



Art © Mo Willems

THE **PIGEON** COMES TO

★ your city here ★

A **Mo Willems** EXHIBIT

Educator Guide

children's  
museum  
PITTSBURGH

# About the Exhibit

Ready to Get Seriously Silly?

We are too! Step on in to the whimsical world of Mo Willems and his cast of lovable characters, including best friend duo Elephant and Piggie, faithful companion Knuffle Bunny, and The Pigeon, the wily city bird best known for his antics in *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Here, simple stories inspire hours of play and reveal the rich emotional lives of Mo's characters. The challenges of growing up, like learning to make yourself understood or figuring out what it means to be a good friend, are gentle themes throughout. Along the way, children get to make their own art, surprises abound, and every exploration ends in fits of laughter!

The Exhibit focuses on the following books:

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* and other books in The Pigeon series

Elephant & Piggie series

*Knuffle Bunny* series

*Leonardo, the Terrible Monster* duet

*The Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*



## Visit Tips for Families

A pre-visit activity might include reading some of Mo Willems' books or visiting his website, [thepigeonpresents.com](http://thepigeonpresents.com) so children become familiar with the characters and materials they will see in the exhibit.

Please remember there is no right or wrong way to experience the exhibit. When possible follow children's leads with what they find most engaging as they move through the exhibit.

### Family Tips

"We create our work for children not because they're 'cute' but because they're human beings, deserving respect."  
- Mo Willems

Here are some tips that you might want to make available to families who will be visiting the exhibit.

*The Pigeon Comes to \*Your City Here\*: A Mo Willems Exhibit* is a place for families to spend time together exploring Mo Willems' books, characters, and creative process while playing and having conversations. The following are tips to consider to make the most of a visit:

**Slow down** and enjoy the exhibit. Don't feel the need to rush through and see everything; instead, take the time to talk together and experience the activities as a family.

**Revisit** and backtrack to a favorite element. There is no "right" way to move through the space.

**Ask questions** to understand how your children are interacting with the space and what they are feeling. Ask questions of the Museum staff and coplay with other families to discover new ways to enjoy the exhibit.

**Share** your experiences. What real world connection can you apply to what you are learning or doing.

**Focus** on the now. Turn off your phone, leave any stress and baggage at the door, and have some fun together!

# Visit Tips for Teachers

*The Pigeon Comes to \*Your City Here\*: A Mo Willems Exhibit* provides a place for educators to introduce children to Mo Willems' characters and learn through hands-on exploration of materials and drawing techniques.

You and your chaperones may find the following techniques helpful during your visit.

## Teacher Tips

**Plan ahead** by talking with Museum staff or exploring the website to learn more about the *The Pigeon Comes to \*Your City Here\*: A Mo Willems Exhibit* before you arrive. Think about your class needs and consider thoughtfully selecting components in the exhibit that will have the strongest impact. Consider telling them about the exhibit before you visit to help students get in the mindset to have meaningful reactions to the space.

**Read a book** by Mo Willems to introduce the characters to your class. Talk about the characters they might see at the exhibit.



**Agree on how much time** you have to enjoy the exhibit experience within your larger group. Then, if possible, divide into smaller groups of students, each accompanied by a teacher or chaperone to move through the exhibit.

**Slow down** and really enjoy an area before moving to the next. If you can, sit or kneel on the ground with your children in the area - this will help them know that it is okay to go slowly and linger. Once you feel that the majority are ready to visit the next area, let them know that you will move together to the next area within the exhibit.



**Ask questions** to find out what interests your group and how they are reacting to the exhibit.




**Ask questions of Museum staff.** They are there to help to you better understand how something works or the intent behind the different components.




# The Pigeon Arcade

Component	Activity	Related Books
<p><b>Hot Dog Launcher</b></p> 	<p>The Pigeon and Duckling both want your hot dog. Who should get it? Line up the launcher, take aim, and THWACK!—try to hit your favorite character. You can make it even more challenging by cranking a wheel to move the targets back and forth.</p>	<p><i>The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog</i></p>
<p><b>Cookie Plinko</b></p> 	<p>In this game of patience and coordination, pull carefully on the two handles to steer your precious cookie past the holes to give the Duckling a cookie—or send the cookie down the ramp to The Pigeon.</p>	<p><i>The Duckling Gets a Cookie</i></p>

# The Pigeon Palace Theater

Component	Activity	Related Books
<p><b>Flip Book Movies</b></p> 	<p>With these amazing flip boxes, you can turn a crank to make The Pigeon flap his wings. Faster! Faster! What emotions does he express? What does his body language tell you?</p>	<p>The Pigeon Series</p>
<p><b>Praxinoscope</b></p> 	<p>As you will see in this early form of animation, Elephant Gerald &amp; Piggie love to dance. Just spin the table top and look in the mirrors: the rapid succession of images creates the illusion of motion. Switch out the dance cards to animate Knuffle Bunny or mix and match your favorite characters.</p>	<p>The Pigeon Series, Elephant &amp; Piggie Series, <i>Leonardo the Monster</i>, <i>Knuffle Bunny</i>, <i>Naked Mole Rat</i></p>

The Bus Depot		
Component	Activity	Related Books
<p><b>Elephones</b></p> 	<p>We all know how much Elephant Gerald and Piggie love to talk to each other. With this magical phone booth, you can transform your voice into Gerald's—or Piggie's—for a hilarious conversation! Lift the receiver and say anything you want. You will sound just like Gerald (shy and bashful) or just like Piggie (happy and excited).</p>	<p>Elephant &amp; Piggie Series</p>
<p><b>Wearable Bus</b></p> 	<p>Welcome to the Bus Depot! Strap on a bus and drive through the exhibit, pulling up to all the bus stops along the way. There's even a big bus for grownups!</p>	<p>The Pigeon Series</p>
<p><b>The Bus</b></p> 	<p>Step inside a life-size version of the bus from <i>Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!</i> and dig into your favorite Mo Willems book. Sitting in the driver's seat makes for a perfect photo op!</p>	<p>The Pigeon Series</p>

Component	Activity	Related Books
<p><b>The Art Studio</b></p> 	<p>Learn to draw just like Mo Willems. In this flexible Art Studio, you can sketch his characters—or make up your own—at large drawings tables. Light tables let you practice tracing your favorite characters. Simple shapes can be assembled to create such expressive characters! Add color and take home your artwork or add it to the display.</p>	
<p><b>Where's Knuffle Bunny?</b></p> 	<p>Trixie and Daddy know Knuffle Bunny must be somewhere in the Laundromat, but where? You can help by turning the wheels of the washing machines and uncovering Knuffle Bunny and other funny surprises.</p>	<p>Knuffle Bunny Series</p>
<p><b>Thank-O-Rama</b></p> 	<p>In <i>The Thank You Book</i>, Piggie wants to thank everyone. But Gerald is worried Piggie will forget someone . . . someone important. Spin the Thank-O-Rama wheel to find out whom you could thank. Then, write a thank you note and add it to the wall. Do it again and again. Now you are a thanking machine!</p>	<p><i>The Thank You Book</i></p>

Component	Activity	Related Books
<p><b>Monster Blocks</b></p> 	<p>Leonardo is truly a terrible monster—terrible at being a monster, that is. Can you build a better monster? Stack the blocks to create a monster or a funny new friend.</p>	<p><i>Leonardo, the Terrible Monster</i></p>
<p><b>Naked Mole Rat Fashion Show</b></p> 	<p>Wilbur loves to dress up! Choose a fabulous outfit for him and his Naked Mole Rat pals, then crank the handle to set the conveyor belt in motion. Now they're heading down the runway!</p>	<p><i>Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed</i></p>
<p><b>Mo's Art Gallery</b></p> 	<p>Want to learn more about how Mo Willems creates his books? This special exhibition of 20 framed reproductions of his drawings and sketches illuminates the evolution of his most popular characters.</p>	
<p><b>Wait and See Cartoon Experience</b></p> 	<p>In this special adaptation of the book <i>Waiting Is Not Easy!</i>, Piggie has a surprise for Elephant Gerald, but he is going to have to wait for it. And Wait. And wait some more. This is very hard for Gerald! The three-minute film, which runs on a loop, is an original production included in the exhibition.</p>	<p>The film is an original production that can be shown at your venue with the exhibition.</p>

## About Mo's Books

Book descriptions from: <http://pigeonpresents.com/books/>

### **Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!**

2004 Caldecott Honor

Finally, a book you can say “no” to!

When the Bus Driver takes a break from his route, a very unlikely volunteer springs up to take his place—a pigeon! But you’ve never met a pigeon like this one before. As The Pigeon pleads, wheedles, and begs his way through the book, readers answer back and decide his fate. Mo Willems’ hilarious picture book debut was a Caldecott Honor book and was inducted into the Picture Book Hall of Fame.

Other Pigeon books: *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!* (2004), *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!* (2006), *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!* (2008), *The Duckling Gets a Cookie!*? (2012), *The Pigeon Needs a Bath!* (2014)

### **Elephant & Piggie Series**

The Elephant & Piggie books, a series of beginning readers, were awarded the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal in 2008 and 2009, and Geisel Honors in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Elephant Gerald is careful. Piggie is not. Piggie cannot help smiling. Gerald can. Gerald worries so that Piggie does not have to. Gerald and Piggie are best friends.

Elephant & Piggie books: There are 25 books in the series.

These titles inspired the exhibit: *Elephants Cannot Dance* (2009), *Can I Play Too?* (2010), *Waiting Is Not Easy!* (2014), *The Thank You Book* (2016).

## More About Mo's Books

### **Knuffle Bunny**

2005 Caldecott Honor Book

Trixie, Daddy, and Knuffle Bunny take a trip to the neighborhood Laundromat. But the exciting adventure takes a dramatic turn when Trixie realizes somebunny was left behind . . .

Using a combination of muted black-and-white photographs and expressive illustrations, this stunning book tells a brilliantly true-to-life tale about what happens when Daddy's in charge and things go terribly, hilariously wrong.

Other Knuffle Bunny books: *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity* (2007), *Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion* (2010).

### **Leonardo, the Terrible Monster**

Leonardo is truly a terrible monster—terrible at being a monster, that is. Despite his best efforts, he can't seem to frighten anyone. But when Leonardo discovers the perfect nervous little boy, will he finally scare the tuna salad out of someone? Or will he think of something even better?

Other Leonardo books: *Sam, the Most Scaredy-cat Kid in the Whole World* (2017).

### **Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed**

2009 Parents' Choice Gold Award

Wilbur is different from the other naked mole rats in his colony: *he* wears clothes (and he likes it!). But what will happen when Grand-pah, the oldest, wisest, and most naked naked mole rat ever discovers Wilbur's secret?

# About Mo's Characters

From <http://pigeonpresents.com/pals/>

## The Pigeon

The Pigeon will be your best friend—if you have a bus and you let him drive it.

**Birthday**

April 1st

**Best Friend**

The Pigeon

**Favorite Color**

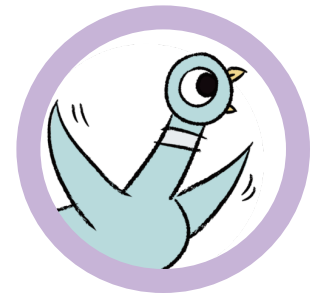
Pigeon Blue

**Food I like best**

Hot dogs

**Hobby**

Getting what I want!



## The Duckling

The Duckling always asks politely for what she wants . . . and gets it! Cookies! Hot dogs! She gets everything and The Pigeon is not happy about it.

**Birthday**

November 28

**Best Friend**

The Bus Driver

**Favorite Color**

Yellow

**Food I Like Best**

Chocolate-chip cookies  
(no nuts, please)

**Hobby**

Being adorable



## Elephant Gerald

Elephant Gerald is careful. His best friend Piggie is not. Gerald worries so that Piggie does not have to.

**Birthday**

February 5

**Best Friend**

Piggie

**Favorite Color**

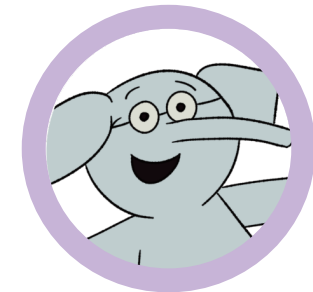
Pink

**Food I like best**

Quiche

**Hobby**

Safety monitor



## Piggie

Piggie cannot help smiling. Her best friend Gerald can.

Piggie is always ready for a new adventure, especially when Elephant Gerald is ready to play, too!

**Birthday**

May 2

**Best Friend**

Elephant Gerald

**Favorite color**

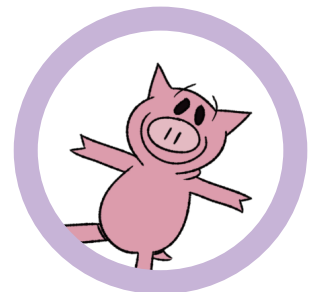
Pink

**Food I Like Best**

Bubble gum and slop

**Hobby**

Dancing

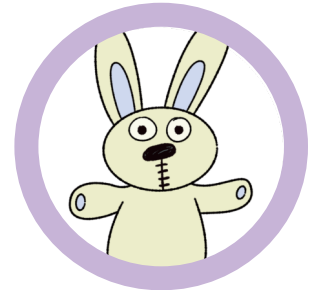


# About Mo's Characters

## Knuffle Bunny

Knuffle Bunny is Trixie's stuffed bunny and her best friend in the whole world. Trixie's first words were "Knuffle Bunny!"

<b>Birthday</b>	June 18
<b>Best Friend</b>	Trixie
<b>Favorite Color</b>	Yellow
<b>Food I Like Best</b>	Lint
<b>Hobby</b>	Hugging



## Leonardo

Leonardo is a terrible monster—terrible at being a monster, that is. Leonardo can't seem to scare the tuna salad out of anyone . . . until he meets Sam, the most scaredy-cat kid in the whole world.

<b>Birthday</b>	October 31
<b>Best friend</b>	Sam
<b>Favorite Color</b>	Orange
<b>Food I like best</b>	Tuna salad
<b>Hobby</b>	Reading Scaring People Magazine



## Sam

Sam is the most scaredy-cat kid in the whole world! He's scared of anything and everything. (Except for his friend, Leonardo, the Terrible Monster!)

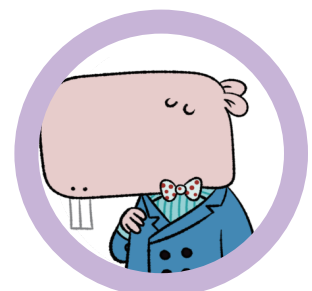
<b>Birthday</b>	January 17
<b>Best Friend</b>	Leonardo
<b>Favorite Color</b>	Eggplant
<b>Food I like best</b>	Tuna Salad
<b>Hobby</b>	Being scared



## Wilbur, the Naked Mole Rat

Wilbur is no ordinary naked mole rat. Wilbur is a naked mole rat who likes to wear clothes!

<b>Birthday</b>	April 15
<b>Best Friend</b>	Grand-pah
<b>Favorite Color</b>	Silk yellow
<b>Food I like best</b>	Salad, with dressing
<b>Hobby</b>	Accessorizing



# About Mo Willems

From <http://pigeonpresents.com/mo/>

<b>Birthday</b>	February 11
<b>Best Friend</b>	My wife
<b>Favorite</b>	Color Rust
<b>Food I Like Best</b>	Kimchi
<b>Hobby</b>	Doodling

## Biography

From <http://mowillemsfaq.blogspot.com/2007/10/q-can-you-give-me-your-biography.html>

#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. During his nine seasons at "Sesame Street", Mo also served as a weekly commentator for BBC Radio and created two animated series, Nickelodeon's "The Off-Beats" and Cartoon Network's "Sheep in the Big City".

While serving as head writer for Cartoon Network's #1 rated show, "Codename: Kids Next Door", 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. The following year *Knuffle Bunny: a Cautionary Tale* was awarded a Caldecott Honor. The sequel, *Knuffle Bunny Too: a Case of Mistaken Identity* garnered Mo his third Caldecott Honor in 2008.

In addition to picture books, Mo created the Elephant and Piggie books, a series of "Easy Readers," which were awarded the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal in 2008 and 2009 and Geisel Honors in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. For older audiences he has published an illustrated memoir of his year-long trip around the world in 1990-91 entitled *You Can Never Find a Rickshaw When it Monsoons* and *Don't Pigeonhole Me!*, a collection of 20 years of his annual sketchbooks. His books have been translated into over 20 languages.

Mo's drawings, wire sculptures, and sculpture have exhibited in numerous galleries and museums across the nation, including major retrospectives at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, MA, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA, The New-York Historical Society, The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, and the Seongnam Arts Center in Seoul, South Korea. His graphic story about his family experiences during 9-11 for DC comics resides in the Library of Congress' permanent collection.

## More About Mo Willems

Mo has been heard on NPR's All Things Considered, where he briefly served as the broadcast's "Radio Cartoonist." Mo voices and produces animated cartoons based on his books with Weston Woods studios which have been screened at festivals around the world and won Best Film during the New York International Children's Film Festival and 3 Carnegie Medals from the American Library Association.

Mo has written the script and lyrics for *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical* and *Elephant and Piggie's WE ARE IN A PLAY!* Both plays commissioned by and debuted at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and consistently run in productions around the nation. His rock opera, NAKED MOLE RAT GETS DRESSED, premiered at the Seattle Children's Theater in 2018.

His monumental sculpture, The Red Elephant, can be viewed in the courtyard of The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art.

Mo lives in Massachusetts with his family.