

THE WORLD OF

Ellie



Using the Ellie books by Mike Wu to Teach Social and Emotional Learning Skills

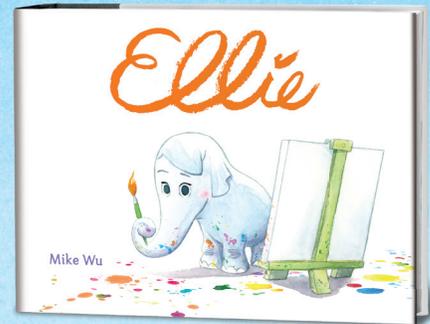
Educator's Guide

Disney • HYPERION

ABOUT THE BOOKS

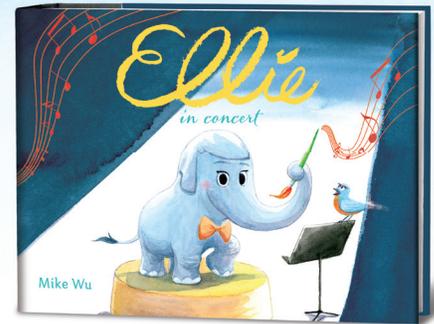
ELLIE

The zoo is closing! Ellie and her friends want to save their home, but Ellie's just a baby elephant and she doesn't know what she can do to help. While the other animals are busy working, Ellie finds a brush and some paints, and gives the zoo a big splash of color! Will her bright new talent be enough to keep the zoo's gates open for good?



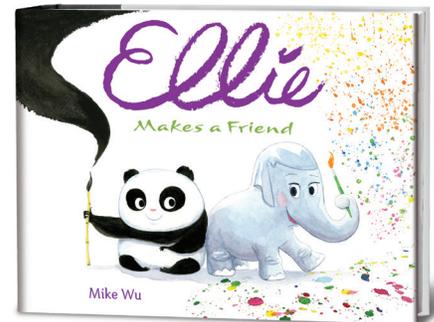
ELLIE IN CONCERT

Since Ellie saved her home with her wonderful paintings, the zoo is back in business and the animals are more energetic than ever. All except for Lucy the giraffe, who hasn't been able to sleep with all the noise. Determined to help her friend, Ellie tries to tone down the ruckus and organizes the animals into an orchestra. But is it possible to conduct the cacophony of the zoo into beautiful music?



ELLIE MAKES A FRIEND

A panda has joined the zoo, and just like Ellie, she's an artist! Ellie is thrilled to make a new friend, but with everyone so impressed by Ping's distinctive painting skills, Ellie starts to question her own talent. As she learns more about her new friend from China, though, Ellie finds that a fresh perspective can lead to new inspiration—and maybe something wonderful they can create together!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Wu is the author and illustrator of *Ellie*, which was selected as one of NPR's best books of 2015, as well as its follow-ups, *Ellie in Concert* and *Ellie in Color*, and *Henri's Hats*. He is also the illustrator of the Oodlethunks series. When he's not making books, Mike is an animator at Pixar, where he has worked on *The Incredibles*, *Ratatouille*, *Up*, and *Toy Story 3*, among other movies. He attended the California Institute of the Arts, and he is the creator of children's clothing and gift line Tiny Teru. Mike lives in the Bay Area with his family.

Visit him online at theartofmikewu.com.

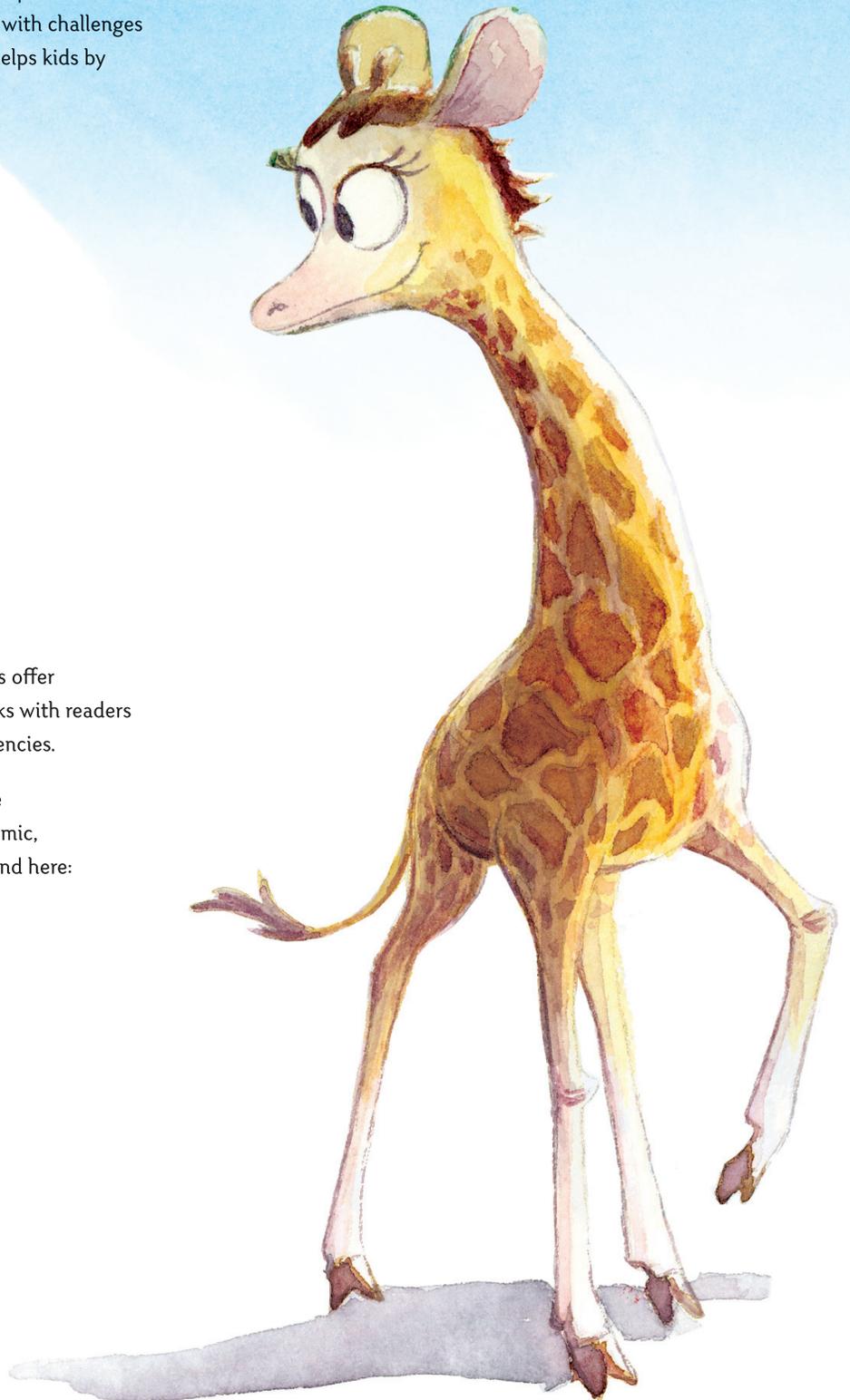
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social and emotional learning instruction is a hallmark of teaching young people. The Ellie books offer an organic way to share these lessons by focusing young readers' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors that equip them with the tools they need to deal effectively and ethically with challenges and daily tasks. Social and emotional learning helps kids by teaching them how to:

- Gain confidence
- Make friends and maintain friendships
- Resolve conflict
- Make appropriate decisions
- Manage stress and anxiety
- Learn strengths and weaknesses
- Gain awareness of what others are feeling
- Learn social norms
- Resist negative social pressure

The following discussions, activities, and lessons offer practical ways to focus and utilize the Ellie books with readers to target social and emotional learning competencies.

Definitions for SEL terms and competencies are outlined by CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) and can be found here: <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>



ELLIE

SEL FOCUS

Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Management

Identifying emotions - Accurate self-perception - Recognizing strengths - Self-confidence - Self-efficacy - Impulse control
Stress management - Self-discipline - Self-motivation - Goal setting - Organizational skills

Teaching Responsible Decision Making

Identifying problems - Analyzing situations - Solving problems - Evaluating - Reflecting - Ethical responsibility

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Discuss what the word “home” means. Does it only apply to people? Why are the homes of animals equally important?

Next, read aloud and share the illustrations in *Ellie*.

ASK READERS TO CONSIDER AND RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

- How does learning the zoo will be closing make the animals feel? (Identifying emotions and problems)
- Do the animals think they can make a difference? Why or why not? (Accurate self-perception)
- What are each of the animals good at doing? (Recognizing strengths and self-confidence)
- Do the animals feel like it's enough? How do each of them take charge of their actions to make a difference? (Self-efficacy)
- How do each of the animals react to the announcement of the zoo's closing? (Identifying problems)
- What do Gerald's and Lucy's responses indicate about them? (Analyzing situations and reflecting)
- Why does Ellie feel she has nothing to add? How do we know she is mistaken? (Reflecting)
- Why is it important that everyone works together to solve this issue? (Ethical responsibility)

PERSONAL CONNECTION

Have students draw a picture of their home or a favorite place and prepare to share three reasons it is unique and important to them. After everyone finishes, display the art and allow students to each share with the class why their favorite place matters to them.



ELLIE IN CONCERT

SEL FOCUS

Teaching Responsible Decision Making

Identifying problems - Analyzing situations - Solving problems - Evaluating - Reflecting - Ethical responsibility

Teaching Relationship Skills

Communication - Social engagement - Relationship building - Teamwork

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask readers the following: How do you know if there's a problem? Are there usually signs someone needs your help? What might those look like? How do you go about solving the issue? What do you do if you can't solve it by yourself?

Next, read aloud and share the illustrations in *Ellie in Concert*.

ASK READERS TO CONSIDER AND RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Ellie tells readers that some of the animals are excited by the zoo's visitors. Why might other animals not be? (Evaluating)
- How does Ellie react to learning that her friend Lucy is struggling? (Identifying problems)
- Do any of the ways Ellie and the zookeeper try to help Lucy work for you when you have a hard time resting? (Reflecting)
- Do you think it is brave of Ellie to politely ask the animals to keep down the noise? (Communication)
- Why does Ellie go to Gerard for help rather than trying to solve Lucy's problem by herself? (Identifying and solving problems)
- How does Ellie prove that she understands that each animal has something valuable to offer? (Reflecting)
- Why does working together ultimately prove to be the best way to solve the problem? (Teamwork)

PERSONAL CONNECTION

Have students work together to create a list of their favorite things to do as a team or in a group. After sharing, allow students to take turns selecting an activity everyone can participate in together.



ELLIE MAKES A FRIEND

SEL FOCUS

Teaching Social Awareness

Perspective taking - Empathy - Appreciating diversity - Respect for others

Teaching Relationship Skills

Communication - Social engagement - Relationship building - Teamwork

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask readers the following: Have you ever been the new person somewhere, or have you traveled to a new place that was unfamiliar? What was that experience like? What did others do to help make you feel more comfortable?

Next, read aloud and share the illustrations in *Ellie Makes a Friend*.

ASK READERS TO CONSIDER AND RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Why do the other animals seem so excited about the arrival of Ping? (Appreciating diversity)
- Why does Ellie worry about Ping also being an artist? How does Gerard ease her fears and insecurities? (Communication)
- How does she begin to understand that it might be difficult for Ping to be in a new and unfamiliar place? (Empathy)
- In what ways does Ellie go out of her way to help Ping fit in at the zoo? (Relationship building)
- Though they don't "speak" the same language, how does Ellie prove she's "listening" to Ping? (Appreciating diversity)
- What makes their friendship so special? (Relationship building)
- In your opinion, what's the best part of their collaboration as artists? (Teamwork)

PERSONAL CONNECTION

Have students take turns sharing something that they consider a connection to their identity—this might be a special toy, a photograph of family, a sampling of a favorite cultural food—the options are limitless! After each person shares, model for other students a positive reaction to what was shared, and then offer students the opportunity to practice doing the same.



ADDITIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES FOR THE ELLIE BOOKS:

- With the help of the librarian, have students do some basic research about a zoo animal of choice. After learning a few fun facts about their animal, offer students a chance to dress up for an animal parade.



- Ellie's art and creative spirit brings joy to both Ellie and those around her. Assemble a "Creation Station" area for young creators to express themselves through an art medium of choice.

- The joy that music brings is contagious; allow readers to share their favorite songs and host a dance party. Remind students of the importance of taking turns.



- Ping the panda is from China. Besides pandas, help readers learn more about where China is located, as well as some of the cultural riches it has given the world.

- Show a video to students about calligraphy. After finishing, provide the supplies and basic practice worksheets to allow them to give it a try.

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HOW DO THEY FEEL

Underneath each picture below, identify the emotion you believe best shows how Ellie and her zoo friends are feeling. You can use each emotion more than once, and you can work together to identify the emotion. When finished, compare your labels and discuss your choices.















CREATE YOUR OWN ELLIE STORY

FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW AND DRAW PICTURES TO GO ALONG WITH THE STORY WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED.



One day, Ellie and Lucy went to visit the _____ in the zoo.

When they got there, Ellie found _____.

Then Ellie saw them _____.

“Oh, dear!” Lucy cried. “Look at this!”

Ellie said, “Don’t worry, Lucy. Now you can _____!”

The two friends laughed. Lucy asked, “_____?”

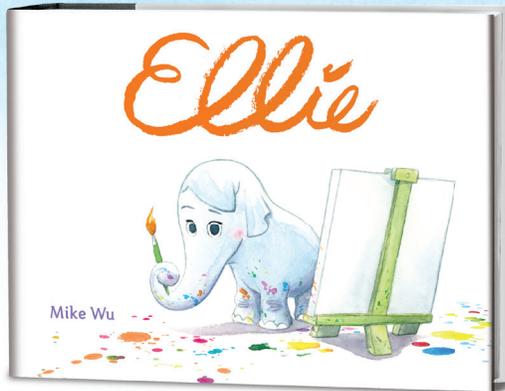
“_____!” said Ellie.



This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor in the Library Science Department in the College of Education at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a Ph.D. in library science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

Many more guides can be found on the Disney • Hyperion website at www.disneybooks.com.

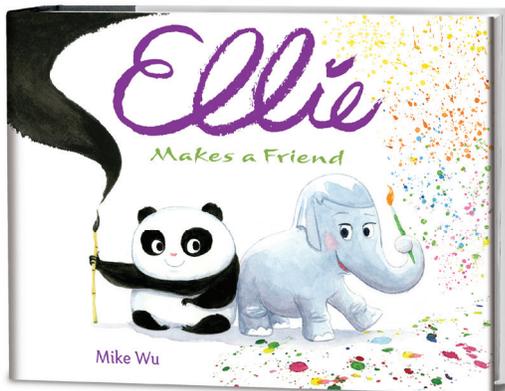
COLLECT ALL OF THE ELLIE BOOKS



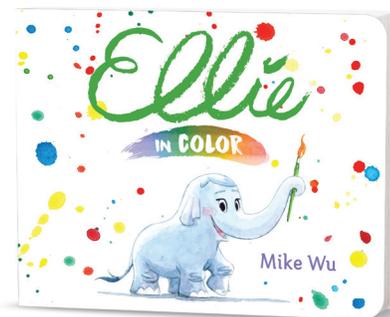
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