We Are in a Book
Author: Mo Willems

- **Summary:**
  - In this book, Gerald, the elephant, and his friend Piggie realize that they are in a book. Then they realize that they are being watched by the reader and that they can make the reader say anything. They soon realize that the book is quickly coming to an end, which means that they will not be able to make the reader say very many more funny words. What will Gerald and Piggie do?
  - *We Are In a Book* is one of many books in the *Elephant and Piggie* series. All of the books in the series have the same two characters, Elephant and Piggie, but do not need to be read in any particular order.

- **Awards received:**
  - Geisel 2011 Honor Book

- **Book Review:**
  - “In this Theodore Geisel Honor book, Gerald the elephant and his porcine companion Piggie arrive at the delightful realization that they are in a book. With that distinction comes power that makes them giggle: At whim, they can make the children reading them say funny words like "banana"! By with that power comes the realization that, with only a dozen pages left, their book will end. Is there any way to keep the fun going? For some reason, the word "rereading" comes to mind. A book to lift your spirits and spark your mind.” – from Barnes & Noble [http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/we-are-in-a-book-mo-willems/1100260677](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/we-are-in-a-book-mo-willems/1100260677)
  - “PreS-Gr 2–Make room for another satisfying episode in the escapades of lovable Elephant (aka Gerald) and Piggie. This time the best buddies star in a witty metafictional romp replete with visual gags, such as Piggie hanging from a speech bubble and Elephant blocking the author's name on the title page. Willems revs up the fun when the friends realize that someone is watching. Who can it be? Cautious Gerald asks, “A monster?” while savvy Piggie answers, “No. It is...a reader! A reader is reading us!” Mirth ensues as the delightful creatures comprehend a newfound power: “If the reader reads out loud,” they can make the reader say words. Piggie decides upon “Banana” and Gerald's sidesplitting laughter proves contagious for all involved. But, when Gerald learns that books end, with Piggie demonstrating by turning the bottom corner of the page to see how many are left, he shouts, “This book is going too fast! I have more to give!” Not to worry—the ever-resourceful Piggie has Gerald ask, “Will you please read us again?” Beginning readers will grant Gerald's request, while grown-ups will marvel at Willems's extraordinary ability to animate his personality-packed gray and pink characters with the widest range of emotions, all drawn with the simplest of line.” –Alicia Eames, New York City Public Schools

- **Author’s Webpage:**

- **Discussion Questions:**
Before reading the book:
- Why did Mo Willems give the elephant a different name, Gerald, but named the pig Piggie?
- Why do you think Gerald and Piggie get along so well?
- Can anyone guess what this book will be about?

During the reading of the book:
- Who is actually watching Gerald and Piggie?
- What are some words that are funny to you?
- When something that you are enjoying is coming to an end, what do you do?

After reading the book:
- What do you think it would be like to be in a book?
- What kinds of things would you do to a reader if they were reading a book that you were in?
- Would you read more books about Gerald and Piggie? Why or why not?

Activities

Reading/Oral Language-
- The book can be read as an entire class aloud, read by the students to a small group, read by the students to a partner, read aloud by the student to themselves, or read silently.
- The class can discuss what the story is about, the problems faced by Gerald and Piggie, and how Gerald and Piggie dealt with the problem in the story.

Writing-
- Students can practice their writing skills by writing a similar story with themselves and a friend as the main characters. They can decide which words they would include as the funny words, and can change the ending if they want to.
- The students can also write a book review on We Are In a Book, analyzing the book and deciding if they would read it again, as well as whether or not they would recommend it to someone else.

Science-
- Since the main characters in this book are an elephant and a pig, students can read other nonfiction books about elephants and pigs. They can complete research about elephants and pigs, learning all about the things that make them unique and interesting.

Art-
- Have the students draw pictures from the book.
- The students can try to draw Gerald and Piggie like Mo Willems.
- Students can use their own imaginations to come up with new characters to add to the story and draw pictures of what those characters would look like. After the students create their own pictures, they can share them with the class.

Drama-
Since some students are visual learners, have students take turns acting out the story, with each character being represented by a student. Repeat as many times as necessary or desired.

- **Technology**
  - The students can get on computers and look at Mo Willem’s website, especially the two additional sites on the webpage that relate to the books and characters. Students can color pictures, read books, play games, or watch videos related to the story.

- **Music**
  - The games on the various pages of Mo Willem’s webpage all include sound effects. One game in particular, The Elephant and Piggie Dance Game, includes music as Piggie and Gerald dance to whatever dance moves the viewer chooses. [http://www.pigeonpresents.com/DanceGame/](http://www.pigeonpresents.com/DanceGame/)

- **Physical Education**
  - Gerald and Piggie are active in all of their books. Students can act out the parts of the books and following the example of Gerald and Piggie as they lead active, healthy lives.

- **Related Books:**
  - *No, David!* By David Shannon
  - *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* by Doreen Cronin, Illustrated by Betsy Lewin
  - *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney
  - *Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons* by Eric Litwin, Illustrated by James Dean
  - *Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein
  - *Hi! Fly Guy* by Tedd Arnold

- **Other Books by Mo Willems:**
  - *Pigeon series*
    - *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*
    - *Don’t Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!*
    - *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!*
    - *The Pigeon Has Feelings, Too!*
    - *The Pigeon Loves Things That Go!*
    - *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!*
    - *The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?*
  - *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*
  - *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*
  - *Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion*
  - *Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn’t Know She Was Extinct*
  - *Leonardo, the Terrible Monster*
  - *Amanda & Her Alligator*
  - *Hooray for Amanda & Her Alligator*
  - *Time to Pee!*
  - *Time to Say “Please”!*
  - *You Can Never Find a Rickshaw When It Monsoons*
- Elephant and Piggie series
  - Today I Will Fly!
  - My Friend is Sad!
  - There Is a Bird on Your Head!
  - I Am Invited to a Party!
  - I Will Surprise my Friend!
  - I Love My New Toy!
  - Are You Ready to Play Outside?
  - Watch Me Throw the Ball!
  - Pigs Make Me Sneeze!
  - Elephants Cannot Dance!
  - I Am Going!
  - Can I Play Too?
  - We Are In a Book!
  - I Broke My Trunk!
  - Should I Share My Ice Cream?
  - Happy Pig Day!
  - Listen to My Trumpet!
- Naked Mole Rate Gets Dressed
- Big Frog Can’t Fit In: A Pop-Out Book
- Cat the Cat series
  - Cat the Cat, Who Is That?
  - Let’s Say Hi to Friends Who Fly
  - What’s Your Sound, Hound the Hound?
  - Time to Sleep, Sheep the Sheep!
- City Dog, Country Frog

- Additional Sources
  - Meet Mo’s Friends! Here, students can meet all of the characters from Mo Willems books, as well as look at the book, play fun games, see pictures, and watch videos. There is also a page for grown-ups on this site. [http://www.gomo.net/page.php?name=Home](http://www.gomo.net/page.php?name=Home)
  - Pigeon Presents! This is a site dedicated to one of Mo Willems most popular characters, Pigeon. Included are games, books, an introduction to other characters in the books, as well as a page for grown-ups. [http://www.pigeonpresents.com/](http://www.pigeonpresents.com/)
  - Mo Willems FAQ. This site includes questions that are answered by Mo Willems frequently. The address to send him fan mail is also included on this page. [http://mowillemsfaq.blogspot.com/](http://mowillemsfaq.blogspot.com/)