

# The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Collection

## Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

### Girl Versus Squirrel by Hayley Barrett

**Self-Awareness** (understanding emotions, persistence, and frustration)

**Self-Management** (problem-solving, patience, and adapting to challenges)

**Social Awareness** (recognizing different perspectives—human vs. squirrel)

**Relationship Skills** (handling competition and finding peaceful solutions)

**Responsible Decision-Making** (making ethical choices and using creative thinking)

#### Background

*Girl Versus Squirrel* is a fun and lighthearted story about a determined girl who wants to keep squirrels away from her bird feeder. However, the squirrels are just as determined to get the birdseed! Through trial and error, the girl tries different ways to outsmart the squirrels, but they keep finding ways to win. Eventually, she learns an important lesson—sometimes it's better to **share and adapt** rather than fight a losing battle. This book teaches **perseverance, problem-solving, and empathy**.

#### Before You Read

Look at the cover—what do you notice about the girl and the squirrel? What do you think the story will be about?

Have you ever worked really hard for something, but it didn't go the way you planned? How did you feel?

Why do you think squirrels want to get into bird feeders? What would you do if you were the girl?

What do you do when you feel frustrated?

What do you think is more important: **winning a challenge** or **finding a solution that works for everyone**?

#### While You Read

##### Guiding Questions

**(Self-Awareness)** How does the girl feel when she first sets up her bird feeder? Why is it important to her?

**(Social Awareness)** Why do the squirrels keep trying to get the peanuts? Can we blame them?

**(Self-Management)** How does the girl react when the squirrels keep outsmarting

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	<p>her? What would you do in her situation?</p> <p><b>(Responsible Decision-Making)</b> What are some of the creative solutions she tries? Do they work? Why or why not?</p> <p><b>(Relationship Skills)</b> Why does the girl keep trying instead of giving up? What does this tell us about her personality?</p> <p><b>(Social Awareness)</b> If you were the squirrel, how would you feel about all of the girl's tricks? Do you think the squirrel sees the problem the same way?</p> <p><b>(Self-Management)</b> What happens when the girl starts to feel really frustrated? Have you ever felt like that?</p> <p><b>(Responsible Decision-Making)</b> What does the girl realize toward the end of the book? How does her mindset change?</p> <p><b>(Relationship Skills)</b> What solution does she come up with that works for both her and the squirrels? Why is this a better solution?</p> <p><b>(Self-Awareness &amp; Social Awareness)</b> What lesson do you think the girl learned about problem-solving and sharing?</p>
After Reading	<p><b>K-2 Activity: "Creative Problem-Solvers" Drawing Challenge</b></p> <p>Objective: Students will brainstorm creative ways to solve everyday problems, just like the girl in the book.</p> <p>Activity Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion: Ask, "What are some everyday problems we face? How can we solve them in creative ways?"</li> <li>2. Drawing: Give students a problem-solving worksheet where they draw a problem on one side (e.g., a cat trying to reach a high shelf) and their creative solution on the other side.</li> <li>3. Sharing: Students explain their ideas to the class, celebrating different ways to think outside the box.</li> <li>4. Reflection: "How does trying different ideas help us solve problems?"</li> </ol> <p><b>3-5 Activity: "If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them" Writing Reflection</b></p> <p>Objective: Students will reflect on when they had to change their perspective or approach to solve a problem.</p> <p>Activity Steps:</p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Discussion: Ask, "Have you ever had to change your approach to something when your first plan didn't work?"</li><li>2. Writing Prompt: "Write about a time when you had to think differently to solve a problem. What was the challenge? What did you try first? What ended up working?"</li><li>3. Pair Sharing: Students share their stories with a partner and discuss what they learned from their experiences.</li><li>4. Class Reflection: As a group, create a Problem-Solving Toolbox poster listing different strategies (e.g., trying a new plan, looking at the problem from a different perspective, asking for help).</li></ol>
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