

CLASSROOM GUIDE for



I'M
SORRY



A Teacher's Guide written by Marcie Colleen,
illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi



Michael Ian Black
Author, *I'm Sorry*

Noted comedian and actor Michael Ian Black is the author of several books for children, including *I'm Bored*, *Chicken Cheeks*, and *A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea*. His most recent book for adults is *A Better Man: A (Mostly Serious) Letter to My Son*. He lives in the wilds of Connecticut with his wife and children. You can find out more about Michael and his projects at MichaelIanBlack.org.



Debbie Ridpath Ohi
Illustrator, *I'm Sorry*

Debbie Ridpath Ohi is the author and illustrator of *Sam & Eva* and *Where Are My Books?* Her illustrations also appear in other I'm... Books by Michael Ian Black (*I'm Bored*, *I'm Sad*, *I'm Worried*), *Gurple and Preen: A Broken Crayon Cosmic Adventure* written by Linda Sue Park, as well as books by Judy Blume and others. For more info about Debbie, see DebbieOhi.com. You can find Debbie on Twitter and Instagram at @InkyElbows.

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 books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at ThisIsMarcieColleen.com.

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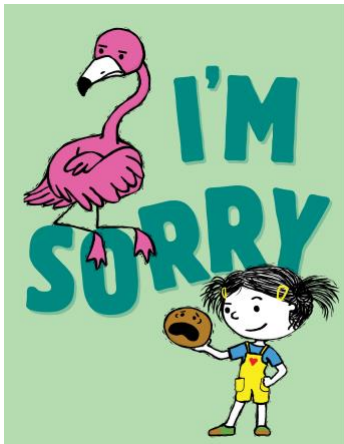
How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *I'm Sorry* is designed for students in preschool through third grade. Teachers can adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

The guide offers activities to help teachers integrate *I'm Sorry* 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/Im-Books.



Title: *I'm Sorry*
Author: Michael Ian Black
Illustrator: Debbie Ridpath Ohi
Ages: 4–8/Grades: P–3
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
ISBN: 9781534415881

In this fourth book in the series from *New York Times* bestselling author Michael Ian Black and celebrated illustrator Debbie Ridpath Ohi, a flamingo and a very sorry potato learn how to mend hurt feelings.

Flamingo is upset. Very upset.

Potato is sorry. Very sorry. In fact, he is the sorriest.

But he doesn't know how to tell Flamingo. He'd rather run away to the South Pole and live with the penguins. He'd rather wear a disguise for the rest of time. But will that be enough to fix their friendship? Will they ever go back to being a girl, a potato, and a flamingo again?

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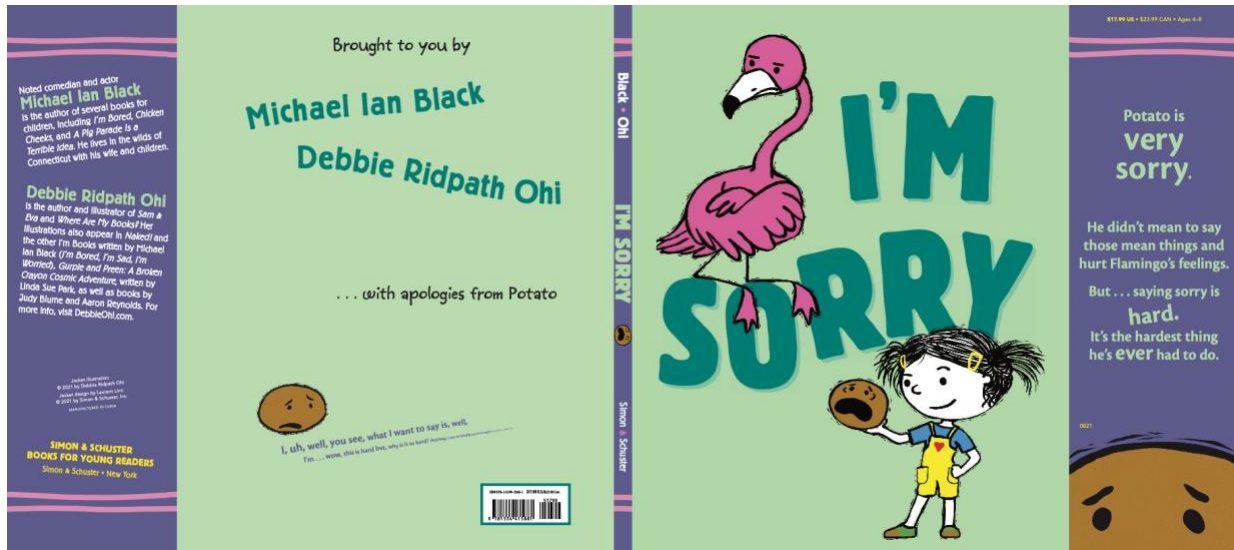
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English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension: Prereading

Before reading *I'm Sorry*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, spine, endpapers, and jacket flap. Then ask them to discuss and answer the questions below.



- 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 that make you feel?
- How would you describe the potato? How do you think he feels? Mimic what he is doing. How does that make you feel?
- How would you describe the flamingo? How do you think she feels? Mimic what she is doing. How does that make you feel?
- What does "I'm sorry" mean? Which of the three characters do you think needs to say "I'm sorry"? Read the back cover. Were you correct?
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find on both the front and back covers?

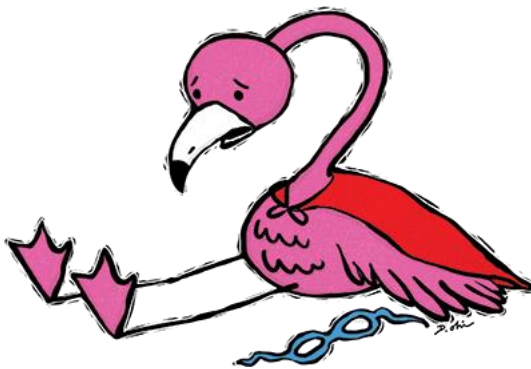
Then have students read or listen to the book.

Reading Comprehension: Post Reading

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.

Beginning	Middle	End
Introduce characters:	Describe the plot: Describe the climax, and how things start to change.	Resolution. How are things solved?

- **Bonus:** Using the basic plot structure above, students can create an original story about the girl, Flamingo, and Potato. Students can work individually or as a class.



- Art Center: Provide a variety of art materials including crayons, pencils, markers, paint, scissors, colored paper, old magazines, and glue for students to illustrate the scenes in *I'm Sorry*.



- Drama Center: Provide puppets, costumes, and props so students can recreate *I'm Sorry* or their new stories.
- Ask students to create a ten-word description of the book. Then they can make a bookstore poster for the book and include their ten words.

The Book's Creators

Talk with students about the people who made *I'm Sorry*, and ask them the following questions.

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

Critical Thinking

Extend the experience with students by discussing the following questions to work on the following skills:

- In fictional stories, a character usually changes in some way. Do you think Potato changed in the story? If so how?
**This question focuses on analyzing, inferring, and giving support to an idea.*
- How would the story be different if Flamingo did not tell Potato that she was hurt?
**This question focuses on predicting and cause and effect.*

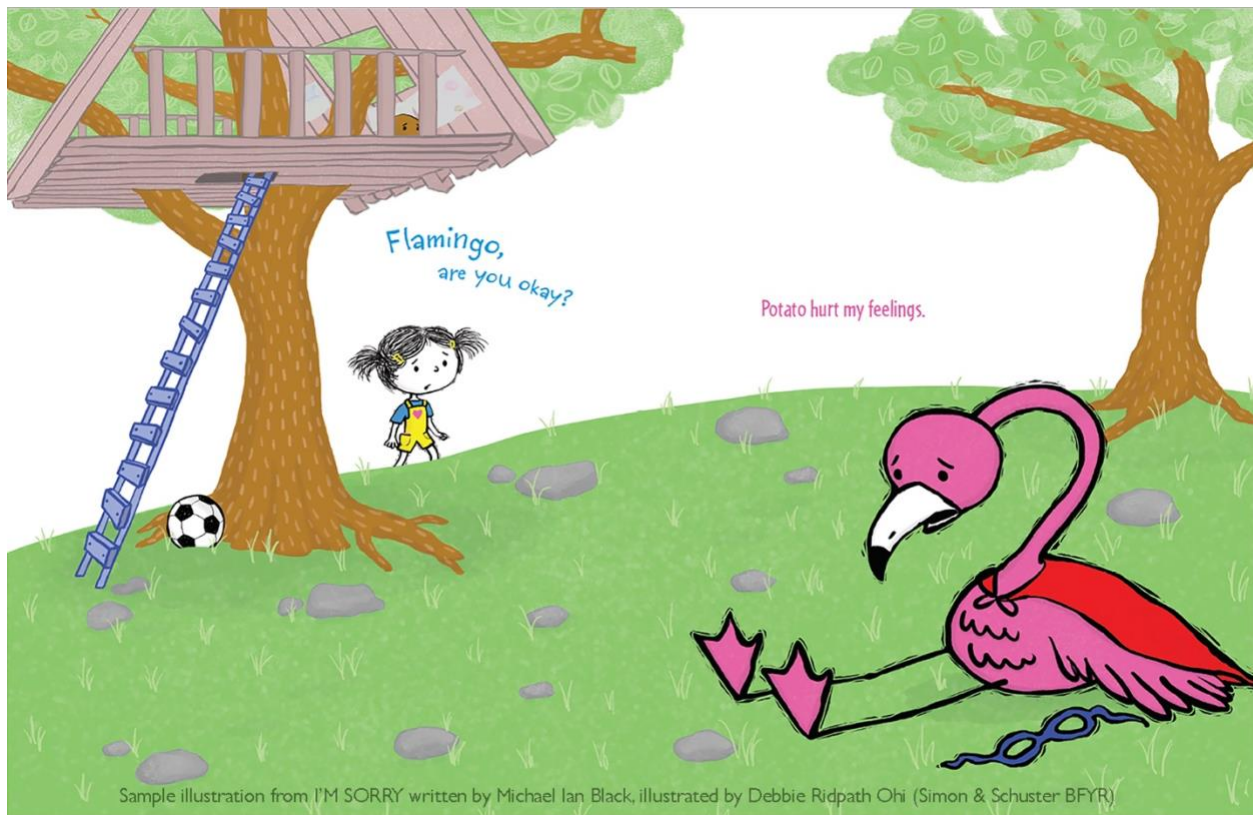
- What do you think is the message of this story?
**This question focuses empathy, kindness, friendship, and celebrating differences.*

Writing Activities

Share the below questions and writing prompts with students.

Interpret the Scene

Look at the following spread:



- Describe what you see.
- List five words that describe how Flamingo feels.
- List five words that describe how the girl feels.
- Can you find Potato? List five words that describe how Potato feels.

Write the Scene

Flamingo tells the girl that they were playing superheroes when Potato said something really mean, hurting Flamingo's feelings. Imagine what that scene might have looked like. For example, how were they playing superheroes? What did Potato say and why? What happened afterward? Then write the scene, being sure to include a beginning, middle, and end.

Letters of Apology: "Potato hurt my feelings."



Using *I'm Sorry* and a little imagination as inspiration, write a letter of apology from Potato to Flamingo. The letter should include:

- A brief recap of the situation
- An apology for what happened
- A reason for why he acted the way he did
- A solution to make sure it doesn't happen again

*Note for teachers: Emphasis can be placed on the proper form of letter writing and the parts of a letter. For further activity, have students write letters of apology to someone they didn't treat kindly.

Language Activities

New Vocabulary: Apology

Potato hurt Flamingo's feelings in *I'm Sorry* and needs to give Flamingo an apology. Lead students in a class discussion on what an apology is, and share the below questions and activities.

1. What is an apology?

- An expression of regret for having done or said something wrong that hurts someone else.

2. What are some things that you may have to apologize for?

- Finish this statement: "Potato had to give Flamingo an apology because..."

3. What are some things you have had to make an apology for in the past?

- Finish this statement: "One time, I had to say I was sorry because..."

4. How does being willing to say "I'm sorry" and giving an apology make you a good friend?

5. Design a poster about the importance of saying "I'm sorry." Hang the poster in your classroom, or get permission to hang it in the school library, office, main hall, or elsewhere.

Show, Don't Tell

Explain to students that we can't always rely on others to tell us how they feel. Reading someone's body language and action can help us know how they might be feeling even if they don't come out and say what they feel, like Flamingo did.

Likewise, good writing doesn't just tell the reader how the character is feeling, but also shows the reader through the character's dialogue, actions, or body language. This allows the reader to better connect with the character.

Then present the below activity to students.

In *I'm Sorry*, Flamingo says Potato hurt his feelings, but look closely at the illustrations. In what other ways does he show he is hurt? Make a list of how the characters in *I'm Sorry* indicate how they are feeling through both the words and illustrations.

Ask students to share their lists, and discuss any of the elements that they have missed.

Examples of telling would be:

- A) Flamingo was sad.
- B) Potato was mad.
- C) The girl was worried.

Examples of showing would be:

- A) Flamingo slumped on the ground and sighed.
- B) Potato stomped away.
- C) The girl put her arm around Flamingo.

After discussion, ask students to rewrite the following examples so that they are showing the emotion instead of telling:

- 1) Potato was sleepy.
- 2) Flamingo was nervous.
- 3) The girl was hungry.
- 4) Potato was sad.
- 5) Flamingo was happy.

Then ask them to draw the characters to show how they are feeling instead of telling the reader with words. What kind of body language would indicate a certain emotion?

Mixed-Up Feelings Jars

Explain to students that sometimes our friends upset us or hurt our feelings. Sometimes we hurt our friends when we don't mean to hurt them. Feelings can be confusing.

Use clear wide-mouth plastic jars to 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 and follow the steps below:

- Explain to students that sometimes we feel several different feelings all at once.
- Ask them these questions: How do you think each character in *I'm Sorry* is feeling? How many different feelings do you think they are experiencing in the book?
- Feelings can be unpredictable. With the lid on the jar, shake the jar. 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. Ask students these questions: Were the predictions correct? Why do you think feelings can be unpredictable?
- Explain to students that sometimes we may have mixed-up feelings. Having mixed-up feelings can be confusing, so it is helpful to talk about our feelings. It is also important to be honest with those we care about and tell them how we are feeling when they have hurt us. Otherwise, how can they apologize and try to make it better?
- Focus on putting words to feelings; have students practice expressing how they are feeling to each other with honesty.

“Right now, I am feeling...because...”

Speaking and Listening Activities

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

Talking About Feelings

Explain to students that 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’re having 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,” which can be a basket, box, or bag.

Talking Stick

Explain to students that sometimes we don’t know how another person is feeling because we don’t listen to each other.

Listening is the first step to being a good friend.

Talking sticks are used in many indigenous cultures, and are helpful communication tools in the classroom. (See [First Nation Talking Stick Protocol: ICTInc.ca/Blog/First-Nation-Talking-Stick-Protocol](http://ICTInc.ca/Blog/First-Nation-Talking-Stick-Protocol))

Create a talking stick for the classroom by decorating a twelve-inch length of dowel or branch.

With students sitting in a circle, explain that only the person who is holding the talking stick can talk. When the talking stick is put down again, everyone can respond to that student to show they heard what the student expressed. Then the student will pass the stick to the next person to talk, or a volunteer can pull a name from a basket.

Use the talking stick for sharing sentences or personal stories about feelings.

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.

Have students start with physical movements and gestures, then add facial expressions and emotions.

Then have them switch places. Discuss the experience, and then ask them to change partners.

Ask students the following questions: Was the experience the same or different? In what way? Which was easier, mimicking the physical or emotional? Why do you think that is? Why do you think it is important to be able to express our emotions to others?

Math

Word Problems

For younger students, the use of pictures or props can be helpful in figuring out word problems.

Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on the illustrations in *I'm Sorry* or any other book of study. Then share them with your students, telling them to use the accompanying illustrations to help them answer.

The South Pole Penguins spread:

- 1) How many penguins are on the floating ice?

On a piece of paper, draw two penguins on a floating piece of ice. How many penguins are on the ice?

Then draw two more penguins on the ice.

How many penguins are on the floating ice now?

Write the equation: $___ + ___ = ___$

What if three penguins swam away? How many penguins would be left?

Write the equation: $___ - ___ = ___$

The Potato in the Old West illustration:

- 2) How many prairie dogs do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw two prairie dogs in the desert. How many prairie dogs are in the desert?

Then draw four more prairie dogs in the desert.

How many prairie dogs are in the desert now?

Write the equation: $___ + ___ = ___$

What if three prairie dogs ran away? How many prairie dogs would be left?

Write the equation: $___ - ___ = ___$



Draw two cactuses. How many cactuses do you see?

Then, draw five more cactuses. How many cactuses are there now?

Write the equation: ____ + ____ = ____

Apology Sandwich Scavenger Hunt

Use this scavenger hunt to sharpen sequencing skills and to learn how to build a solid apology.

- Create several cut-outs to represent the various parts of a sandwich:
 - Bottom bread
 - Lettuce/Tomato/Cheese
 - Meat
 - Top bread
- On each of the pieces, write the following:
 - On the bottom bread: I'm sorry for...
 - On the meat: It was wrong because...
 - On the toppings: In the future, I will...
 - On the top bread: Will you forgive me?...
- Hide these cut-outs around the room.
- Ask students to find all the parts to make one sandwich. If a student sees a piece they already have collected, they must leave it for another student to find.
- As each student completes their sandwich, they must then use the pieces to construct an apology around a fictitious scenario. For example, "I'm sorry for cutting in front of you in line." Be sure they include all four parts of an apology, using the sandwich for guidance.
- For an additional activity, this same game can be played with a set pattern of colors or pictures to teach sequencing.



Social Studies

In Someone Else's Shoes Discussion

Ask students the following questions to get them thinking about what it might feel like to be in someone else's shoes.

- Have you ever felt hurt like Flamingo?
- What made you feel better?
- Have you ever hurt someone else?
- If so, did you apologize? How? If not, why?
- Do you think Flamingo and Potato are friends now? Explain why you think so.
- What makes a good friend?
- What do you look for in a friend?
- How are you a good friend to others?
- What kinds of things do you do for your friends?
- Are you kind to people who are not your friends?
- Do you treat others differently when they are not your friends?
- How might you make someone feel welcome?
- How do you expect others to respond when you tell them they hurt you?
- What responsibility do you have to apologize for hurting others?

Apology Role Play

Introduce a Memory Tool

What is a simple way to remember how to apologize? One way is to use the acronym S-O-R-R-Y.

Share this chart with students:

- S** Say what happened, acknowledge it.

"I'm sorry I stepped on your foot."

- O** Own it by accepting responsibility.

"I wasn't paying attention."

- R** Respond differently from the first reaction.

"I should have listened to you."

- R** Repair the damage by offering to fix it or make it better.

"What can I do to make it better?"

- Y** Yield to a person's feelings by letting them be upset.

"I know you might still be upset."

Then have students put it all together to build a genuine apology:

"I am sorry I stepped on your foot. I wasn't paying attention. I should have listened to you. What can I do to make it better? I know you might still be upset."

Introduce Facial Expressions

Discuss how the look on your face can influence what people think about your words. Make several faces, and have students guess what you are thinking or feeling.

Introduce Body Language

Silently show examples of various body language poses. Ask students how you are feeling and thinking in each pose.

Demonstrate an Insincere Apology

Offer your hand, look away, roll your eyes, give a huffy breath, and make a snarl with your lips when you growl out a hateful sorry. Ask students if they thought you meant your apology. Now ask them how they knew you did not mean it by identifying all the things you did wrong.

Now do the apology again.

This time make eye contact and use a pleasant face, voice, and body language. Ask the students if they believed you and to identify what you did right.

Practice Apologies Through Role Play

Ask students to role play the following situations to practice properly apologizing:

You called your friend a name that wasn't nice, and now they are mad at you. You need to apologize.

You took your friend's markers without asking and lost one. Now your friend is upset with you. You need to apologize.

You told your friend's secret to someone else. You hurt your friend's feelings. You need to apologize.

You were not looking where you were going and accidentally ran into your friend. You spilled their lunch all over them and the floor. You need to apologize.

You told your friend you couldn't come over because you had to go to grandma's house, but went to the movies with another friend instead and they saw you. You need to apologize.

You laughed at a classmate when they got the wrong answer during math class. Your classmate is angry and embarrassed. You need to apologize.

You are talking to a friend while your teacher is giving directions for the reading assignment. Your teacher is upset because you were being disrespectful. You need to apologize.

You yelled at a friend about something silly because you came to school in a bad mood. Your friend is hurt and confused. You need to apologize.

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 SORRY Classroom Guide. Idea courtesy Marcie Colleen.

For more bonus material re: I'M...Books, see DebbieOhi.com/im-books