

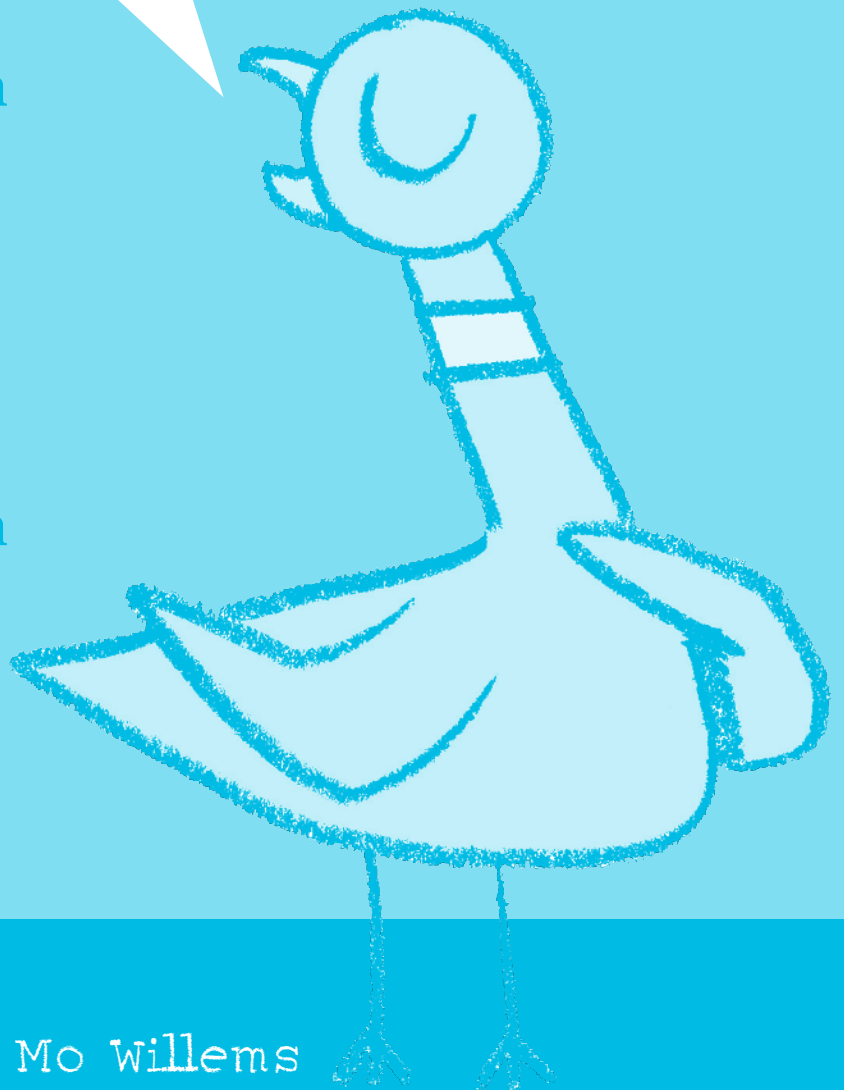
# The Pigeon Teacher's Guide

Don't Let the Pigeon  
Drive the Bus!

The Pigeon Finds  
a Hot Dog!

and

Don't Let the Pigeon  
Stay Up Late!



Words and pictures by Mo Willems

# Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!

Though the bus driver has warned us, "... Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!" the jaunty blue Pigeon uses every trick in the book, from whining to temper tantrums, to convince us, the readers, to let him do just that.

## INTERACTING WITH THE BOOK:

What's hilarious about this picture book for all ages is watching that pigeon try to talk us into something forbidden, just as children do every day. "Hey, can I drive the bus?" the gimlet-eyed blue pigeon asks you, the reader, straight out. "NO!!!" your listeners will spontaneously reply. They will most likely decide there is no way they will let that pigeon drive that bus.

And aren't these same kids begging and pleading with their own authority figures to let them stay up late and do forbidden stuff? You might think your young listeners will empathize with the poor Pigeon and let him drive, but you will most likely be amazed by how adamant they are.

The youngest children can read the pictures and the moods of the Pigeon as he tries to fast-talk us into letting down our guard. As you read the book aloud, acknowledge your listeners' spontaneous responses ("NO!" "Forget it!") as they interact and answer back each of the Pigeon's entreaties.

## CALDECOTT HONOR:

The Caldecott Honor, or silver medal, is given each year to the artists of the year's most distinguished American picture books for children. Some readers may look at Willems's books and call them deceptively simple. Willems agrees, but with some clarification.

"I'd tweak that to 'deliberately simple,'" he says. "The essence of my design is to create an immediate, emotional connection ... I'm thrilled that any child can pick up a crayon and quickly create a reasonable drawing of Pigeon; it allows the book to connect with the reader on a fundamental, participatory level."

## DISCUSS WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

Why do you think the Caldecott Committee chose this book?  
What is special or memorable about the illustrations?



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



## GET TO KNOW THE PIGEON:

With your group of 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 the person on the outside of the story to interact and respond. Read the story aloud again, and have the 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.

## 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 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!* 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.

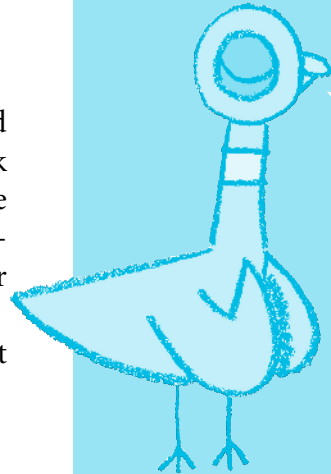
I bet  
your mom  
would  
let me ...  
Right?



Ask  
away!  
I’m an  
open  
book!



It’s not  
just buses  
that rock  
my world.



DEBATE?  
No one  
ever listens  
to me  
anyway....



Hmm..  
I never  
thought  
of driving  
the  
“Titanic.”  
Sounds  
like fun!



If the  
Pigeon drove the  
bus he ... would  
be very happy!



Don’t  
worry, I’m  
cute no  
matter how  
you draw  
me!



The  
Pigeon  
on the  
bus goes,  
Drive,  
Drive,  
Drive!



## INTERVIEW THE CHARACTERS:

With your entire group, or with groups of three, set up an interview. The moderator interviews first the bus driver and then the Pigeon, asking questions like, “Well, bus driver, why didn’t you want the Pigeon to drive your bus?” and “Say, Pigeon, what kind of driving experience do you have?”

## HOLD A DEBATE:

Divide your group into two camps: pro-pigeon driving and anti-pigeon driving. Each group must come up with a list of reasons to support their side. Then, start a debate with the topic: should the Pigeon drive the bus?

## “WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL? IT’S JUST A BUS!”:

While we know we can’t possibly allow the Pigeon to drive, we nonetheless feel sorry for him and wish we could let him do it. What would happen if the Pigeon did drive the bus? Ask your listeners to predict how Pigeon would be as an actual driver. They can finish the following sentence and illustrate it: “If the Pigeon drove the bus, he \_\_\_\_.”

## SING IT OUT:

You know you’ll be singing that “Wheels on the Bus” song forever after this one. After singing it the usual way, ask your group to compose some new verses to sing and act out, incorporating the pigeon, such as: “The pigeon on the bus says, ‘Flap your wings!’”



# The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!

About to wolf down the hot dog on a bun he has just found, the Pigeon is interrupted by a persistent yellow duckling who says, “I’ve never had a hot dog before. . . . What do they taste like?”

## HOT DOG!:

The Pigeon says to the Duckling, “It just tastes like a hot dog, okay!?” What exactly does a hot dog taste like? How would you describe it to someone who had never tasted one? After finishing the book (when Duckling says, “Hmmm . . . needs mustard.”), ask your listeners: “Do you think the duckling has ever tasted a hot dog before? And, by the way, what do you put on YOUR hot dogs?” You might want to serve pigs in a blanket as a follow-up snack.

## HAVE A TASTE?:

The Duckling wants a taste of the hot dog. The Pigeon doesn’t want to share. He asks the reader, “What am I supposed to do?” What COULD he do? How does the Duckling get the Pigeon to share? Ask your students: What do you do when someone wants a taste of your favorite food? What is your favorite food? Would you share it with someone who asked for some? How would you persuade a friend to share with you?

## LEARN TO DRAW THE PIGEON... AND MAYBE ... THE DUCKLING

Download the “How to Draw the Pigeon” sheet from [www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com](http://www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com) Web site, located on the *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* and *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!* pages.

Have the children follow the step-by-step instructions for drawing the Pigeon. Once they have practiced, they can create their own scenes or stories using the character. Now, try the Duckling. . . .

I’ve had  
just about  
enough  
of that  
duckling. . . .



## COMPARE AND CONTRAST:

The Pigeon gets a taste of his own medicine when the persistent Duckling gets him to share his hot dog. Compare and contrast the Pigeon’s relentless hectoring in *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* with the Duckling’s less direct approach in *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!* The Pigeon and the Duckling try to get their own way, but they have very different ways of getting what they want. Which one works? Why? How?

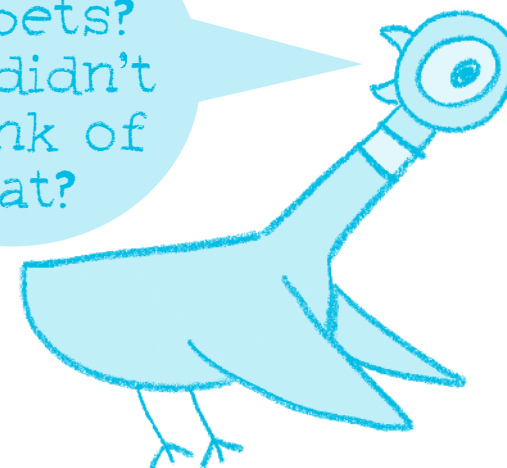
## COLOR THE PIGEON:

Download the coloring sheet from the [hyperionbooksforchildren.com](http://hyperionbooksforchildren.com) Web site. It is located in the record for *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* and the record for *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!* Make copies for all the children, and encourage them to color or decorate them for a Pigeon gallery or show.

Sometimes  
I feel blue.  
Other times  
yellow,  
orange and  
purple.



Pigeon  
puppets?  
Why didn’t  
I think of  
that?



## MAKE PIGEON PUPPETS:

Have children draw and color the Pigeon and the Duckling on construction paper or oak tag (file-folder card). Cut out the figures, and glue them onto paint sticks to make stick puppets. Working in pairs, kids can then reenact the dialogue of both books or engage the two characters in a new situation.

# Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!

Once again, the bus driver asks us to do him a favor: "Don't let the pigeon stay up late!" The Pigeon does his best to persuade us he's not a bit tired, but he can't stop yawning.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Examine the cover. Ask children to predict what they think will happen in this story. What do they think the Pigeon will say and do to keep from going to bed on time? Make a list and compare them to Pigeon's actual excuses and strategies.

Make a text-to-text connection: what is the name of the stuffed bunny Pigeon is holding under his wing? Where have you seen that bunny before? (It looks amazingly like Trixie's adored companion, from Mo Willems's Caldecott Honor-winning book, *Knuffle Bunny*.) How do you think the Pigeon got it? Speculate on what might have happened between the Pigeon and Trixie.

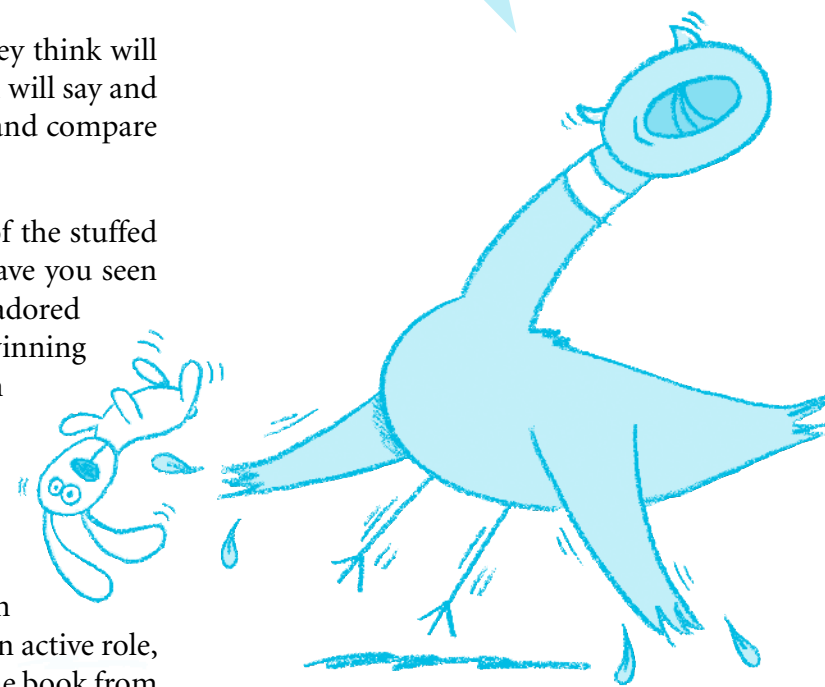
## TALK TO THE PIGEON:

Just like *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, this is an interactive story, where the reader or listener plays an active role, talking back to the Pigeon. Your children will turn the book from a monologue into a dialogue, as they fend off the Pigeon's requests to party, watch TV, and count the stars, and resist his attempts to wheedle his way to a later bedtime.

After sharing the book, have children get together in pairs and act out the story. One child plays the persistent Pigeon, while the other parries each of the Pigeon's requests and tries to get him to go to bed. Then have the children in each pair switch roles and do it again.

## HAVE A HOT DOG PARTY:

The Pigeon says he's in the mood for a hot dog party. Why not hold a Pigeon Party? Play games like 'Pin the Tail on the Hot Dog' or 'Duck Duck Pigeon' or 'Pigeon Says.' Do 'The Pigeon Dance' (just like the Chicken Dance, but with more attitude). Bring in wieners, buns, and mustard and eat up a storm.



PLEASE??  
It's not like  
I'm asking  
for six  
minutes....!



## FIVE MORE MINUTES?:

The Pigeon says, "How about five more minutes? C'mon! What's five minutes in the grand scheme of things?" What can you do in five minutes? Set the timer and see.

## YAWN!:

Note when you show the double-page spread of the Pigeon yawning hugely how many of your listeners start to yawn as well. Yawning is contagious. Yawn together to get into the Pigeon's frame of mind. Then ask children for ideas on how they stay awake when they're terribly tired. Try out some of their suggestions. Lead them in jumping jacks and other aerobic exercises to get going again.

I'm not  
even  
tired.....



I love  
lavender-  
scented  
pillows.



## GET READY FOR BED:

What do you do to get ready for bed each night? Brainstorm a list with your group of children and write it on chart paper or on the board. Then have them determine the best sequence of events, from first to last. Copy the newly organized list onto a large chart. As you read the finished list aloud, have your children act out each of the activities in pantomime.



GO TO SLEEP:

Ask your students: What are some other ways to get the Pigeon to go to sleep? What do your parents do to make you sleepy and ready for bed? Have them write and illustrate their best ideas and bind them into a Go-To-Sleep Manual.

ROCK-A-BYE, PIGEON:

To make the Pigeon sleepy, why not sing him a lullaby? Sing together the lullabies you know.

Here are some new verses to an old lullaby so you can sing the Pigeon to sleep.

*Rock-a-bye, Pigeon, on the treetop;  
When the bough bends, the cradle will rock.  
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,  
And down will come Pigeon, cradle and all.*

*Rock-a-bye, Pigeon, up on a cloud,  
Sighing so soft and sighing out loud.  
When the cloud bursts, his sighing will stop,  
And down will come Pigeon on a raindrop.*

*Rock-a-bye-Pigeon, up in the stars,  
Waving to Earth and waving to Mars.  
When the star shines, the sky will be bright,  
And down will come Pigeon, with a night light.*

*Rock-a-bye-Pigeon, up in his nest;  
Sways to the east and sways to the west.  
When the moon shines, the Pigeon will dream  
Of hot dogs in buns and lots of ice cream.*

(First verse, mostly traditional; other verses by Judy Freeman)

OFF TO DREAMLAND:

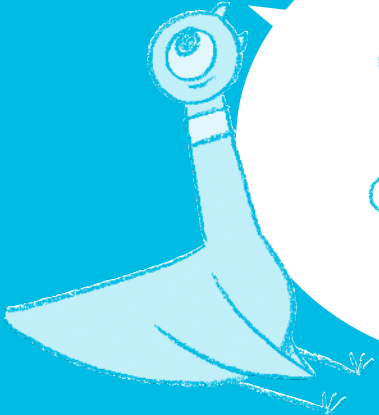
Ask your students to look at the last page, showing the Pigeon sound asleep and dreaming. What is he dreaming about? What do you dream about? Draw a picture of yourself in bed, with a thoughtballoon showing your best dream.



I just  
love scrap-  
booking. . .



OK.  
Counting  
stars:  
One, two,  
three . .



I'm just  
giving  
my eyes  
a little  
rest.



On the  
inside, I'm  
having a  
party.



CRAFTY PIGEON:

In the course of trying not to go to sleep, the Pigeon:

- makes a request
- states a fact
- begs
- bargains
- makes an announcement
- asks a question
- makes a suggestion
- changes the subject
- makes a statement

Read the story again so that listeners can identify each of his strategies.

FACT CHECK:

The Pigeon has plenty of delaying tactics for staying up late. Take a closer look at some of them.

1. The Pigeon says, "We could count the stars."

How many stars can we count in the night sky? (Children can go outside with their parents on a clear night and see.) How many stars are there? (Astronomers estimate there are 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy alone.) What is a star? (Go to the 523.8 shelf of your library's nonfiction section for some good books on the subject.) Show your students how to recognize and locate the Big Dipper in the sky.

2. The Pigeon says, "Studies show pigeons need hardly any sleep at all."

Is this true or false? (Pigeons actually sleep from sunset to dawn.) What other facts do you know about pigeons? How much sleep do you need at night?

Find some interesting pigeon facts online at:  
[www.fbipigeons.com/pigeon\\_facts.htm](http://www.fbipigeons.com/pigeon_facts.htm)  
[www.pigeons.com/resources/facts.html](http://www.pigeons.com/resources/facts.html)  
[www.pleasebekind.com/pigeon.html](http://www.pleasebekind.com/pigeon.html)

3. The Pigeon says, "It's the middle of the day in China." True or false? What time is it in China right now?

PIGEON WATCH:

You and your children can participate in a hands-on scientific research study of pigeons and their colors (called morphs) with the PigeonWatch project, sponsored by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. For cool pigeon facts, a guide to the seven color morphs of pigeons, and instructions on how to join the project, go to the informative Web site:  
[www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/urbanbirds](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/urbanbirds)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

**MO WILLEMS** won six Emmy Awards for his writing and animation on *Sesame Street* and as the head writer for Cartoon Network's *Codename: Kids Next Door*. His first book for children, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, was awarded a 2004 Caldecott Honor by the American Library Association, and his book *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale* was awarded a 2005 Caldecott Honor. His other books include *Leonardo, the Terrible Monster*; *Time to Pee!*; and *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*. Mo lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York. Check out his wonderful Web site at [www.mowillems.com](http://www.mowillems.com).

**JUDY FREEMAN**, children's literature consultant and workshop presenter, is the "Book Bag" columnist for *School Library Media Activities Monthly* and the author of *Books Kids Will Sit Still For 3: A Read-Aloud Guide* (Libraries Unlimited, 2006). Visit her Web site at [www.JudyReadsBooks.com](http://www.JudyReadsBooks.com).

This and other teacher resources are available at [www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com](http://www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com). Visit the *Teachers and Librarians* area for a full list of available materials.

## Books written and illustrated by Mo Willems



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

Tr. ed. 0-7868-1988-X  
\$12.99 2003  
A 2004 Caldecott Honor Book  
ALA 2004 Notable Children's Book



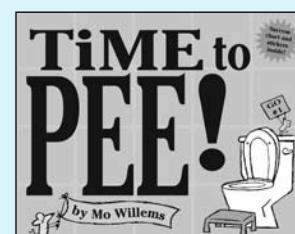
### The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!

Tr. ed. 0-7868-1869-7  
\$12.99 2004



### Leonardo, the Terrible Monster

Tr. ed. 0-7868-5294-1  
\$15.99 2006  
ALA 2005 Notable Children's Book



### Time to Pee!

Tr. ed 0-7868-1868-9 \$12.99 2003



### Time to Say \"Please\"!

Tr. ed 0-7868-1868-9 \$12.99 2003



### Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!

Tr. ed. 0-7868-3746-2  
\$12.99 2006



### The Pigeon Has Feelings, Too!

Bd. ed. 0-7868-3650-4  
\$6.99 2005



### The Pigeon Loves Things That Go!

Bd. ed. 0-7868-3651-2  
\$6.99 2005



### Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale

Tr. ed. 0-7868-1870-0 \$15.99 2004  
A 2005 Caldecott Honor Book  
ALA 2005 Notable Children's Book

**Hyperion Books for Children**  
114 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011  
[www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com](http://www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com)