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An Educator's Guide to:



Get ready for a musical experience, ripped from the pages of **Mo Willems'** beloved, award-winning, best-selling children's books, that will leave audiences doing the "Flippy Floppy Floory" dance all night long! In *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*, Gerald and Piggie take to the stage in a rollicking adventure that is perfect for young audiences.

An elephant named Gerald and a pig named Piggie are best, best, "bestus" (a word Gerald and Piggie made up that means "very best") 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. That's because she and Gerald are invited to a party hosted by the Squirrelles, three singing squirrels who love to have a good time. And so begins a day when anything is possible.

In this vaudevillian romp, Elephant and Piggie sing and dance their way through plenty of pachydermal peril and swiney suspense. Filled with beloved characters and lively songs, *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"* is a perfect way to introduce young people to theatre.

 Throughout the study guide, this symbol means that specific Florida Standards are being addressed that correlate activities directly to Florida Assessments. As new standards are created and approved by the Florida Department of Education, this may change. Please visit www.cpalms.org for more information and to customize this guide to your specific grade level.

THE THEATRE IS A SPECIAL TREAT

Let us concentrate for a moment on a vital part of youth theatre: the young people. Millions of youngsters attend plays every season, and for some the experience is not particularly memorable or entertaining. The fault may lie with the production – but often the fault lies in the fact that these youngsters have not been properly briefed on appropriate theatre manners. Going to the theatre is not a casual event such as flipping on the TV set, attending a movie or a sports event. Going to the theatre is a SPECIAL OCCASION, and should be attended as such. In presenting theatre manners to young people we take the liberty of putting the do's and don'ts in verse, and hope that concerned adults will find this a more palatable way of introducing these concepts to youngsters.

MATINEE MANNERS

By PEGGY SIMON TRAKTMAN

The theatre is no place for lunch,
Who can hear when you go "crunch?"
We may wear our nicest clothes
When we go to theatre shows.
Do not talk to one another
(That means friends or even mother)
When you go to see a show,
Otherwise you'll never know
What the play is all about
And you'll make the actors shout
Just to make themselves be heard.
So, be still - don't say a word
Unless an actor asks you to...
A thing they rarely ever do.
A program has a special use
So do not treat it with abuse!
Its purpose is to let us know
Exactly who is in the show
It also tells us other facts
Of coming shows and future acts.
Programs make great souvenirs
Of fun we've had in bygone years
Keep your hands upon your lap

But if you like something you clap
Actors like to hear applause.
If there is cause for this applause.
If a scene is bright and sunny,
And you think something is funny
Laugh- performers love this laughter
But be quiet from thereafter.
Don't kick chairs or pound your feet
And do not stand up in your seat,
Never wander to and fro -
Just sit back and watch the show.
And when the final curtain falls
The actors take their "curtain calls"
That means they curtsy or they bow
And you applaud, which tells them how
You liked their work and liked the show.
Then, when the lights come on, you go
Back up the aisle and walk - don't run
Out to the lobby, everyone.
The theatre is a special treat
And not a place to talk or eat.
If you behave the proper way
You really will enjoy the play.

THE STORYTELLER

MO WILLEMS



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.

THE ACTIVITIES

BEFORE THE PLAY:

1. Read **Elephant and Piggie's, We are in a Play** to your students. The play the students see will not be exactly like the book they have read or the video they have seen. Discuss the differences between the play and book.

✍ **TH.1.H.1 (PreK–2)** Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live (d).
✍ **TH.1.O.3.1** The student understands the artistic characteristics of various media and the advantages and disadvantages of telling stories through those artistic media.
✍ **LAFS.2.RL.3.9** . The student recognizes the use of comparison and contrast in a text
2. Ask your students to discuss the difference between television and live theatre. It is important that they know about “theatre etiquette,” or manners. Refer to the poem “Matinee Manners” listed above.
✍ **TH.1.S.1.1** The student understands theatre as a social function and theatre etiquette as the responsibility of the audience.
3. Elephant & Piggie introduce the children to many new words that they may not be familiar with. In fact, they even make up several words for fun! Have the students learn the following vocabulary words and listen for them during the play. See how many words they can recall and how the characters used them in the context of the play.

VOCABULARY WORDS:

invitation elegant ridiculous complimentary trumpet impolite
wondrous gadget trinket gloomy glamorous obligatory bleak
quarrel posh scrumptious maestro interrupt

A Word Predicament? Impossible!

Well, here’s a predicament. There might be a few other words in the performance that you don’t know. Like predicament! That means a difficult situation. But don’t worry, here’s some help:

Unintended consequences — things that happen that surprise you.

Pachyderm (PAK-i-durm) — a thick-skinned animal like an elephant or hippopotamus.

Swine — a short-haired animal with a curly tail and hooves, like a pig.

Impossible — a made-up word Gerald uses when he means not possible or impossible.

Contingency — something that might happen

Sty — a fenced area, usually for pigs.

Manipulate — to change what people do or the way something happens.

VOCABULARY LIST adapted from Kennedy Center Cuesheet: *Elephant & Piggie's We Are In a Play*.

✍ **LAFS.1.L.3.5.** With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

✍ **LAFS.1.L.1.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

✍ **SP.PK12.TP.4.1** Demonstrate comprehension and use of the system that governs vocabulary acquisition and meaning of words and sentences in spoken and written language.

4. Have the students look and listen for patterns during the play. See how many patterns they can recall and how they were used in the context of the play. Encourage students to be aware of patterns that may occur in music, dance, scenery, costume fabric and dialogue. Students may also notice architectural patterns in the theatre.

✍ **G.K12.1.1.4c Organization of Data - Perform:** Identify and illustrate themes, patterns, and structures that define an area of study.

✍ **MAFS.K12.MP.4.1** Mathematically proficient students can apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace.

✍ **MU.2.S.3.4** Compare aural melodic patterns with written patterns to determine whether they are the same or different.

5. Discuss the elements that make *Elephant & Piggie* a fictional play. Discuss the key story elements such as character, setting, plot, theme and point of view.

✍ **LAFS.1.RL.2.5.** Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

✍ **WL.K12.IM.2.1** Identify the main idea and key details in texts that contain familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary used in context.

AFTER THE PLAY:

Part I

1. Ask your students to write letters, or draw pictures, to send to the cast of *Elephant & Piggie*. What did they like about the play? Who was their favorite character? What did they learn from the story?

✍ **LAFS.1.W.1.3** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

✍ **LAFS.2.W.2.5** With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising/editing.

✍ **SP.PK12.US.1.3c** Apply skills and strategies in written communication, including setting a purpose for writing, creating complete simple and complex sentences, and organizing information into different types of paragraphs and essays.


2. Have the students choose their favorite scenes from *Elephant & Piggie* and act them out for one another. Be creative by assigning a director, actors, prompter and by making and using props and scenery.


✍ **TH.1.S.3.1** Use simple acting techniques to portray a person, place, action, or thing.


✍ **DA.2.H.3.1** Create a dance phrase using numbers, shapes, and patterns


✍ **TH.912.S.1.5** Write monologues, scenes, and/or short plays using principles and elements of writing found in dramatic literature

3. The better children are at detecting rhymes, the quicker and more successful is their reading progress. "When children rhyme, it really draws attention to the fact that words have parts," according to Sally Shaywitz, a professor of pediatrics and brain research at Yale University. Back in class, have the students write their own rap or poem about a character in *Elephant & Piggie* or even a short synopsis of the play in rhyme.

 **LAFS.2.RL.2.4** Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

 **LAFS.2.SL.2.4** Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

 **LAFS.2.L.2.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
Compare formal and informal uses of English.

 **LAFS.3.L.2.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

2. Internet fun. Go to the following links for outstanding Teacher Guides and Activities for dozens of books. These guides include language art, reading, writing and creative art activities for all grades. www.abcteach.com or www.scholastic.com

3. The stage adaptation of *Elephant & Piggie* includes many characters played by a few actors. Ask the children to observe how the actors are able to portray the different roles. Be sure to discuss costume, vocal and physical differences that the performers use to help them change characters.



Bringing Gerald and Piggie's Story to Life on Stage

Although you won't see them on stage, a lot of people work very hard to create the world of Gerald and Piggie. **composer**, who writes the music.

director, who guides the whole team.

choreographer, who plans all the dance movements.

music director, who directs the musical part of the performance.

set designer, who decides how the stage will look.

lighting designer, who plans how to use lights to help tell the story.

costume designer, who plans what the performers wear.

stage manager, who runs the show from behind the stage.


Part II


Relevant Themes:


- 1. Friendship/Cooperation**
- 2. Imagination**
- 3. Decision Making/Responses**

Refer to the themes listed above. Ask the following questions to relate the themes to everyday life:

1. One of the major themes in the play concerns friendship. 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? Have a conference in your classroom on the value of friendship.
 - a. What character qualities do real friends possess?
 - b. How was the friendship between Elephant and Piggie a two way street?
 - c. Why does friendship hurt sometimes? Is it worth it? Have you ever unintentionally hurt a friend's feelings?
 - d. Which characters in Elephant & Piggie would make the best friends?
 - e. Have you ever had a really close friendship with an Animal? Ask the students to talk about their favorite pet and what makes it so special.

 **SP.PK12.US.20.3** Identify and maintain behaviors that build positive relationships with peers and adults, including friendships, family relations, and cooperating with peers.

 **SS.K.C.2.2** Demonstrate that conflicts among friends can be resolved in ways that are consistent with being a good citizen.


 **HE.K.C.2.2** Recognize the characteristics of a friend.


A Big Idea


You might not think that a serious elephant and a playful pig could be best friends—but Gerald and Piggie are. Friendship is one big idea in everything that these “besties” do together on stage. During the show, think about how two very different animals can be such good friends by **Cooperating**. For ideas, watch how they:

share
joke around
help each other
forgive each other
use teamwork


After the performance, discuss with your students what you think makes a good friend, and why.


 **SP.PK12.DH.5.4a** Communicate with others in ways appropriate for the relationship, such as friends and family.

 **LAFS.1.SL.1.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

 **LAFS.1.SL.1.2** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.


2. Imagination is vital to the plot of the play.
 - a. How do Gerald & Piggie use their imaginations in the play?
 - b. How did the Squirrelles change their voices, movements and appearances to play other characters in the play?
 - c. What was the special magic word that they used for “please”? Do you have any special words that you made up with friends or family? What do they mean?
 - d. Gerald is embarrassed that he cannot dance, so Piggie depends on her imagination to teach him. What is something that you have learned from a friend? What is something you have taught to a friend?


 **TH.912.F.1.3** Stimulate imagination, quick thinking, and creative risk-taking through improvisation to create written scenes or plays.


 **TH.2.C.2.2** Describe how an actor in a play, musical, or film creates a character

3. The way the characters respond to circumstances and their decisions on how to move forward ultimately change the story for the better.

- a. Gerald struggles with how to respond to Piggie when she plays her trumpet. What did he decide to do about Piggie’s playing? What are some positive ways you can give feedback to a friend when you don’t like what they’re doing? What would be an example of a negative way to respond?
- b. Gerald has a very important decision to make; share his ice cream cone with Piggie or not? Why is it important to share, especially with friends? Have you ever shared a special object with a friend? How did it make your friend feel? How did it make you feel?
- c. Piggie has a favorite new toy. Did Gerald break Piggie’s toy by accident or on purpose? How did Elephant try to make it up to Piggie? What made them realize that friends are more important than things?

 **S.S.1.A.2.4:** Identify people from the past who have shown character ideals and principals including honesty, courage and responsibility.

 **TH.3.S.3.3:** Describe elements of dramatic performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

 **HE.1.C.2.2** Explore the ways that a friend would act in a variety of situations.

Part III FUN STUFF!

What’s in a Song?

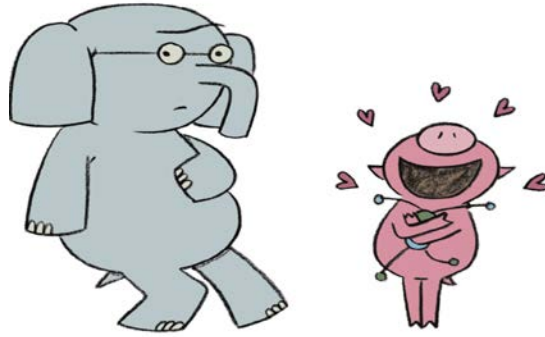
The songs in *Elephant & Piggie’s We Are in a Play!* tell you a lot about the characters and what’s happening in the story. During the performance, watch and listen for how the performers communicate through their actions and lyrics when they sing the songs.

Rhyme Time.

During the songs, listen for rhyming words, like “Piggie” and “biggie,” or “fear” and “dear.” Also listen for soft rhymes of words that don’t exactly match, like “prince” and “audience” or “imagine” and “having.” To help you get warmed up, see whether you can fill in words for these parts of the song “Ode to Toy”:

“It’s my new JOY this wondrous ____.

“So I will PLAY both night and ____



Know That Tune?

Listen carefully when Piggie sings about her new toy—does the music seem familiar? It sounds like “Ode to Joy,” a popular piece of music written almost 200 years ago by Ludwig van Beethoven (LOOD–vig VAHN BAY–tohvin). You might have heard it in concerts, commercials, television shows, or movies. If you like Piggie’s song, ask a grownup to help you listen to Beethoven’s version after the performance.

ELEPHANTS

Elephants are the largest land-living mammal in the world. There are two types of elephants: the Asian elephant and the African elephant. Elephants are known for their large, thin ears which are made up of a complex network of blood vessels; blood is circulated through their ears to cool them down in hot climates. Elephants trunks are very special. The trunk is able to sense the size, shape and temperature of an object. An elephant uses its trunk to lift food and suck up water to then pour it into its mouth. When elephants swim, they can use their trunk to breathe like a snorkel when they are in deep water. Elephants have no natural predators. The main risk to elephants is from humans through poaching and changes to their habitat.

MORE FUN FACTS

1. Elephants do not like peanuts. They do not eat them in the wild or even at the zoo.
2. Elephants can recognize themselves in a mirror.
3. Elephants can get sunburned, so they take care to protect themselves. They will throw sand on their backs and on their head to keep from getting burned.
4. Elephants have six toes on their feet!

PIGS

There are hundreds of types of pigs found all over the world. Pigs are among the smartest of all domesticated animals. Pigs have the reputation of being dirty animals, but this is not true. The pig’s reputation for being filthy comes from its habit of rolling in mud to cool off. Pigs that live in cool environments stay very clean. Pigs are also known as hogs or swine. Farmers raise pigs for the variety of valuable products they provide to humans, including pork and lard. In the wild, pigs eat everything from leaves, roots, and fruit to rodents and small reptiles. In the United States, farm-raised pigs eat diets of mostly corn. A pig’s snout is an important tool for finding food in the ground and sensing the world around them.

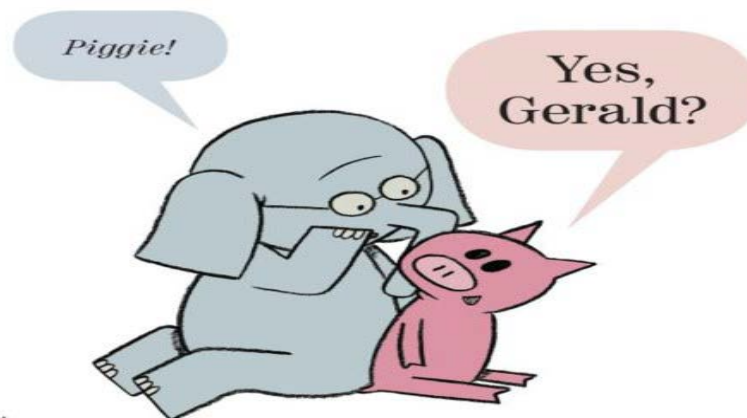
MORE FUN FACTS

1. Pigs dream just like humans.
2. Pigs have an excellent sense of smell.
3. Pigs live on every continent, except for Antarctica.
4. Adult pigs can run at speeds up to 11 miles per hour!

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.



The Art of Florida Assessments

Contributed by Patricia Linder

Visual and Performing Arts Field Trips provide an excellent source of support for the development of skills necessary for success on the Florida Assessments. We invite you to use these instructional strategies to enhance preparation through your theatre field trip.

Theatre Activities/ Cognitive Level 1

Read the story (or play) your field trip performance is based on.

Name the main character.

List all the characters.

Identify the setting.

List the story events in the order they happened.

Describe a character (or setting).

Explain the problem (or conflict) in the story.

Explain how the actors used stage props to tell the story (or develop characterization).

Discuss how the blocking, or positioning of the actors on stage affected the performance.

Discuss how unusual technical elements (light, shadow, sound, etc.) were used in the performance.

Draw a picture of a character.

Illustrate or make a diorama of a scene from the performance.

Draw a poster to advertise the performance.

Work with other students to act out a scene.

Demonstrate how an actor used facial expression to show emotion.

Write a narrative story to summarize the plot of the performance story.

Use a map and/or timeline to locate the setting of the story.

Make a mobile showing events in the story.

Cognitive Level II

Would the main character make a good friend? Write an expository essay explaining why or why not.

Create a graph that records performance data such as: female characters, male characters, animal characters or number of characters in each scene, etc.
Compare/Contrast a character to someone you know or compare/contrast the setting to a different location or time.
Solve a special effects mystery. Use words or pictures to explain how “special effects” (Lighting, smoke, sound effects) were created.

Imagine the story in a different time or place. Design sets or costumes for the new setting.
You’re the director. Plan the performance of a scene in your classroom. Include the cast of characters, staging area, and ideas for costumes, scenery, and props in your plan.

Create a new ending to the story.

Did you enjoy the performance? Write a persuasive essay convincing a friend to go see this production.
Write a letter to the production company nominating a performer for a “Best Actor Award.” Explain why your nominee should win the award.

Create a rubric to rate the performance. Decide on criteria for judging: Sets, Costumes, Acting, Lighting, Special Effects, Overall Performance, etc.

THE PRODUCER

STAGES PRODUCTIONS is a professional theatre ensemble that specializes in bringing classic fairy tales to over 150,000 young people each year throughout the Southeast.

STAGES' show credits include critically acclaimed performances of: *Charlotte's Web*, *School House Rock*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Mother Goose* and *Let Freedom Sing*. Be sure to join us for our 32nd anniversary season featuring; *Elephant & Piggie*, *Holiday Traditions Around The World* and *Rapunzel*..

Stages Productions is dedicated to making drama an integral part of education, and lesson plans are available to incorporate these plays into the student's curriculum. Thank you for supporting this mission by choosing a STAGES PRODUCTIONS play! www.stagesproductions.com

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