



## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

# Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!



Where Your Child Matters Most™

# Thank you for joining us for a Smart Stage Matinee!

Smart Stage Matinees are educational performances produced by professional companies for students in grades Pre K-12.

Integrating the arts into learning in meaningful ways, the performances reinforce classroom lessons, are aligned with Florida's B.E.S.T. standards, and spark creativity to help students make learning gains.

Here are just a few ways the Broward Center for the Performing Arts believes that Smart Stage Matinees provide educational arts integrated experiences for students:

- Watching live performances improves listening and observation skills.
- Students gain appreciation for the performing arts and understand its role in culture and history.
- Theater helps students develop empathy by experiencing diverse perspectives and emotions.
- Live theater reinforces classroom learning through storytelling, music, and visual arts.
- Students analyze characters, themes, and plot, which strengthens comprehension and interpretive skills.
- Exposure to live theater sparks imagination and creative problem-solving.

We'd love your feedback. Please click the link or QR code to help us continually improve our programming:

<https://forms.office.com/r/1pJAckCr4i>



# What's included in Curriculum Connections:

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## Know Before you Go:

- Arrive at the theater 15 to 20 minutes before show time. Allow extra time for Broward County traffic. We are unable to start a show late.
- Please stay on the bus until greeted by an usher. At that time, please give the usher your BUS document and the usher will escort you to the theater.
- Remember to watch our Know Before You Go Video:

<https://tinyurl.com/ElementarySeasWelcome>

*“As South Florida’s only specialty-licensed hospital exclusively for children, Nicklaus Children’s provides expert pediatric care tailored to every stage of development. Nicklaus Children’s is proud to support early learning through the Smart Stage series, nurturing young minds alongside their health. “*



**Nicklaus  
Children's**

Where Your Child Matters Most™





**Dear Teacher,**

**We appreciate YOU and the incredible work you do!**

Our Curriculum Connections Study Guide is designed to make your classroom come alive—before or after your trip to see a play or musical.

These guides are aligned with Florida’s B.E.S.T. Standards and provide creative ways to bring the page to the stage, making learning engaging and memorable.

Why use Curriculum Connections?

- Boost comprehension and help students organize information.
- Encourage metacognition by giving students tools to check for understanding.
- Offer activities tailored for specific grade levels (clearly labeled for easy use).

Each guide includes:

- ✓ A reminder of theater etiquette
- ✓ A Social-Emotional Learning activity
- ✓ A Student-**Family** Cooperative Activity for extended learning at home
- ✓ A **NEW** Post-Show Cooperative Learning Page making group work easy after a show!

How to use it:

- Print activities for individual work
- Display on smart boards for class discussions
- Use in small groups for collaborative learning



**Pro Tip:** Discuss and or READ the play or musical as a class before your field trip. This makes the experience even richer!

**Stay connected with us:**

Follow @BrowardCenterEducation on Facebook and Instagram

Scan the QR code below to access our Teacher’s Lounge for insider tips, discounted tickets, and resources for you and your students!





# Theater etiquette

*There is so much that goes into creating a show for the stage. Behind the scenes, there are people who control the lights and the sound, the sets and the props. There are directors, writers, producers, musicians, and choreographers. So many people work together to create the performance you and everyone in the audience watches.*

It is helpful to remind students of appropriate audience etiquette by explaining and discussing WHY these rules of behavior are important:

- Restroom visits are best made prior to the performance.
- Listen carefully to the ushers and your teachers. This gets everyone to your seats quickly and ensures a pleasant experience.
- Turn watches and cell phones to silent.
- Walk single file, hold hand rails as you use the steps for your safety.
- Listen carefully to each performer. They are working hard to entertain and inform with lots of clues about the story.
- Refrain from TALKING. This allows everyone to enjoy the show without distraction. Sometimes we think that if we whisper it is okay. But, if everyone in the audience whispers, it becomes disruptive.
- Laugh if something is funny, but not too loudly, you don't want to miss any dialogue.
- Photography and recording are not permitted.
- Pay attention to the lighting, scenery, costumes and music. All of these elements help provide more details to tell the story in an interesting way.
- Applaud (clap) and laugh at the right moments. This shows the performers that you respect and appreciate their work.



# My Theater Review

I saw: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

This play/musical was about...

Here's a drawing of  
my favorite character:

It made me feel:

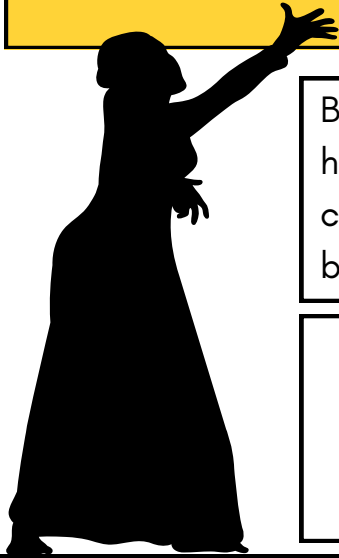
I learned:

I gave this play/musical .... stars.



**We'd love to hear from you! If you'd like to submit this review,  
please send to [jenriquez@browardcenter.org](mailto:jenriquez@browardcenter.org)**

# From Page to Stage



Books make wonderful theater! When adapting a book however, changes must be made to the plot, setting and/or characters to accommodate the length of the play or to help bring the show to life on stage!

Here are some famous adaptations you may know:  
Legally Blonde/Les Miserables/The Wizard of Oz/Mary Poppins/  
How the Grinch Stole Christmas/The Secret Garden/  
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory/Cinderella/Alice in Wonderland/  
Beauty and the Beast/Romeo and Juliet

## Vocabulary to share with students:

**Adaptation:** Something that has changed so that it can be presented in another form.

**Playwright:** A person who writes plays.

**Lyricist:** A person who writes the words of a song.

**Composer:** A person who writes music.

**Author:** A person who writes something such as a book or an article.

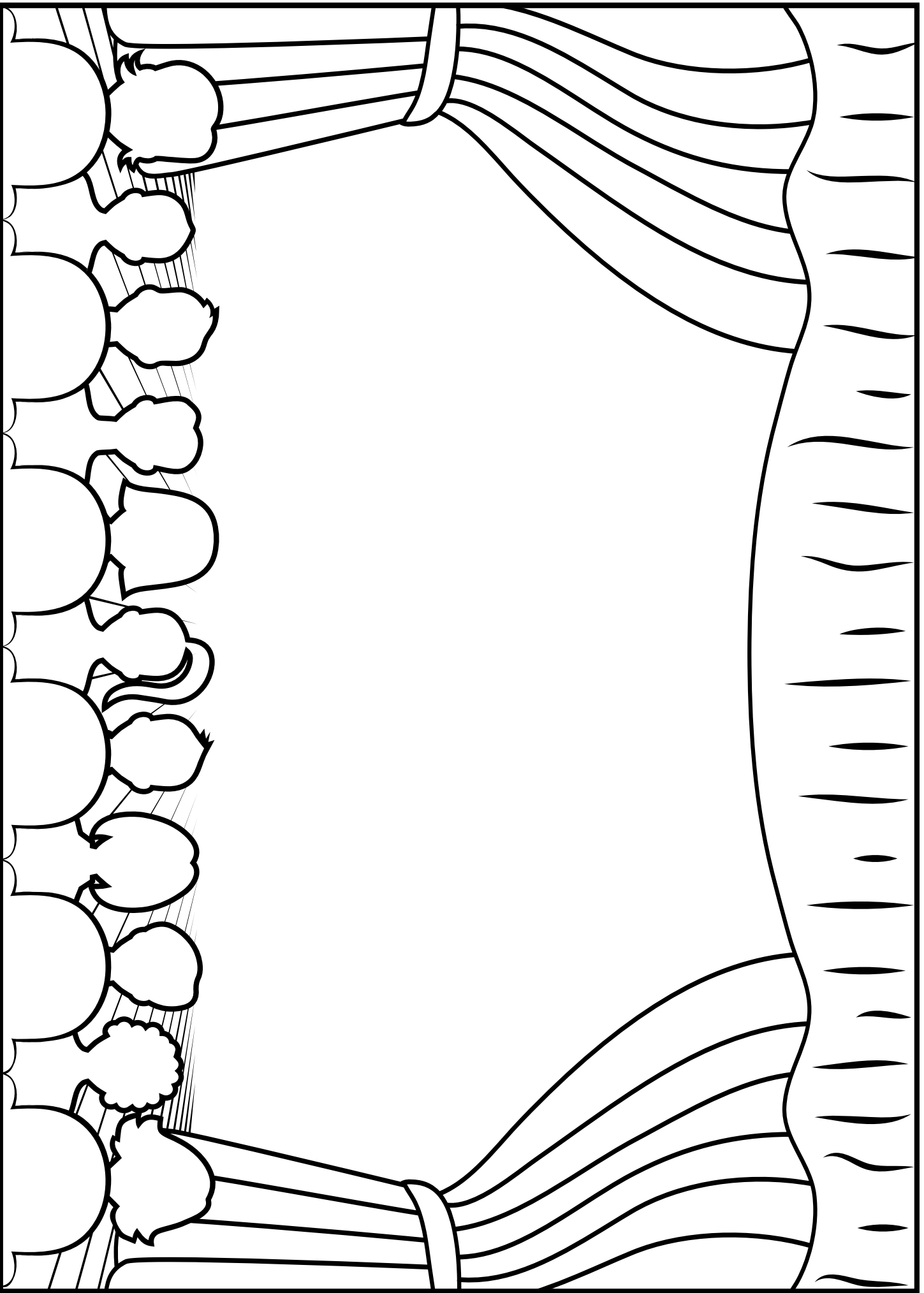
**Characters:** the individuals portrayed by actors in a play or musical.

**Director:** A key creative figure in theater responsible for overseeing the artistic aspects of a production.

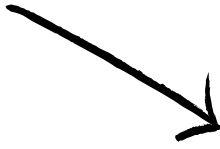
## Pre-Show creative questions:

Ask your students, "If you could adapt any book for the stage, which book would you choose and why?" Invite them to draw a picture of the story they would adapt on stage. Define "costumes" "set" and "props" and ask them to draw what the set would look like on stage as well as the characters' costumes. (Use the next page to spark creativity)

Choose a book or story to adapt to a play or musical.  
Draw a picture of the set and props and/or actors in costume here.



# **DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL! SYNOPSIS:**



Hop on board for an unforgettable ride with the Pigeon.



Whatever you do, don't let the Pigeon star in his own musical production! It's not easy being the Pigeon—you never get to do ANYTHING! But when the Bus Driver has a crisis that threatens to make her passengers (gasp!) late, maybe that wily bird CAN do something.

Starring an innovative mix of actors, puppets, songs, and feathers, Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! (The Musical) is sure to get everyone's wings flapping.

With a script written by Mo Willems, the creator of the #1 New York Times best-selling, Caldecott Honor award-winning "Pigeon" picture books, this comedic musical production is even more fun than staying up late and having a party!

The story follows the Pigeon, who wants to have at least one ride, but readers keep telling him "NO!", which aggravates him. The musical explores themes such as the responsibility to keep promises, persuasion, and the value of punishment.

**Mo Willems has often said that his books are meant to be "played" not read, and this is true for his stage adaptations as well. DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL! has a slightly different story than the picture book audiences have come to love.**

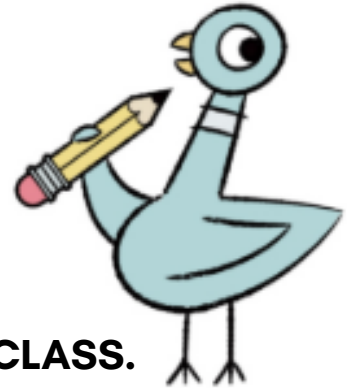
**The Pigeon is still very much himself, but the conflict is broadened a bit. The plucky bird still does not drive the bus, but this time, the show asks why? Because he can't reach the pedals? Because he doesn't have the training? Because the bus absolutely must reach each stop on time?**

**The conflict is bigger. It isn't about simply wanting to do the impossible on impulse, but something larger: wanting to have a thing. Everyone's got one. The Bus Driver drives buses, the Teenager loves movies, the Little Old Lady likes to throw birdseed around. Everyone has a "thing" that makes them unique, and the Pigeon is feeling insecure because he doesn't know what his "thing" is yet.**

**It's a big conflict, and it's told with simple, connective, honesty:**

## **WILL THE PIGEON FIND HIS "THING"?**

# **DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL!**



## **HEY TEACHER!:**

**READ THE BOOK OUT LOUD WITH YOUR CLASS.**

*(A read along is also linked below).*

[https://youtu.be/n-dHeNfXtgc?si=urlMpjJSN9J\\_sJOE](https://youtu.be/n-dHeNfXtgc?si=urlMpjJSN9J_sJOE)

### **AFTER READING**

**IT THROUGH, TURN THROUGH THE PAGES AND:**

- **In this case, the author is also the illustrator. You can explain what that means.**
- **Point out that words in all capital letters and the use of exclamation points tell the reader to read those parts with more excitement and intensity.**
- **Look at the different faces that Pigeon makes. Ask the children what the different faces mean. Have them explain how they can tell.**
- **Ask the children how it made them feel that pigeon wanted them to help him do something that the grown up in the story didn't want him to do because it was not safe.**

**DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES. What are your responsibilities at home? How about at school? Do other kids have different responsibilities than you? Why does the driver say "no" to the pigeon? If the driver had let the pigeon drive, what might have happened?**

# Theater Vocabulary: From Script to Spotlight

**Play:** A story told live on stage by actors in front of a live audience.

**Musical:** A story told live on stage by actors in front of a live audience that also involves singing and dancing.

**Genre:** The style of a play.

**Plot:** The timeline of actions in the story from beginning to end.

**Setting:** Where a story takes place.

**Characters:** Who the story is about.

**Conflict:** A problem that the characters in the story have to face and overcome. A conflict arises when a character wants something but something else gets in their way.

**Objective:** What a character wants to achieve or solve in the story. In other words, a character's goal.

**Protagonist:** The story's *hero*. This is the character who is out to accomplish a goal or find purpose.

**Antagonist:** The story's *villain*. This character is usually against what the protagonist(s) needs to accomplish their objective or goal.

**Dialogue:** a conversation between two or more people in a play or musical.

**Blocking:** Movement the director give to the actors to show them where to go on the stage

**Choreography:** A sequence of dance moves assigned to a dancer in a musical number (song) that are used to help tell the story.

**Cue:** In theater, a cue signals when another action should begin. Ex: The actor's cue to enter the stage might be after they hear the thunder sound effect.

**Playwright:** The writer or writers of the play. Playwrights write the dialogue between characters in a play.

**Composer:** The artist who writes music for a musical.

**Lyricist:** the artist who writes words to the music in a musical.

**Actor:** the artist who embodies or puts themselves "in the shoes of" a character or characters in a play or musical to tell that character's story to the audience.

**Audience:** a group of people who attend a live event like a theatre performances to watch, listen, and respond to the event on stage.

**Director:** the artist who works with the writers, actors, and designers to tell a clear story on stage for the audience.

**Stage Manager:** The artist who manages the onstage and backstage areas before, during, and after a performance.

**Costume Design:** A costumer designer chooses and creates the articles of clothing that characters wear on stage to help tell the audience who the characters.

**Sound Designer:** an artist that creates the mood or atmosphere of the play through the use of sound, sound effects, and music in a play or musical.

**Props:** Objects used by a character on stage to help tell the story. Ex: A character may use a prop like an umbrella on stage if it is raining in that scene of the play.

# **DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL! WRITE ABOUT IT:**

Have you ever wanted to do something very badly,  
but weren't allowed?

What were some things that you wanted to do, but weren't allowed to do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel when you were told, "no?"

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think that you're not allowed to do these things that you want to do?

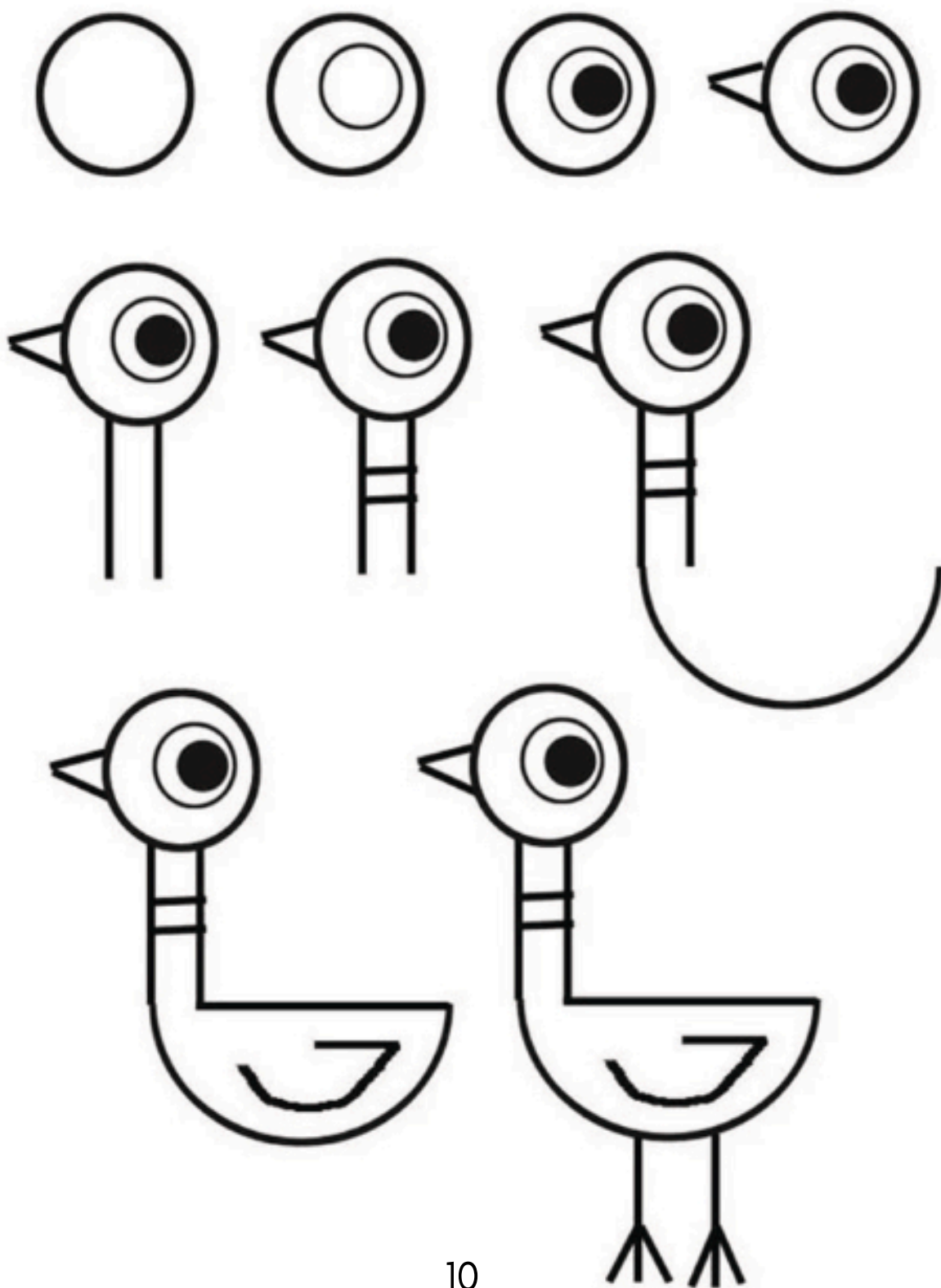
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of things do you say or do to try to make your (parent, teacher, babysitter) change their mind?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL!

**DRAW THE PIGEON! STEP-BY-STEP  
ON YOUR OWN PAPER:**



# DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS!

## THE MUSICAL!

### PIGEON FACTS

Pigeons have feathers, not fur. In addition to helping with flight, a pigeon's feathers provide a waterproof layer and act as an insulator so pigeons can maintain a high body temperature. (Pigeons have a body temperature of around 105 degrees Fahrenheit!) When it's cold outside, pigeons can reduce their exposure to the cold by tucking in their head and feet, sticking their feathers down and crouching.



Pigeons have monocular vision. This means that only one eye can take in the visual field at a time, unlike humans who have binocular vision and use both eyes to see the same visual field. Due to their monocular vision, they are able to focus on different objects out of each eye! Each eye has two foveae, the part of the retina that "sees" most clearly.

Pigeons can survive in diverse habitats. Pigeons are commonly found around barnyards, parks, and city buildings. In natural environments, pigeons usually occupy sea cliffs or caves. Originally native from Europe to North Africa and India, pigeons now live in wild or semi-wild conditions in cities all over the world, including most of North America. Pigeons prefer to roost (rest or sleep) and loaf (relax) on flat surfaces, like concrete, marble, and stone, because it mirrors their natural habitat of rocky shores and caves.

Pigeons use straw, sticks, stems, and leaves to build their nests.



Pigeons need a well-balanced diet. Wild pigeons and doves eat a variety of grains, seeds, greens, berries, and fruits, and will occasionally eat insects, snails, and earthworms. Pigeons need plenty of clean, fresh water at all times, and the average pigeon will eat a tenth of its body weight every day! Pigeons can eat seeds in captivity, but should not consume seeds only: finely chopped vegetables, greens, and fruit should be offered as part of a daily diet. Although pigeons are naturally herbivores, they have adapted over the years to eat a diverse range of foods and to rely heavily on food discarded by humans, including bread, rice and meat. While rice is safe for pigeons to consume, bread is less desirable because it offers zero nutritional value. All animals, humans included, need food that maximizes the nutrition they require. Avocado, apple seeds, chocolate, foods with high salt content, and foods with oil or caffeine should all be avoided.



Pigeons are smart! Pigeons are one of only a small number of species to pass the mirror test, which is a test of self-recognition. In the 1990s, there was an experiment that showed that pigeons can be trained to discriminate between paintings by Picasso and Monet. They can also recognize each letter of the human alphabet, differentiate between photographs, and even distinguish different humans within a photograph. Thanks to their unique homing ability, carrier pigeons have long played an invaluable role in war as military messengers and over 30 pigeons have been awarded medals for wartime bravery!



# DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL!

## CARING FOR A PET PIGEON

Using the information you read on the last page, record how you would take care of a pet pigeon:



Draw your pigeon:

My pigeon eats:

My pigeon drinks:

My pigeons habitat is...

My pigeon is so smart...

My pigeon is known for...

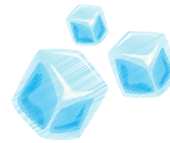
My pigeon should NOT eat:

# DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL!

## Opposite Words

Pigeon has many feelings during the story Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus.  
Can you draw a line to match each picture with its opposite trait?.

fast



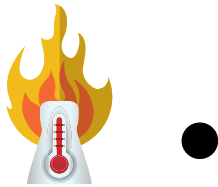
cold

long



back

hot



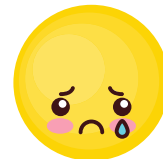
night

front



slow

full



sad

day



short

happy



empty



# DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS

## WORD SEARCH

Look for words that are hidden and circle them.  
Then write the words on the lines below.

E	B	R	P	I	G	E	O	N	P	A
Z	W	T	K	H	E	C	E	F	A	E
B	S	L	M	O	N	G	O	R	N	S
U	Y	R	B	T	I	I	M	A	I	A
S	U	D	R	D	G	E	L	N	C	P
A	D	S	L	O	N	P	K	U	X	F
K	R	R	I	G	E	D	R	I	V	E
V	E	I	C	L	T	D	K	K	L	Y
O	A	S	B	L	L	D	U	C	K	B
D	M	P	H	E	A	Y	K	N	T	A

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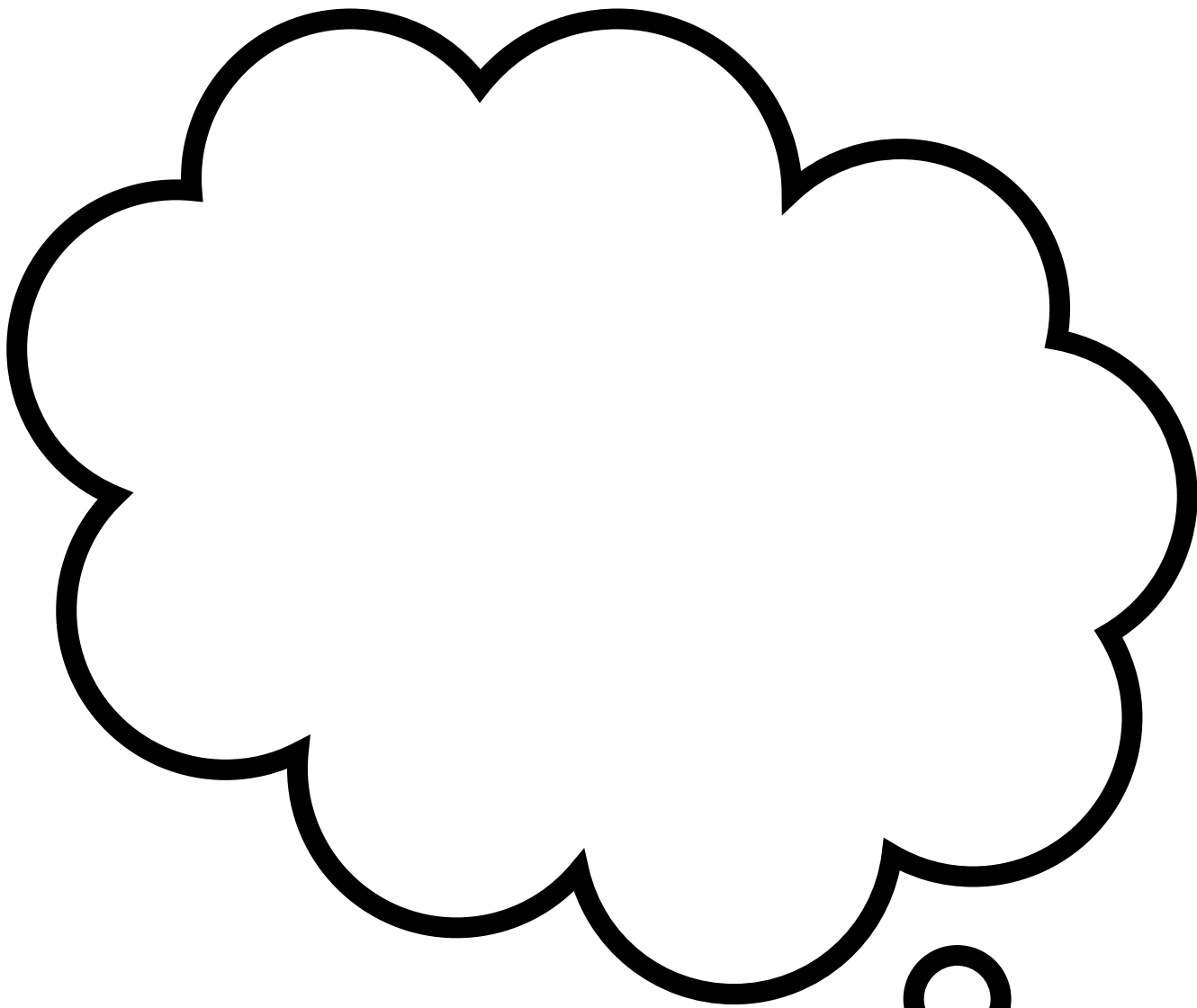
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Don't let the pigeon

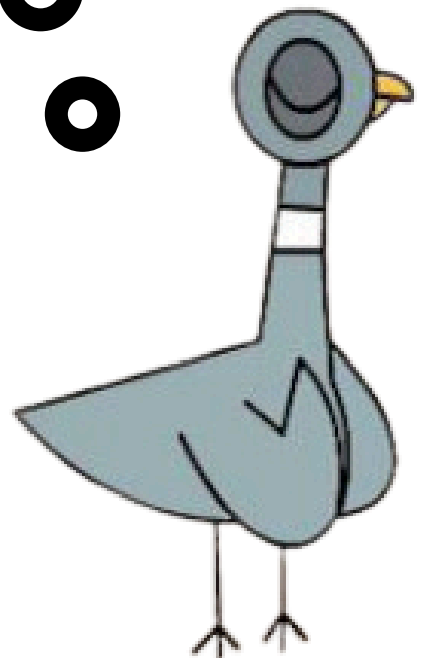
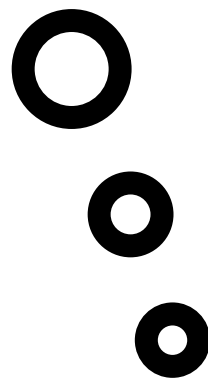
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_!

By:

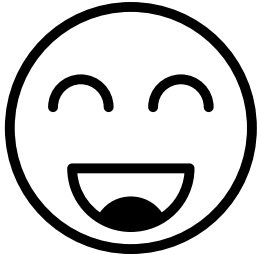


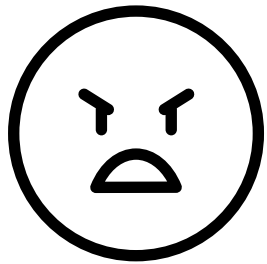
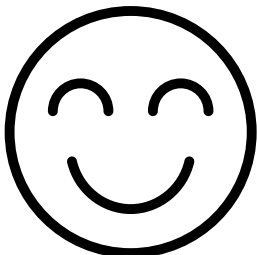
\_\_\_\_\_



# DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS! THE MUSICAL!

## Express your feelings like the PIGEON: SEL

Use your favorite colors to bring these emojis to life!  
Have fun expressing different feelings through colors. Remember, it's okay to feel all these emotions sometimes, and coloring can help you understand them better.

Emotion	Emoji	When do you feel like this?
Happy (Yellow)		
Sad (Blue)		
Surprised (Purple)		
Angry (Red)		
Calm (Green)		

# Post Show Cooperative Learning Opportunities

(Group Work Ideas for Teachers)



## 1. Group Reflection Circle

Sit together and share your favorite moments, characters, or songs from the performance. Encourage everyone to explain why they liked those parts.

*This builds listening skills and helps everyone appreciate different perspectives.*

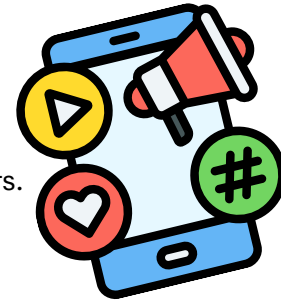


## 2. Create a Mini Review Together

Work as a team to write a short review of the show.

Assign roles: one person writes, another edits, others brainstorm key points.

You can post it on social media or keep it in a class journal.



## 3. Reenact a Scene

Pick a favorite scene and act it out as a group.

Add your own twist—maybe change the setting or improvise new dialogue.

*This sparks creativity and teamwork.*



## 4. Design a Poster or Program

Collaborate to create a poster or program for the performance you saw.

Include drawings, quotes, and fun facts.

*This is great for artistic expression and memory keeping.*



## 5. Plan a "Behind the Scenes" Discussion

Research how the performance was made (costumes, music, choreography).

Assign each group member a topic to present.

*This turns curiosity into a cooperative learning activity.*



# K-5 Student to Family Cooperative Activity Ideas:

- Create a home theater space: Dedicate a specific area in your home as a temporary theater space. It can be anywhere with a little bit of space to "put on a show". Create a cozy ambiance with lighting and comfortable seating.
- Create tickets and programs: Design and print them at home or even hand made. Deliver the tickets to family members, and the programs can include information about the performance, cast, and crew. This adds a touch of authenticity and excitement.
- Snack bar and concessions: Set up a snack bar or concessions stand with a variety of treats and refreshments. You can even create special themed snacks related to the performance you are watching.
- Interactive viewing experience: Encourage audience participation during the performance. For example, during a musical, you can sing along to the songs and clap during applause-worthy moments!
- Post-show discussions: After the performance, have a family discussion about the show. Share your thoughts, favorite moments, and discuss the themes or lessons portrayed. This can foster critical thinking and encourage creativity in your kids.
- **Remember, the goal is to create a memorable and immersive experience. Adapt these ideas based on your family's preferences and the resources available to you. The key is to have fun and enjoy the theater experience in your digs!**

## Additional Activity Ideas:



- Memory jars: Create a memory jar with your children. Write down favorite childhood memories on small pieces of paper and put them in a jar. Each week or month, take turns pulling out a memory and sharing it. This can spark conversations and lead to further discussions about your childhood experiences, and theirs too!
- Bedtime stories: Instead of reading traditional bedtime stories, take turns sharing personal stories from your childhood. These could be tales of adventure, funny incidents, or heartwarming experiences. This can create a strong bond between you and your children as you share personal narratives.
- Encourage your kids to create their own journals or scrapbooks to document their childhood memories. Take the opportunity to share your childhood stories as you help them with their own projects. You can even contribute by adding some of your own stories or mementos to their journals.
- What was your favorite song, band or genre growing up? Play a few songs for your child/children and let them play a few of their favorites for you!
- Create traditions with your child/children!: Establish special rituals or traditions that you can share. It could be a weekly movie night, cooking together on weekends, going for a walk after dinner, or singing at the top of your lungs before bedtime.

### **Standards Alignment: Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!**

**Standards Alignment:** The activities in this guide are aligned with the standards listed below. When teachers incorporate the arts, they increase student engagement, offer multiple points for students to access the curriculum, and provide alternate means for students to demonstrate what they know.

<b>Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.)</b>	
<b>Kindergarten through Grade 12/ English Language Arts</b>	
ELA.K12.EE.1.1	Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.
ELA.K12.EE.2.1	Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.
ELA.K12.EE.3.1	Make inferences to support comprehension.
ELA.K12.EE.4.1	Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
ELA.K12.EE.5.1	Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1	Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.
<b>Theater</b>	
TH.K.C.3.2	Share reactions to a live theatre performance.
TH.1. H.3.1	Identify similarities between plays and stories.
TH.2. O.3.1	Identify theatrical elements and vocabulary found in everyday life.