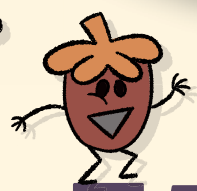
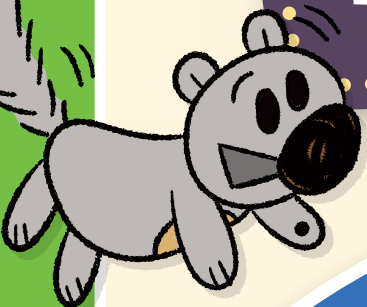


A new early reader series from

Mo Willems!



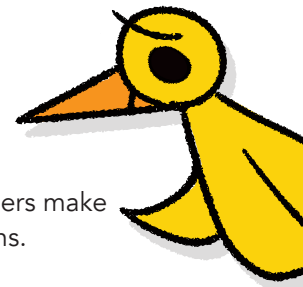
Mo!

UNLIMITED SQUIRRELS

A TEACHING GUIDE!

Pre-Reading Activity

“PICTURE IT” ILLUSTRATION ANALYSIS



Choose one of the books from the Unlimited Squirrels series to read aloud with the class. Have readers make predictions about what will happen in the chosen story based on a selection of the book’s illustrations.

DIRECTIONS:

Divide readers into groups that have as many members as there are characters in the illustrations.

Distribute a copy of an illustration from the selected Unlimited Squirrels book to each group. Have the group study the picture and discuss what they think happened immediately before and after the moment shown in the image.

After giving kids time to plan, have groups improvise a scene that would “bookend” the action in their illustration. Have students act out what they think happened in the story that led up to the moment shown in their illustration and what they think will happen immediately after. Have each group “freeze” for a moment in the middle of the scene, when they recreate the action from the illustration.

After each group performs their scene, read the chosen Unlimited Squirrels book and have readers discuss the importance of illustrations. How would the story be different without the art? In what ways does it enhance the story? What “Easter eggs” (hidden elements) can they find in the art?

Post-Reading Activity

SOMEBODY / WANTED / BUT / SO CHART

Use a graphic organizer to help readers identify basic literary elements, as well as major plot points, of one of the books in the Unlimited Squirrels series.

DIRECTIONS:

Working with the whole class, model the process of the SWBS chart by using a familiar story (perhaps there’s an Elephant & Piggie willing to help you out). After checking for understanding, read one of the books in the Unlimited Squirrels series aloud to the class, and have readers complete the following graphic organizer to check for understanding of major literary elements and plot points.

Somebody (CHARACTER)	
Wanted (GOAL)	
But (PROBLEM)	
So (SOLUTION)	

Researching Made Fun with Unlimited Squirrels!

I LOST MY TOOTH! **RESEARCH RODENT ASSISTANTS**

In *I Lost My Tooth!*, readers discover interesting facts about teeth from Research Rodent. Now, ask them to research their own fun teeth facts. First, ask students to come up with a few questions they have about other animals' teeth, and then divide students into groups and assign each group a category: carnivores, omnivores, and herbivores. Have them use books or online resources to research the teeth of animals that fall into their assigned category. When they are finished researching, have them share their findings with the class.

WONDER SQUIRREL TO THE RESCUE IN WHO IS THE MYSTERY READER?

In *Who is the Mystery Reader?*, Wonder Squirrel introduces exciting facts about the history of writing, paper making, and hieroglyphics.

Take readers to www.unlimitedsquirrels.com as an extension, and after exploring the slideshow resources there, give them an opportunity to learn more about how paper is made through kid-friendly videos available online. (As always, be a brainy squirrel and preview the video first before showing it to young people.)

Both the Egyptians and the Maya used hieroglyphs to communicate and indicate sounds and words. Young readers can discover even more fascinating facts about hieroglyphs from *National Geographic Kids*:

<https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/history/egypt/hieroglyphics-uncovered/>

I WANT TO SLEEP UNDER THE STARS!

In *I Want to Sleep Under the Stars!*, Nutshell Squirrel highlights some incredible facts about when stars are born and why they aren't visible during the daytime, as well as other fascinating details about the sizes and temperatures of stars. Take readers to www.unlimitedsquirrels.com to learn more about the beauty and mystery of stars. After checking out these resources, offer readers a chance to design their own star at a DIY craft station.

For inquisitive young minds, learning more about how stars are born and why they shine so brightly is just the beginning. Because everyone probably knows the lyrics to "*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*," do a sing-along, and then ask young readers of *I Want to Sleep Under the Stars!* to listen and think about the song and what questions can be answered by doing some research. Together, learn more facts about stars by visiting:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/space/universe/stars/>.



GUESS WHAT!?

After a fun rendition of “Going to the Beach” (music and lyrics included in the back of *Guess What!?*), have readers join the Unlimited Squirrels in learning more about sand, shorebirds, seashells, waves, and sounds. Together, explore more beach and ocean facts from *National Geographic* by visiting the following websites:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/beach/prek/>
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/habitats/article/ocean>

THE FRUSTRATING BOOK!

Research Rodent asks the Squirrel Friends, “What do you do when you are frustrated?” and after gathering their relaxation techniques, he shares that researching with friends helps him when he gets frustrated. Together with readers, take some time to research and share mindfulness and de-stressing techniques for children. This website offers suggestions:

<https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/coronavirus/resilience-is-mindfulness-calming-exercises-for-kids/>



Classroom Extension Activities

LETTER TO THE TOOTH FAIRY

Like Zoom Squirrel, readers have their own unique experiences when losing teeth. Ask readers to think about their own experiences, and write letters to the tooth fairy about what happened when they lost their first tooth and what it was like to have the tooth fairy come for a visit. If readers haven't lost a tooth yet, it's okay; ask them to use their imaginations to tell a tale about what they hope will happen when they do.

WRITE YOUR OWN SQUIRREL STORY

On the endpapers, readers are introduced to Zoom Squirrel and an additional cast of bushy-tailed characters. After asking readers to select one of the other Squirrels, have them create an original adventure story for their Squirrel of choice; encourage them to draft their story either as a text-only narrative or as an illustrated story similar to *I Lost My Tooth!*

WHAT KIND OF SQUIRREL ARE YOU?

Have each reader draw themselves as a Squirrel. What is their Squirrel name? Do they wear a lab coat, like Research Rodent, or have wings and a beak like Flappy Squirrel? Tell them to GO NUTS! After they draw themselves, have them pick (or draw) a Squirrel friend.

WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?

In *Who Is the Mystery Reader?*, Wink and Klink Squirrels both discover that reading is a superpower, and it's a talent that anyone can enjoy with some patience and practice. Think about Wink Squirrel's actions—besides being a "brave" and "cool" mystery reader, what are the other positive character qualities Wink exhibits? Working with partners, review Wink's superpower behavior and make a list of 3–5 positive character qualities you believe Wink Squirrel to have. Next, use the list created by the group and brainstorm ways you personally could demonstrate at least one of these qualities. After doing so, create a personal plan of action—how will you use your superpower to benefit others?



THE WRITE STUFF!

Remind young writers that the best stories have a beginning, middle, and ending. After sharing a book in the Unlimited Squirrels series, ask the class to work together to identify the three main parts of their selected story. After reviewing these parts and clarifying for understanding, let the storytelling begin! Remind writers that while some of the most fun stories feature squirrels, they should use their imaginations when creating original stories—their characters can be as unique and creative as they are! After the original stories have been composed, it's time to illustrate and share!

DARE TO DREAM

After hoping for a night of sleep under the stars in *I Want to Sleep Under the Stars!*, Zoom Squirrel believes his dreams are dashed. Luckily for him, his Squirrel friends find a clever way to make his wish come true. Gather readers in a circle and have them take turns discussing why it's important to have all kinds of wishes—both small and large. After spending some time reflecting, share a wish you'd like to see come true, and invite readers to do the same. After everyone has had a turn to share, divide readers into small groups in which they can work together to form a plan of action for each person that will help them move closer to making their wish a reality.

GET GOING!

In *Guess What!?*, after much anticipation and dreaming about a trip to the beach, Zoom Squirrel discovers that, for him, the most fun part of going to the beach is in the preparation itself—not what he actually finds there. As a group, begin by discussing what it means to have anticipation. How can anticipation make us feel? Next, discuss what the students' favorite places to go visit are. What makes their place so special? Is it indoors or outdoors? Is it the type of place they share with other people? What do they like to do once they are there? After spending some time sharing, pair up readers and ask them to draft a list of (1) things to pack, (2) whom they would like to take with them, and (3) what specific things they would like to do once they get there. To finish, ask students to draw a picture of themselves at their favorite place!

WHAT A FEELING!

Zoom Squirrel wants to feel brand-new emotions, and his Squirrel pals think they know just what to do. But what if Zoomy doesn't like those feelings? Begin by gathering everyone for a discussion of why understanding our feelings and communicating them with others is important. Next, make a list of all the emotions readers can name. After that group brainstorm is complete, have young readers work together in small groups to demonstrate or "show off" these emotions through performance. After all the named emotions have been covered, lead a discussion on why all emotions are valid, focusing on positive reactions even when feelings are strong or challenging.



Hands-On/Get-Up-and-Moving Activities

SQUIRRELING AWAY ACORNS—ESTIMATION JARS

Squirrels love to store things. Use jars to “store nuts” and allow readers to improve their math skills with estimation practice.

PREP:

- Fill a variety of different-size Mason jars with small plastic or foam acorns (these can usually be easily found at a craft store or ordered online). Be sure to count them after filling up each container, and keep the answers handy.
- Spread out jars throughout the classroom so teams can move around and use their math skills to estimate the number of acorns in each jar.
- Have colorful sheets of paper at each station on which each group can write their answers.
- Prep prizes—be creative! Options could be copies of another Mo Willems book or small goody bags of snacks and treats.

DIRECTIONS:

Divide readers into small groups and have them move around the room, working together to do calculations and make predictions about the number of acorns contained in each jar. Allow ample time for groups to circulate and make predictions at each station, and after teams have completed this activity, reveal the winning estimate for each station. Prizes can be distributed to members of individual groups or to all readers.

“Sleep” Under the Stars Camp-In

While a night outside may not be possible, you can create a “night” full of stars (and wishes) for readers. Create an indoor campground with twinkle star lights, and encourage readers to bring a pillow and an appropriate favorite object to snuggle with. After singing and campground treats, readers can get comfy, find some peace and quiet, and simply enjoy listening to *I Want to Sleep Under the Stars!*

Building Beach Sand Sculptures

Since a trip to the beach may not always be in the works for readers, consider bringing the beach to them (clean play sand can be purchased inexpensively). Allow readers to work independently or in groups to design and build sand sculptures (the Unlimited Squirrels, perhaps). For inspiration, share the following images with your group:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/wacky-weekend/article/sand-sculptures>



NUTTY PASS

In this elimination activity, very similar to musical chairs, players try to avoid being the last one left holding the acorn. You'll need a large plastic acorn or nut or a soft circular item.

HOW TO PLAY:

Everyone sits in a circle except for the "caller." The caller closes his or her eyes, and the rest of the players pass around the acorn.

When the caller calls "Stop!" whoever has the acorn leaves the circle—which is why the players pass the nut along as fast as they can. The game is over when only one person is left. The sole remaining player becomes the caller in the next game.

ACORN-Y JOKE TIME

After sharing some family-friendly jokes (including at least one featured in the Unlimited Squirrels series), group readers together to tell their favorite jokes, as well as to attempt to write some original ones. Allow group members an opportunity to practice sharing and delivering jokes, offering jokesters a chance to stand and share their favorites with the larger group.

WRITE YOUR NAME IN HIEROGLYPHS!

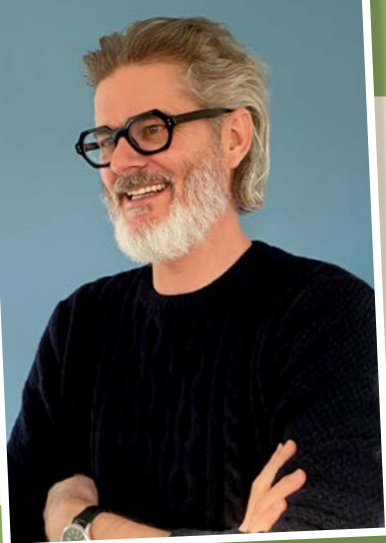
Squirrely readers have fun writing with hieroglyphs! Provide readers with a copy of the hieroglyphic alphabet and have them write their name in hieroglyphs or, for an extra challenge, have them create a message to a friend, using hieroglyphs. After they finish, they can decode the messages!

IT'S NOT A MYSTERY: MASKS AND DRESS-UP MAKE READING MORE FUN!

One of the most exciting parts of pretending is using one's imagination. Using the Unlimited Squirrels and their "superpowers" as inspiration, set up a craft station with paints, markers, stickers, and a variety of other crafty materials where readers can BAM! (Build a Mask) to transform into a mysterious masked reader. After readers create their masks (and while the masks are drying), invite them to visit the dress-up station to create a "Super Suit" custom costume. When everyone has donned their disguises, gather them around for a parade and some squirrely storytelling.

DON'T BE FRUSTRATED! MOVE (AND RELAX) THAT BODY!

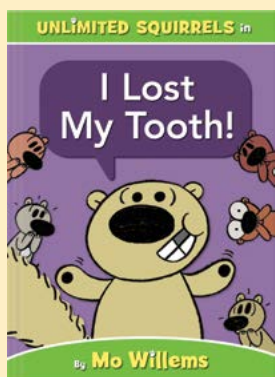
When negative emotions are heightened, sometimes intentional, focused motion can help bring calmness. Tell readers that, as a group, all of them are going to "Make Some Lemonade." Begin by having them imagine they are standing underneath a lemon tree. Have them stretch both hands into the air to grab two imaginary lemons. Next, have them tighten their fists to squeeze out the juice. After getting all the "lemon juice" out, tell them to throw those lemons as far as they can and finish by shaking out their hands to relax. After a quick break, have them stretch to reach for two more lemons and repeat the process until they've squeezed enough juice to make that cool glass of lemonade. For extra fun, pour real glasses of lemonade for all readers who would like one, or alternatively, add yellow dye to water to offer a lemon look.



Mo Willems, creator of the revolutionary, award-winning, best-selling Elephant & Piggie books, is back with another breakout early reader series. An ensemble cast of Squirrels, acorns, and pop-in guests hosts a page-turning extravaganza!

If you can read **ELEPHANT & PIGGIE** here is our referral:
Try UNLIMITED SQUIRRELS!

Unlimited Squirrels are furry friends! Unlimited Squirrels have fuzzy ends!



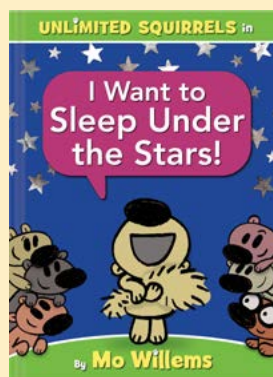
In *I Lost My Tooth!*, Zoom Squirrel has lost a front tooth! The Squirrels leap into action when they discover the missing tooth is a baby tooth! Do you know more about teeth than the Squirrels do? You will by the end of this book!

ISBN: 978-1-368-02457-0
 \$12.99 / POB



In *Who is the Mystery Reader?*, Zoom Squirrel tries out a new superpower with help from a mysterious Mystery Reader. But will the Squirrel pals ever find out who the real Mystery Reader is? Do you know more about reading than the Squirrels do? You will by the end of this book!

ISBN: 978-1-368-04686-2
 \$12.99 / POB



In *I Want to Sleep Under the Stars!*, Zoom Squirrel dreams of sleeping under the night stars. The Squirrel pals are excited to help! But will their encouragement be enough—or too much? Do you know more about sleeping under the stars than the Squirrels do? You will by the end of this book!

ISBN: 978-1-368-05335-8
 \$12.99 / POB



In *Guess What!?*, Zoom Squirrel is excited to go to the beach. But what will happen when Zoomy and pals finally get there? Do you know more about going to the beach than the Squirrels do? You will by the end of this book!

ISBN: 978-1-368-07093-5
 \$12.99 / POB



In *The FRUSTRATING Book!*, Zoom Squirrel wants to feel brand-new emotions. The Squirrel pals know just what to do! But what happens if Zoomy doesn't like these new feelings? Do you know more about feelings than the Squirrels do? You will by the end of this book!

ISBN: 978-1-368-07482-7
 \$12.99 / POB

UNLIMITED SQUIRRELS IS UNLIMITED FUN!

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, a professor at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a PhD in library science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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