



# WE DON'T EAT OUR CLASSMATES

Author: Ryan T. Higgins

Illustrator: Ryan T. Higgins

WORDS ALIVE EXTENDED SOURCE: [www.wordsalive.org/storystationposts/2020/4/15/we-dont-eat-our-classmates-by-ryan-t-higgins-read-by-words-alive](http://www.wordsalive.org/storystationposts/2020/4/15/we-dont-eat-our-classmates-by-ryan-t-higgins-read-by-words-alive)

## Overview

### ABOUT THE BOOK

It's the first day of school for Penelope Rex, and she can't wait to meet her classmates. But it's hard to make human friends when they're so darn delicious! That is, until Penelope gets a taste of her own medicine and finds she may not be at the top of the food chain after all. . . (source: Amazon)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

As a child, Ryan T. Higgins lived on a diet of cartoons, cheese sandwiches, and climbing trees. Until he was four years old, Ryan wanted to grow up to be a tiger. When that didn't work out, he decided to become a cartoonist. He's been making his own cartoons ever since and hasn't grown up yet. Ryan is the author and illustrator of *We Don't Eat Our Classmates*. He has also written and illustrated *Mother Bruce*, *Hotel Bruce*; *BE QUIET!*, *Bruce's Big Move*, and more. He lives in Maine with his three children, three dogs, three cats, one gecko, one tortoise, and one wife. (audible.com)

## The Read Aloud

### BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- What do you notice on the cover?
- Where do you think the dinosaur is standing?
- Can you tell me something about the classroom?
- Where are the students?
- What's coming out of the dinosaur's mouth?
- Why do you think the chairs are all topsy turvy?
- So many questions! Let's open the book and start reading.

### DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

- ♥ I wonder how Penelope feels on the first day of school?
- (front end papers) Even before we get to the title page, we have some pictures to look at. What do you think they are drawings of?
- (front end papers) Do you have a guess as to who might have drawn the pictures?

This book is best for kids ages 3-5 years old.

Look for the ♥ to incorporate social emotional learning questions!

### Topics:

Friendship, empathy, classroom etiquette, self-control, first day of school

**Model curiosity and wonder with these power phrases...**

I wonder...

I notice...

Tell me more!

**Ask these questions about any book...**

Why do you think the author wrote this story?  
What's their message?

How did things change in the story?

What does this story make you wonder about?

**Help readers show their thinking by asking...**

That's interesting! What made you think that? Or how do you know?

- (reader: turn to title page) This is the title page. What do we see on this title page? (title, author, illustrator, and a drawing)
- (title page) What is the dinosaur saying? (reader: read the text box)
- p. 1: Look! The dinosaur has a name: Penelope Rex.
- p. 1: How can we tell that Penelope is nervous? Can you show me your nervous face?
- pp. 2-3: What room is this? How can you tell? (pictures of dada, mama; bed, name over the door)
- pp. 2-3: Who do you think that is in the doorway?
- p. 5: Only one apple juice for 300 tuna sandwiches?! How many sandwiches can you eat at lunch?
- p. 7: Do you see any clues as to how Penelope feels?
- p. 8: Were you surprised? What do you think Penelope was expecting?
- pp. 8-9: Tell me what you see around the classroom. Are there things in your classroom that you see in Penelope's classroom?
- pp. 10-11: She what? Hmm. Are children delicious to you? What's that hanging out of Penelope's mouth?
- pp. 12-13: Yuck! What are all the kids covered in?
- p. 14: Would you go down the slide with Penelope at the bottom?
- p. 19: "maybe sort of just a little bit" -Was it just a little bit? She is understating what she did.
- p. 21: What do you think Penelope is thinking of?
- p. 22: How does the illustrator show that Penelope is trying really hard?
- p, 27: Look at how big these letters are. Why do you think the illustrator used such big letters - and an exclamation point!
- pp. 30-31: Can you see Penelope's finger? Do you think she wants to be friends with Walter now?
- pp. 32-33: So many ways to make friends. Can you think of any others?
- p. 36: Why is Walter licking his lips? What does it mean when you lick your lips?
- p. 38: Thumbs up if you think dinosaurs are delicious. Thumbs down if you don't.

#### AFTER READING

- What was your favorite part of this story?
- What did you think was the funniest?
- What did Penelope learn in this story about making friends?
- What are some important things to remember when trying to make friends?

#### BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- p. 1: Show me your nervous face.
- p. 27: Everybody CHOMP!
- p. 36: Show me how you would lick your lips if you wanted to eat something yummy.
- If you thought this book was funny, put your hands on your cheeks and show me a surprised face. If you thought it wasn't funny, put your hands on your hips and shake your head no.

#### COOPERATIVE LEARNING

(find more information about Cooperative Learning Strategies here: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/cooperative-learning-strategies>)

- Turn to your neighbor and discuss all the ways you can think of to make new friends. Now turn to your other neighbor and do the same.

## Small Group Activities

#### DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- Let's take a picture-walk through the story and see what we might have missed the first time through.
- What is this story about?
- Penelope looks at Walter whenever she thinks of eating her classmates and she remembers how she felt when he bit her finger. If you were thinking of doing something that you knew was against the rules, how would you stop yourself?

#### WRITING ACTIVITY

- Write down three words that describe the things you would do to make a new friend. (examples: share, play together, etc.)
- Fill in the blank with as many words as you can think of to complete the sentence: I find (blank) delicious! How many words did you think of?

#### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Vocabulary building: pick out words from the story and ask students for synonyms.
  - nervous
  - favorite
  - delicious
  - classmates
  - determined
  - notice
  - lonely
  - appetite

### Common Core Links

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL. K.1, K.3, K.4, K.6, K.7; 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7