

HOORAY FOR AMANDA AND HER ALLIGATOR

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by Mo Willems

Ages: 4-8; Grades: PreK-3

Themes: Friendship, Feelings, and Humor

Running Time: 12 Minutes

NEW! COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SUMMARY

From the author of the Knuffle Bunny and Pigeon series, comes another insightful and humorous story about a girl named Amanda and her toy alligator. This movie sweetly imagines life through the eyes of the alligator who spends his time waiting for Amanda to play with him, while cooking up ways for them to have fun. Any child (or adult) who has had a special toy will relate to Alligator and Amanda's sweet and funny relationship.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss friendship.
- Students will bring important personal items to school to share with their classmates.
- Students will write a story about making a new friend, real or imaginary.
- Students will participate in a text dependent discussion.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Invite students to bring in an important personal item for show-and-tell. Tell them that this could be something that they have had since they were a baby or something that they care about very much. For some students this may be a blanket or book, for others, a toy. During the show and tell, allow the student to speak about why the object is so important to him/her and then allow three students to ask questions. Encourage students to speak in complete sentences. One of the objectives of this activity is to give students practice at oral language development.

Common Core Connection Activities:

Discuss friendship with students. Guiding questions:

- What are the qualities of a good friend?
- How do you make friends?
- How do you decide whom you want to be friends with?
- Have you ever done anything special to try to make friends with someone?
- How do you feel when you're with a great friend?

Tell students that they're going to watch a movie about a girl named Amanda and her good friend Alligator. Encourage them to watch and listen for ways that Amanda and Alligator show friendship to one another.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Common Core Connection Activities:

Say to students: Do you have a special friend in your life? Is your friend a person, or a toy, like Alligator? We're going to write a story about a time that we did something fun or adventurous with our friend. Just like Mo Willems did, we're going to focus on one small moment in our friendship and write about that. For example, we're not going to write about the whole summer at camp with our friend, or maybe not even a whole day, but we might write about the first time we went out in a canoe with our friend. Think about a time you did something fun or adventurous with a great friend and write a story about that time.

Guide students through the writing process, by modeling a story about doing something fun or adventurous with a friend.

- 1) Use a web or list to brainstorm ideas.
- 2) Use the web or list to choose the strongest idea. Using that idea, create an outline with the students. Since it is a story, the outline should be created in chronological order, using the key words first, then, next, finally. Encourage all students to contribute ideas to the outline.
- 3) Use the outline to fill in details and strong vocabulary, creating a story. Scribe the story on large chart paper, so that students can see how the ideas get transformed into complete sentences.
- 4) Conclude by having students tell the stories of how they did something fun or adventurous with a friend. Older students can use the writing process to create their story, while younger students can make a wordless picture book.

Focus on the section of the movie, "A Surprising Value." Discuss with students how Amanda demonstrates the qualities of a good friend in this section. Guiding questions:

- The text says: "When friends say 'No, really,' they mean it." What does that mean?
- How does Alligator feel when he first finds out he has a price tag on his tail? What in the text (or pictures) makes you think that?
- How do Alligator's feelings change after Amanda reads the tag? Why do they change? What evidence from the text leads you to this conclusion?
- Why didn't Amanda say anything at first when Alligator asked why he was only worth seven cents?
- How does Amanda help Alligator feel better?
- What is the author's message about telling the truth in this section? What parts of the text are connected to this message?

Take a class trip to the local library. Alert the librarian that you are coming so that he or she can prepare. Show the students the different areas of the children's section and how the books are organized. Use examples of titles that you have read in class to show them how to find books on their own. Give students time to peruse the library on their own. As they are exploring, take small groups to the desk to get library cards, if they don't already have them. Allow each child to choose one book to check out.

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