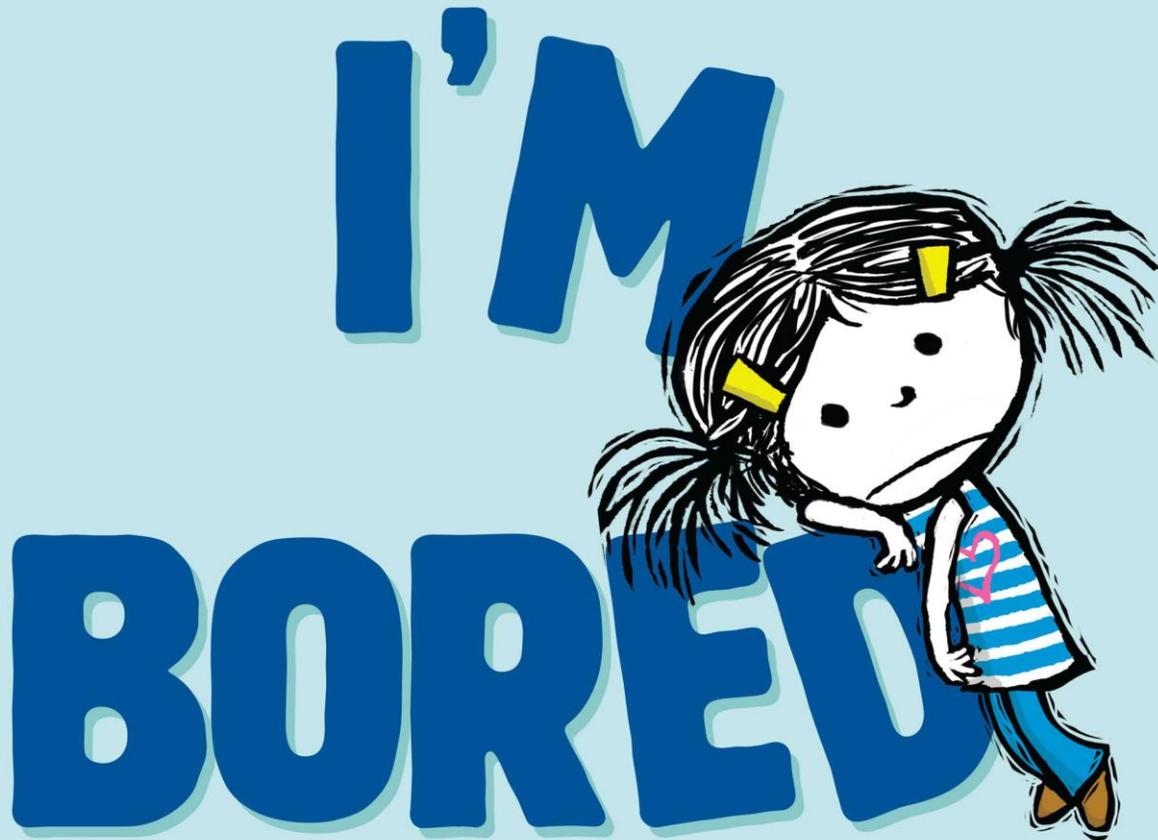


Totally ~~Not~~
Boring

A Teacher's Guide To



A classroom guide written by Marcie Colleen
and illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi,
based on the picture book written by Michael Ian Black,
published by Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers.



Michael Ian Black
Author, *I'm Bored*

Michael Ian Black is a comedian, an actor, and a writer best known for the television shows *The State*, *Stella*, and *Ed* and for his frequent contributions to the VH1's "I Love the..." series. His three other picture books are *Chicken Cheeks*, *The Purple Kangaroo*, and *A Pig Parade is a Terrible Idea*. Michael lives in Connecticut with his wife and two children.



Debbie Ridpath Ohi
Illustrator, *I'm Bored*

Debbie Ridpath Ohi writes and draws for a living, and is having way too much fun to ever be bored. This is her first picture book. Debbie lives in Toronto with her husband, Jeff. On Twitter: @inkyelbows. *I'm Bored* Bonus Page: DebbieOhi.com/bored.

Marcie Colleen, Curriculum Writer

Marcie is a former teacher with a bachelor's degree in English Education from Oswego State and a master's degree in Educational Theater from New York University. Marcie fights boredom every day in Brooklyn, NYC. Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *I'm Bored* is designed for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *I'm Bored* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as a teaching tool throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.

All handouts mentioned in this guide are available at:

<http://debbieohi.com/bored-teachersguide>

Title: I'M BORED

Author: Michael Ian Black

Illustrator: Debbie Ridpath Ohi

Ages: 3-8

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers

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Brief synopsis:

"Just when a little girl thinks she couldn't possibly be more bored, she stumbles upon a potato who turns the tables on her by declaring that children are boring. But this girl isn't going to let a vegetable tell her what's what, so she sets out to show the unimpressed potato all the amazing things kids can do. Too bad the potato is anything but interested.

This tongue-in-cheek twist on a familiar topic is sure to entertain anyone who's ever been bored—or had to hear about someone else being bored—and is filled with comedian Michael Ian Black's trademark dry wit, accompanied by charismatic illustrations from newcomer Debbie Ridpath Ohi."

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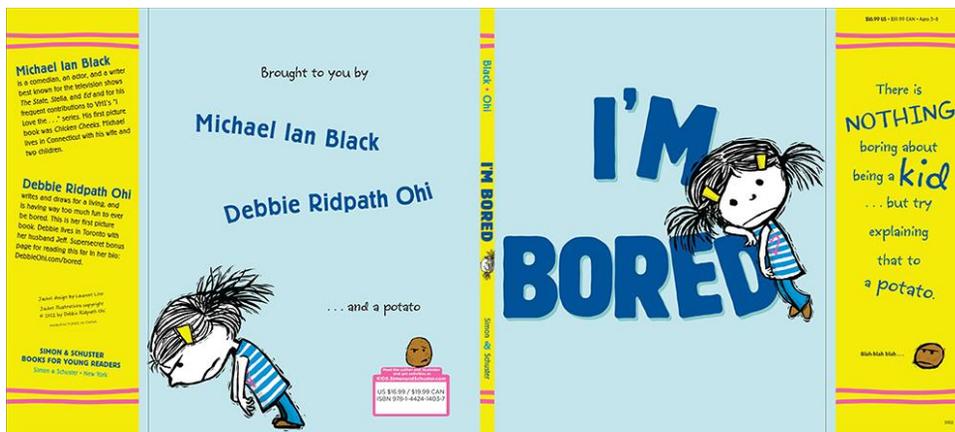
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English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *I'm Bored*,

Help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.



The Front and Back Covers ~

- How would you describe the girl? How do you think she feels? Stand up and mimic what she is doing? How does it make you feel?
- What do you think "bored" means? If you were told the little girl feels bored, what would you predict "bored" means?
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find in the cover illustration?
- Do you see more than one character anywhere on the front or back cover? Look closely.

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about.

- Create a plot line graph for *I'm Bored*. Be sure to include the introduction of characters, introduction of conflict, rising action, climax and falling action/resolution.
- Create a 10 word description of the book. Make a bookstore poster for the book and include your 10 words.

Let's talk about the people who made *I'm Bored*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

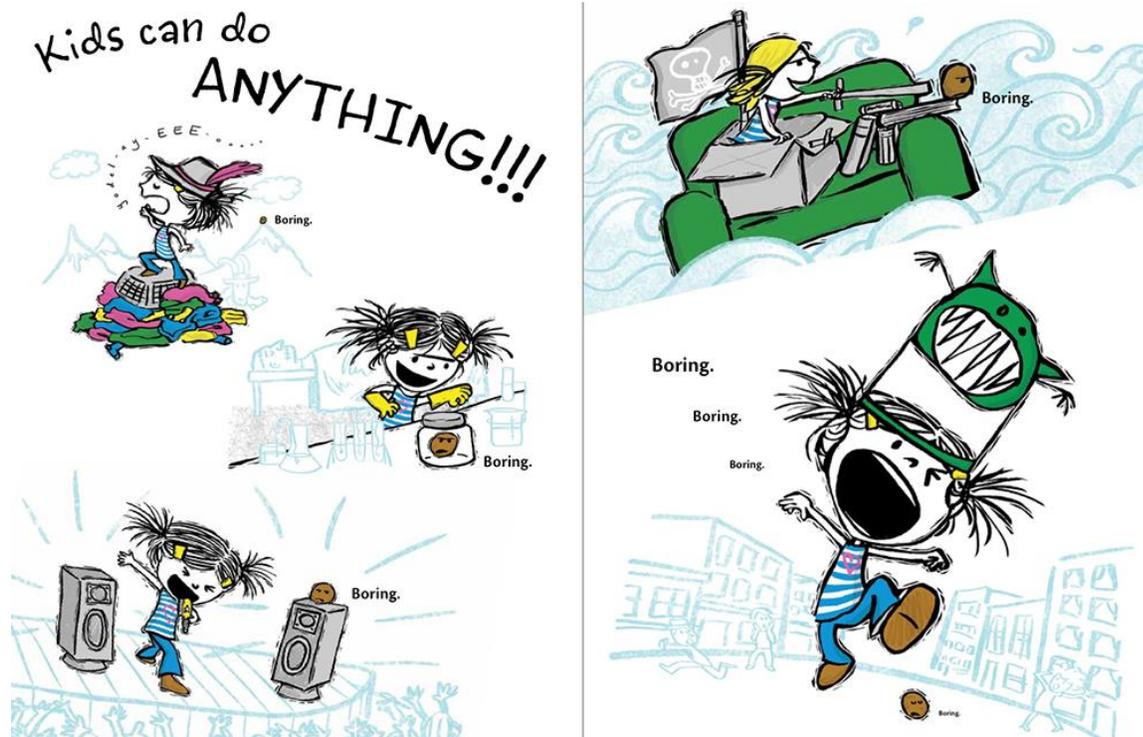
Also see: <http://debbieohi.com/how-im-bored-was-created>

Take a look at the illustrations in the following spreads:



"Kids can swing! Kids can jump! Kids can fly!" spread

- Why do you think some of the illustrations are in light blue and others are in black line/color?
- Look closely at the potato in each illustration. Notice anything silly?
- What are some other ways Debbie Ridpath Ohi could have illustrated swinging, jumping and flying?



"Kids Can Do ANYTHING!!!" spread

- Name the 5 different things the girl is doing in this spread?
- Ohi blends the imaginative with the real-life nicely in this spread. What are some real-life elements in these illustrations (ie. laundry basket and clothes)? What are the imaginative elements (ie. mountain goat)?

As a class, read *Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson and *Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis.

- How does Harold use a crayon and imagination to play?
- When using your imagination, what are some things that a box can become?
- What would you draw if you were given Harold's very special purple crayon?
- If you were given a big box, what would you imagine it was?
- Write a mash-up version of either story, in which the potato from *I'm Bored* visits Harold or the bunny in *Not a Box*.

Writing Activities

"My Very Own Story of Boredom"

Waiting in a very long line. Listening to grown-ups incessantly chatter on. Long summer days when everyone in the neighborhood is on vacation and there is no one to play with. Childhood can be filled with boredom.



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Write about a time when you were bored. Where were you? What did you do to make the time pass quickly? Did it help? Knowing what you know now, how would you avoid being in bored again?

OR

Create a fictional story in which the main character is bored, but something extraordinary happens to change the situation. Be creative!

Optional: Create the story together as a class.

Also see: [Tips and Activities for Young Writers](#).

Boredom is in the Eye of the Potato ~ Point of View

Either as a class or individually, explore *I'm Bored* from the point of view of the potato. Where does Potato come from? How does Potato feel? Why does Potato think kids are boring? What does Potato like about flamingos?

Whoa, just a sec. Potatoes are NOT BORING!!

Advanced classes will be able to actually create *I'm Bored* from Potato's point of view. However, if the class is less-advanced, simply have them create captions and thought-bubbles for him.



Additional Challenge: How about *I'm Bored* from the girl's parents' POV? Or the flamingo?

"HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY THINK KIDS ARE BORING..." Persuasive Essay

The little girl in *I'm Bored* does her best to persuade Potato that kids are not boring. Ask your students if they know what "persuade" means? If not, can they make any guesses?



Discuss:

- What it means to persuade
- Times you might want to persuade someone (ie. persuade your parents to let you stay up late).

Writing to persuade tells the reader what you believe, gives the reader at least three reasons why you believe it, and has a good ending sentence. You want to try and convince the reader to agree with you.

Have students write a persuasive essay called "Kids are Not Boring Because..." using the following structure:

T=Topic sentences. The topic sentence tells the reader what you think or believe.

Example: *I believe that kids are not boring because...*

R=Reasons. 3 or more. The reasons tell the reader why you believe what you believe. Write at least 3-4 sentences supporting each reason.

E=Ending. Wrap it up with a conclusive sentence.

E=Examine. Look closely. Do you have all of your parts?



All print-ready handouts available at <http://debbieohi.com/bored-teachersguide>

Speaking and Listening Activities

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *I'm Bored* to life in your classroom and also have fun with speaking and listening skills!

Choral Reading

The teacher takes the role of the little girl while the students take the role of the potato. Read the book aloud together. Emphasize memorization of the students' parts as well as good vocal expression.

Mime

While the teacher reads the book aloud, the students can act out the events in the book. Half the students can be the girl and half the students can be the potato. Emphasize body motion and facial expressions, as well as listening skills. Switch roles and read the book again.

Drama

Ask the students if they can think of any other things that young people do to prove they're not boring. Have the students act out their ideas in front of the class. They can either tell the class what they're acting or ask the class to guess what actions they are acting out.

Or

In groups, have the students come up with more ways kids aren't boring and act those scenes out for the class.

Or

Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read *I'm Bored*.

Vocal Style

In small groups, act out *I'm Bored* as an opera, a western, a "breaking news" story, a thriller, etc. The rest of the class should guess what the "style" is.



All print-ready handouts available at <http://debbieohi.com/bored-teachersguide>

Language Activities

Synonyms/Antonyms

The word "bored" is used 7 times and "boring" is used 22 times though out *I'm Bored*. Students should create a list of synonyms for these two words and rewrite the story using alternate words.

In addition, create a list of antonyms for "bored" or "boring". How could the story be rewritten using these antonyms instead?

Bored versus Board: Homonyms

I'm Bored provides an excellent introduction to homonyms.

Students need to be able to identify that words are pronounced the same, either when listening to or when seeing the words. One fun activity is to ask them to race to react as soon as they hear or see a homophone. For example, read out or show a list of words and as soon as there are two words that are pronounced the same (e.g. "fair" and "fare") next to each other, the students stand up, raise one hand or shout out.

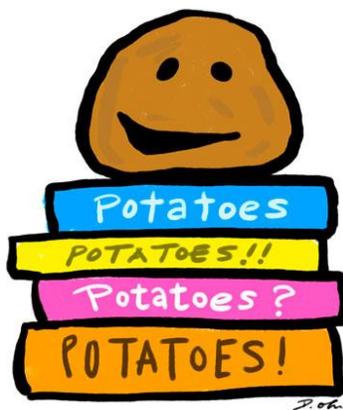
Fill in the blank:

- 1) Sally had nothing to do and felt _____.
- 2) To chop the carrots, David needed a cutting _____.
- 3) After staring off into space, Beatrice realized she was _____.
- 4) "I'm _____!" Steven shouted, "there's nothing to do!"
- 5) Sylvia wrote her name in big letters on the chalk _____.
- 6) Peter tried to bend, but he was stiff as a _____.

Grow a Potato Library

Gather fiction and non-fiction books, newspaper articles, internet clippings, videos and any other form of media about potatoes, vegetables, gardening, farming, etc.

Related book suggestions:



Potatoes, Potatoes - by Anita Lobel. K-Gr. 3. First published in 1967, this picture book introduces two brothers who are lured by the trappings of glory to become the commanders of opposing armies.

The Enormous Potato - written by Aubrey Davis, illustrated by Dusan Petricic. PreSchool-Grade 1. Retelling of Tolstoy's *The Great Big Enormous Turnip*, but using a potato instead.

Pigs Love Potatoes - written by Anika Denise, illustrated by Christopher Denise. Counting book for ages 4+.

Potato Joe - by Keith Baker. Preschool-Grade 1. Counting book.

Potato: A Tale from the Great Depression - written by Kate Lied. A retelling of a family story that brings home the reality of this time in history.

Math

Hot Potato! Math game

This version of Hot Potato takes a classic, fun game that children know and makes it one of many fun math games children can play to keep up on addition or multiplication! And interestingly, adding movement to learning helps many children learn more quickly.

Items Needed: Beanbag or soft ball or pillow

How to Play: Call out an addition problem as you toss a beanbag, soft ball or pillow. The second player must yell out the answer before he/she catches the "potato".

See how many times the potato can be tossed back and forth without missing a fact.

Advanced Players: Shout out multiplication or division facts up to 12×12 or $144 \div 12$.

Variation:

Sit in a circle and play music while players take turns tossing (or passing) the "potato" around the circle. When the music stops, the person who has the hot potato has to answer a math problem. If that player answers correctly, they can continue playing. If they get it wrong, they're out.

Make Your Own Math "Bored" Game

Math will never be boring when students use their creativity to transform their favorite board game into a math experience!

How?

- Choose the game. Clue, Scrabble, Twister and Go Fish all make excellent math games.
- Review the rules of the game.
- Write the new "math" instructions that will help players with their adding, subtracting or multiplication skills. Make sure they are simple and easy to understand, but also clear.
- Create your own version. (ie. fashion the board, playing pieces and cards out of paper/cardboard/etc.
- Label all game pieces or add things to make them look pretty. People don't want to play games that are just plain pieces of paper.
- Place the game in a box or large envelope. If you have small pieces, place them in a bag. Label your box with the name of the game (instead of something like Go Fish, you could do a title completely different), who made the game, and a picture in the background to decorate.
- Present the game to the class, along with the playing instructions, and enjoy!

Science

The Science of Boredom

The scientific method is a way to ask and answer questions by making observations and doing experiments. Most scientists do this without even thinking.



Using the Scientific Method, investigate ways to end boredom.

Below are the steps of the Scientific Method with examples of the experiment:

- Ask a Question – How can we battle boredom?
- Do Background Research/Collect Information - Conduct surveys, research on the internet, brainstorm through class discussion, etc.
- Form a Hypothesis or “possible explanation” - Doodling/singing a song/exercise/brief breaks/etc. end boredom when working on something that is boring.
- Test Your Hypothesis by Doing an Experiment - Choose a boring task, have the class experiment with ways to make the task less boring.
- Record and Study Data
- Draw a Conclusion

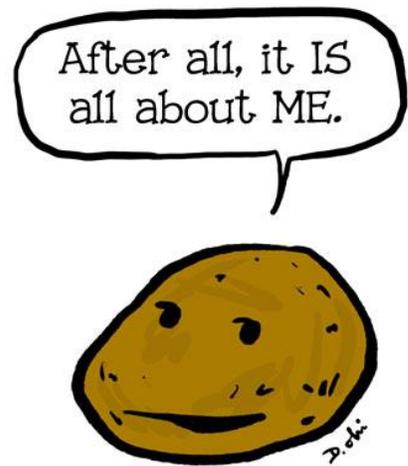
Create a bulletin board display of the experiments, the Scientific Method, and the outcomes.

All About Potatoes

How to Grow a Potato

You will need:

- a potato that is starting to sprout new growth from its "eyes",
 - a glass full of water,
 - 4 toothpicks,
 - a small dish
1. Stick the toothpicks into the potato about two thirds up from the end that has the most sprouts. Space the toothpicks evenly around the potato.
 2. Place the sprouted end of the potato into the glass. The toothpicks will rest on the rim and support the potato in the water.
 3. Put the glass on a warm, sunny windowsill. Make sure the glass stays full of water. After a few weeks the potato should grow roots into the glass. Soon after this occurs the top should break open and the shoot of a new potato plant should emerge.
 4. Leave the plant in the glass until it sprouts its first leaves. At this point if you wish to keep growing the plant you should transplant it to a pot with new potting soil. Make sure to remove the toothpicks and transfer the plant carefully from the glass so you do not damage the roots. Place the newly potted potato back in the same sunny window. Water when the soil feels dry.



Once potatoes are ready to be harvested, donate them to a local Food Bank.

Additional Activity: Draw a cross-section science diagram of a potato growing in the ground. Put a title and label your diagram (roots, fruit, eyes, ground, etc.). Color in your picture.

Amazing Potato Experiments

A simple Google search will uncover many websites about making clocks and batteries out of potatoes! Who knew that potatoes were *that* interesting? They aren't boring at all! In fact, there is a lot of science to be learned from spuds.

Divide the class into 4 groups and challenge them to research the following, conduct the experiment and present/explain scientific findings to the class.

- How to make a potato battery/clock (electrochemistry)
- How to bend a potato (osmosis)

- How to drive a straw through a potato (physics)
- How to shrink a potato (desiccation)

An internet search is a great place to start: *Science Potato Projects*

http://www.ehow.com/list_6135930_science-potato-projects.html#page=3

For more science experiments using potatoes see *Potato Chip Science Book* by A. Kurzwell & Son (Workman 2009).

Potato Recipes

Easy Potato Chips

Ingredients:

- a potato
- vegetable oil
- a baking sheet
- salt

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Wash and peel potato.
3. Now very carefully cut the potato into very thin slices.
4. Rub some oil on the cookie sheet.
5. Place the slices on the cookie sheet and sprinkle them with salt.
6. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes.
7. When golden brown and crispy, flip chips over and sprinkle salt on the other side.
8. Bake for another 20 minutes.
9. Remove from the cookie sheet right away, let cool and eat!

For additional recipes, see:

Kid-Friendly Potato Cooking Tips and Recipes from the Ontario Potato Board

<http://www.ontariopotatoes.ca/kids-corner>

Potato Goodness Unearthed (see cooking section, also includes kid-friendly activity pages) <http://www.potatogoodness.com/>



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Fun Potato Facts

After all, it IS
all about ME.



The word “potato” came from the American Indian word “Batata.”

A potato is about 80% water.

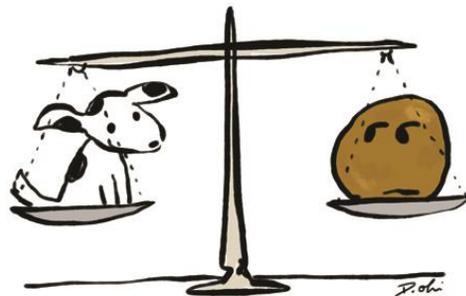
The first people to cultivate the potato were the Indians in Peru, over 4000 years ago.

The potato was the first food to be grown in outer space.

The average American eats nearly 140 pounds (63.6 kg) of potatoes per year.

Pringles made the world’s largest potato chip, back in 1990. It measured 23 inches across.

The world’s biggest potato was grown in Germany in 1997. It weighed 3.2 kg or 7 pounds, which is about the same weight as a small dog.



In 1974, Englishman Eric Jenkins grew 370 pounds of potatoes from one plant.

Source references: TheHotPotato.com, PotatoFacts.net, LovePotatoes.co.uk,
The University Of Michigan website.

For more I'M BORED Bonus material, see DebbieOhi.com/bored

Facts about Flamingos

Potato is pretty certain that flamingos bring fun. Here are some fun facts about flamingos to help your class come to its own conclusions.

- An adult flamingo is 3.3-4.6 feet tall and weighs 3.3-9 pounds.
- Flamingo wingspan ranges from 3.3 feet-5 feet.
- The color of their feather is a result of their diet: pigments in their food are responsible for red and pink colors of their feathers. They eat shrimp, algae and crustaceans.
- When they eat, their head is positioned upside-down.
- Flamingos hold their breath while feeding.
- During migration, they fly up to 37 mph and travel distances of over 300 miles to reach their new habitat.
- Flamingos live in large groups called colonies.
- Baby flamingos will hatch in the nest made of mud.
- When they want to rest, flamingos stand on one leg.

***I'm Bored*, the "scientific" sequel**

Using scientific facts about potatoes and flamingos, write a sequel to *I'm Bored* in which the potato and flamingo try to convince each other that they are not boring. Fully illustrate your version.

Social Studies

All About Me; All About My Family

This multi-book project enhances confidence, allows the students the opportunity to get to know one another, get to know members of their family and serves as an introduction to community. Students make books that contain pages with fill-in-the-blank answers and pictures. Yarn is used to bind the pages together. The first book features the student, and each student should have a special day that he reads his book to the class. Separate books feature siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even friends.

Pages in each book include:

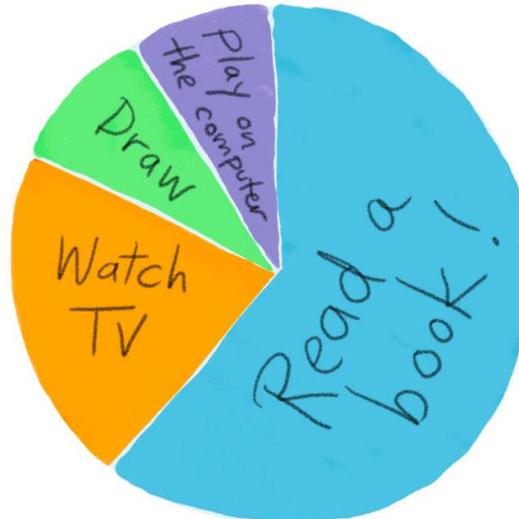
- A portrait
- I have fun when I _____
- When I play I pretend I am _____
- I get bored when I _____
- I am not boring because _____

Conduct a Census of Boredom

Gathering information is an important way to help people see their similarities and differences about topics of interest.

- As a class, create a survey about boredom and ways to combat boredom.
- Together, make up a list of survey questions.
For example: What do you do when you are bored? When was the last time you were bored? How often a week are you bored? Etc.
- Groups of 5 ask 20 people each by visiting other classes, the library, the office, and so forth. Once collected, the groups work to sort and classify the results, and create a pie chart to show results for each question.

What do Chestnut Hill Elementary students do when they are bored?



Go Global

A program called ePals (epals.com) provides opportunities for students to be digital pen pals with kids from across the world. Connect with other cultures without leaving the classroom.

Find out what students in other parts of the world do for fun. Ask about their toys, their vacations, their schoolwork, the movies they watch, etc.

Plan a classroom staycation celebration in which students honor the cultures of their ePals.

Art

The Style of Picture Books

Discuss how the text is set up in *I'm Bored*. Why do the writer/illustrator set up the words the way they do? What feeling are they trying to bring out for the reader? Have you seen any other books where the words aren't just in straight lines? Have the students create another page that would fit the style of the book (on the topic of why kids aren't boring) drawing both words and pictures in creative ways.

Cover Art

Using a different medium than pen and ink, create your own cover for *I'm Bored*. Be prepared to explain your choices of medium and design.

How To Create A Potato Stamp



1. Slice a potato in half, lengthwise.
2. Push a cookie cutter through the cut/flat side of the potato half.
3. Keeping it flat on the table, break away the extra potato.
4. Poke shape out of cutter and use a paper towel to blot away moisture.
5. Spread thin layer of paint on a paper plate and dip the potato (flat side down) into the paint.
6. Shake off excess paint. Stamp away!



Don't you DARE think of stamping me on anything!

Thanks to the Ontario Potato Board for their help with this handout!

Drawings by Debbie Ridpath Ohi, Illustrator of *I'M BORED*. Author: Michael Ian Black. (Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers, Sept./2012)