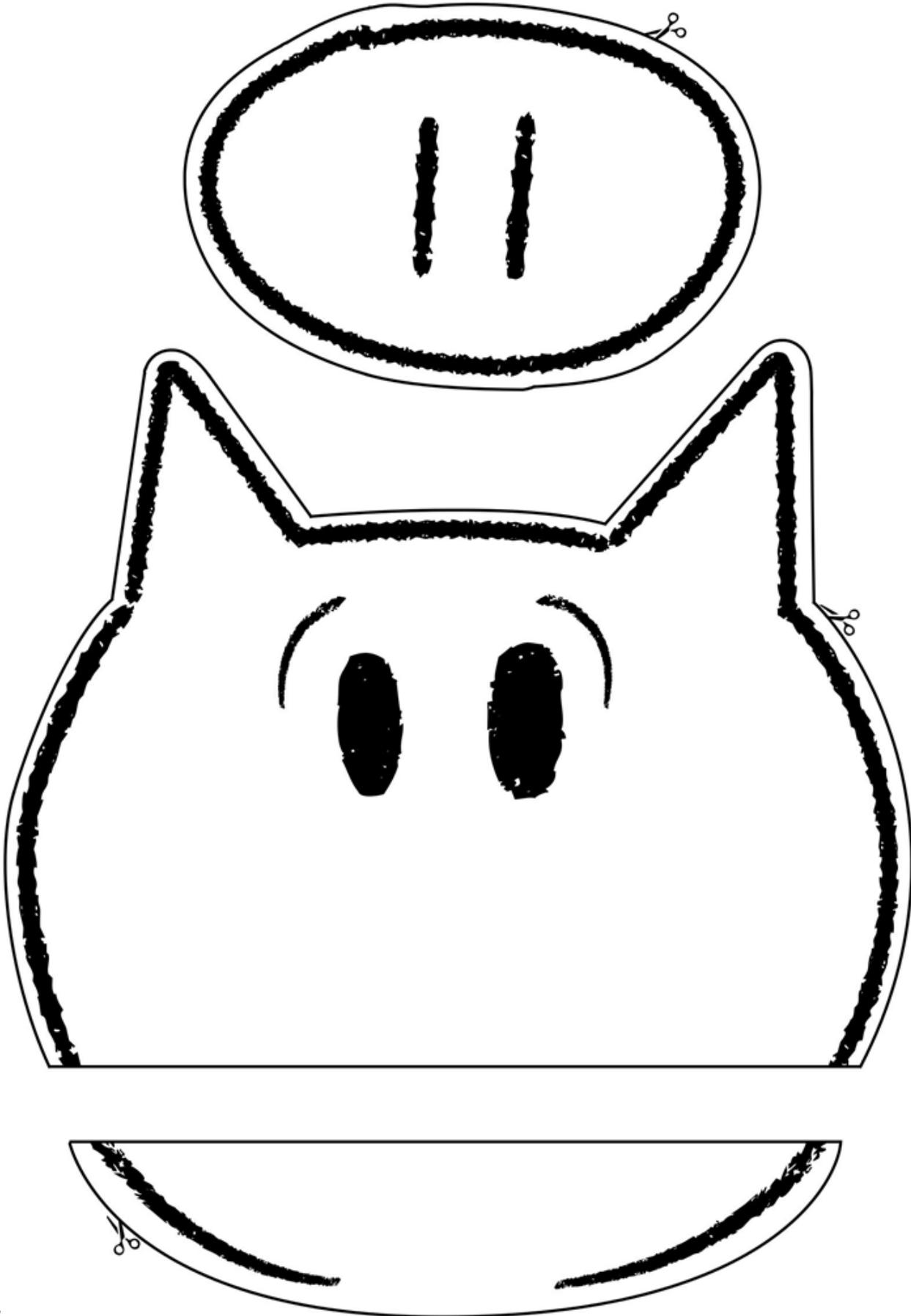


## Readers Theatre

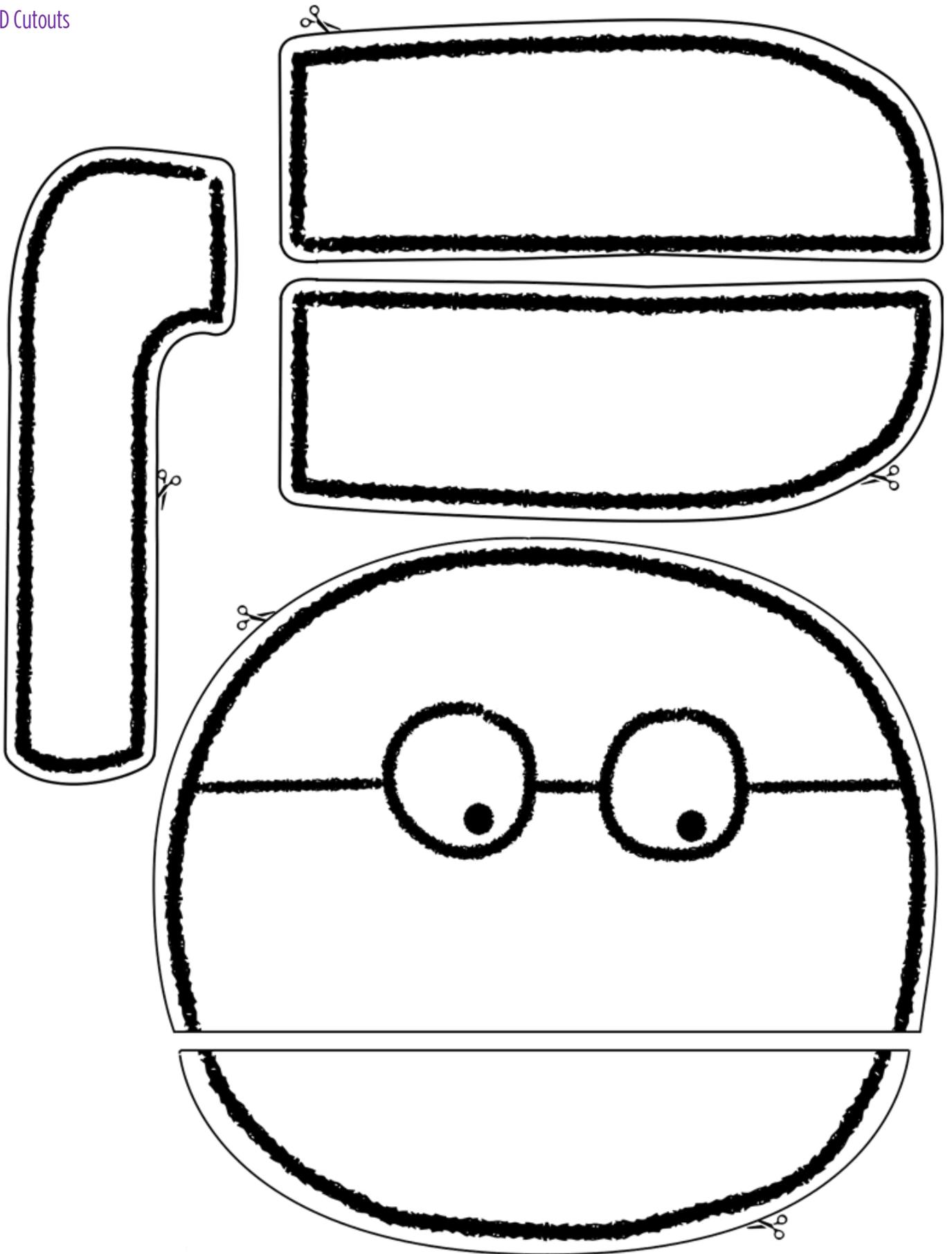
Readers Theater is readers reading a script adapted from literature, and the audience picturing the action from hearing the script being read aloud. For more about this literacy strategy, visit <http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/programs/whatisrt.htm>

1. Read an *Elephant & Piggie* book to the class. Then ask students to make observations about the characters, setting, conflict, and plot. To enhance understanding, take a well-known story (such as a fairy tale) and model writing a Readers Theatre script as a whole-class activity.
2. After discussing dialogue and performance, divide the class into small groups that will create an original script using an *Elephant & Piggie* book as inspiration. Allow students ample time to practice, and be sure to conference with each group to answer or clarify any questions they may have. Have each group make the *Elephant & Piggie* paper bag puppets on the following pages. Encourage students to create additional props to use during the final puppet show performance.
3. Finally, it is show time! Using either the Readers Theatre script inspired by one of the *Elephant & Piggie* books or an original *Elephant & Piggie* story of their creation, have students gather their puppets and props and perform their puppet show for the other teams of students. For additional fun, consider filming each performance to share!

PIGGIE Cutouts



GERALD Cutouts



## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Guided Reenactment of the Story

The *Elephant & Piggie* books lend themselves perfectly to improvisation work. A teacher can easily direct the students through the process of turning one of these books into a play simply through text and movement. This takes the pressure off students to remember lines or blocking, as they will simply copy what you do and say! A guided reenactment activity also serves to reinforce the themes of the story by making them personal for students, and reinforces the language of the story through repetition. The guiding principle of this exercise is for students to hear the story, discuss the story and then act out the story, so that their comprehension and retention of the story is increased. The instructions below will walk you through a guided reenactment activity using the book / *Am Invited to a Party!*

### Getting Started

First, read the story aloud using your best interactive storytelling skills. (See “Read Aloud Tips” on page 9 for advice!) Next, group students into pairs and assign them a working space. If you have an odd number, have one student be partners with the teacher. Give pairs enough room to work so they won’t interfere with other students. Assign a role to each child, with one member of each pair playing Piggie and the other Elephant Gerald. Explain to students that they are going to copy your actions and your words. Allow them to use their own ideas for how their character sounds.

### Retelling the Story

Next, you’ll begin the process of performing the story. As Piggie, step up to Gerald and hold out your hand, showing him the invitation. Say, “Look! Look! I am invited to a party!” (pp. 4-5) Pair your dialogue with a simple movement, especially if the illustration is easy to imitate physically. Then, instruct all of the students that you cast as Piggie to repeat everything with you. Repeat what you just did, slowly and clearly, as the students play along. Now, switch roles. As Gerald, pretend to take the invitation, look at it and say, “Cool.” (p. 6) Ask the students playing Gerald to repeat the action and line with you. Continue doing this for the rest of the story; students will eventually catch on and start repeating their part without you having to coach them.



### Finishing Up

You can choose to recite the entire story, or just pick out key moments of the story to paraphrase. When you finish ask students about their favorite part of the story they just acted out, prompting them to remember specific plot points. Check for comprehension by asking students to retell the story in their own words.

### Learn More

This activity was inspired in part by the following resource: <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/teaching-elementary-school/54605-role-play-reading-activities-for-elementary-students/> and by activities found in *Movement Stories for Children Ages 3-6* by Helen Landalf and Pamela Gerke.

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Finding Emotions in the Story

The *Elephant & Piggie* books lend themselves wonderfully to the exploration and learning of emotions. Mo Willems' illustrations highlight precisely what the characters are thinking and feeling.

### Prepare Students to Discuss Emotions

Prior to reading any *Elephant & Piggie* book, choose one illustration from the book. Show it to students and have them infer or predict what the character is thinking or feeling. For example, on page 18 in *I Am Going* we see Elephant Gerald crying and feeling very sorry for himself. Ask students, "What do you think Gerald is feeling in this picture?" "With his arm pointing to himself, what is he telling us to focus on? Who does he want us to notice?"

### Help Students Identify Emotions in a Story

This activity can be used before any read aloud! Create a library of "emotion flash cards" with words and pictures.

Before reading, select the emotions present in your story and review these flash cards with students. When you show the card, add a movement or sound along with the emotion. For example:



**HAPPY:** Make a big smile with your arms and fingers spread wide. Make a sound like "Yay!" or "Whee!"

**ANGRY:** Furrow your eyebrows, ball up your fists, stick out your lip, and make a growling sound like, "Grrrrrrrr!"



Create a gesture and sound for the emotions that students will encounter in the story you are reading. Review these actions several times with the pictures and tell students that each time you hold up the picture they are to do the action and say the emotion with you. Then, as you read your story, use your best read aloud emotions to cue students when an emotion is coming up. They may be way ahead of you and do the action without prompting. If they don't, prompt them with your flash card to express and say the emotion currently being felt in the story. For example, in *I Love My New Toy*, you could pause to ask, "How does Piggie feel when Gerald breaks her new toy?" You can use the illustration to guide students, then hold up your emotion flash card while the group says the emotion and does the action. For a list of possible emotions to use, visit:

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/2006/feelingchart.pdf>.

### For Older Students

Consider grouping basic emotions at different levels of intensity, from the lowest to the highest level of feeling. For example, instead of mad, consider: disgusted (low), angry (medium), outrage (high). The web pages below offer several methods for categorizing emotions:

[https://kids.kiddle.co/List\\_of\\_emotions](https://kids.kiddle.co/List_of_emotions)

<http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/basic%20emotions.htm>

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Here To There

This is an exercise designed to introduce or reinforce emotions, and it pairs well with the activities available in “Finding Emotions in the Story” on page 16. Before you begin this activity, think about which emotions or states of being you want to explore and consider making visual aids to help prompt students.

### Getting Started

Find a large open space where students have room to move. Have them all line up on one side of the room. Tell them they are going to cross the room in many different ways. Start with easy suggestions to get the activity started. “Go from here to there just walking.” Instruct students to stop, turn around, and wait for the next suggestion when they get to the other side of the room. Give them a prompt that takes them back across to where they started. “Go from here to there like you are marching in a parade.” Continue the activity, having students use their body to explore some of the physical and emotional contrasts below:

- Happy vs Sad
- Angry vs Calm
- Excited vs Easygoing
- Nervous vs Brave
- Sick vs Healthy
- Bored vs Interested

### Raise the Stakes

Increase urgency and promote creativity by adding situational circumstances:

- Go from here to there like you’re on your way to a party and you’re **worried**.
- ... like you’re eating delicious cake, but you’re still **mad** at your best friend after an argument.
- ... like you have a toothache but you’re still **excited** about the soccer game.

Reinforce elements of a story or a unit of study. For example, the seasons:

- Go from here to there like you’re picking spring flowers.
- ... like you’re pulling up carrots and other vegetables in the garden.
- ... like you’re jumping into a pile of fall leaves.
- ... like you’re shoveling winter snow.

After Seeing *Elephant & Piggie’s “We Are In a Play!”*

- Go from here to there like you’re on a picnic in the park.
- ... like you’re swimming at a pool party.
- ... like you’re tossing a toy up in the air and catching it.
- ... like the Squirrelles dance.
- ... like Gerald looking for your friend Piggie.
- ... like you’ve been invited to a very exciting party.

### After the Activity

Ask students to share how it felt to feel each of those emotions in their bodies. Could they feel a difference between moving angrily versus calmly? What was it? Did some feelings feel better than others? Why?

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Run Out and Come In

*Inspired by "Run Just So Far & Then Stop" by Angela Russ-Ayon and "I Am Invited to a Party!" by Mo Willems.*

To begin, have students make a tight circle around you. Tell them you are going to go through all the instructions before anyone moves.

When you call out, "RUN OUT!" everyone is going to turn around and run straight out from the circle until they hear you shout, "WAIT!" When they hear you say that, the children are to freeze where they are. Then you tell them to come back to the circle with specific instructions. "COME BACK IN MARCHING." Then the children come back into the tight circle, matching the movement prompt you gave them. A list of suggested movement prompts is provided below. You won't have any problem coming up with ideas of how they should come move back in! Depending on the space you are using when you do this game, your prompts can lead the children to being on the floor, "COME BACK IN LIKE A SNAKE" or flying, "COME BACK IN LIKE A BUTTERFLY." If you have a large space kids will have lots of fun if you let them run far before saying in your big voice, "WAIT!" As with several of the other activities in this guide, you can use prompts from the unit you are studying or the story you just read. You can also reinforce counting: "COME BACK IN IN EIGHT GIANT STEPS." Or letters: "COME BACK IN SINGING THE ALPHABET SONG."

### Prompts for "Come In":

- Walking
- Marching
- Skipping
- Galloping
- Sneaking
- Like a robot
- Flying like a bird
- Like a monster
- Like your favorite animal (pause for students to share which animals they are)
- Floating like a leaf in the wind
- Walking in peanut butter
- Like you have ants in your pants
- Sulking because you were told you couldn't watch a movie
- Like a dinosaur
- Like a superhero (pause for students to share which superheroes they are)



## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Yes, Let's!

“Yes, Let’s” is an acting warmup that is great for getting the brain working. In a classroom it can help reinforce positive attitudes, support the ideas of others, learning verbs, repetition, fostering creativity, and kinesthetic learning.

Have students stand around a room with enough physical space to swing arms and legs without bumping anyone. For this activity, you will need a Leader. For younger students, or the first time you play, we suggest the teacher be the Leader.

To start, the Leader will choose a physical action and then say to the students, “Let’s \_\_\_\_\_!” while performing the action. Then, students will repeat, “Yes, let’s!” and do the action themselves.

For example:

You might start by saying, “Let’s stand up” and the group would then say, “Yes, let’s!” as they stand up. Then you might say, “Let’s look at the stars in the sky,” and then the group would say, “Yes, let’s” while they look up as if looking at the stars, pointing to them and making “ooh” and “aah” sounds. Then go on to the next prompt, which could be something like, “Let’s march up the mountain to get a better look.” And the group then says enthusiastically, “Yes, let’s.”

Some helpful tips:

- This is an activity where the actions can be random (Let’s swing our arms, act like a mouse, brush our teeth) or you can suggest actions in sequence to guide the children on a journey.
- Eventually you want to get the game going so well that the children are giving actions. The Leader can choose students to give the next action, or you could set up a circle and have students go in order.
- To encourage language learning, have the children repeat the whole sentence. “Let’s jump up and down!” “Yes, let’s jump up and down!”
- For a large group, consider an attention getter to pause between actions so you can ensure all students are ready.

### Prompts for Yes Let’s!

Let’s wiggle our fingers; Let’s shake out your arms; Let’s eat an ice cream cone; Let’s take a rocket to the moon; Let’s be squirrels and search for nuts; Let’s eat a marshmallow and broccoli sandwich; Let’s take out the trash; Let’s PARTY!; Let’s parade around the room in our silly hats; Let’s eat lunch; Let’s go on a picnic; Let’s cast a spell with our wands; Let’s drink the world’s biggest glass of water; Let’s ride a horse across the USA; Let’s wrestle an alligator; Let’s be Paw Patrol and save someone who is hurt; Let’s be mischievous fairies; Let’s walk the circus tightrope; Let’s be our favorite animal; Let’s swim in the ocean; Let’s be bees collecting nectar from flowers; Let’s scamper like mice looking for cheese

### Variation: What Are You Doing?

For a challenge, consider this similar game! Put students in a circle. Have the first student mime a simple action, such as brushing teeth. The next student in the circle will turn and ask, “What are you doing?” The first student should reply with a new action that **does not match** what they’re already doing. Something like, “I’m climbing a ladder.” The second student then mimes the new action given to them by the first student – in this case, climbing a ladder. The third student asks the second, “What are you doing?” The process then continues around the circle. This activity challenges students to separate their thinking from their movement, while also encouraging them to be creative in their pantomime. For an additional challenge, consider theming the actions, such as “around the house” or “at the football game” to make students stretch their imaginations.

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | I Can Do It!

*From 101 Drama Games for Children by Paul Rooyackers and "Solo Pantomimes" by Janea at DramaNotebook.com*

Have students take a place of their own around the room where they have enough room to move without bumping into anything. The children should be able to see each other. Explain to them that they are going to think of the space they are in as their stage space and this is not an activity where they will need to move all around the room.

You as the leader will perform a short mime of a simple activity. Some suggestions are below. Then ask the children to copy your mime. Do it along with them the first couple of times. Then do another mime with the copying your action after they watch you do it. If this is going well, you will then start calling out actions for them to do their own way without copying you. You might want to start with actions very familiar to them in everyday life like eating a slice of pizza, or sipping juice through a straw. Their "acting" will then take on a life of its own. Some of the students might copy others in the group and some may ask you to show them how. If you see that you have a couple natural mimes, pick one of them to be the leader of an action!

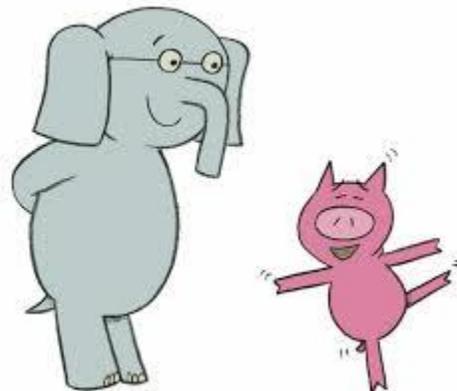
As a note, these types of activities seem to work best for non-acting students when you begin with the familiar and then branch into the more daring suggestions!

### Variations

- Add sounds to the pantomimes like the buzzing of a bee while getting honey out of the beehive. Then you can move on to simple phrases like, "Come back here!" if you are playing with a puppy and it runs away.
- Perform actions in a sequence. Start by waking up and getting out of bed in the morning. Then ask a student, "What do you do next in the morning when you get ready for school?" The student may say, "Wash my face." Then have all the students to pantomime washing their face. Continue this way until the sequence reaches a natural conclusion, or until each student in the class has contributed an action.
- Allow the basic pantomimed action to grow and take over the whole body into an absurd caricature of the original suggestion. For example, start by brushing your hair. Then brush a dog's hair. Now a horse's hair. Now a giant's hair! Now Rapunzel's hair! Now YOU are the hair!

### Prompts for I Can Do It!

Brushing your teeth  
Putting on your shoes  
Playing ping pong  
Eating a cupcake or an ice cream cone  
Picking up toys  
Washing your face  
Putting on your seat belt  
Playing with a puppy or kitten  
Talking on the phone  
Building a snowman  
Flying a kite  
Sweeping the floor  
Putting on a band aid  
Falling asleep  
Swinging on a swing



## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Dance Play

*These dance games are easy enough for anyone to lead! They can be used when students need a break from sitting and you want to help them refocus, or they could be combined with a unit of study. Dance play allows children to develop motor skills, cognitive brain function, rhythm, music appreciation and physical awareness.*

### Combinations

Teach a small combination of steps that can be learned easily and repeated throughout a song. Line dances are great for this! Choose some simple movements like walking backwards and forwards, clapping, hands up, hands down and put them into a simple combination where the students count out loud as they perform the moves.

### Free Dance

Free dance is as easy as turning on some music and allowing the children to move to it as their bodies are inspired. To increase its benefits and to help out children who might be intimidated, announce certain moves as you lead them. As you announce movements, consider the essential elements of dance and movement: **Space** (near/far, big/small), **Time** (quickly/slowly), **Energy** (rushed/relaxed), and **Relationship** (with a partner/all alone). Use several selections of music to engage in different ways.

### Character Movement

Choose a selection of music that lends itself to certain characteristics or feelings. (For example, the Pink Panther theme evokes feelings like sneaky, sly or cautious and the Superman theme evokes feelings like bravery, power, or strength.) Play the music and have students move to it in the way that the music makes them feel. As you do the same, put words to your feelings. “This music makes me feel STRONG!” Have students name or describe their feelings as well. Do this for several contrasting pieces of music. For additional fun, add a selection of props for students to choose from as they explore the music! Making use of scarves, hats, pool noodles, or bean bags can be quite effective.

### Mirroring

Mirroring (and flocking, below) is a proven component of theatre movement and dance work. To mirror, pair two students face to face. Assign one as the Leader. As the Leader moves, the other student’s job is to follow as closely as possible. Encourage Leaders to start with long, slow movements to help their partner follow along. View an example here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNe-QxsMvoM>

### Flocking

Arrange students in a triangle/arrow formation with everyone facing in one direction. The student at the point is the Leader of the movement for a short time, and the “flock” behind them follows their movement, like in mirroring above. Rotate the flock so the student at another corner is the Leader. Pair this activity with classical music for an impromptu ballet! More about flocking and its function and objective can be found here: <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/flocking>

### Prompts

Use these movement and dance verbs for any of the above activities: *sway, jump, skip, march, squat (plié), tippy toe (relevé), spin, wiggle, shake, touch toes, lift arms, wave, glide, slide, scoot, lean, lunge, count with the beat*

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Bean Bag Play

Bean bag work is perfect for early elementary education! It incorporates countless educational components: balance, hand-eye coordination, cooperative play, full body exercising, body vocabulary, gross motor skills, rhythm, listening, directional awareness, behavioral control, taking directions, and imaginative play.

Bean bag work varies greatly depending on students' development level. When investing in bean bags for your own room, try to find bags with lots of colors, shapes, or decoration for the most flexibility.

Below you will find a list of physical prompts that you can use with students that incorporate bean bags with movement. For any of these skills, remember:

- Safety first! Never toss a bean bag to a partner who isn't ready.
- Consider whether adding music to these activities is right for your group.
- While many students learn by doing, some learn best by watching. Consider splitting students into groups and having one be the audience while the other engages with the bean bags, switching periodically. Encourage students to support and cheer each other on as they try more and more difficult tricks!
- Don't try to do too much. Focus on only one or two skills at first, adding more slowly each time you use the bags. Remember to repeat activities multiple times, as repetition is vital to mastering skills and knowledge.
- Notice the **bolded** vocabulary in the prompts. Use these to reinforce key early learning concepts as you play!

### Motor Skills Prompts

- While sitting, toss a bean bag **up** gently and catch it with **one** hand. Toss it up and catch it with **two** hands.
- Working in pairs, gently pass a bean bag **back and forth**. After a few catches in a row, scoot back a foot and try again.
- Turn just your torso to one side and toss a bean bag up gently and catch it. Turn to the other side and repeat. Now face center and repeat. (Use this exercise to reinforce **right** and **left**!)
- Shake a bean bag **up high... down low... to one side... to the other side... in a circle... in front of you... behind you**.
- Balance a bean bag on your **elbow... your knee... your foot... your chest... your shoulder... your head... your back**.
- Use a bean bag to touch your **thumb... your hip... your ankle... your stomach**.
- Squeeze a bean bag between your **knees** and **hop** around.
- Sit on the floor and squeeze the bean bag between your **ankles** and lift your legs up.
- With a bean bag on the ground, dance **around** it... jump **over** it... lay **under** it... stand **near** it... stand **far** away from it... sit **beside** it.

### Imaginative Play

Imagine your bean bag is a puppy you are playing with. Imagine your bean bag is a cell phone and call someone. Imagine your bean bag is a camera and take a picture of a fantastic moment. Imagine your bean bag is a bar of soap and wash yourself all over. Imagine your bean bag is a drum and play it. Let your imagination run wild!

### Finding Your Own Bean Bags

Online retailers such as Amazon have bean bags of varying quality and prices. However, consider making your own:

<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/how-to-make-a-bean-bag-1251122>. After sewing the first few steps, consider having students help you fill the bags before you finish them!

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Silly Hats!



*Image courtesy of Google Images*

In *I am Invited to a Party!* both Elephant Gerald and Piggie wear hats to go to a party. How fun it would be to make hats with your students! For any of the hat suggestions in the links below, you will need to gather enough, glue, construction paper, scissors, markers and crayons, paper bags, string, yarn, paper plates or newspaper for every student. You may want to have an adult station too with a glue gun, cardboard, and long sharp shears to help students with steps that may not be safe for them to do.

### Paper Bag Hats

Begin with paper grocery bags without handles. Begin by having the children fold, crumple up, and roll out the open end of the bag. Do this at least four times or more. It helps to narrow the paper bag to fit their head while creating a brim on the hat. If it is still too large to fit the child's head, tie string or yarn around the paper bag near the brim, pull it in and tie it off.

Allow the children to decide which side will be the front of the hat. Then with a marker, have them make a label inside the hat on the back. Just like a real hat! After that is finished, it's time to decorate! Provide foam shapes, stickers, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, markers and construction paper, and even magazines (for cutting out words and pictures) to decorate their hats. Think of ways you could theme your hats as a class, perhaps based on a book you've read (a Robin Hood hat or sailor's cap) or something to reinforce academics, like a thinking cap!

### Other Silly Hat Ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fhgAI10HkA>

<https://www.education.com/activity/article/paper-bag-hat/>

[https://www.ehow.com/how\\_6740736\\_make-hat-brown-paper-bag.html](https://www.ehow.com/how_6740736_make-hat-brown-paper-bag.html)

<https://lifestyle.howstuffworks.com/crafts/paper-crafts/paper-hats3.htm>

<http://redtri.com/simple-and-fun-hat-crafts/slide/1>



*Image courtesy of Google Images*

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Cool Down Technique – Yoga

Yoga has many health benefits. It increases flexibility, improves breathing, encourages focus, and more.

Leading students in some simple yoga poses can help a group decompress. You can even theme your yoga session to a unit or story – with poses like Mountain, Tree, Rabbit, Horse, Boat, and Cat, the possibilities are endless!

No matter what pose you do, the most important thing to remember is to BREATHE! You don't have to be a trained yogi to lead your students through the basic poses you know. Just be calm, breathe and have fun!

If you've never done yoga before, consider starting with a resource like Kids Yoga Stories at <https://www.kidsyogastories.com/yoga-in-the-classroom/>.

If you'd like to invite a professional into your classroom, consider contacting one of these Indianapolis-area yoga studios:

The Yoga Studio - [www.indyyogastudio.com](http://www.indyyogastudio.com)

Cityyoga - [www.cityyoga.biz](http://www.cityyoga.biz)

The Hot Room - [indyhotroom.com](http://indyhotroom.com)

Flourish Yoga - [www.flourishyoga.biz](http://www.flourishyoga.biz)

Yoga Matters – [www.yogamattersindy.com](http://www.yogamattersindy.com)

Dragonfly 360 Yoga & Wellness - <https://www.dragonfly360.net>

Additionally, most branches of the Indianapolis Public Library and the YMCA have yoga instruction available. Contact the one nearest you!



## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES | Cool Down Technique – Relaxation Narrative

*It is important to calm your group down at the end of a lot of excited physical activity. It encourages group cohesiveness, and gives students time to reflect on the work they have just done, to quiet themselves and transition to the next activity.*

During any relaxation activity, it is important that students focus on their bodies only, not using their voices or worrying about what other students are doing. Being able to lay down and close their eyes is helpful, but these activities can be done sitting in a desk or chair if space is tight. The most important thing for you, the teacher, is to remember to use a calm and even tone throughout. Your voice guides students to feel comfortable enough to truly relax.

### Relaxation Script

This activity is designed to help students get in tune with their bodies, finding tension and releasing it, and slowing their breath to become truly relaxed. Have students lay down on the floor, preferably on something soft like a yoga mat. Lower the lights if possible, and explain to students that you're going to take a minute to help them relax their muscles and brains.

Starting with hands or feet, ask students to tense up their muscles as tight as they can – really squeeze! – and then slowly release the tightness. Ask them to think about their muscles. How did it feel to let that go? Students should think their answers in their brain, not aloud. Repeat this for the muscles in the legs, arms, shoulders, jaw, etc.

After each muscle, take a moment to breathe deeply, asking students to think only about the air as it comes in and out of their bodies.



Sample scripts for how to do this can be found here: <https://www.innerhealthstudio.com/relaxation-for-children.html>

### Guided Image Journey

An image journey asks students to picture in their minds. Through these images, students can focus and relax. Your narrative should focus on building an environment that students can fill in with their imaginations. Forests, beaches, or floating through clouds are very effective. You can also guide students to create their own peaceful place in their imaginations. For a variety of scripts that utilize visualization narratives, visit <https://www.innerhealthstudio.com/visualization-scripts.html>

### After the Activity

Consider having students share what they saw on their journey. Ask them questions about the specific trees they saw in the forest, or what color the sand was on their beach. For further engagement, use this activity in conjunction with art time and have students create drawings or pictures of their visualizations. End the activity by complimenting students' imaginations and thanking them for sharing.

## RESOURCES

### Advocating for Arts Education

- Why Children's Theater Matters: [http://www.education.com/magazine/article/Why\\_Childrens\\_Theater\\_Matters/](http://www.education.com/magazine/article/Why_Childrens_Theater_Matters/)
- Study Finds Major Benefits for Students Who Attend Live Theatre: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/10/141016165953.htm>

### Books on Teaching Theatre and Drama

- *101 Drama Games for Children: Fun and Learning with Acting and Make-Believe* by Paul Rooyackers
- *112 Acting Games: A Comprehensive Workbook of Theatre Games for Developing Acting Skills* by Gavin Levy
- *50 Early Childhood Literacy Strategies* by Janice J. Beaty
- *Beginning Drama 4-11, Early Years and Primary* by Joe Winston and Miles Tandy
- *Movement Stories for Children Ages 3–6* by Helen Landalf and Pamela Gerke
- *The Preschooler's Busy Book: 365 Creative Learning Games and Activities to Keep Your 3-to-6-Year-Old Busy* by Trish Kuffner
- *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook* by Viola Spolin
- *Up, Down, Move Around – Nutrition and Motor Skills: Active Learning for Preschoolers* by Deborah Kayton Michals
- *A Handbook of Creative Dance and Drama* by Alison Lee
- *Feelings Flash Cards: A Great Way for Kids to Share and Learn About All Kinds of Emotions* by Todd Parr

### Web Resources for Theatre and Dramatic Play

- Drama Based Instruction: <http://www.utexas.edu/cofa/dbi/>
- Using Drama and Theatre to Promote Literacy Development: <http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-1/drama.htm>
- Lisa Murphy, M.Ed. aka “The Ooey Gooley Lady”: <http://www.ooeygooley.com/resources/>

### Bean Bag Activities

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eiz60rIRdPE>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRxnPU7BP\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRxnPU7BP_o)
- <http://collab4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Symposium2012Rosenbrock1.pdf>
- <https://meaningfulmama.com/day-235-10-bean-bag-games-to-play-with.html>
- <http://devdelay.org/newsletter/articles/pdf/354-bean-bags-fun-with-purpose.pdf>

### Songs for your Classroom

“Jack in the Box” from the Ooey Gooley Lady: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1dQUgKkxX8>

“Willoughby Wallaby Woo” a naming rhyme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gf1FRljnzbk>

“Sing, Dance, and Play” from Baby Genius: <https://youtu.be/OAGu7gpk8rQ>

### Attention Grabbers

From Dr. Jean Feldman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vK6EKSUJ6Wg>

From *A Classroom Diva*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4guCiBd89E>