



Teach

Shel[®]

Celebrate 50 Years
of *The Giving Tree*
and the anniversaries
of five other
Shel Silverstein
classics!

Teaching Guide contains
discussion questions and
writing activities for:

The Giving Tree

Don't Bump the Glump!

A Giraffe and a Half

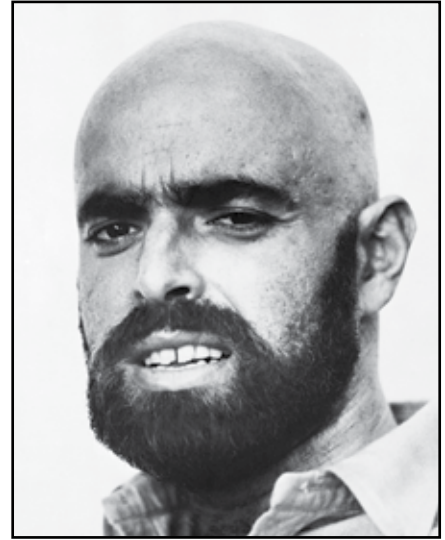
Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back

Where the Sidewalk Ends

Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?

About Shel Silverstein

“And now . . . a story about a very strange lion—in fact, the strangest lion I have ever met.” So begins Shel Silverstein’s very first children’s book, *Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back*. It’s funny and sad and has made readers laugh and think ever since it was published in 1963.



It was followed in 1964 by four new books. The first, *The Giving Tree*, is a tender tale about the enduring relationship of a boy and a tree. Then came the riotously funny *Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?* and *A Giraffe and a Half*. The fourth book published in 1964 was *Don't Bump the Glump! and Other Fantasies*, Shel's only book illustrated in full color. Shel combined his unique imagination and bold brand of humor in this collection of silly and scary creatures.

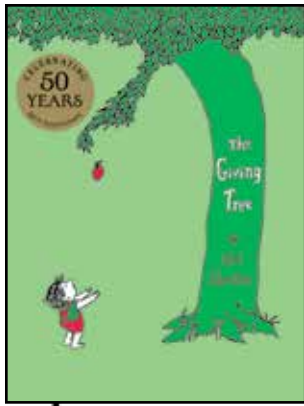
Shel's second collection of poems and drawings, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, was published in 1974. Shel invited children to dream and dare to imagine the impossible, from a hippopotamus sandwich to Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout who would not take the garbage out.

This was followed by *The Missing Piece*, published in 1976, and *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O*, published in 1981—two companion fables that explore the concept of fulfillment. With his next collection of poems and drawings, *A Light in the Attic*, published in 1981, Shel asked his readers to put something silly in the world, not be discouraged by the Whatifs, and turn on a light in the attic.

Shel Silverstein was born in 1930. He grew up in Chicago and created his first cartoons for the adult readers of the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* when he was a GI in Japan and Korea in the 1950s. He also learned to play the guitar and to write songs, including “A Boy Named Sue” for Johnny Cash. He performed his own songs on a number of albums and in 1984 won a Grammy Award for Best Children’s Album for *Where the Sidewalk Ends*—“Recited, sung and shouted” by the author. He was also an accomplished playwright whose credits include the 1981 hit *The Lady or the Tiger* and 1991’s *The Devil and Billy Markham*.

Shel Silverstein will perhaps always be best loved for his extraordinary books, which are now published in more than 30 different languages. The last book that was published before his death in 1999 was *Falling Up* (1996). Like his other books, it is filled with unforgettable characters such as Screamin’ Millie and Danny O’Dare the dancin’ bear. His legacy continued with the release of *Runny Babbit*, in March 2005. Conceived and completed before Shel’s death, *Runny Babbit* is a poetry collection of spoonerisms, which twist the tongue and tease the mind. *Every Thing On It*, a new collection of Shel Silverstein’s poetry containing 140 never-before-seen poems and drawings that Shel had completed before his death, was published in 2011.

Shel Silverstein’s prolific body of work continues to inspire and delight readers throughout the world.



The Giving Tree

Classroom Discussion

The Power of Illustrations. Guide your students through a close examination of Shel Silverstein's illustrations in the story's beginning. Based on the illustrations, how would students describe the tree? How do the illustrations convey the tree's personality, as well as its playfulness and its love for the boy? How do the words and illustrations work together to tell the story? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.7., RL.2.7., RL.3.7.*

The Importance of Character. Assist your students in describing the boy and the tree. Encourage them to discuss ways the differences between the two characters affect the plot of the story.

Also, ask students why they think the boy and the tree change over the course of the story. Help them use evidence from the story to support their answers. Finally, facilitate a discussion of how the changes in each character affect the other. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.3., RL.2.3., RL.3.3.*

The Influence of Repetition. Shel Silverstein uses powerful repeated phrases over the course of the story, such as "Come, Boy" and "And the tree was happy." Help your class identify these repeated phrases. Ask students why they think Shel Silverstein chose to repeat these phrases. What feelings do the phrases convey? How and why are the phrases important to the story? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.4., RL.2.4., RL.3.4.*

Contrasting Tales. Read the story "The Fisherman and His Wife" by the Brothers Grimm. (This is in the public domain and widely available online, though there are also picture book versions of it.) Facilitate a discussion in your classroom of "The Fisherman and His Wife" and *The Giving Tree*. Ask students: In what ways are the characters the same, and in what way are they different? How do the events, including the endings, compare and contrast? Are the stories more similar than different or not? Why? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.9., RL.2.9., RL.3.9.*

The Moral or Lesson of the Tale. Ask what your students think is the moral or lesson of this unforgettable story. Help them use evidence from the book to support their answers. Also, explain that the story's lesson or moral has continued to appeal to readers for 50 years—a long, long time. Assist them as they discuss why this might be so. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.2., RL.2.2., RL.3.2.*

CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address:
SL.1.1a-c., SL.2.1a-c., SL.3.1a-d., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6.

Writing Activities

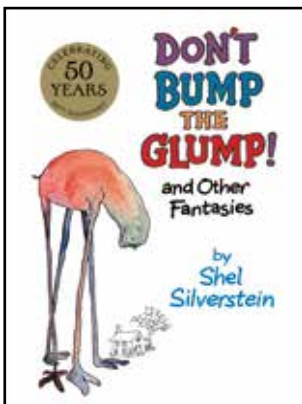
A Story of Giving Happiness. In Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*, the generous tree is happy when making the boy happy, though the tree is most happy when the boy also is nearby. Instruct students to brainstorm about times in their lives when they were happy because they made someone else happy. Encourage them to think not only of the actions they took and the results of these actions, but also of the sights, smells, sensations, tastes, and feelings connected to the events. Then aid each student to write "A Story of Giving Happiness," incorporating all the sensory details that will make their stories vibrant. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

Love Poem of a Favorite Place. While not all children have a Giving Tree, most have some favorite place that they love. This place, like them, changes over time, though not always as drastically as the Giving Tree changes. Assist students in writing two-part poems. Part I should be about their favorite place several weeks or months or years ago, and part II should be about their favorite place now. Compile these "Love Poems of a Favorite Place" into a collection for your classroom or school library. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6.*

Why Is Love Sometimes Sad? Opinion Piece. This story shows that love, while ultimately happy, is sometimes sad. Help students to develop an opinion piece on why they think love is sometimes sad. They might use *The Giving Tree* or other fiction or nonfiction stories, in addition to personal experiences, to support their opinions. When your students are finished, compile the pieces into a touching "Why Is Love Sometimes Sad?" anthology. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.1., W.2.1., W.3.1a., W.3.1b., W.3.1c., W.3.1d.*

A Tale in Conversation. *The Giving Tree* is a story partially told through conversations that repeat and change slightly over time. Using this story as an example, have your students invent two characters or select two people they know, like two friends or a parent and a child. Then assist them as they invent or select a problem for their two characters (for example, the child wants something the parent doesn't want her to have, or one friend wants to play something and the other friend doesn't). Guide your students in the creation of a short story or poem told mostly through the conversation between their two characters as they attempt to solve their problem. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address:
SL.1.1a-c., SL.2.1a-c., SL.3.1a-d., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6.



Don't Bump the Glump!

Classroom Discussion

Illustrating the Gritchen. Read “There’s a Gritchen in My Kitchen” with your class, and then break the class into five groups. Have each group draw a stanza from a hat. Once they select their stanzas, help them to create an illustration that includes all the details in the stanza. You may need to give them a checklist as a guide. Once your class has all the illustrations complete, display the artwork on your classroom walls. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1., RL.4.1.*

What Isn’t Said? Shel Silverstein often wrote poems where the joke must be inferred from the clues in the poems. Read two of these poems with your class: “The Skinny Zippity” and “Oops!” Help your students locate the clues in the poems. What isn’t said and so has to be inferred? What is the joke? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1., RL.4.1.*

Gold-Star Words. Several of the poems in this collection include fantastic challenging words: gregarious, jeered, various, contrary, dwells, converse, masculine, filial, envisions, ferocious. Give students ten gold stars made of paper, and help them look up these words in printed or electronic dictionaries. If appropriate, locate meanings as a class. Once students collect the definitions, they can write these on the backs of the stars. Then decorate your room with these stunning “gold-star words.” *CCSS (Language): L.1.4., L.2.4., L.3.4., L.4.4.*

Awesome Alliteration Animals. Define alliteration for your class. Then help students identify alliteration in “In Waukesha Wisc.” Facilitate a discussion of ways alliteration creates rhythm in the poem, as well as meaning and humor. How do the alliterations suggest feelings or appeal to the senses? After your thorough discussion, help students invent their own creatures with alliterative names. They can make posters of these animals with their own unique illustrations to display around the classroom! *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.4., RL.2.4., RL.3.4., RL.4.4.*

*CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address:
SL.1.1a-c., SL.2.1a-c., SL.3.1a-d., SL.4.1a-d., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6., SL.4.6.*

Writing Activities

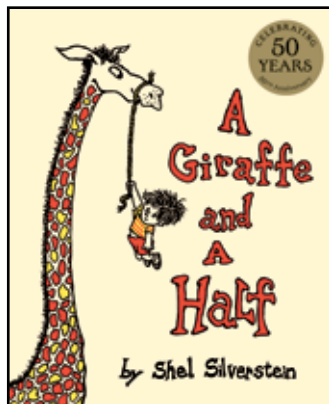
Glump Inspiration Story. Help students choose one of these fabulous illustrations of invented animals, or perhaps one of the animals named but not illustrated. What is that animal’s behavior? What is its habitat and home? What problem might it need to solve? Once students have answered these questions, ask them to write a story about their chosen animal—and include as much humor as possible! Guide each student through the process of revising and polishing his or her tale, and then help them share their fabulous stories with the class. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d., W.4.3a., W.4.3b., W.4.3c., W.4.3d., W.4.3e.*

Escape Encyclopedia. In the poem “Glub-Toothed Sline,” the narrator travels to many places all over the world to avoid the Glub-Toothed Sline. Assist students in locating these places on a map and labeling them. Then give them age-appropriate information about each location. Assign students or student groups to write short expository pieces about these places. Once the expository pieces are finished, bind the “Escape Encyclopedia” and display it with the labeled map so that everybody will know where to run in case of a visit from the Glub-Toothed Sline! *CCSS (Writing): W.1.2., W.2.2., W.3.2a., W.3.2b., W.3.2c., W.3.2d., W.4.2a., W.4.2b., W.4.2c., W.4.2d., W.4.2e.*

What’s Your Favorite? Ask each student to choose his or her favorite poem and illustration in *Don’t Bump the Glump!* Help students list what they like about the poems—for example: words, phrases, wordplay, events, descriptions, and humor. Have them generate similar lists about the corresponding illustrations. Once they’ve finished, guide them to use their lists, the poems, and the illustrations to write opinion pieces on why they like their selections best. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.1., W.2.1., W.3.1a., W.3.1b., W.3.1c., W.3.1d., W.4.1a., W.4.1b., W.4.1c., W.4.1d.*

A New Fantasy Poem. Using *Don’t Bump the Glump!* to inspire your students’ creative ideas, ask them to draw their own invented animals. They can then create unique names for their animals. To prepare for poetry writing, they might craft rhymes that relate to or describe the invented animals. Then have them write poems about their invented animals in the entertaining style of Shel Silverstein’s poems. During the revision process, help students focus on word relationships and nuances. Once the poems are complete, hold a poetry reading with treats for your stunning poets. *CCSS (Language): L.1.5., L.2.5., L.3.5., L.4.5.*

*CCSS (Writing) that activities might also address:
W.3.4., W.4.4., W.1.5., W.2.5., W.3.5., W.4.5., W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6., W.4.6.*



A Giraffe and a Half

Classroom Discussion

The Shape of the Story. Using Shel Silverstein's *A Giraffe and a Half*, guide your students in a discussion of story structure. Identify the beginning, where the concept of the story is introduced; the middle, where the concept and the problems related to it develop; and the end, where the problem resolves. With your class, try mapping the shape of the story on a piece of paper, designating a size for the beginning, middle, and end. Students can list what happens or what characters are involved in each section to complete the map. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.2.5., RL.3.5.*

What's under the Ground? Help your students read or study the words on the pages where that kooky giraffe and a half "fell in a hole / that was dug by a mole..." Once they've done this, give them paper and art supplies, while reminding them to fire up their imaginations. Then assist them in developing alternative illustrations for these pages—ones that show what's under the ground. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.1., RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1.*

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words. With your students, examine the illustration Shel Silverstein drew to accompany the words "and a man who bought junk / bought the trunk with the skunk . . ." List as many of the items this man carries as possible. Then discuss the ways the illustration tells more than the words. Also, what does the illustration reveal about "a man who bought junk"? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.7., RL.1.7., RL.2.7., RL.3.7.*

What's the Same, What's Different? Give students the nursery rhyme "The House that Jack Built," another cumulative tale. (This is in the public domain and widely available online, though there are also picture book versions of it.) Guide them in a discussion of the similarities and differences between these two classic works of literature. For example, some similarities between the two might be: rhymes and accumulation. Some differences might be: the humor and the turning point in *A Giraffe and a Half*. Then aid your students as they create a chart of similarities and differences that clearly designates the comparisons and contrasts. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.1., RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1., RL.K.9., RL.1.9., RL.2.9.*

*CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address:
SL.K.1a-b., SL.1.1a-c., SL.2.1a-c., SL.3.1a-d., SL.K.6., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6.*

Writing Activities

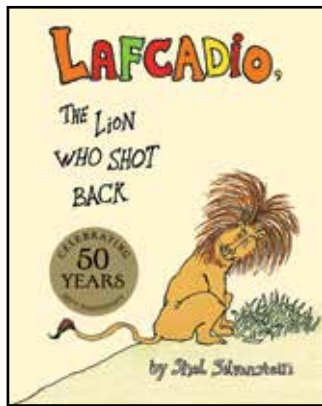
One Day I Found a Giraffe: An Original Story. There is an entire tale to tell that precedes Shel Silverstein's *A Giraffe and a Half*. A child doesn't simply end up with a giraffe, the way he or she might end up with a kitten or a fish. Some crazy hijinks must have helped him or her obtain one. So, using this scenario as a creative springboard, guide students to plan and write a fiction story in which they end up leading around giraffes. Once their stories are revised and polished, hold a reading for their "One Day I Found a Giraffe" tales. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.3., W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

Best Illustration Ever! Guide each student to choose an absolute favorite illustration from *A Giraffe and a Half*. Then discuss the elements of great opinion writing with students, including a clearly stated opinion and examples that support it, like details from an illustration or story. Also discuss the need for a sense of closure at the end of an opinion piece. Once students are ready, assist them as they write their "Best Illustration Ever!" opinion pieces. Posting these in your classroom or on your class blog will likely provoke a lively class discussion. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.1., W.1.1., W.2.1., W.3.1a., W.3.1b., W.3.1c., W.3.1d.*

If You . . . With your students, study the characteristics of cumulative poems that tell stories, using *A Giraffe and a Half* and "The House That Jack Built" as examples. Brainstorm potential topics, drawing from the class's experiences or their imaginative ideas. Once you've finished the discussion, try using "If you . . ." as a prompt to begin your class's cumulative narrative poem. Support students in developing great rhymes and super-silly humor as they write a fantastic cumulative poem. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.3., W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

Stolen Rhyme Poems. Gather all the pairs of rhyming words from this poem: stolen rhymes. Put these on cards or strips of paper, and distribute the rhymes to either individuals or groups of students. Help your students to use the rhymes to write their own stupendous poems. Once the poems are complete, create a digital or paper collection of "Stolen Rhyme Poems" and publish it for multiple classrooms or the entire school to read. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.6., W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6.*

*CCSS (Writing) that writing activities might also address:
W.3.4., W.K.5., W.1.5., W.2.5., W.3.5., W.K.6., W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6.*



Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back

Classroom Discussion

Wordplay. Shel Silverstein plays with words in several ways throughout the story. In Chapter 1, he introduces onomatopoeic lion names such as “Grograph” and “Grrrrr.” At the end of Chapter 9, he makes jokes out of the phrases “social lion” (social butterfly), “literary lion” (an actual phrase), and “clothes lion” (clothes horse). With your class, discuss the nuances of all these words’ meanings, as well as the humor and the relationships between the literal and figurative meanings. As a result of your discussions, develop a wordplay poster, including the words and phrases along with their definitions. *CCSS (Language): L.1.5., L.2.5., L.3.5.*

The Mysterious Narrator. Lead your students in a discussion of “I,” who is telling the story, discovered to be “Uncle Shelby.” What do your students learn about his personality? What do they learn about his relationship to Lafcadio? How does he eventually participate in the story and affect what Lafcadio does? Do your students think he’s important to the story? Why or why not? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1.*

Character Illustrations. With your class, examine Shel Silverstein’s illustrations of Lafcadio early in the story (in Chapter 1) and later in the story (in Chapter 9). Facilitate a discussion of the similarities and differences in Lafcadio’s appearance. Also, reread the accompanying pages and ask what the illustrations show about the way Lafcadio looks that readers might not understand from the words alone. Do your students like any of these illustrations better than others? Why or why not? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.7., RL.2.7., RL.3.7.*

What’s the Message? Does this story offer lessons or messages? If so, what might they be? Potential areas to explore with your students might be Lafcadio’s interest in things that other lions don’t always enjoy, like marshmallows or hunters. You might also discuss the variety of pastimes Lafcadio tries over the course of his life, as well as the events at the story’s end. Then ask students to use what they’ve discussed as evidence for potential lessons or messages in *Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back*. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.2., RL.2.2., RL.3.2.*

*CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address:
SL.1.1a-c., SL.2.1a-c., SL.3.1a-d., SL.4.1a-d., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6., SL.4.6.*

Writing Activities

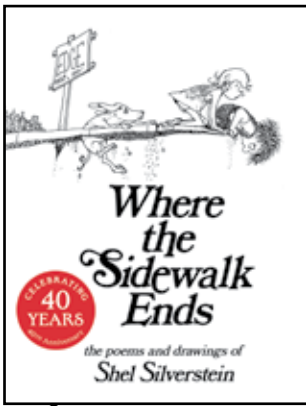
Is Lafcadio a Lion or a Man? Opinion Piece. What do your students think Lafcadio is, a lion or a man? Guide them to use evidence from the text and illustrations as they write opinion pieces to answer this question. Potential opinions might state that he’s “both,” “in ways he’s one and in ways he’s the other,” and “neither.” The challenge is to help students use the story to support their opinions, no matter what those might be. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.1., W.2.1., W.3.1a., W.3.1b., W.3.1c., W.3.1d.*

The Next Lafcadio Tale. Shel Silverstein leaves the ending of this story ambiguous, allowing readers to wonder what might happen next. Capitalize on that wondering, and aid your students as they brainstorm where Lafcadio goes after he leaves the lions. What is his next adventure? Does he meet a new friend or, perhaps, an old one? Does he find a new home? Support them as they write and revise their stories to completion. Have them share each “The Next Lafcadio Tale,” so they can all enjoy the further adventures of Lafcadio. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

Invented Word Dictionary. Shel Silverstein invents many fabulous words in this story—for example, lickety-clipt, pippety-pap, lioning, and finder outers. Collect a few invented words from each chapter. Break your students into groups and assign words to every group. Then assist students in writing definitions, drawing from the contexts of the sentences or the story. Help them create illustrations that depict the usage of the words, along with example sentences from real-life situations. Compile all the dictionary entries and bind them together, creating a rollicking “Invented Word Dictionary.” *CCSS (Language): L.1.5., L.2.5., L.3.5a.*

The Marshmallow Song. In Chapter 4, the circus man begins to sing the marshmallow song, but Lafcadio stops him. What might the rest of the song be? Help your students use rhyme, alliteration, wordplay, and syllabic rhythms to complete the song. For extra writing inspiration, look at the marshmallow suit in Chapter 8. Once the marshmallow song is complete, record it so that other classes and parents can enjoy it. As an alternative, create illustrations to accompany the song and show posters of the illustrated lyrics while performing the song for an audience. *CCSS (Speaking and Listening): SL.1.5., SL.2.5., SL.3.5.*

*CCSS (Writing) that activities might also address:
W.3.4., W.4.4., W.1.5., W.2.5., W.3.5., W.4.5., W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6., W.4.6.*



Where the Sidewalk Ends

Classroom Discussion

Invitation. After reading “Invitation” (p. 9), discuss the overall meaning of the poem. Focus especially on “come in” and the way it provides rhythm to the poem. Also, focus on what the author might mean by “come in” with regard to both the literal and figurative aspects. Is a book like a doorway, a room, a world? How do your students understand the words “come in” as they relate to books and stories? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.2.3., RL.3.3., RL.4.3.*

Who’s That Girl? Read “Sick” (pp. 58–59) with your class, and talk about Peggy Ann McKay. What do your students know about her personality from the poem? What might they infer about her feelings? What traits would they say she has, and how do these traits cause her to behave? In what ways are they similar to her, and in what ways are they different? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.3., RL.2.3., RL.3.3., RL.4.3.*

Poem Lessons. With your class, read “Lester” (p. 69) and “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out” (pp. 70–71). Discuss the unique characters described in each poem, and then discuss the events described. What traits do these characters have? How do they affect the characters’ choices? Once you’ve explored the answers to these questions, ask your class to identify the central messages, lessons, and themes in the poems. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.1.2., RL.2.2., RL.3.2., RL.4.2.*

What’s Different? Help your class compare and contrast the two poems “Boa Constrictor” (pp. 44–45) and “Hector the Collector” (pp. 46–47). Potential areas you might explore with your students: story structure, including beginning, middle, and end; rhyme schemes; use of dialogue; tone; and point of view. Also, ask them what they like about each poem and why. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.2.5., RL.3.5., RL.4.5., RL.4.6.*

Many Meanings. Read “The Farmer and the Queen” (p. 32–33). This silly story plays with words like “nay” and “cheap” that are onomatopoeic words for animal sounds as well as words with other meanings. Help students identify all the meanings. Then have them create a poster of the words and all the words’ meanings, along with companion sentences that show the uses of the words in context. They might also illustrate the poster with imaginative, accurate drawings. *CCSS (Reading: Literature): L.1.5., L.2.5., L.3.5., L.4.5.*

*CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address:
SL.1.1a–c., SL.2.1a–c., SL.3.1a–d., SL.4.1a–d., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6., SL.4.6.*

Writing Activities

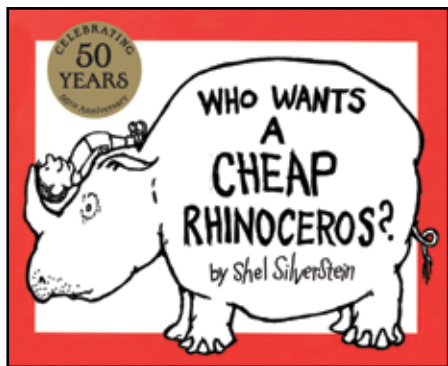
Lying Poem. After reading the preposterous “Who” (p. 63), help your class invent outrageous lies about itself. You could either map the rhyme scheme and use a similar pattern as a guide, or you could use the lines “I can!” “I did!” “I will!” in the same way Shel Silverstein uses them and adopt the poem’s rhyme scheme. You also might encourage your class to use the poem’s final lines “Who can sit and tell lies all night? / I might!” or you could aid your class to develop alternative, yet equally silly, ending lines. Publish your “Lying Poem” in the class or school newsletter to give parents and schoolmates a laugh. *CCSS (Writing): W.3.10., W.4.10.*

The Official Poem Review. Help each student to choose a favorite poem in *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Explain what a great review should contain: an opinion along with examples and reasons that support the opinion. Guide the students through the process of writing reviews for their favorite poems, and encourage them to write about the illustrations as well as the words, phrases, lines, characters, or events. Display these excellent Official Poem Reviews for all to read. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.1., W.2.1., W.3.1a., W.3.1b., W.3.1c., W.3.1d., W.4.1a., W.4.1b., W.4.1c., W.4.1d.*

An Artist’s Life: A Biography. Present your students with biographical information on the remarkable life of Shel Silverstein. For a good resource, go to www.shelsilverstein.com. Help your students identify key facts about his life and his work. As part of the process, they might want to collect some of the information they’ve gathered from reading *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and his other work. For example, they might relay what topics he often wrote about, or they might describe his humor. Assist them in writing, revising, and polishing these thoughtful “An Artist’s Life” biographies. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.2., W.2.2., W.3.2a., W.3.2b., W.3.2c., W.3.2d., W.4.2a., W.4.2b., W.4.2c., W.4.2d.*

The Story of Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too. The three very silly characters Ickle Me, Pickle Me, and Tickle Me “never returned to the world they knew” (pp. 16–17), so where did they go? Did they land or continue flying? What sights did they see? What was their next adventure? Help students create a letter home from Ickle Me, Pickle Me, and Tickle Me that relates the story of where they went after the end of the poem and what they did. *CCSS (Writing): W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d., W.4.3a., W.4.3b., W.4.3c., W.4.3d., W.4.3e.*

*CCSS (Writing) that activities might also address:
W.3.4., W.4.4., W.1.5., W.2.5., W.3.5., W.4.5., W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6., W.4.6.*



Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?

Classroom Discussion

Rhino Benefits. Lead your class in a rousing discussion of the delightful benefits of owning a rhino, according to *Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?* Encourage your students to identify both words and illustrations that describe the fun and useful things one might do with such a pet. Then ask them if parents would agree with kids that all these things are benefits. Why or why not? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.1., RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1.*

Rhino Drawbacks. Now lead your class in an equally rousing discussion of the drawbacks of owning a rhino. Encourage your students to identify both words and illustrations that describe the destructive or difficult things a rhinoceros pet might do. Remind students of the discussion of rhino benefits. Would parents think a rhino pet had different drawbacks? Why or why not? What might these be? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.1., RL.1.1., RL.2.1., RL.3.1.*

Who Are Those Kids? Help your class examine the words and the illustrations, focusing on the kids playing with the rhino. What can they learn about these imaginative kids from the story's words? What can they learn about them from the illustrations? What do the kids in the story care about? What do they like to do? What are some of their worries and interests? Do your students think the kids are similar to or different from themselves? How? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.7., RL.1.7., RL.2.7., RL.3.7.*

Where's the Story Set? As you go through each page of this story with your students, look for clues in the words and illustrations about where the action of the tale is taking place. Inside houses? Outdoors? On rivers? At oceans? What can your students tell about the settings? What might they predict or infer about aspects of the setting that aren't depicted? *CCSS (Reading: Literature): RL.K.3., RL.1.3.*

CCSS (Speaking and Listening) that discussions might also address: SL.K.1a-b., SL.1.1a-c., SL.2.1a-c., SL.3.1a-d., SL.K.6., SL.1.6., SL.2.6., SL.3.6.

Writing Activities

The Best Use for a Cheap Rhinoceros. Guide your students to select the absolutely, positively best use for a rhinoceros shown in the story. Then have them brainstorm related personal experiences to this best use. For instance, they might decide the best use is that the rhino plays pirate, because on the playground at recess they often pretend that they are pirates. Help your students add details and examples from their personal experiences and relate these to the use. Afterward, guide them to write opinion pieces on the fabulous ways a rhino would be useful in their own lives. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.1., W.1.1., W.2.1., W.3.1a., W.3.1b., W.3.1c., W.3.1d.*

One Day I Brought Home a Rhinoceros. Taking the uses for a rhinoceros as inspiration, help your students plan the story of what would happen if they brought home a rhinoceros as a pet. What would it eat? Where would it sleep? How would their parents or guardians react? What about their siblings and pets? Would they keep the rhino, or would it have to leave and live somewhere else? Once your students are finished planning, assist them to write their "One Day I Brought Home a Rhinoceros" stories. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.3., W.1.3., W.2.3., W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

Real Rhino Report. Present research to your class on real rhinos. Make sure to include information on types of rhinoceroses, the geographical locations in which they're found, their life cycle, and their behavior. If appropriate, you might explain that they're endangered, and why this is so. Help students list and define unfamiliar words related to the research. Once students have collected all their facts and vocabulary, assist them in developing an informative writing piece. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.2., W.1.2., W.2.2., W.3.2a., W.3.2b., W.3.2c., W.3.2d.*

Absolutely True Favorite Pet Story. Help students brainstorm true pet stories they have experienced or heard. Guide them to write details, especially sensory details, from these stories. Once they have all their ideas written down, guide them to choose one of the pet stories and then write it, incorporating all the fabulous details they remember. After the story is revised and polished, instruct them to illustrate it. Then collect these "Favorite Pet Stories" and create a stunning paper or digital anthology with them. *CCSS (Writing): W.K.3., W.1.3., W.2.3. W.3.3a., W.3.3b., W.3.3c., W.3.3d.*

CCSS (Writing) that activities might also address: W.K.5., W.1.5., W.2.5., W.3.5., W.K.6., W.1.6., W.2.6., W.3.6.

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