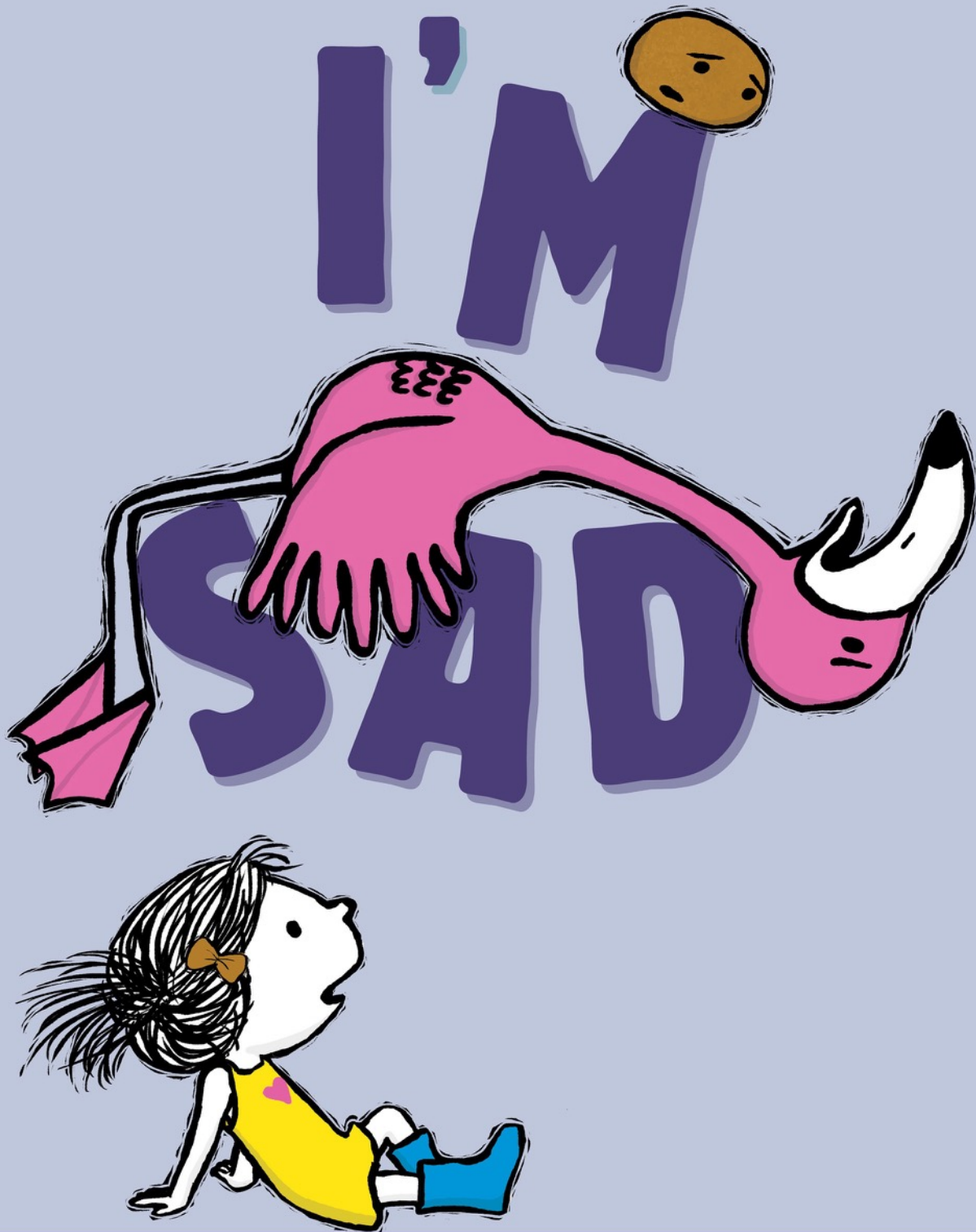


Marcie Colleen's  
Classroom Guide to



A picture book by Michael Ian Black and Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Simon & Schuster Books BFYR)



**Michael Ian Black**  
**Author, *I'm Sad***

Michael Ian Black is a writer, comedian, and actor who currently appears on *Another Period*, *The Jim Gaffigan Show*, and *Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp*. He created and starred in many television series, including *Michael and Michael Have Issues*, *Stella*, and *The State*. He wrote the screenplay for the film *Run, Fatboy, Run* and wrote and directed the film *Wedding Daze*. Michael regularly tours the country as a stand-up comedian and is the bestselling author of the book *My Custom Van (and 50 Other Mind-Blowing Essays That Will Blow Your Mind All Over Your Face)*, the memoir *You're Not Doing It Right*, and the children's books *Chicken Cheeks*, *The Purple Kangaroo*, *A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea*, *I'm Bored, Naked!*, and *Cock-a-Doodle-Do-Bop*. Michael lives in Connecticut with his wife and two children.



**Debbie Ridpath Ohi**  
**Illustrator, *I'm Sad***

Debbie is rarely bored or sad since illustrating *New York Times* Notable Book *I'm Bored*, her first collaboration with Michael Ian Black. The third book in the series, *I'm Worried*, launches in 2019. She is the author and illustrator of [Where Are My Books?](#) and [Sam & Eva](#). You can also find her illustrations in [Naked!](#) by Michael Ian Black, [Sea Monkey & Bob](#) by Aaron Reynolds, and books by Judy Blume, among others. Debbie lives in Toronto with her husband, Jeff. She

posts about reading, writing and illustrating children's books at [Inkygirl.com](http://inkygirl.com). You can also find Debbie on Twitter @[inkyelbows](https://twitter.com/inkyelbows), Instagram @[inkygirl](https://www.instagram.com/inkygirl) and [DebbieOhi.com](http://DebbieOhi.com).

**Marcie Colleen, Curriculum Writer**

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children's books, Marcie can often be found writing picture books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

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## How to Use This Guide

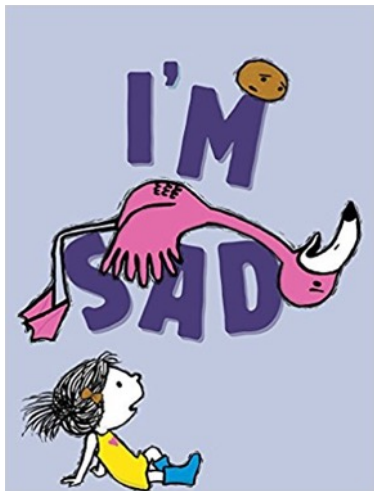
This classroom guide for *I'm Sad* is designed for students in preschool through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *I'm Sad* 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.

**Extra activity sheets and other bonus material can be found at [DebbieOhi.com/sad](http://DebbieOhi.com/sad) and [DebbieOhi.com/im-books](http://DebbieOhi.com/im-books).**

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**Title: I'm Sad**

**Author: Michael Ian Black**

**Illustrator: Debbie Ridpath Ohi**

**Ages: 4-8/Grades: P-3**

**Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers**

**ISBN: 978-1481476270**

A girl, a potato, and a *very* sad flamingo star in this charming sequel to *I'm Bored* by *New York Times* bestselling author and comedian Michael Ian Black and celebrated illustrator Debbie Ridpath Ohi.

Everyone feels sad sometimes—even flamingos. *Sigh.*

When Flamingo announces he's feeling down, the little girl and Potato try to cheer him up, but nothing seems to work. Not even dirt! (Which usually works for Potato.) Flamingo learns that he will not *always* feel this way. And his friends learn that sometimes being a friend means you don't have to cheer someone up. You just have to stick by your pal no matter how they feel.

Even if they're a potato.

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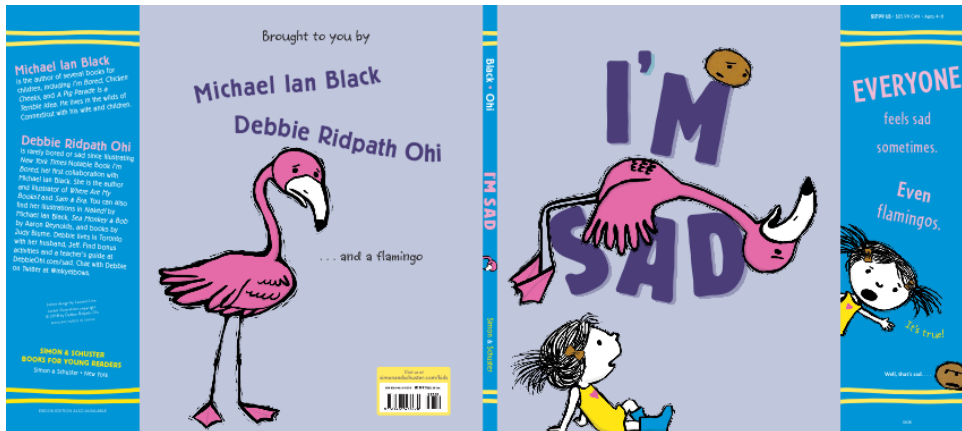
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# English Language Arts

## Reading Comprehension

Before reading *I'm Sad*, 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 ~

- Describe what you see.
- Who are the characters?
- How would you describe the girl? How do you think she feels? Mimic what she is doing. How does it make you feel?
- How would you describe the potato? How do you think he feels? Mimic what he is doing. How does it make you feel?
- How would you describe the flamingo? How do you think he feels? Mimic what he is doing. How does it make you feel?
- What does "sad" means? Which of the three characters on the front cover do you think is sad? What details of the character's body language indicate sad to you?
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find in the cover illustration?

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about and define the events in terms of a plot arc by using the following chart.



Look at the illustrations in the following spreads:



“Hockey! Dirt!” spread

- Why do you think some of the illustrations are in light purple and others are in black line/color?
- What are the characters doing in each spot illustration?
- Ohi blends the imaginative with the real-life nicely in this spread. What are some real-life elements in these illustrations? What are the imaginative elements?
- What are some other ways Debbie Ridpath Ohi could have illustrated hockey, jungle adventures, spy stuff?





Sample from *I'M SAD*: written by Michael Ian Black, illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Simon & Schuster, 2018). [DebbieOhi.com/SamEva](http://DebbieOhi.com/SamEva).

"Sigh. Sigh. Sigh." spread

- How do you think each character is feeling here? What details tell you this?
- What other things might the characters say in this illustration?

### Writing Activities

Who is the girl? Who is Flamingo? Who is Potato ~ Character Study

How a character acts says can tell readers a lot about who the character is.

Read *I'm Sad*. Scene by scene, record your thoughts regarding each character, in a chart like the one below.



Sample from *I'M SAD*: written by Michael Ian Black, illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Simon & Schuster, 2018). [DebbieOhi.com/sad](http://DebbieOhi.com/sad)



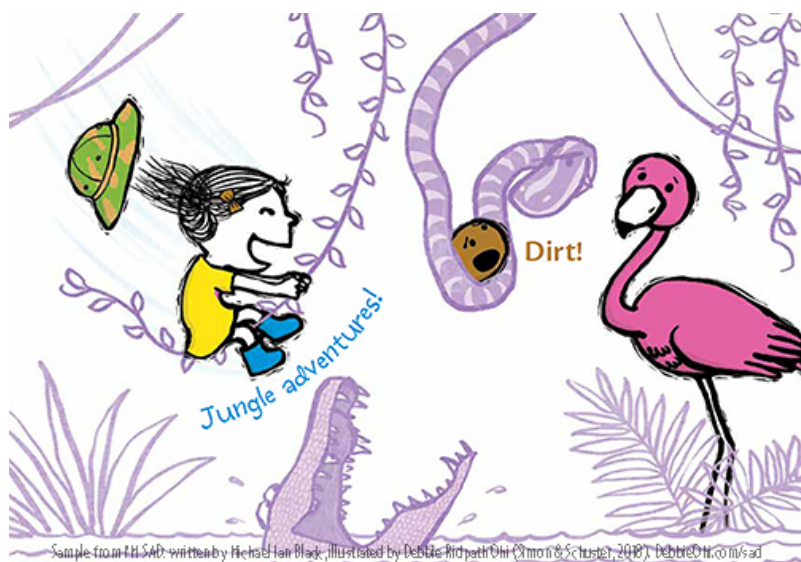
Text	What the girl does. What Flamingo does. What Potato does.	What the girl says. What Flamingo says. What Potato says.	How would you describe the girl? How would you describe Flamingo? How would you describe Potato?

After gathering information regarding the characters, use the scenarios below to write a new story, following the format of *I'm Sad*. What would the characters say and do in the following stories?

- *I'm Happy.*
- *I'm Mad.*
- *I'm Lonely.*

### Write the Scene

Choose one of the fun adventures that the girl suggests in *I'm Sad* and create the scene. For example, what happens when the friends go on a jungle adventure? How do each of them feel? What do they say? What do they do? What happens? Be sure to include a beginning, middle, and end.



## Writing Narrative and Dialogue

*I'm Sad* is written completely in dialogue. All the text is things that the girl, Flamingo, and Potato say. This provides a great springboard to discuss narrative and dialogue in a story.

Narrative ~ An account of the connected events. Often through a narrator who gives information on the feelings and actions of the story.

Speech/Dialogue ~ The written conversational exchange between two or more characters.

Rewrite *I'm Sad* using the following:

- Write a version of the story using only narrative. For example, "One day, Flamingo was sad. He told his friends about how sad he was." Continue through the entire story like this, describing the action on each page without the use of speech.
- Combine the two versions into a new version of *I'm Sad*, in which all three friends speak and a narrator carries the action of the story.

How do the new versions compare with the original version of *I'm Sad*? Which do you prefer? Why?

## Feelings and Color

Sometimes feeling sad is referred to as "feeling blue."

Make feeling charts.

- List as many feelings as students can think of in the Feelings column (sad, mad, fear, nervous, happy, disappointed, excited, etc.).
- Have children choose a color for each feeling and explain why they are choosing each color for each feeling.
- Then, in the "When I Felt That Way" column, students should write about a time they felt that feeling.



Sample from *I'M SAD*, written by Michael Ian Black, illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Simon & Schuster, 2018), DebbieOhi.com/SamEva.

FEELING	COLOR	WHEN I FELT THAT WAY

- Choose one of the situations in the “When I Felt That Way” column and illustrate it using the color included on the chart.

### Mixed-Up Feelings Jars

Using clear wide-mouth plastic jars, create some mixed-up feelings jars.

Provide students with slips of paper, each including the name of a feeling on it. (See attached handout on page 18.)



Students should color each feeling in whatever color they think fits. On the back of each slip of paper, students should write why they might feel this way. Then put the papers into the jar.

- Explain to students that sometimes we feel several different feelings all at once (pull a few feelings out of the jar and hold in your hand).
- Then with the lid on the jar, shake the jar. Explain to students that sometimes, especially at times of big changes and loss, we may have mixed-up feelings. Having mixed-up feelings can be confusing so it is helpful to talk about our feelings.
- Shake the jar again. Ask the students to predict what three feelings you will pull out of the jar with your eyes closed.
- Pull three feeling papers out of the jar. Were the predictions correct? Explain that especially in a time of grief or big change or stress, feelings can be unpredictable. We might not even know why we feel the way we do, like Flamingo in *I'm Sad*.

## **Speaking and Listening Activities**

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

### **Talking About Feelings**

We all feel various feelings. No feeling is right or wrong.

Post the names of feelings in different colors for everyone to see. Have children choose a feeling to make a sentence about that feeling.

"Today I feel excited because we have pizza for lunch."

"Last week I felt lonely because my brother went away."

"Yesterday I felt worried because I lost my jacket."

### **Mime**

Mime a feeling with gestures and facial expressions. Then have others try to guess that feeling. For a variation, have children draw the feeling from a "hat"—a basket/box/bag.

### **Mirroring**

Have students stand in pairs. One person will be the actor. The other will be the mirror. The actor will make different movements slowly; the mirror must try to do the exact same movements at the same time as the actor—just like a mirror. Then switch places. Discuss the experience. Then change partners. Was the experience the same? different? How?



# Math

## **Word Problems**

*For younger students, the use of pictures or props might be needed to figure out word problems. Note to teachers: Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on I'm Sad or any other book of study.*

- 1) Ice cream makes the girl happy. She gets five scoops of ice cream. She eats one scoop of ice cream. How many scoops of ice cream does she have left?

$$5 - 1 = ?$$

- 2) Flamingo is sad and sighs four times. Flamingo then sighs three more times. How many times does Flamingo sigh?

$$4 + 3 = ?$$

- 3) The girl comes up with six things that cheer her up when she is happy. She tries three of the ideas on Flamingo and he is still sad. How many more things does the girl have to try?

$$5 - 3 = ?$$

- 4) The friends tell jokes to help cheer up Flamingo. The girl tells two jokes. Potato tells eight jokes. How many jokes do the friends tell?

$$2 + 8 = ?$$



## Under Where? Spatial Sense

Look at the “Maybe it’s okay just to be sad.” spread in *I’m Sad*.



Describe where is the girl standing.

[examples: under the tree, on top of the leaves and grass, in between two rocks.]

Describe where Flamingo is.

[examples: beside the girl, next to the tree.]

Describe where Potato is.

[examples: behind Flamingo, in the air, away from the girl.]

Have students choose another illustration in *I'm Sad* and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

Now look around your classroom.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.



- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?

## Science

### **The Science of Ice Cream**

Almost everyone loves ice cream—except for Potato and Flamingo!

As a class, review following the terms matter:

Solid                  Liquid                  Gas

Introduce the following ingredients: milk, sugar, vanilla, ice and salt. Have students describe each ingredient as a solid, liquid, or gas.

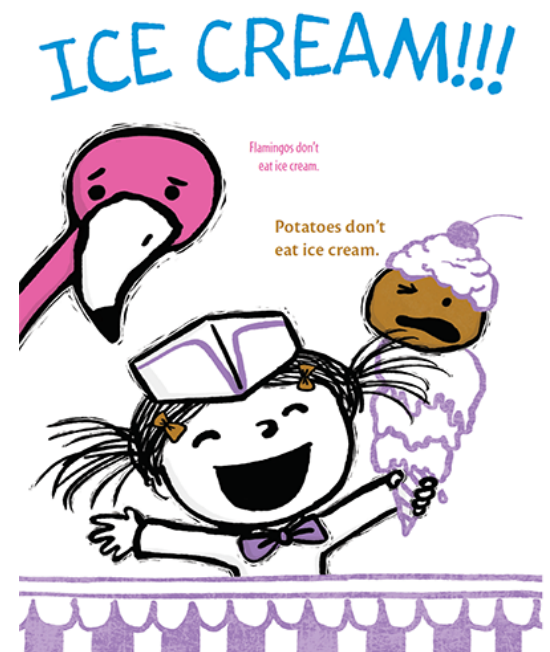
Explain that, in this lesson, the different states of matter will be combined to make something new –ice cream!

This recipe is enough for one student, so that each student can make their own.

You will need:

- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 4 cups crushed ice
- 4 tablespoons salt
- 2 quart size Zip-loc bags
- 1 gallon size Zip-loc freezer bag

Tip: wearing mittens or gloves will keep hands and fingers from freezing!



Mix the milk, vanilla and sugar together in one of the quart size bags.

1. Seal the bag tightly, allowing as little air to remain in the bag as possible. Too much air left inside may force the bag open during shaking.
2. Place the bag of milk, vanilla, and sugar inside the other quart size bag, again leaving as little air inside as possible and sealing well. By double-bagging, the risk of salt and ice leaking into the ice cream is minimized.
3. Put the two bags inside the gallon size bag and fill the bag with ice, then sprinkle salt on top. Again, let all the air escape and seal the bag.
4. Gently shake the bag, making sure the ice is evenly spread out. Shake and knead the bag continuously. Five to eight minutes is adequate time for the mixture to freeze into ice cream.

Further Study: How does it work?

Just as salt is used to melt ice on roads in the winter, the salt in this recipe also causes the ice to melt. When salt meets ice, the freezing point of the ice is lowered. By lowering the temperature at which ice is frozen, an environment is created in which the milk mixture can freeze at a temperature below 32 degrees F into ice cream.

## **Flamingo Research Project**

How much do you know about flamingos? It's time to research them.

Information to be gathered must include:

- What flamingos eat.
- Where flamingos live.
- How do flamingos communicate how they feel?
- Draw a picture of a flamingo.
- Write 3 words that describe flamingos.
- Interesting fact #1
- Interesting fact #2
- Interesting fact #3

Students may use the Internet or the library to complete their research. Once all the needed research is done, students must create a poster visual with all the necessary information and present their findings to the class.

## Non-Verbal Communication

Take a close look at all of the illustrations of Flamingo, throughout *I'm Sad*.

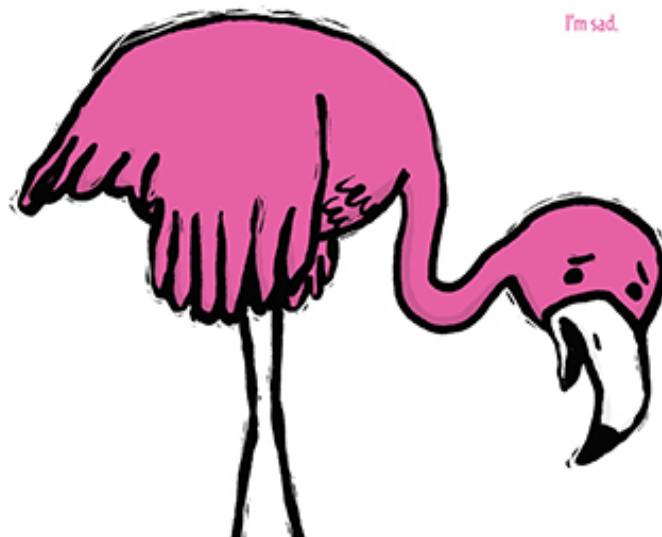
Without words, how is Flamingo showing he is sad?

Ask students that have pets to describe how they know their pet is sad, scared, happy, having to go to the bathroom, etc.

Discuss the ways that animals communicate how they are feeling non-verbally.

Some examples of how animals communicate:

- *Giraffes* press their necks together when they are attracted to each other.
- *Elephants* show affection by entwining their trunks.
- *Gorillas* stick out their tongues to show anger.
- *Kangaroos* thump their hind legs to warn of danger.
- *White-tailed Deer* alert others to danger by flicking their tail.
- *Dogs* wag their tails when they are happy.



## Social Studies

### **What Makes a Good Friend?**

Flamingo has two very good friends in the girl and Potato.

Discuss what makes a good friend. Draw upon examples from their own friendships and create a list describing what makes a good friend.

Example: Good friends...

- Remember important things (birthdays, accomplishments, etc.)
- Are reliable.
- Do kind things for one another and use kind language.
- Help out when a friend is sad or has a problem.
- Like to spend time together.
- Have fun with one another.

Look closely at *I'm Sad*. How do the girl and Potato act as good friends to Flamingo?

As a class, create an action plan on how to be a good friend.

### **A Grieving Child or Children in the Classroom?**

The Dougy Center has extensive resources, including the podcast *Grief Out Loud*, and these key sections in How to Help a Grieving Child (<https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/how-to-help-a-grieving-child/>) and advise the following:

- Answer the questions they ask, even the hard ones.
- Give the child choices when possible.
- Talk about their sadness.
- Respect differences in grieving styles.
- Listen without judgment.
- Take a break.



Illustration from *I'M SAD*: written by Michael Ian Black, illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Simon & Schuster, 2018), DebbieOhi.com/sad



Sample from *I'M SAD*: written by Michael Ian Black, illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Simon & Schuster, 2018), DebbieOhi.com/sad

**MIXED UP FEELING JARS:** Add the name of a feeling to each slip of paper; cut along dotted lines. For instructions on how to use these, see the I'M SAD Classroom Guide. Idea courtesy Marcie Colleen.
