Are you a JASPER or an OLLIE?

JASPER & OLLIE

By Alex Willan
About the Book

Best friends Jasper and Ollie decide to go to the pool. On your mark, get set ... WAIT! As Jasper races ahead—crashing into the mailman, speeding past the ice cream truck—Ollie takes his sweet time, pausing to admire a butterfly, smell a daisy, and help the mail carrier pick up his letters!

With a clever design that shows Jasper’s hectic rush compared with Ollie’s casual stroll, this hilarious visual story allows young readers to recognize the differences between the two pals. It is a smartly paced, hugely funny celebration of our differences. Kids and grown-ups will giggle as they decide if they are more of a “Jasper” or an “Ollie.” It is also a great way to share the concept of “taking time to smell the roses”—a perfect lesson for our overly scheduled world.

About the Author

ALEX WILLAN grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was seldom seen without his sketchbook in hand. His love of drawing led him to earn a BFA in illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design. Alex has exhibited in art galleries and has painted murals, theater sets, and squirmy kids’ faces, but his true love has always been children’s murals, theater sets, and squirmy kids’ faces. He lives in Chicago with his dog, Harley. Jasper & Ollie is Alex’s first book. See more of his work at alexwillan.com, and follow him on Instagram at @alexwillan.

Pre-Reading Activity

In Jasper & Ollie, the two friends are different from each other in a very noticeable way. We could say they are opposites: Jasper is very fast, and Ollie is very slow. Ask students for other examples of opposites. Then, have students work alone or in small groups to come up with as many opposites as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fox Facts</th>
<th>Sloth Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long can Jasper run?</td>
<td>How long can Ollie run?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How fast can Jasper run?</td>
<td>How fast can Ollie run?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long can Ollie walk?</td>
<td>How long can Jasper walk?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nature Walk

Take your students to the playground and tell them they have five to ten seconds to notice as much as possible about the playground, and have them record their observations. Give them one minute to walk around the playground and record their observations. Ask them to pay attention to what they see, hear, feel, and smell. Discuss the differences between the two lists of observations.

Mindfulness Activities

Ask your students to look back at the pages in the book that show Jasper racing around to the pool or find Ollie. Point out the things he has knocked over or animals he disturbed. Now find the illustrations that show Ollie interacting with those same objects or animals. The following activities introduce students to techniques so they can interact with their surroundings in a more mindful way.

Object Pass

Gather three small objects that your students can easily hold but that have some interesting feature, such as a piece of fruit, a ball, or a picture. Hand one object to three students and tell them they will have three seconds to examine the objects before they must pass it to the student next to them. Once everyone has examined the object, ask them to write down what they remember about it. Repeat the process with the same object. This time, let them examine it for fifteen to thirty seconds. Have them record their observations, encouraging them to notice how the object feels, sounds, smells, etc. Ask your students to compare the list with their first observations and discuss the differences between the two.

Rowdy to Restful Music

Select a one-minute clip of music that has a very fast tempo. Play it for your students and ask them to dance or move around to the beat of the music. When the music stops, ask your students to place their hand over their heart and feel how fast it is beating. Ask them to describe the way their body felt when they were moving and how their heart felt once they stopped. Allow enough time to pass so everyone’s heart is near a resting rate. Then play a one-minute clip of very peaceful music while the students are seated. When the music is playing, ask the students to breathe in time with the music but not to move or dance. When the music stops, ask them to place their hand over their heart and feel how fast it is beating. Ask them to describe the way their body felt when the music was playing and how their heart felt when it stopped. You can discuss with them that music can be a way to slow down their breathing so they can calm their bodies and thoughts. You can also introduce them to the simple breathing exercise of inhaling for three to five seconds and exhaling for the same amount of time. Bring this back to the story when Jasper pulled the alarm at the pool. Ask your students what he could have done to calm his panic when he couldn’t find Ollie.

Different but the Same

Even though Jasper and Ollie are very different, they are still friends because they enjoy the same things. Complete the Venn diagram below to show the differences between the two friends, but also show things they have in common or things that are the same about them.