



## Big Max

By Kin Platt, illustrated by Robert Lopshire

GRL J

### ABOUT THE BOOK:

When Jumbo, the prize elephant of the King of Pooka Pooka, is missing, the king calls the famous detective Big Max to help find Jumbo. When Big Max arrives in Pooka Pooka, the king immediately takes him to Jumbo's enclosure. After asking questions and looking for clues, Big Max and the king immediately leave the castle grounds to begin their search. After following Jumbo's footprints and having a close encounter with a crocodile, the king and Big Max find Jumbo celebrating his birthday with friends and family.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Big Max fly to Pooka Pooka? To whom does he talk on his trip? What mystery does Big Max solve?
2. What secret does Big Max reveal to the king about why he is such a great detective?
3. What are the answers to the "where," "why," and "how" questions Big Max uses to find Jumbo? What does the king pay Big Max for finding Jumbo?
4. What promise does the king make to Jumbo about his birthday next year?

*The above questions correlate to Common Core State Standards (Reading): RL.1.1, RL.2.1, and RL.3.1; (Speaking & Listening): SL.1.1, SL.2.1, and SL.3.1; SL.1.3, SL.2.3 and SL.3.3.*

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

**Who Is Jumbo the Elephant?** Ask students to make a list of the facts they know about Jumbo based on the information the king reveals about him and what they learn about Jumbo after he is found. Then ask students to draw a large picture of Jumbo and list his character traits inside the drawing of his body. Have students share with a partner the character traits they listed and why they describe Jumbo with that word. For example, students may say, "I know that Jumbo is caring because . . ." Display the pictures in the classroom. *This activity correlates to Common Core State Standards (Reading Literature): RL.1.3, RL.2.3, and RL.3.3; (Language): L.1.1, L.2.1, and L.3.1; L.1.2, L.2.2, and L.3.2.*

**Do Elephants Have Friends and Family?** Jumbo leaves his home in Pooka Pooka to have a party with his friends and family. Explain to students the difference between books that tell stories and books that provide information. Then using nonfiction books and the Internet, ask students to research elephant herds and to discover how their relationships with each other are unique. Using a 5 x 8 index card, ask each student to write three facts about how elephants interact with one another on the lined side and to draw an illustration on the blank side demonstrating one or more of the facts. Combine the cards with two one-inch rings to make a flip book. *This activity correlates to Common Core State Standards (Reading Literature): RL.1.5, RL.2.5, and RL.3.5; (Writing): W.1.2, W.2.2, and W.3.2; (Language): L.1.1, L.2.1, and L.3.1; L.1.2, L.2.2, and L.3.2.*

**How Does He Do It?** With a partner, ask students to practice and retell to a partner the story of Jumbo, the prize elephant, from Big Max's point of view. Encourage students to assume the voice and personality of Big Max as they identify and tell the clues that Big Max found that led him to solve the mystery of what happened to Jumbo. Ask students to reflect afterward on how the retelling was different by having the students assume the voice and personality of Big Max. *This activity correlates to Common Core State Standards (Reading Literature): RL.1.2, RL.2.2, and RL.3.2; RL.1.7, RL.2.7, and RL.3.7; (Speaking and Listening): SL.1.4, SL.2.4 and SL.3.4.*

**Reaction to Big Max:** Ask students to write their reaction to or state their opinion of the book *Big Max*. Students should support their opinion using information about the book. For example, "I like the part when Big Max . . ." or "I didn't like it when the King . . ." Create a classroom mural where each student writes their reaction statement and draws an illustration to accompany it. After sharing the mural as a whole class, post the mural in the classroom. *This activity correlates to Common Core State Standards (Writing): W.1.1, W.2.1, and W.3.1; (Language): L.1.1, L.2.1, and L.3.1; L.1.2, L.2.2, and L.3.2.*

Visit [www.icanread.com](http://www.icanread.com) for more teaching guides!

