



ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE'S WE ARE IN A PLAY!

Applause Series Curriculum Guide
February 16-17, 2017



CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS



Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Elephant & Piggie's We Are In a Play!* Author and illustrator Mo Willems's books about these two best friends have been delighting young readers since their debut in 2007, with their conversational style and expressive illustrations. Willems's decision to team up with the Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences to adapt the adventures of Gerald and Piggie for the stage has produced an equally witty, touching ode to friendship that will warm the hearts of both children and adults.

We thank you for sharing this very special experience with your students and hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and assessment activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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This study guide was compiled and written by Allison McGuire and edited by Karoline Myers.
Adapted from the John F. Kennedy Center's *Cuesheet for Elephant & Piggie's We Are In a Play!*

ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

Public education programs allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 55,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F.

Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center*, 2744 seats
- *Stoner Theater*, 200 seats
- *Temple Theater*, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space. Features include the Lauridsen Fountain, the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by Claes Oldenburg, and the Swirl sculpture by Jim Campbell.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 21st season of school performances!

GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Musicians and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- * What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- * What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- * What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- * Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- * Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Des Moines Civic Center:

- * Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- * Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- * Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- * Do not text during the performance.
- * Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- * When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- * **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- * Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater and causing a distraction.
- * Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- * Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- * Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- * After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- * Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- * Des Moines Performing Arts reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- * Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- * Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- * Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- * All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted online. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- * Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
- * Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- * Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- * Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with Des Moines Performing Arts Education staff.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- * When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes.
- * Each group will be assigned a specific location in the hall, and ushers will escort groups to their seats upon arrival. Various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- * We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and that other adults position themselves throughout the group.** This helps with supervision purposes and is especially important in the event a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- * Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging individuals' seat locations or taking students to the restroom. This helps ensure that everyone has a seat in your designated section, as well as allows us to more efficiently seat other arriving groups. This helps us to start the performance on time.
- * As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause Series performances.

IN THE THEATER

- * In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Civic Center performances.
- * We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- * Following the performance, please wait for your group to be dismissed prior to exiting the theater.
- * If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at education@desmoinesperformingarts.org or 515.246.2355.
Thank you!

VOCABULARY



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

assumption: something that you think is going to happen, but you don't have proof that it will

contingency: something that might happen

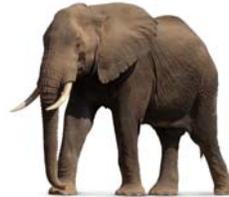
manipulate: to change what people do or the way something happens



Image: lifehacker.com

obligatory: something that must happen

pachyderm: a thick-skinned animal like an elephant or hippopotamus



Images: dkfindout.com



Image: enrichmentrecord.com

swine: a short-haired animal with a curly tail and hooves, like a pig

stage manager: the person who runs the play from behind the stage



Image: artzray.com

sty: a fenced area, usually for pigs



Image: turbosquid.com

unintended consequences: things that happen that surprise you

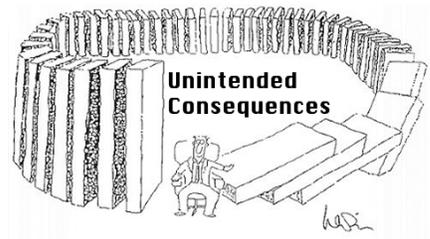


Image: interactioninstitute.org

impossible: a made-up word Gerald uses when he means not possible or impossible



Twitter: Mo Willems' Pigeon. @ThePigeon

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

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Welcome to a big event for our favorite pig and elephant, *Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play!* You should know that Elephant and Piggie call the performance a "play." That's a story told on stage with actors, lights, and some stuff like toys. But this is a play with a little something extra—songs and music. And here's a little secret—sometimes a play with music is called a "musical." No matter what you call it, let's learn more about what you'll see and hear.

Run Time: Approx. 60 minutes

SYNOPSIS

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.

PLAYING AN ELEPHANT AND A PIG

It might be fun to have a real elephant and pig on stage. But you know what? It's way more fun to have people—actors—pretend to be Gerald, Piggie, and singing squirrels. Unlike animals, actors can talk, dance, and sing. To become their animal characters, the actors will change their voices and movements, and they will dress up, like in a gray suit for Gerald or a pink outfit for Piggie. All you have to do is remember to bring your imagination!

A BIG IDEA...

You might not think that a serious elephant and a playful pig could be best friends—but Gerald and Piggie are. And 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. For ideas, watch how they:

- ◇ Share
- ◇ Cooperate
- ◇ Joke around
- ◇ Help each other
- ◇ Forgive each other

...AND BIG FEELINGS

During the performance, Gerald and Piggie have strong emotions, or feelings — like joy, love, anger, worry, fear, sadness, and embarrassment (feeling uncomfortable with something you've done). Watch for ways these pals communicate their feelings through what they say, sing, or do.

BE YOUR "BESTUS" DURING THE SHOW

Watch for...

- ◇ a swimming pool
- ◇ how the Squirrelles sometimes play other characters in the story
- ◇ props, or objects used on stage, like an ice cream cone and a toy
- ◇ how the lights and music change to show slow motion
- ◇ the Flippy Floppy Floory dance

Listen for the...

- ◇ The sound of Piggie and Gerald's trumpeting
- ◇ The special magic word Gerald and Piggie use for "please"

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play! began as a book—well, six books from the *Elephant & Piggie* series, to be exact.

Mo Willems, the man who wrote the books and drew the pictures believed those stories could be told with actors performing and singing on stage. So, he wrote the dialogue (words spoken by the characters) and added new parts and characters, like the Squirrelles. He also wrote the lyrics (words) to the songs. The written play is called the script.

The story of the play comes from these *Elephant & Piggie* books:

- ◇ *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!*

Learn more about the artists behind *Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play!*

MEET MO WILLEMS

Mo Willems has written and drawn pictures for 24 *Elephant & Piggie* books so far, and lots of other books, too, like *Knuffle Bunny* and the *Pigeon* series. Mo says “When I was a kid, I wanted to draw and be funny.”

Today, Mo lives in Massachusetts with his family, and they like to draw together every night at dinnertime.



Author and illustrator Mo Willems.
Image: designmom.com



Image: diversioninc.com

MEET THE KENNEDY CENTER THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is located in our nation's capital, Washington D.C., near the Lincoln Memorial on the Potomac River.

The Kennedy Center was opened in 1971 to be America's Cultural Center. Two decades later, the Theater for Young Audiences launched. KCTYA devotes itself to producing and presenting new theater works that excite, inspire and challenge young audiences.

It's touring productions have allowed more than 2 million students, teachers, and parents who may never have had the chance to visit the nation's performing arts center to experience their imaginative and original works.

BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE



Although you won't see them on stage, a lot of people work very hard to create the world of Gerald and Piggie!

PLAYWRIGHT

Some musicals and plays are inspired by books. Mo Willems, who wrote the *Elephant & Piggie* books, also served as the playwright for the show you will see — figuring out how to adapt the story for the stage.

COMPOSER

The composer writes all of the music for the show. This includes the songs that the actors sing as well as the instrumental music that sets the tone for each scene.

DIRECTOR

The director tells the actors where to go on stage and how to interpret their characters. The director makes sure everyone is doing a good job making the story come to life.

CHOREOGRAPHER

The choreographer plans all the dance movements.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

The music director directs all of the musical parts of the performance.

SET DESIGNER

The set designer imagines all of the pieces you see on stage and figures out how the stage changes from scene to scene.

LIGHTING DESIGNER

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

COSTUME DESIGNER

The costume designer imagines the clothes and costumes that the actors wear to help them become the characters.

STAGE MANAGER

The stage manager runs the show from behind the stage, helping to keep everything organized and happening on time.

BACKSTAGE CREW

You may not see them, but there are lots of people backstage who operate the scenery, costumes, props, lights, and sound during the performance.

CREATING A MUSICAL

Gerald and Piggie, your favorite elephant and pig, right there on stage, talking, singing, and dancing — as Gerald might say, impossible? Oh no, very possible! Taking a story from the pages of books to the big lights on stage took a lot of imagination and problem solving from a whole team of people.

Click the photo below to access a series of 3-4 minute videos, in which members of the team discuss the process of bringing “bestus” friends Gerald and Piggie to life. You’ll hear them discuss three main parts of creating a musical—the writing, music, and design.



Image: artsedge.kennedy-center.org

LISTEN UP! THE SOUNDS OF ELEPHANT & PIGGIE



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. In addition to noticing how the performers communicate through their actions and lyrics when they are singing, check out some of the other things that you can listen for during the performance!

THE INSTRUMENTS

The music in the play was created by five instruments.

ACCOMPANYING THE SONGS

You can probably pick out the sounds of the piano, which is played by pressing keys that cause hammers to strike tuned strings to make sound.



Image: roland.com



Image: dkfindout.com

You will probably also recognize the sound of the drums, which are used to establish rhythm. Percussion instruments make a sound when they are struck.

Also listen for a really deep sound—that comes from the bass, the largest member of the string instrument family.



Image: guitarcenter.com

From the woodwind family of instruments, listen for the high sounds of the clarinet. The clarinet has a straight body like a tube. Sound is made by the player vibrating a reed with their lips and breath.



Image: guitarcenter.com

Also from the woodwind family, listen for the mellow notes from the saxophone, which has a distinctive loop that brings its bell upwards. It is also uses a reed to produce sound.



Image: yamaha.com

ON STAGE

You will see just one instrument on stage—the trumpet. It is a brass instrument that is coiled and opens into a bell shape. It has just three keys. Players “buzz” their lips on the instrument’s mouthpiece to make the different sounds.



Image: amromusic.com

RHYME TIME

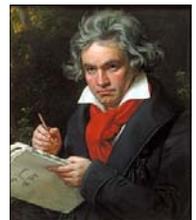
During the songs, listen for rhyming words, like “Piggie” and “biggie,” or “fear” and “dear,” or soft rhymes of words that don’t exactly match, like “prince” and “audience” or “imagine” and “having.” To help you get warmed up, see whether you can fill in words from the song “Ode to Toy”:

“It’s my new JOY
This wondrous _____.”

“So I will PLAY
Both night and _____.”

KNOW THAT TUNE?

Listen carefully for 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. Including this classic music, which is often performed with big orchestras and large choruses, adds drama to Piggie’s love for her toy.



Portrait by Joseph Karl Stieler, 1820.

FUN FACTS: ELEPHANTS AND PIGS



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!



Image: scitechdaily.com



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!



Image: panoramio.com

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 1 of 2

1) WHAT'S IN A SNOUT?

Goal: Students will understand that Gerald and Piggie can still look like an elephant and a pig without wearing animal costumes.

Explanation: Students will review the job of a costume designer and practice designing costumes for Gerald and Piggie.

Materials:

- ◇ Blank paper for each student
- ◇ Pencils
- ◇ Crayons, colored pencils, or markers

Activity:

1. Ask students to recall some of the behind-the-scenes jobs needed to put on a show (director, composer, stage manager, set designer).
2. Review the job of a costume designer (someone who plans what the performers will wear).
3. Explain that the costume designer for *Elephant and Piggie* decided not to give Gerald the Elephant a trunk or give Piggie a snout. Tell students that a costume designer uses costumes to help the audience see characters' personalities, not simply whether they are a pig or an elephant.
4. Ask students what words they would use to describe Gerald and Piggie's personalities (how they behave) (*i.e.* careful, playful).
5. Ask students: "If you were the show's costume designer and had to use ordinary clothes for Gerald and Piggie, what items would you choose?"
6. Students may make a list of costume pieces and/or draw their ideas.
7. Students then share their costume designs with a group.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did you choose for Gerald and Piggie to wear? Why did you choose those items?
2. Why might the costume designer decide not to use an elephant trunk and a pig snout in the show?

2) DUCK, DUCK, ANIMAL

Goal: Students will practice assuming the physical and vocal attributes of different animals, just like the actors playing Gerald the Elephant, Piggie, and the Squirrelles.

Explanation: This activity is a variation of "Duck, Duck, Goose".

Materials:

- ◇ Open space
- ◇ 6+ players, ideally

Activity:

1. Players sit in a circle.
2. The first player taps seated players on the head saying, "Duck, duck, duck..." but chooses the "goose" by tapping him or her by naming any animal (ex. elephant, pig, lion, unicorn).
3. The player who has been tapped must assume the physical and vocal attributes of the animal. For example, a player might say "duck, duck, monkey". The first player must waddle and quack like a duck while being chased by a player that must leap and eep like a monkey. Encourage players to match their speed to their animal.
4. The monkeyed player would then begin his turn by saying "Monkey, monkey, monkey... (names another animal)".
5. Play until everyone has had a turn. If a player is tagged, they get put in the zoo (the middle of the circle) for one turn, then rejoin the circle.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Is there a person you would like to compliment for their animal? What did they do that stood out?
2. What was a funny pairing of animals? (turtle vs. cheetah, mouse chasing a bear)

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 2 of 2

3) EXAGGERATIONS

Goal: Elephant and Piggie can be very dramatic. On stage, your movements and voice need to be bigger than they are in everyday life. This game will help students practice making big, dramatic gestures and sounds.

Explanation: Students pass an action and a sound around the circle, like in a game of Telephone. The action and sound get bigger with each person.

Activity:

1. Stand in a circle.
2. The leader begins by performing a very small action and a very small sound.
3. The next person in the circle does the same action, but exaggerates it just slightly.
4. The last person to execute the action will have the largest movement and the biggest sound.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Why do an actors' movements and voice need to be bigger than normal on stage?
2. What was fun about this activity? What was challenging?

4) STORY CIRCLE

Goal: Students will use voice and sound in dramatic play.

Explanation: Students will repeat dialogue from an *Elephant and Piggie* story in the voice of their assigned character.

Materials:

- ◇ An *Elephant and Piggie* book of your choice

Activity:

1. Before starting the story, divide your reading group into Elephants and Piggies.
2. Have the different groups repeat their character's dialogue out loud as you read the story.
3. Encourage students to use a voice that they think represents the character.
4. Further encourage students to use inflection in their voice to show their character's feelings.

5) THE DRAWING BOARD

Goal: Students will use the stories of Elephant and Piggie as a jumping off point to practice imagining new story ideas and sharing them through drawing or storytelling.

Explanation: Students draw their own stories of Elephant and Piggie doing something new.

Materials:

- ◇ Blank paper for each student
- ◇ Pencils
- ◇ Crayons, colored pencils, or markers

Activity:

1. In *Elephant and Piggie's We Are In A Play!*, Gerald and Piggie try lots of new things, like going to a party, dancing, playing the trumpet, and being in a play! As a group, brainstorm other things the characters could do for the first time together.
2. Ask students to draw their own Elephant and Piggie trying one of these new activities.
3. Ask students to think of a short story to describe their drawing and share it with a friend, teacher, or family member.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Have you ever tried the activity that Elephant and Piggie tried in your story? How would feel if you tried it (excited, scared, etc.)?



Image: rosetheater.org

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION & ASSESSMENT, pg. 1 of 3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some examples of Gerald and Piggie using their imaginations in the play?
2. How did the composer, director, and lighting designer use music, movement, and lights to show that Gerald and Piggie were moving in slow motion?
3. How did the Squirrelles change their voices, movements, and appearance to play other characters? What other characters did they play?
4. 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?
5. What were some of the props (objects that actors hold in their hands) you saw used during the play?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. Gerald unknowingly creates his own dance. How do you like to dance? Can you show us? How did you come up with your dance moves?
9. Piggie has a favorite new toy. What is your favorite toy? What makes it special?
10. 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? Have you ever hurt a friend by accident?

1) WRITE A LETTER

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

Explanation: After the show, students will write letters to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students.
2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors.

Letter Starter:

Dear *Elephant & Piggie* performers OR
Dear Des Moines Performing Arts donors,

My favorite part of the show was...
While watching the show I felt... because ...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...
If I could be in the show, I would play the part of ... because ...

3. Mail the letters to the following address:
Des Moines Performing Arts
Attn: Education Department
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What did you choose to share in your letter? Why?
2. How does receiving a letter make you feel?
3. How do you think the recipient of your letter will feel when he or she receives your letter? Why?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION & ASSESSMENT, pg. 2 of 3

2) FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Goal: Students will contribute to the dramatic adaptation of literary dialogue and action.

Explanation: Students will plan, prepare, and perform a short scene taken from a book.

Materials:

- ◇ Book, fairy tale, or something the class is currently reading

Activity:

1. Choose a favorite book, familiar fairy tale, or something the class is currently reading. Before starting, break the story down into manageable segments or scenes that will only take students 30 seconds to two minutes to act out.
2. Break students into small groups of 3-4 students and explain that they will be planning a stage version of a short scene from the book.
3. You can either allow each group to choose one of your pre-identified scenes or assign each group to a scene, so that each scene is covered. (Depending on number of groups and scenes, more than one group may do the same scene.)
3. As a class, read through the story out loud, starting with the first scene and going through the last. As they listen, instruct students to envision what their scene would look like on stage:
 - ◇ Who are the characters in your scene?
 - ◇ What are the important things the audience needs to see in order to understand what's happening?
 - ◇ What does the audience need to hear?
4. If appropriate, ask that each group choose a recorder, who will be in charge of writing down the group's ideas and any suggested dialogue. (Stress that it is not the recorder's job to write the script by themselves.)
5. Give groups time to brainstorm and assign characters (5 minutes should be plenty).
6. Ask groups to start getting their scene on its feet by practicing acting it out to see what works and doesn't work through trial and error (5 - 10 minutes).
8. If time allows, ask them to perform it for the class.

Follow-up Questions:

1. What were the challenges of making the jump from page to stage?
2. If this was a musical what part of your scene might make a good song? Why?

3) MAKE ME LAUGH, PIGGIE

Goal: Students will practice the acting skills of focus and self-control.

Explanation: The actors in the play have to do silly things in a serious way, like when Gerald has a hard time learning to dance. In this activity, students must practice keeping a straight face while another tries to make them laugh.

Activity:

1. Have students break into pairs: one of each pair is Elephant Gerald and the other is Piggie.
2. When you give the starting signal, Piggie faces Elephant and has one minute to make him laugh. Elephant must keep his "serious" face and not smile or laugh at all.
3. Piggie may use her hand and facial expressions to make Elephant laugh and is only allowed to say one thing: "Oink, oink."
- Piggie is not permitted to make any other noises or touch Elephant or Elephant is the automatic winner.
4. If Elephant laughs before the minute is up, Piggie wins. If not, Elephant wins.
5. Then have the pairs switch roles and do it again.



Follow-up Questions:

1. Do you think the actors playing Piggie and Gerald had to work to stay serious during the play? Why or why not?
2. Was keeping a straight face easy or difficult for you? Why?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION & ASSESSMENT, pg. 3 of 3

4) MORE FRIENDS FOR ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE

Goal: Students will think about different personality traits that make up a character and use their imaginations to create a new friend for Elephant and Piggie.

Explanation: In Elephant and Piggie's book *Can I Play Too?*, the pair make a new friend — Snake! In this activity, students will brainstorm other friends for Elephant and Piggie.

Materials:

- ◇ Copy of Elephant and Piggie Make a New Friend worksheet for each student (page 17)
- ◇ Pencils, crayons, colored pencils, or markers

Activity:

1. Ask students to name some of Elephant and Piggie's personal characteristics, and to identify if the characteristics are the same or opposites.
2. Discuss what makes Piggie and Elephant such good friends, even though they are very different from one another.
3. As a group, talk about what you admire about your friends. Make a list of personality traits.
4. Break students into pairs to brainstorm another new friend for Elephant and Piggie, using some of the personality traits suggested by the class. Think about:
 - ◇ How would Elephant and Piggie respond to this new friend?
 - ◇ What kinds of games could they play with their new friend?
5. Individually, students draw and color in their worksheet of Elephant and Piggie making a new friend. On their own, or with assistance, they can draw and fill in dialogue and thought bubbles for their characters.

Follow-up Question:

1. What would it be like if each of your friends was exactly like you? What good things might happen? What might be hard?

5) PLACES, PLEASE!

Goal: Students will practice their listening skills and following directions in this fun, adventure-inspired, movement-based activity.

Explanation: Students will match specific actions to your commands and pretend to be multiple characters.

Materials:

- ◇ Open space

Activity:

1. Clear enough space in your classroom so that students can move about the room easily and safely.
2. Explain to the students that you are going to give directions to them as they move about the space, and that they will be going on a journey to become characters from *Elephant & Piggie's We Are In A Play!*
3. Introduce the first command: "Go." The students should move around the room without touching each other.
4. The next direction to give is "Stop." The children should stop moving immediately.
5. Once they have mastered those two commands, introduce the next command: "Gerald." When this command is spoken, students must point to themselves and say, "I know parties!"
6. The next command is "Piggie." Students should mime playing a trumpet.
7. Have the students practice these new commands, integrating them with "Stop" and "Go."
8. When they are comfortable with those four commands, introduce the last two commands: "Friendship" and "Squirrelles." Have the students create a movement for each command. Encourage them to be creative and active; the sillier the movements, the better.
9. As students walk around the room, you now have six different directions to give them. Play around with the order and tempo. Have fun!

For an additional challenge:

Once the students know how to play the version of the game outlined above, you can add in other commands, like "Flippy Floppy Floory Dance".

NEW FRIEND WORKSHEET (for Assessment Activity 4, pg. 16)

NAME: _____

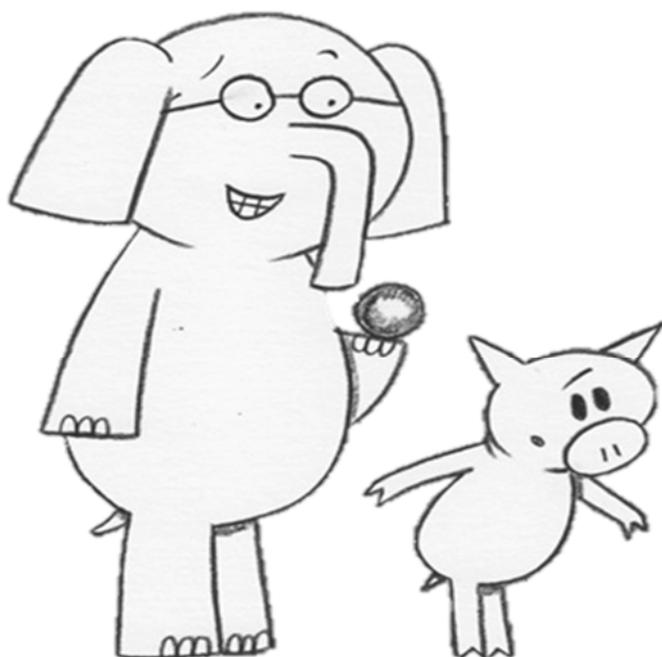


image: masivy.com

(Draw their new friend here.)

Elephant and Piggie's new friend's name is _____.
(name of friend)

Elephant, Piggie, and _____ like to
(name of friend)

_____ together because _____
(activity)

(reason)

RESOURCES AND SOURCES

BOOKS

Elephant & Piggie Books:

- ◇ *A Big Guy Took My Ball!*
- ◇ *Are You Ready to Play Outside?*
- ◇ *Can I Play Too?*
- ◇ *Elephants Cannot Dance!*
- ◇ *Happy Pig Day!*
- ◇ *I Am Going!*
- ◇ *I Am Invited to a Party!*
- ◇ *I Broke My Trunk!*
- ◇ *I Love My New Toy!*
- ◇ *I Really Like Slop!*
- ◇ *I Will Surprise My Friend!*
- ◇ *I Will Take a Nap!*
- ◇ *I'm a Frog!*
- ◇ *Let's Go for a Drive!*
- ◇ *Listen to My Trumpet!*
- ◇ *My Friend is Sad*
- ◇ *My New Friend Is So Fun!*
- ◇ *Pigs Make Me Sneeze!*
- ◇ *Should I Share My Ice Cream?*
- ◇ *The Thank You Book*
- ◇ *There is a Bird on Your Head!*
- ◇ *Today I Will Fly!*
- ◇ *Waiting Is Not Easy!!*
- ◇ *Watch Me Throw the Ball!*
- ◇ *We Are in a Book!*

MORE MO WILLEMS BOOKS

(not a complete listing)

- ◇ *City Dog, County Frog*
- ◇ *The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?*
- ◇ *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*
- ◇ *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!*
- ◇ *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*
- ◇ *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*
- ◇ *Leonardo the Terrible Monster*
- ◇ *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*
- ◇ *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!*
- ◇ *The Pigeon Needs a Bath!*
- ◇ *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!*
- ◇ *The Story of Diva and Flea*

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

"Beethoven Meets Mr. Big. ArtsEdge."

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/multimedia/Interactives/beethoven-rocks/meet-mr-big>

Can't get enough Beethoven? Learn more about the classical music rock star.

"Elephant & Piggie Dance Game".

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

Students choose different dances to see Elephant and Piggie perform together.

"Elephant & Piggie Event Kit."

http://www.pigeonpresents.com/teachersguides/EandP_eventkit_2015.pdf

Lots of Elephant and Piggie discussion questions, activities, and games!

"Learn How to Draw Piggie with Mo."

<http://www.pigeonpresents.com/video-drawpiggie.aspx>

Two-minute video tutorial with Mo Willems on how to draw Piggie.

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

"Cuesheet Performance Guide: Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play! A Kennedy Center Commission." The Kennedy Center.

https://issuu.com/artsedge/docs/1516cuedesign_tya_elephant_piggie_s

"Kennedy Center ArtsEdge: Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play!"

<https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/students/kc-connections/series/cuesheet/2015-2016/151124-tya-elephant-and-piggie>

"Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play! Study Guide."

Emerald City Theatre.

http://emeraldcitytheatre.com/pdfs/emeraldcity_elephantandpiggie_studyguide.pdf

"The Elephant & Piggie Books Party Kit!" from Pigeon Presents.

http://www.pigeonpresents.com/teachersguides/EandP_eventkit_2015.pdf

"Pig." National Geographic Kids.

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/pig>

"Fun Elephant Facts for Kids." Science Kids.

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/elephant.html>