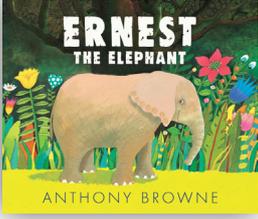




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Ernest the Elephant

Anthony Browne
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Ernest is a happy baby elephant. But when his curiosity gets the better of him and he leaves the rest of his herd to explore the alluring and dangerous jungle, he becomes very lost indeed. Amongst the undergrowth, he meets a rude gorilla, a weary lion, an impolite hippo and an uncaring crocodile. Will anyone help Ernest find his way out of the jungle and home to his mum? From the international phenomenon, Anthony Browne, comes a heartfelt, visually stunning picture book, about finding help in unexpected places.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Anthony Browne is one of the most celebrated author-illustrators working today. UK Children's Laureate from 2009 to 2011 and winner of multiple awards – including the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal and the much-coveted Hans Christian Andersen Award – Anthony is renowned for his unique style. His work is loved and admired all around the world. Anthony lives in Canterbury, Kent.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Ages 3-7
- Years F-1

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:

- Rules
- Animals
- Fears
- Strangers
- Gratitude



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Ernest the Elephant*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author/illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Write your own story using the title *Ernest the Elephant*.

Exploring the Text

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *Ernest the Elephant* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

At the start of the book Ernest decides to go into the jungle on his own for an adventure. He doesn't tell his mum and soon becomes lost. Was this a good idea? Why or why not? What could Ernest have done differently to make sure he stayed safe if he wanted to go on an adventure?

When Ernest asks all of the big animals for help they tell him no, and it is only the mouse willing to help him find his mum. Why do you think the mouse decided to say yes?

Have you ever been lost? How did this make you feel? How did you find your parents?

Take turns describing/retelling the story as if you were explaining it to someone who hasn't read it yet. What do you think are the most important parts of the story? Why do you think that?

Exploring the Book

How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

Ernest goes through a range of feelings in the story. Look at each spread and discuss how Ernest might be feeling. Discuss situations when students have felt the same way and why.

The landscape the elephants walk through is very different to that of the jungle. How has this been done through the illustrations? How did you feel about the different environments at the start of the book and at the end of the book?

Some of the spreads use large areas of blank space. What is the effect of this when compared to the spreads that are full of colour?

Further Activities

There are many different African animals in *Ernest the Elephant*. Research more about these animals on the internet. Make a list of websites which are useful for learning about African animals. Make sure you consider whether the information each site provides is reliable, who wrote or manages it and how up-to-date it is.

What other books has Anthony Browne written and illustrated? Research on <http://www.anthonybrownebooks.com>. Have you read any of his other books? Can you find any in your school library? Which is your favourite Anthony Browne book? Why?

The jungle in *Ernest the Elephant* is made up of lots of strange and colourful objects. Make your own jungle by arranging objects on a black background and explain to the class why you chose the things you did.

Put on a performance of *Ernest the Elephant* using the jungle collages you made as a backdrop. Perform your play for other classes.