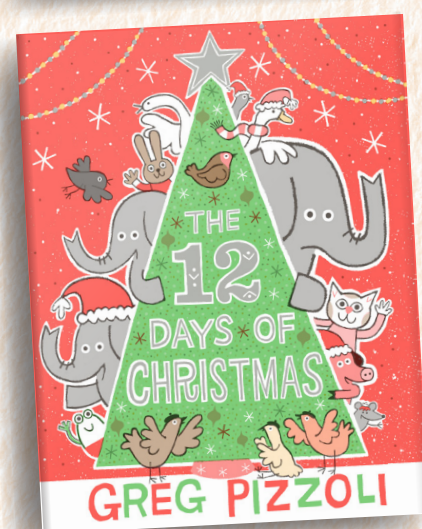
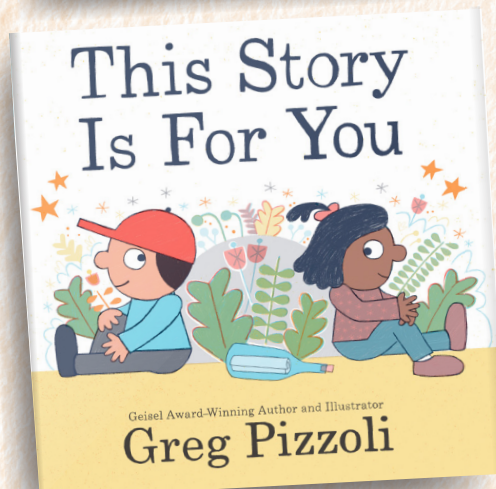
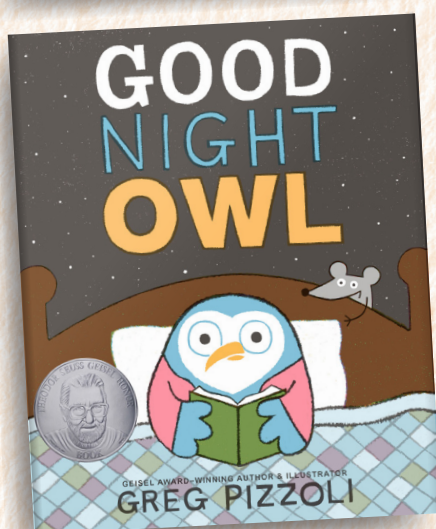
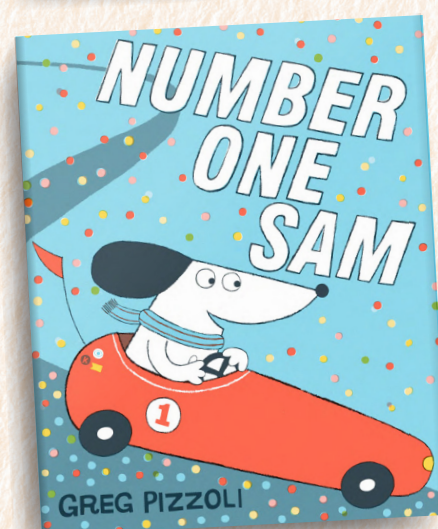
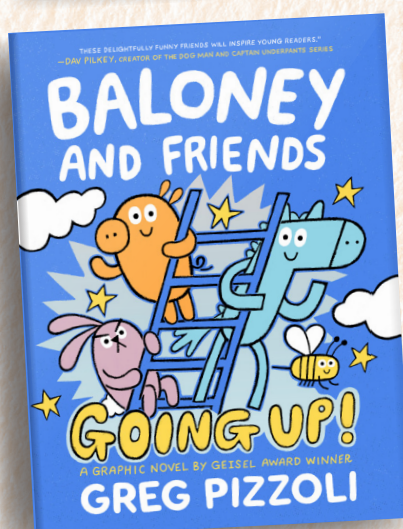
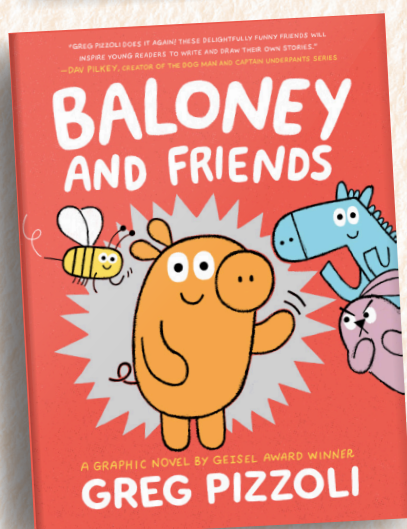
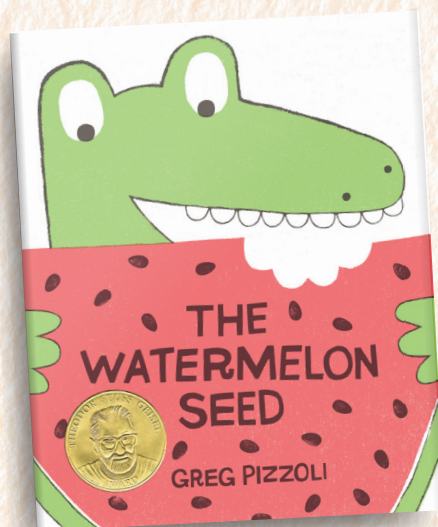
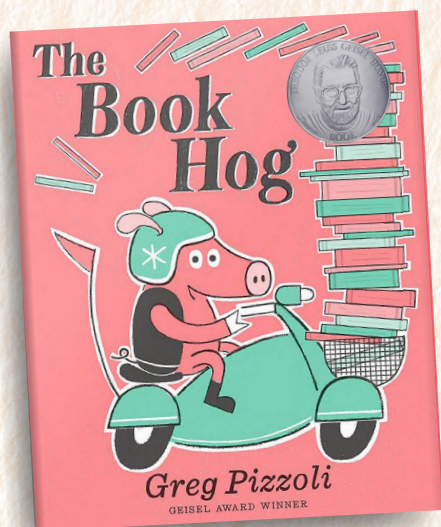


LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

# The World of Greg Pizzoli | Educator's Guide





### Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

Use the following discussion questions to guide your reading of the works of Greg Pizzoli.

1. What's the silliest thing you've ever been afraid of? What are the things you are most afraid of? How do you make yourself feel better?
2. Do you remember the last time a friend did something nice for you? What did they do to make you feel special? How did you respond?
3. What can you do to make a friend feel important?
4. If you had one wish, what would it be?
5. How do you deal with your family when they annoy or frustrate you?
6. What's the best way to handle being disappointed about not getting your way?



### Classroom Extension Activities

After sharing a Greg Pizzoli book with your class, use the following classroom activities to extend your students' learning.

#### Perfect Pals: Create a Friendship Handbook

In *Number One Sam*, though his best friend, Maggie, is important to him, readers witness Sam struggling with his racing loss to her. How does discovering the five baby chicks make Sam come to realize what's really important? Reread the story and answer the following: Even though he places last in the race, why are all his friends cheering him on at the finish line? What is it about his actions that inspire them? What lesson do you think Sam learns from this?

After discussing, ask students to consider their own actions and a time where they put a friend before themselves. Have them consider—what makes a good friend? After brainstorming, have each student create a Friendship Handbook detailing and listing the qualities and behaviors of good friends.

#### Wishing Well

In *Templeton Gets His Wish*, Templeton gets the wish of a lifetime—a few days of independence from his family. After discussing what they learned from his choices, ask students to consider what they'd wish for if they had a magic diamond. Encourage them to "wish well"—what could they do to help others with their wishes?

#### Fact or Fiction: Researching Old Wives' Tales

In *The Watermelon Seed*, Crocodile fears he will begin to grow a watermelon in his stomach after swallowing a seed. Explain to students that an old wives' tale is a superstition or traditional belief that is regarded as unscientific or incorrect but is often shared within families or cultures. Put students in small groups and help them conduct some basic research about other well-known old wives' tales. Once they've learned more, encourage them to interview family members to see how many tales they are familiar with. After they've gathered information, give students a chance to share their new knowledge with their classmates.

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### Write All About It!: Fear-Free Journaling Activity

Using the works of Greg Pizzoli as inspiration, have students write, connect, and create as they reflect on their personal experiences in the following ways:

- *Number One Sam* Journal Entry: After sharing *Number One Sam* with your class, ask students to make a list of things they are good at doing. Of those, which do they enjoy doing most? Why is that?
- *Templeton Gets His Wish* Journal Entry: After sharing *Templeton Gets His Wish* with your class, share the following writing prompt: Write about a time when you did something you later regretted. What was it you did? Were there consequences for your actions? What did you learn from this experience?
- *The Watermelon Seed* Journal Entry: After sharing *The Watermelon Seed* with your class, have students create their own old wives' tale and accompany it with original illustrations.
- *Good Night Owl* Journal Entry: After sharing *Good Night Owl* with your class, share the following writing prompt: What does it mean to overreact? Reflecting on your actions and those of your family, can you think of a time where you or someone you loved overreacted? What did they or you do? How was the issue resolved? Did you or they learn anything from the experience?

### Extended Journaling Activity: Fear-Free

*Good Night Owl*, *Templeton Gets His Wish*, *Number One Sam*, and *The Watermelon Seed* all show readers that being afraid is a very natural feeling. Reread these books and make a list of the emotions that are evident based on the images of the characters. After discussion, share a personal experience where fear temporarily handicapped you. After offering your story (and how you overcame your apprehensions), ask students to reflect on a time where they were afraid to try something new (examples could include starting school, sleeping without a night-light, trying out for a sport, etc.). Have them consider this fearful experience and what made them afraid, and finally, what happened when they chose to try to overcome their fear. Allow students a few minutes to reflect before journaling and sharing their story. To enrich this activity, have students draw illustrations of the experience after completing their story.

### Readers Theatre for The World of Greg Pizzoli

#### Purpose

To demonstrate an understanding of text structure by retelling and sequencing a story.

#### Directions

1. Using the cover art and title as a starting point, have students make predictions about the book (Ask: What do you think this book is about?)
2. Read *Good Night Owl*, *Templeton Gets His Wish*, *Number One Sam*, or *The Watermelon Seed* to the class. Following the reading of the story, have students complete a story analysis graphic organizer or a SWBS chart as a way to make observations about the characters, setting, conflict, and plot.
3. To enhance understanding, take a well-known story and model writing a Readers Theatre script as a whole class activity. After discussing dialogue and performance, divide the class into small groups that will create an original script using the selected Greg Pizzoli book as inspiration.

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4. Next, allow students ample time to practice, and be sure to conference with each group to answer or clarify any questions they may have.
5. Finally, it is showtime! Groups will perform for other teams of students. For additional fun, consider filming each performance to share with the whole class.

### Enrichment activity

Allow students to create costumes, props, and sets for the final Readers Theatre performance. Although Readers Theatre does not usually employ such devices, the use of costumes and sets affords early elementary students a better understanding of the story.

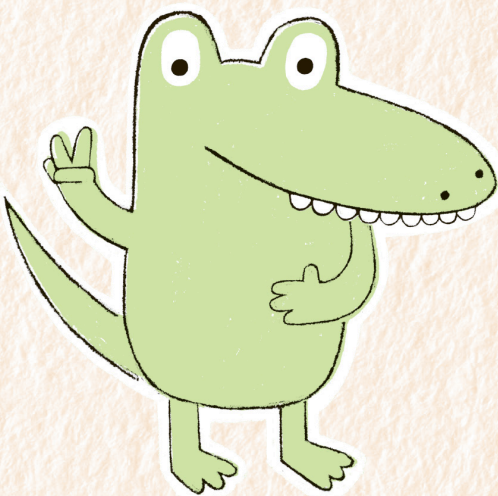
## Conversation with Greg Pizzoli

### What has inspired your picture books?

This question is never easy to answer because so much about life—the joys, the disappointments, the mediocrity of existence—it's all inspiring and finds its way into my sketchbooks. And I love picture books: I love the paper, the smell of the ink, the connection between reader and audience as they are read aloud—as an artist, picture books are my favorite thing to make.

And I tend to not want to examine things as I'm making them, so I don't often think about why a certain character is acting this way, or wants this or that. The characters are there, and I build a book around them. I feel as though my job is to understand and convey the emotions of the characters, but not to create them. That might sound weird—but that's how it feels.

After making a few books, I can look back and see commonalities between all of the characters. They all exude a certain type of anxiety, and they all deal with that anxiety in their own way. Kroc fears the seed in his stomach, Sam fears failure, Templeton has to come to terms with the realities of family dynamics, and Owl wishes to control that which can't be seen. Again, I don't think about those commonalities as I'm working on the books, but looking back at them as a group, I would say that it seems clear I want my books to speak to kids who feel that something is not quite right—something is a little off with the world—and so I want to tell them a story about a character who feels the same way—and I want to make them laugh.



**When you are creating a story, what comes first—the words or the pictures? Which is more satisfying for you—writing or drawing?**

Typically the words come first, although they are often inspired by a doodle of a character in my sketchbook. But typically, text comes first, and I usually get that pretty close to done before I start sketching in earnest. I like to say a lot with the pictures, and not have the text say TOO much, so I am often thinking about what the pictures will “say” as I am writing the text. I think of drawing as a kind of writing, and I don't really separate them in the process of making a book. It's all connected.

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**Your characters capture the emotional qualities of young children so authentically. How do you channel that in your work so well?**

Thank you, I appreciate that. I'm not sure. I was a kid for much of my life, and I don't think I ever forgot what that felt like. I was raised by a single mom, and my little sister didn't come around until I was seven, so I had a lot of time to myself as a kid. I was always reading, drawing, or playing games, and I think I have held on to that sense of wonder that kids who are alone a lot have to maintain just to keep themselves interested in the world around them. I think I also just try to be honest with kids, and not talk down to them, which is surprisingly common in a lot of kids, books. I never liked adults who pinched my cheeks or told me how "polite" I was as a kid, and I never want to be like them. I'd rather try to laugh at the absurdity of it all.

**In what ways do you think young readers benefit from meeting characters like Owl, Templeton, Sam, and Kroc?**

Sorry if once again I seem cagey with my answers, but I just don't think in those terms. I suppose they would benefit first and foremost by having a laugh, or maybe digging the drawings, but I have never once written a book with the intention that this would teach this one thing or help kids to understand this other thing. The Watermelon Seed, for example, isn't meant to instruct kids that swallowing a watermelon seed is okay. It's supposed to be funny. I just make books that I think are honest and funny, and I have been lucky in that a lot of kids (and some parents, teachers, and librarians) have found them entertaining.

The one thing I am conscious of when choosing the words for the stories is to keep the language "simple" enough for emerging readers to begin to read the stories themselves. I've gotten several letters from kids and parents, telling me that Number One Sam, or Templeton Gets His Wish, or The Watermelon Seed, was a game-changing book for them in their path to reading. That's incredibly meaningful to me, and I strive to make books that are simple enough to be read by emerging readers, and complex enough to warrant many returns.

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor in the Library Science Department in the College of Education at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a PhD in Library Science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

### About the Author



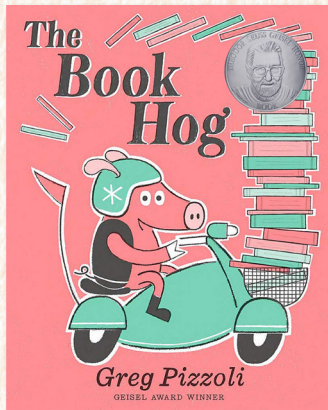
**Greg Pizzoli** is the creator of the Baloney & Friends series as well as a three-time Theodor Seuss Geisel Award recipient for *The Watermelon Seed* (Medal winner), *The Book Hog* (Honor book), and *Good Night Owl* (Honor book). He is also the author-illustrator of *This Story Is for You*, *The 12 Days of Christmas*, *Templeton Gets His Wish*, and *Number One Sam*. His nonfiction for children includes the New York Times Best Illustrated Book *The Impossible True Story of Tricky Vic: The Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower*, and he has also illustrated picture books written by authors such as Mac Barnett, Kelly DiPucchio, Jennifer Adams, and Margaret Wise Brown. He lives in Philadelphia.



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## Praise for Greg Pizzoli



HC 9781368036894  
\$16.99

### A 2020 Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Book

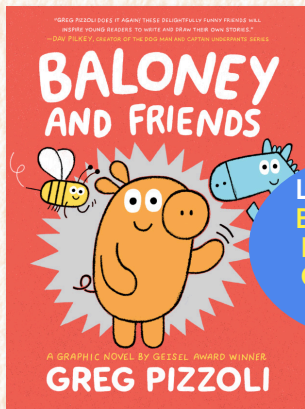
"Even non-Book-Hogs should have this one. It's that good."

—Jon Klassen, Caldecott Medal winner for *This Is Not My Hat*

"The good-natured celebration of books, reading, and libraries will charm fellow bibliophiles." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"A book that readers will be eager to hog." —*Booklist*

"Kids will get the clear message that libraries are great places to get comfy with books as well as to read them--and also that any library with room for a scooter-riding porker has room for you." —*BCCB*



HC 9781368054546  
\$12.99  
TP 9780759554696

### A 2020 Junior Library Guild Selection

"Greg Pizzoli does it again! These delightfully funny friends will inspire young readers to write and draw their own stories."

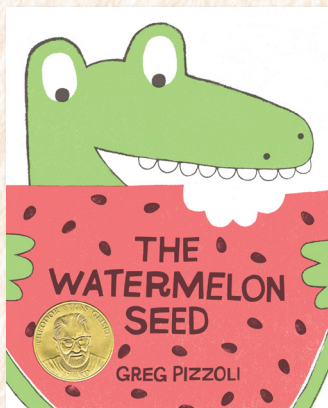
—Dav Pilkey, creator of the Dog Man and Captain Underpants series

"Kids will gobble up Baloney!" —Ben Clanton, creator of Narwhal and Jelly series

"Porcine-ly-perfect." —Laurie Keller, Geisel Award-winning author of *We Are Growing!*

"A sure bet for Elephant and Piggie fans who are ready for the next step up or want to make the move to comics." —*Booklist*

"An amiable new graphic novel series...Pizzoli's approachable art style communicates emotions and personalities through exaggerated facial expressions that should be clear to readers moving into chapter books." —*Publishers Weekly*



HC 9781423171010  
\$16.99

### Winner of the 2014 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award

★ "It's an expert debut." —*Publishers Weekly*

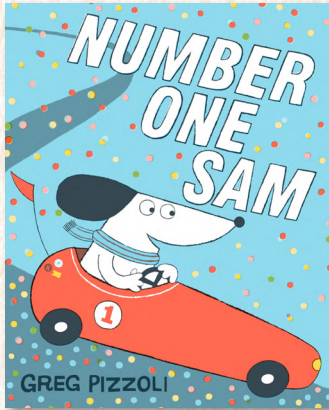
★ "Children will love this hilarious book.... The story has broad appeal, making it a great first purchase." —*School Library Journal*

"Pizzoli legitimizes childish anxieties but also slyly exaggerates each worry to highlight the humor." —*New York Times*

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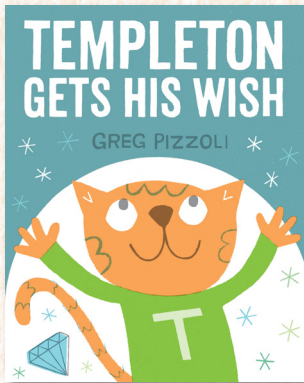
## Praise for Greg Pizzoli



HC 9781423171119  
\$16.99

★ "[A] class act" —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Pizzoli's zingy ice-pop colors and dramatically varied page compositions take home the blue ribbon." —*New York times*

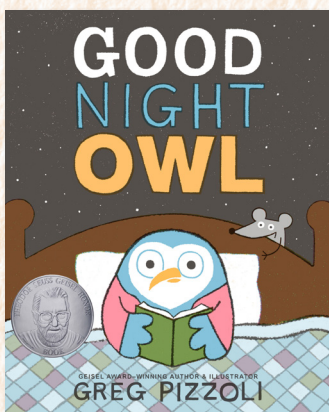


HC 9781484712740  
\$16.99

"Cheerful entertainment, with just a touch of snark" —*Publishers Weekly*

"Templeton...conveys intense emotion with a few simple lines and very bright colors, as his tale reflects the endearing aspects of a small child's struggles to behave." —*Booklist*

"Templeton is a celebration of independence, an our complex feelings about those we love." —*Horn Book*



HC 9781484712757  
\$16.99

"Kids will be greatly amused by Pizzoli's latest effort."  
—*School Library Journal*

"Entertaining bedtime drama that works equally well for new readers and for sharing aloud."  
—*Horn Book*



"A funny tale about stress and an ever upping ante, with a comforting end."  
—*Kirkus Reviews*