



Art © Mo Willems

**SCRIPT BY MO WILLEMS AND MR. WARBURTON**  
**LYRICS BY MO WILLEMS**  
**MUSIC BY DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA**

**A STUDY GUIDE**  
**COMPILED BY LIV FASSANELLA**

**★PLAYHOUSE**  
**THEATRE GROUP, INC.**

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# A NOTE FOR STUDENTS

**Teachers:** Read this out loud, and feel free to make it into a discussion.

**Example:** What should we not let the pigeon do while we watch the show?



In a few days you will be attending a production of **Don't Let The Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!** at Playhouse on Park. Some of you may have attended performances of live theatre before, and for others, this may be a new experience.

Use the restroom before the show. There is no intermission during the performance!

When you arrive at the theatre, you will walk through the lobby and into the theatre, where you will each be assigned a seat in the audience. Soon after that, the lights will get dark, and the show will begin!

This show is a musical, so you will see live actors singing, acting, and dancing. Please be quiet and focused throughout the production so you do not disturb others in the audience or the performers onstage. Please only ask to go to the bathroom if it is an emergency, and try to leave between songs or scenes if possible. You may quietly return when an usher or a teacher says that it is a good time. We do not allow photography, texting, ringing cell phones, or any noisy distractions, so students, please remind your teachers to please make sure that all electronic devices are silenced and put away before entering the theatre at the start of the show!

Now that we've gotten what you can't do out of the way, there are many things that we hope you will do! We would love to hear applause after a song and at the end of the show. We hope to hear you laugh if something is funny, and participate when the actors ask for your help. At the end of the show the actors will bow. Just as you thank the actors by clapping, bows are the actors' way of thanking you for watching. If you really love the show, feel free to stand up while you are clapping during the bows to give the actors an extra special thank you! This is called a **standing ovation!**

**Remember to laugh, clap and have a good time!**

# THEATRICAL TERMS

The world of **Theatre** comes with a lot of fun terms to describe the various roles people perform and the things done! You may hear some of these terms when you come to the Playhouse or maybe you have heard them before!

Work together to figure out what these theatre terms mean



**ACTOR/ACTRESS**  
**DIRECTOR**  
**REHEARSAL**  
**BACKSTAGE**  
**DRESSING ROOM**  
**GREEN ROOM**  
**PROP**  
**SWING**  
**STANDING OVATION**  
**BREAK A LEG**





# DEFINITIONS

- **Actor/Actress** - Someone who performs in a show. Also known as a performer.
- **Director** - Someone who will tell the actors and actresses what to do while the rehearsing of a show. The director also helps the designers in making the show come to life!
- **Rehearsal** - When everyone gets together to learn their roles, study their lines, block the scenes and get the show ready to perform!
- **Backstage** - This is the area behind the stage or behind the curtain where the actors wait for when it's their time to go on stage.
- **Dressing Room** - Where the actors get dressed and ready for the show.
- **Green Room** - A waiting room for actors before, during or after a performance.
- **Prop** - Things that are used by actors and actresses on stage
- **Swing** - An actor or actress who studies all the roles in the show so if someone gets sick or injured, they go on in their place! It's a very exciting and very important role!
- **Standing Ovation** - When an audience really loves a performance, at the end, they will rise from their seats and clap and cheer for the performers!
- **Break a Leg** - A way of saying "Good Luck!" to a performer! The theatre community can be a superstitious bunch! Performers believed saying "good luck" would actually bring bad luck on stage, so they'd tell one another to "break a leg" instead. That way, the opposite would happen. Instead of breaking a leg, the performer would put on a flawless performance.

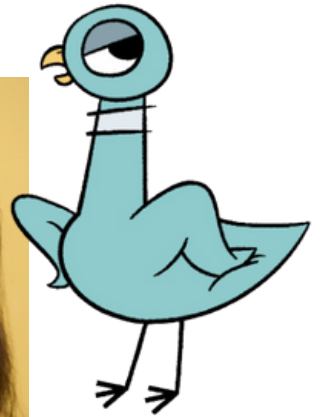
# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST?



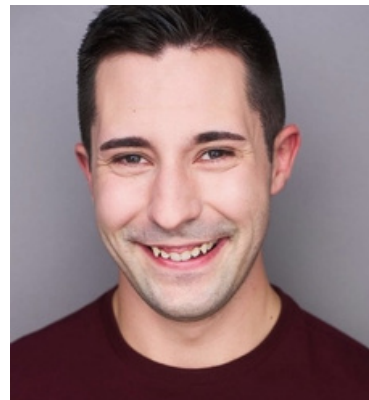
**Evan Blackwell**  
(Business Man, Hot Dog Vendor,  
& Others)



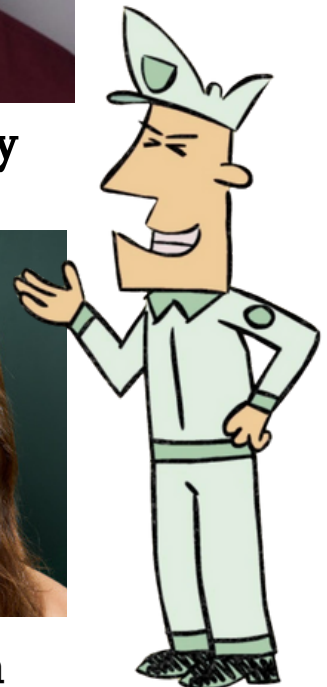
**Rachel Brudner**  
(Duckling, Bus Engine, &  
Others)



**Jeremiah Burch**  
(Teenager, City Worker, & Others)



**Logan Farley**  
(Pigeon)



**Chelsea Majors**  
(Bus Driver)



**Rachel Roth**  
(Little Old Lady & Others)



# WHO WORKS ON THE SHOW?

It truly takes a team to create the magic of a show! Every production relies on a group of talented people working together, both on stage and behind the scenes. Here are some of the important jobs people do to make it all happen:

**Director:** The director is like the captain of the ship! They guide the actors by helping them understand their characters, decide where to stand or move during a scene, and explore how to say their lines to tell the story in the best way. For musicals, there's also a music director, who helps the actors learn and perform the songs beautifully.

**Choreographer:** The choreographer creates all the fun and exciting dances you see in the show! They think up the moves, teach them to the actors, and work with the rest of the team to make sure the dances fit perfectly into the story.

**Designers:** Designers are the creative minds who imagine how things will look on stage. They design the sets, costumes, lights, and props. Some designers even help make these elements to bring the world of the play or musical to life!

**Stage Managers:** Stage managers are the show's organizers and problem-solvers. They make rehearsal schedules, ensure everyone knows where to be, and keep everything running smoothly so the show can go on without a hitch.

**Carpenters and Tech Crew:** Carpenters help build the set—the walls, floors, and other parts of the stage world. After the show is over, they carefully take it apart too. The tech crew helps with everything else, like hanging lights, setting up microphones, and fixing things during the performances to make sure the show looks and sounds amazing!

# WHO WROTE THE SHOW?

## MO WILLEMS

Mo Willems is an author, illustrator, animator, and playwright. He continues to collaborate in creating fun new stuff involving classical music, opera, comedy concerts, dance, painting and digital works.

Willems is best known for his #1 New York Times bestselling picture books, which have been awarded three Caldecott Honors (*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*; *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*; *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*), and his celebrated *Elephant and Piggie* early reader series, which has been awarded two Theodor Geisel Medals and five Geisel Honors.

Mo's art has been exhibited around the world, including major solo retrospectives at the High Museum (Atlanta) and the New-York

Historical Society (NYC). Over the last decade, Willems has become the most produced playwright of Theater for Young Audiences in America, having written or co-written four musicals based on his books.

He began his career as a writer and animator on PBS' *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards (writing). Other television work includes two series on Cartoon Network: *Sheep in the Big City* (creator + head writer) and *Codename: Kids Next Door* (head writer). Mo's recent TV projects include the live action comedy special *Don't Let the Pigeon Do Storytime!* and an animated rock opera special based on *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, which originally premiered on HBO Max. In April 2023, Mo will celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* with the publication of *Be the Bus: The Lost & Profound Wisdom of The Pigeon* (Union Square Kids, April 4, 2023), a humor book for adults, and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! 20th Anniversary Edition* (Hyperion Books for Children, April 4, 2023) including an exclusive board game. His papers reside at Yale University's Beinecke Library.





# WHO ELSE WROTE THE SHOW?

## MR. WARBURTON (BOOK)

Thomas Edward Warburton (born July 23, 1968), better known as Mr. Warburton, is an American animator, producer, screenwriter, and character designer. He is best known for creating the animated television series *Codename: Kids Next Door*. He also created the animated short *Kenny and the Chimp*. He is also the author of the book *A Thousand Times No.*<sup>[1][2]</sup> Since moving to Los Angeles in 2009, he has worked at Disney Television Animation serving as creative director on *Fish Hooks*, co-executive producer on *The 7D* and executive producer on *Muppet Babies*.



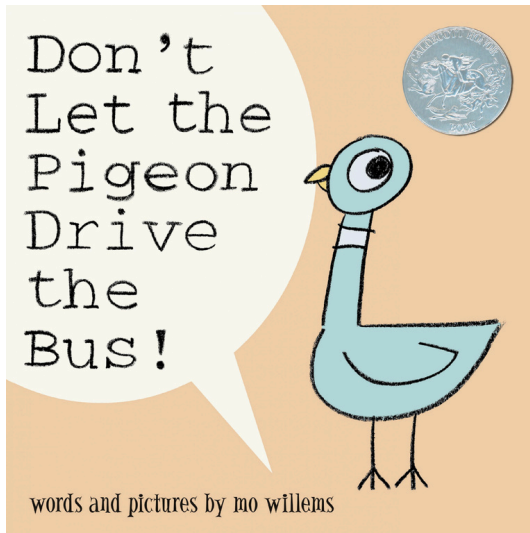
## DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA (MUSIC)

Deborah Wicks La Puma is a composer, music director, and orchestrator. She is one of most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today, with her work being seen across the globe and enjoying both popular and critical success. Her works include "She Persisted: The Musical" (Based on the book by Chelsea Clinton, at Bay Area Children's Theatre) with Adam Tobin; "Elephant and Piggie's: We are in a Play!" (New Victory Theatre), "Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience" (Seattle Children's Theatre) and "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus" (Kennedy Center) with bestselling author Mo Willems. With playwright Karen Zacarias she created "Ella Enchanted" (First Stage Milwaukee, based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), "OLIVÉRio: A Brazilian Twist" (Kennedy Center), "Frida Libre" (La Jolla Playhouse), and "Einstein Is a Dummy" (Alliance Theatre). Other favorite projects include "Nobody's Perfect", a bilingual musical in English and American Sign Language, with creators Marlee Matlin and Doug Cooney, and "Perdida", a Mexican folk musical based on Shakespeare's

"Winters Tale", with Salt Lake Acting Company's playwright-in-residence Kathleen Cahill. Her film scoring work with HBOmax includes "Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Underground Rock Experience" and the upcoming series "Unlimited Squirrels". Musical arranging credits include the TYA hits "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever", Mo Willems' "Knuffle Bunny", Ken Ludwig's "Tom Sawyer", and Joan Cushing's "Petite Rouge".



# THE BOOK!



“When a 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 one like this before. As he pleads, wheedles, and begs his way through the book, children will love being able to answer back and decide his fate.”

**Take this time to read the book, or [click here](#) to watch the animated read aloud!**

## **Discussion questions:**

Should the pigeon be allowed to drive the bus? Why or why not?

Have you ever not gotten what you wanted? How did that make you feel?

How should or shouldn't you ask for something you want?

How should you react if you don't get what you want?

How should you react if you DO get what you want?

What is the difference between a need and a want?

## MORE WAYS TO ENGAGE

C'mon,  
say it  
loud:  
LET ME  
DRIVE THE  
BUS!!!!!"



### ACT IT OUT:

Have your group stand up and act out the pigeon's role, emulating his dialogue and especially his body language as he shifts through a masterful range of emotions. He is eager, hopeful, cajoling, annoyed, joyful, deflated, doubtful, exasperated, and finally erupts into a full-blown tantrum: "LET ME DRIVE THE BUS!!!" Examine and analyze that wonderfully evocative tantrum page, with the explosive yellow and black lettering, feathers flying, and six images of Pigeon having a meltdown, and then ask your actors to re-create the scene. Ask them if they can recall ever having a tantrum and what it felt like.

### GET TO KNOW THE PIGEON:

With your children, compile a list of words that describe each of his emotions. Next, list words that describe the pigeon's personality. They can draw a picture of the pigeon to go along with one or more of those words. Examine the illustrations and describe how the pigeon's face was drawn to express each emotion.

I like  
sunsets,  
long walks  
on the beach,  
and driving  
buses ...



Dear Mr.  
Bus Driver,  
How are you?  
How is  
your bus?  
Your friend,  
Pigeon



### WRITE ABOUT IT:

For older children, what is this? It's a monologue, though one that encourages you, the person on the outside of the story, to interact and respond. Read the story aloud again and have children answer each of the pigeon's entreaties out loud (or in writing), giving a variety of good reasons for each response. What a fabulous showcase for persuasive writing, one of the many forms writing teachers introduce and model! Ask your students to write a persuasive letter to the bus driver, with clear reasons why the pigeon should, or should not, be allowed to drive. Or have them write to the pigeon himself.



## MORE WAYS TO ENGAGE

### PERSONAL NARRATIVE WRITING:

Ask your listeners: What do you do when your parents say no? Write about a time you tried to talk your parents into letting you do something. What arguments did you use? What did they say? Were you successful or not? What happened? Have them do a Quick Write describing their experience, and then share their stories aloud.

### PREDICTING OUTCOMES:

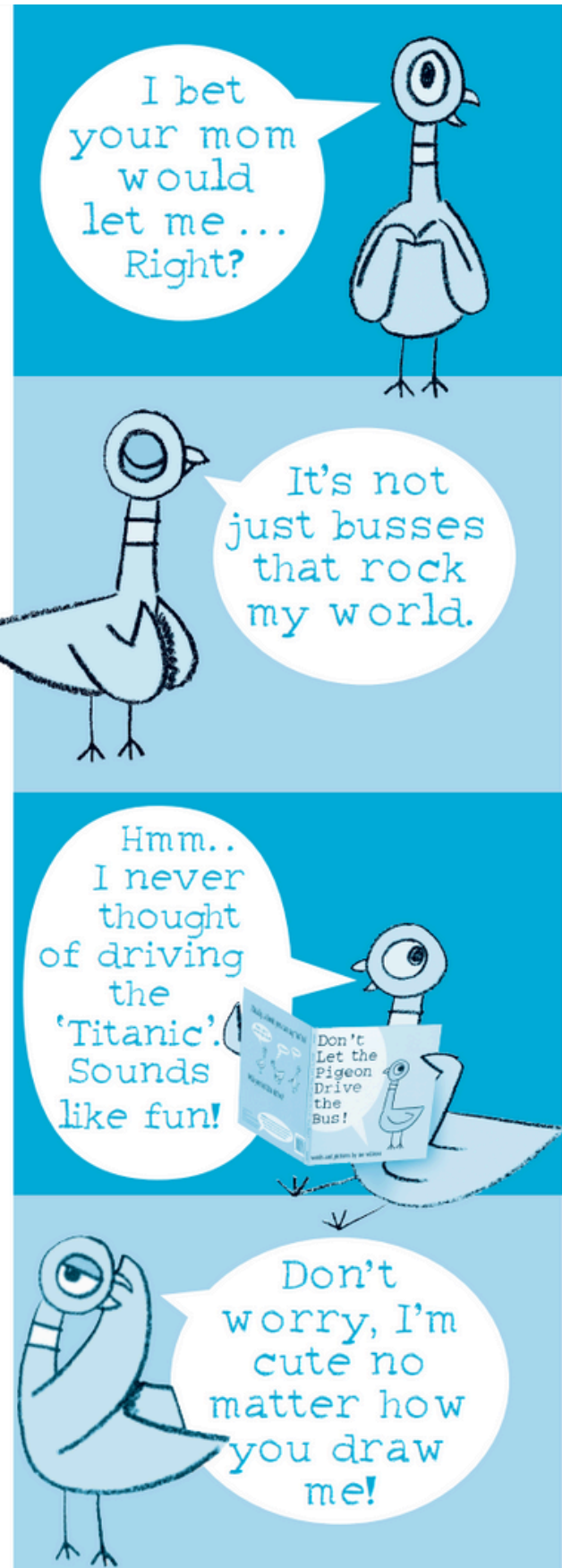
When you come to the end, where the pigeon turns and sees the enormous red tractor trailer truck and says "Hey ..." ask your group to predict what the pigeon will do next. (The back endpaper shows him, once again, dreaming, rapturously, of driving that semi.) One question the pigeon never answers is WHY he wants to drive the bus or truck. So children can write and illustrate his reasons from his point of view: "I, Pigeon, want to drive the bus because ..."

### WRITE NEW ADMONITIONS:

Children can write and illustrate new cautionary sentences, starting with, "Don't let the pigeon . . ." (One student wrote, "Don't let the pigeon drive the *Titanic*.") Or have them finish the sentence: "Don't let the pigeon drive the bus BECAUSE . . ." They will come up with all sorts of interesting reasons. Be sure to have crayons available so they can get Pigeon's coloring just right. They can add his comments in dialogue balloons.

### WRITE AND ILLUSTRATE SEQUELS:


*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Tractor Trailer Truck!* is one possibility for a sequel, of course. Using dialogue balloons, kids can sketch the pigeon trying to talk his way into that or yet another forbidden activity. Students can fold a large piece of drawing paper in half three times, which will give them eight boxes to develop a new story line. Or have each child contribute one page and compile a class book.





# Draw Me!


## FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

**1.** Start with a big letter O. (It appears in words like "Mo"!) 


**2.** Now draw a smaller letter O inside of it. (You've drawn a doughnut!) 


**3.** Next, you have a choice between two letters—M or W—but draw the letter on its side. (You made a beak!) 


**4.** We're going to place the eye next, which is the most important part of the drawing, because the eye shows how the character is feeling. Make sure to darken it in. (You always look at the darkest part of a drawing first!) 

**5.** Draw two lines going straight down for the neck. 

**6.** Next, draw two lines across the neck for the collar. 

**7.** The body is a circ-angle—a triangle and a circle combined. (It kind of looks like an ice cream cone that's fallen over.) 

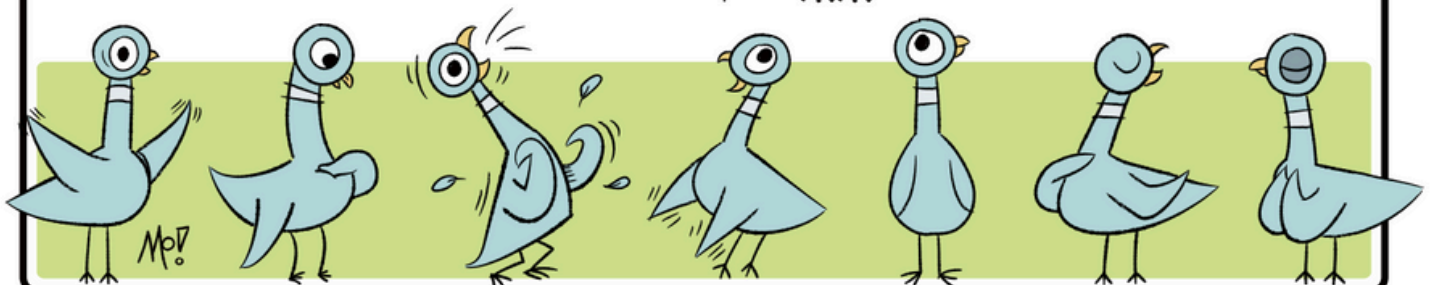
**8.** The legs are two more lines straight down from the body. (Just like the neck!) 

**9.** Almost done! Draw the letter V three times. The first two are upside down for the feet. The third is on its side in the body for the wing. 

### FINISHED!

Great job! That's an awesome Pigeon!

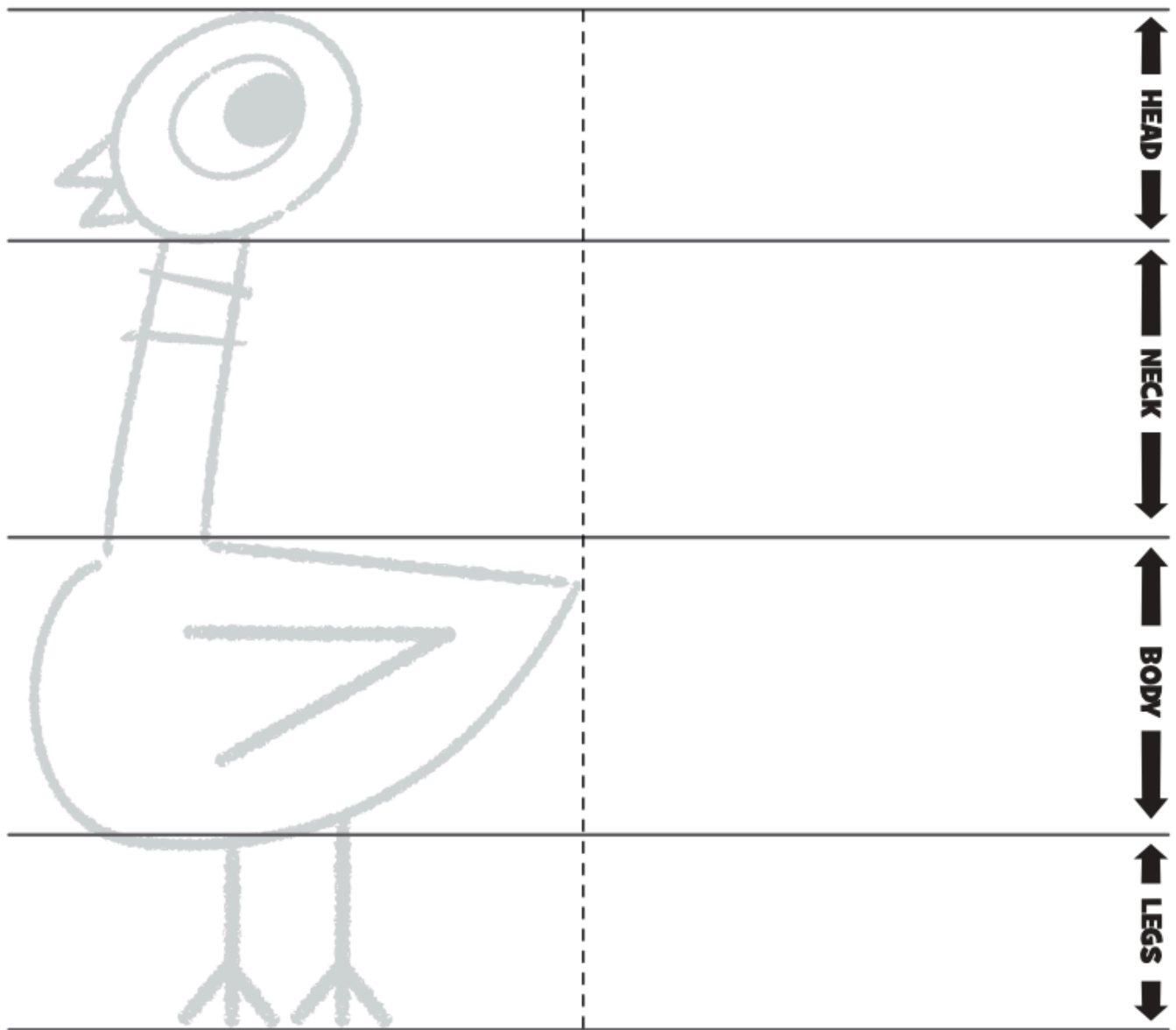
Once you've gotten the basic drawing down, mix it up. Move The Pigeon's beak, wings, eye, or legs to create lots of funny poses!



Art © Mo Willems

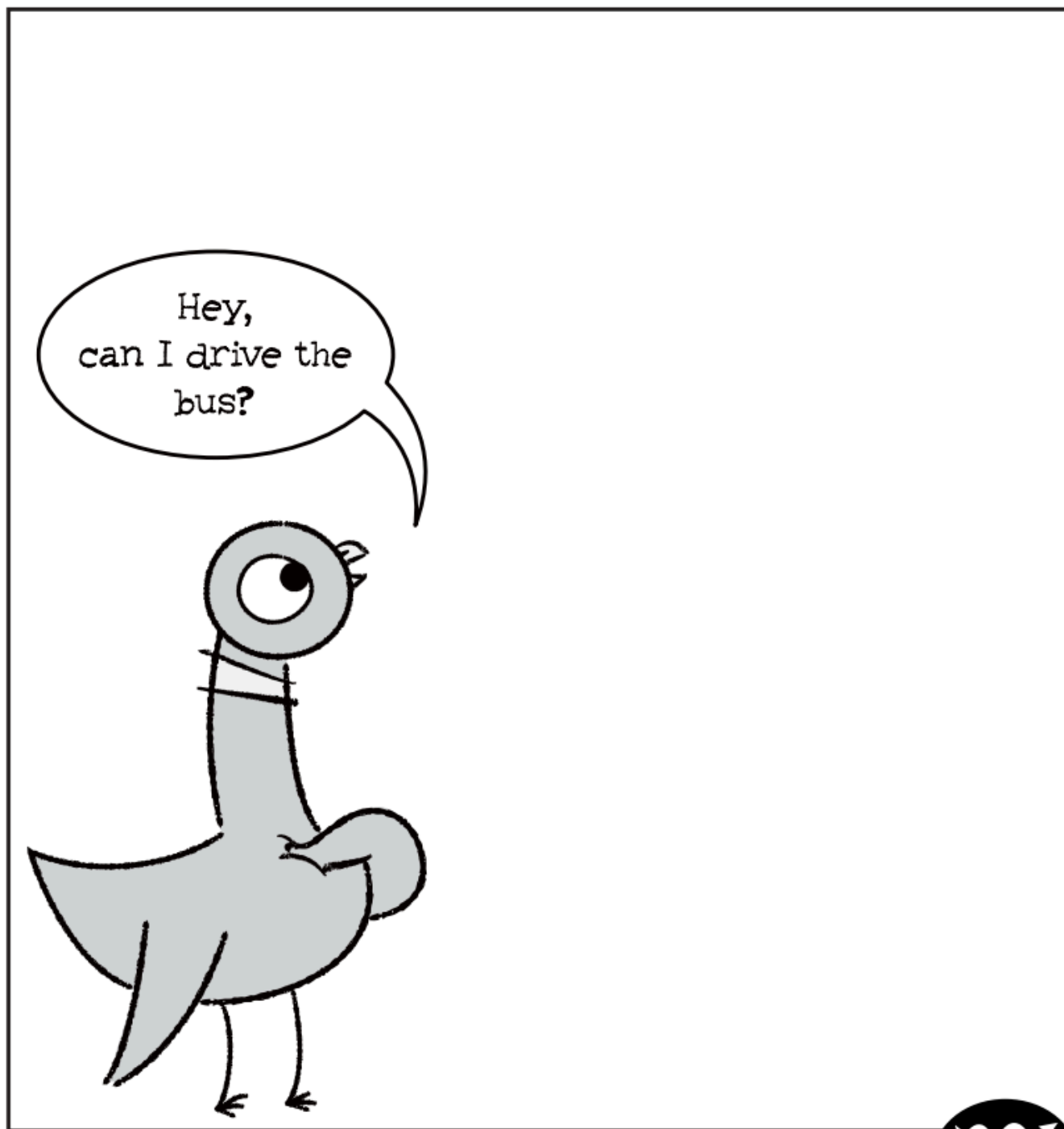
# Practice Drawing the Pigeon

Use the guide on the left to draw your first pigeon, then draw the next one by yourself on the right!



# What Would **YOU** Tell the Pigeon?

What would you say if the Pigeon asked **YOU** if he could drive the bus?  
Draw yourself and your response below!





**For Older Kids:**

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF PUPPETRY**

## **FROM PUBBETS.NET**

Puppetry has been used as a form of entertainment, art, and even political commentary. Though the specific origins of puppetry are lost to history, we do know that the art form has been used for thousands of years to entertain, educate, and enlighten people of all ages.

The first recorded mention of puppets dates back to the 4th century BC, when Aristotle wrote about them in his treatise "On the Soul."

However, it is believed that puppets were being used long before that. In fact, some archaeologists believe that ancient cave paintings depict stick figures being manipulated in a way that is similar to modern-day puppetry!

The first known puppet show was performed in Greece in the 5th century BC. This type of performance was called "pantomime," which comes from the Greek words for "all" and "mimesis," meaning imitative behavior. These shows were often humorous or satirical, and they frequently commented on current events or political figures.

The word "puppet" comes from the Latin word "puppis," which means "little girl." Puppets were originally used in religious ceremonies and ritualistic dances. Some historians believe that puppets may have even been used in ancient Egypt to perform magic tricks.

The first recorded use of puppets in a theatrical setting was in Greece in the 5th century BCE. Though these early Greek puppet shows were probably quite different from the shows we see today, they laid the foundation for the development of modern puppetry.

During the Middle Ages, puppeteers were often regarded with suspicion and fear. Many believed that puppetry was associated with black magic and devil worship. As a result, puppeteers were often persecuted by religious authorities. In England, puppet shows were banned entirely from 1469 to 1570. It wasn't until the Renaissance that puppetry began to be seen as a legitimate form of entertainment once again.

Throughout the centuries, puppets have taken many different forms. In China, for example, shadow puppetry is a popular form of entertainment. In this type of puppetry, flat figures made of leather or cardboard are held between a screen and a light source to create the illusion of three-dimensional beings. Indian puppet shows often feature string marionettes, while Punch and Judy shows—a type of English folk theater—utilize hand Puppets.



Puppets have been entertaining people for thousands of years. Though they've taken many different forms over the centuries, they all share one common goal: to make us laugh, cry, think, and dream. The next time you see a puppet show, take a moment to appreciate this unique and fascinating art form.





# Let's Make Pigeon and Duckling Finger Puppets!

Just follow these simple steps. **You will need:**



CRAYONS

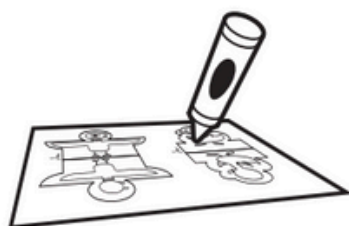


SCISSORS

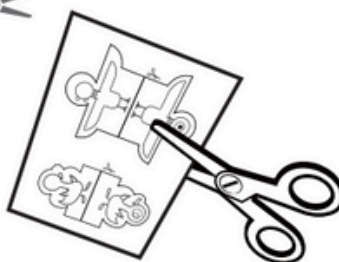


TAPE

- 1** Color the puppets on the next page.



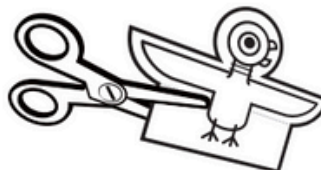
- 2** Cut along the dashed lines to cut out the puppets.



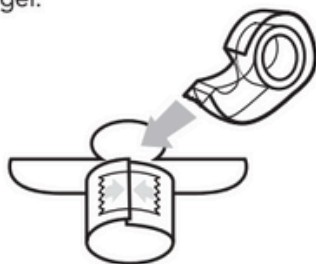
- 3** Fold each puppet in half along the black solid line.



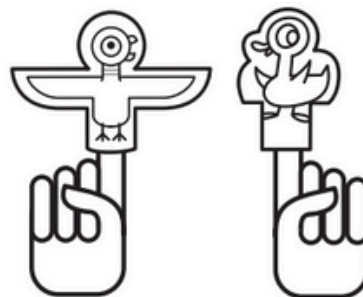
- 4** Cut along the dotted lines.



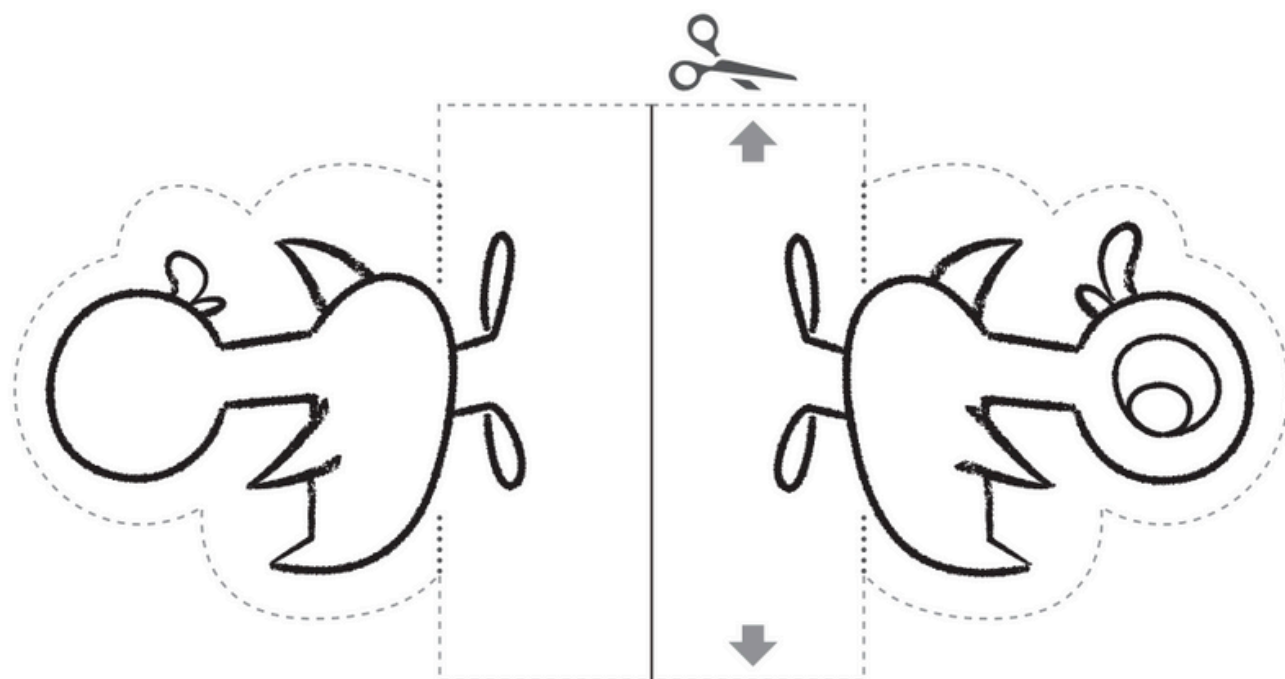
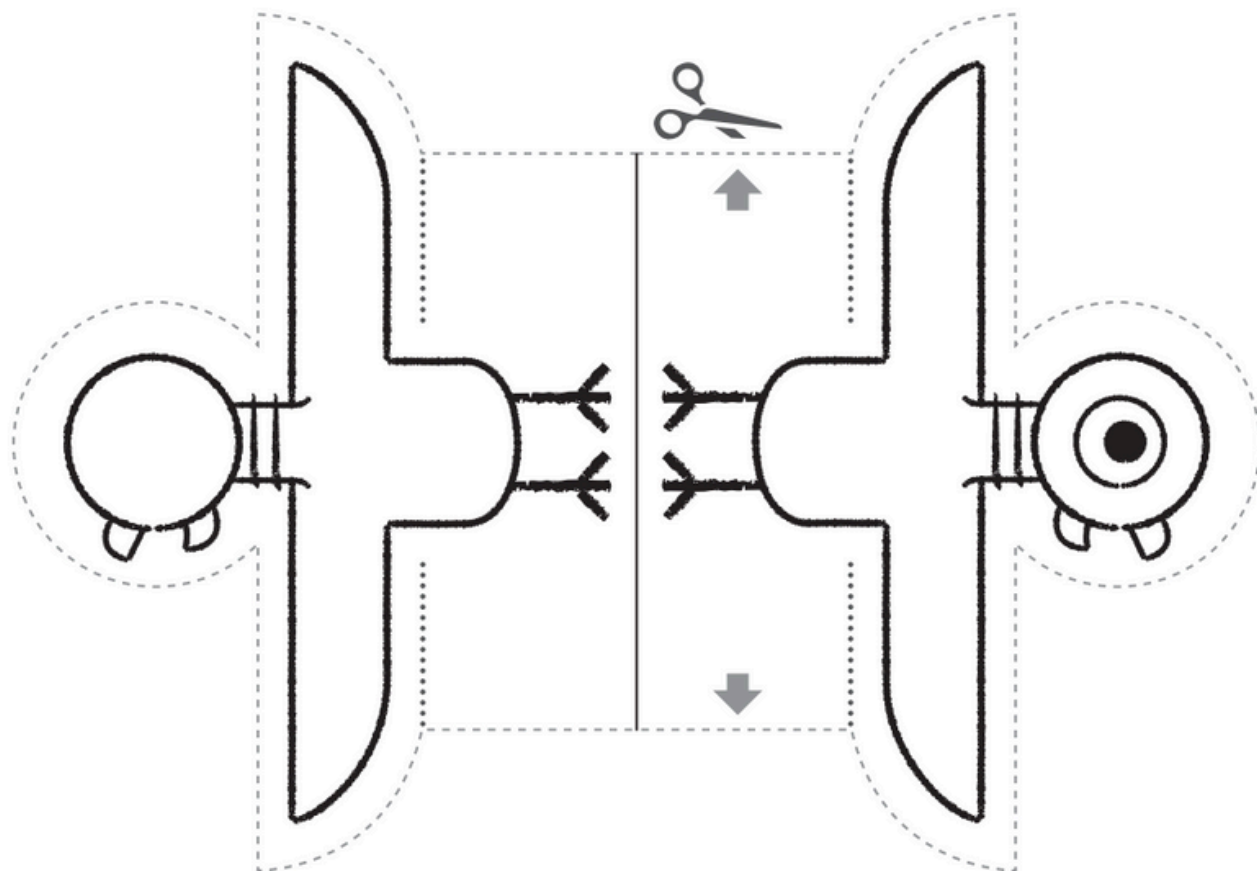
- 5** Roll the bottom into a tube so that the arrows touch; then, tape it together. It should be a little bit bigger than your finger.



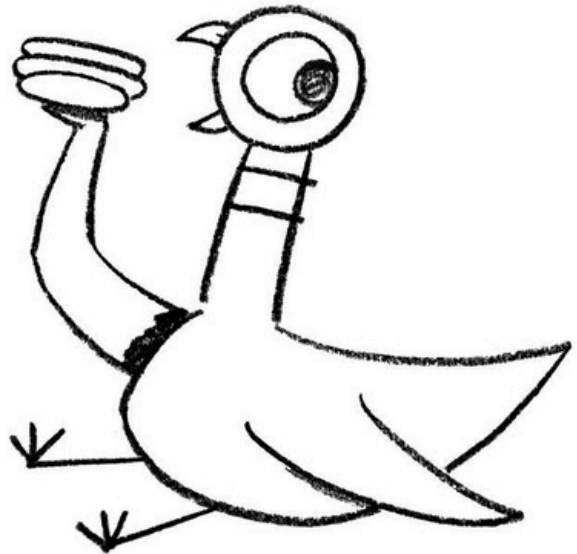
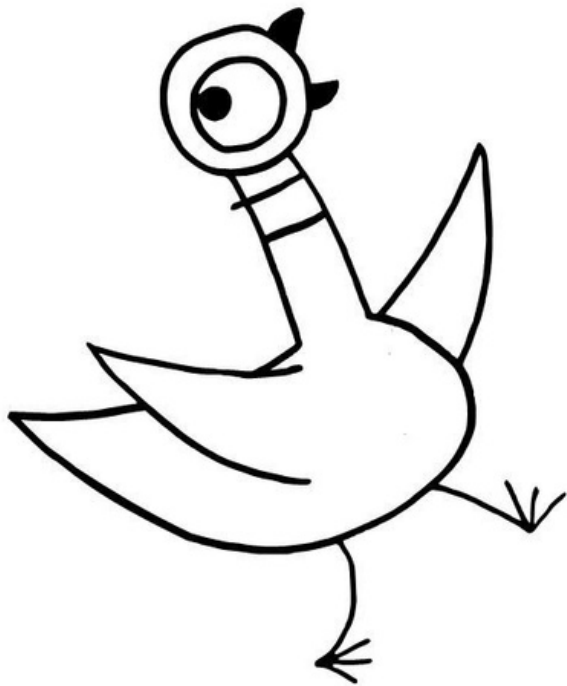
- 6** Yay! You just made finger puppets!







# COLOR PIGEON AND PALS!



Art © Mo Willems

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 3RD**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 10TH**

**★PLAYHOUSE**  
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# BOOK LIST

Did you like Pigeon? Here are ALL of his books and more!

## Pigeon Books

- The Pigeon Finds a Hotdog!
- The Pigeon Has Feelings, Too!
- The Pigeon Loves Things That Go!
- Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!
- The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!
- The Pigeon Needs a Bath!
- The Duckling Gets a Cookie?!
- The Pigeon HAS to Go to School!

## Other Series by Mo Willems

- Elephant and Piggie
- Knuffle Bunny
- Cat the Cat
- Naked Mole Rat
- Leonardo, The Terrible Monster
- Unlimited Squirrels



# **WRITE A LETTER TO THE CAST!**

Thank you for bringing your students to see *Pigeon* at Playhouse on Park and for encouraging the arts in your classroom! We would love to hear from students what they thought of the production and any questions they may have for our cast and crew!

Mail your class letters to us at Playhouse on Park, we will send a thank you letter back to your class!

Please mail class letters to:

**Playhouse Theatre Academy  
Playhouse on Park  
244 Park Rd  
West Hartford, CT 06119**

Teachers: if you have thoughts or comments regarding educational programming at Playhouse on Park, please email Kevin Cronin, Director of Education, at [kcronin@playhousetheatre.org](mailto:kcronin@playhousetheatre.org).

**Dear Pigeon Cast and Crew**

My favorite part of the show was:

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Draw your favorite part of the show below!

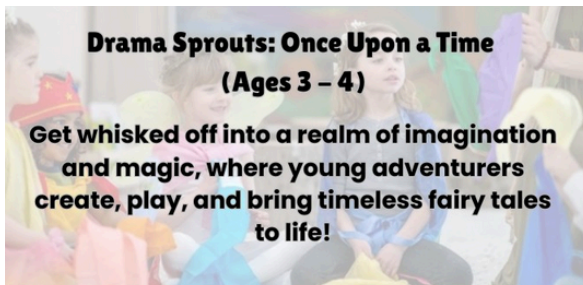
From,

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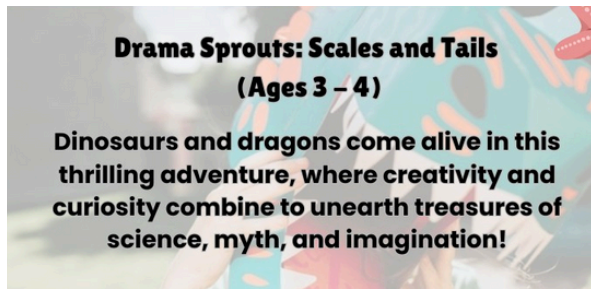
# DON'T LET THE PIGEON MISS OUT ON SUMMER PROGRAMMING!

Summer just got even better! At Playhouse Theatre Academy, we're all about making it easy and fun for your family to enjoy an unforgettable season. With options ranging from one to two weeks in length, as well as half-day or full-day choices, we ensure families can find a program that works perfectly for their summer schedules.



**Drama Sprouts: Once Upon a Time**  
(Ages 3 – 4)

Get whisked off into a realm of imagination and magic, where young adventurers create, play, and bring timeless fairy tales to life!



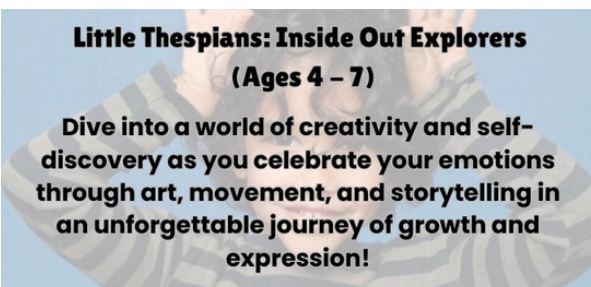
**Drama Sprouts: Scales and Tails**  
(Ages 3 – 4)

Dinosaurs and dragons come alive in this thrilling adventure, where creativity and curiosity combine to unearth treasures of science, myth, and imagination!



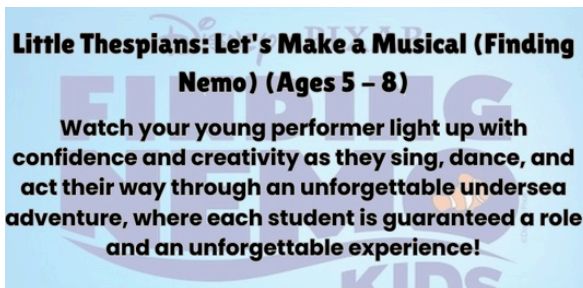
**Little Thesians: Pride Lands Adventure Experience** (Ages 4 – 7)

Dive into a week of roaring creativity, where young performers will bring the magic of *The Lion King* to life through music, movement, and storytelling like never before!



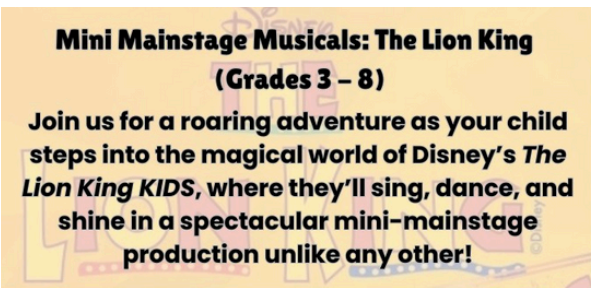
**Little Thesians: Inside Out Explorers**  
(Ages 4 – 7)

Dive into a world of creativity and self-discovery as you celebrate your emotions through art, movement, and storytelling in an unforgettable journey of growth and expression!



**Little Thesians: Let's Make a Musical (Finding Nemo)** (Ages 5 – 8)

Watch your young performer light up with confidence and creativity as they sing, dance, and act their way through an unforgettable undersea adventure, where each student is guaranteed a role and an unforgettable experience!



**Mini Mainstage Musicals: The Lion King**  
(Grades 3 – 8)

Join us for a roaring adventure as your child steps into the magical world of Disney's *The Lion King KIDS*, where they'll sing, dance, and shine in a spectacular mini-mainstage production unlike any other!



**Rising Stars: A Spellbinding Harry Potter Summer Adventure** (Grades 3 – 8)

Unlock your inner wizard this summer with a thrilling two-week adventure where theater, magic, and the world of *Harry Potter* collide for an unforgettable experience!



**Teen Experience: Singin' in the Rain**  
(Ages 13 – 17)

Splash into the spotlight this summer with *Singin' in the Rain Jr.*, a high-energy two-week program where teens bring a classic musical to life while mastering acting, singing, and dancing alongside industry pros in a fun, supportive atmosphere!



Scan here to visit our website!



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