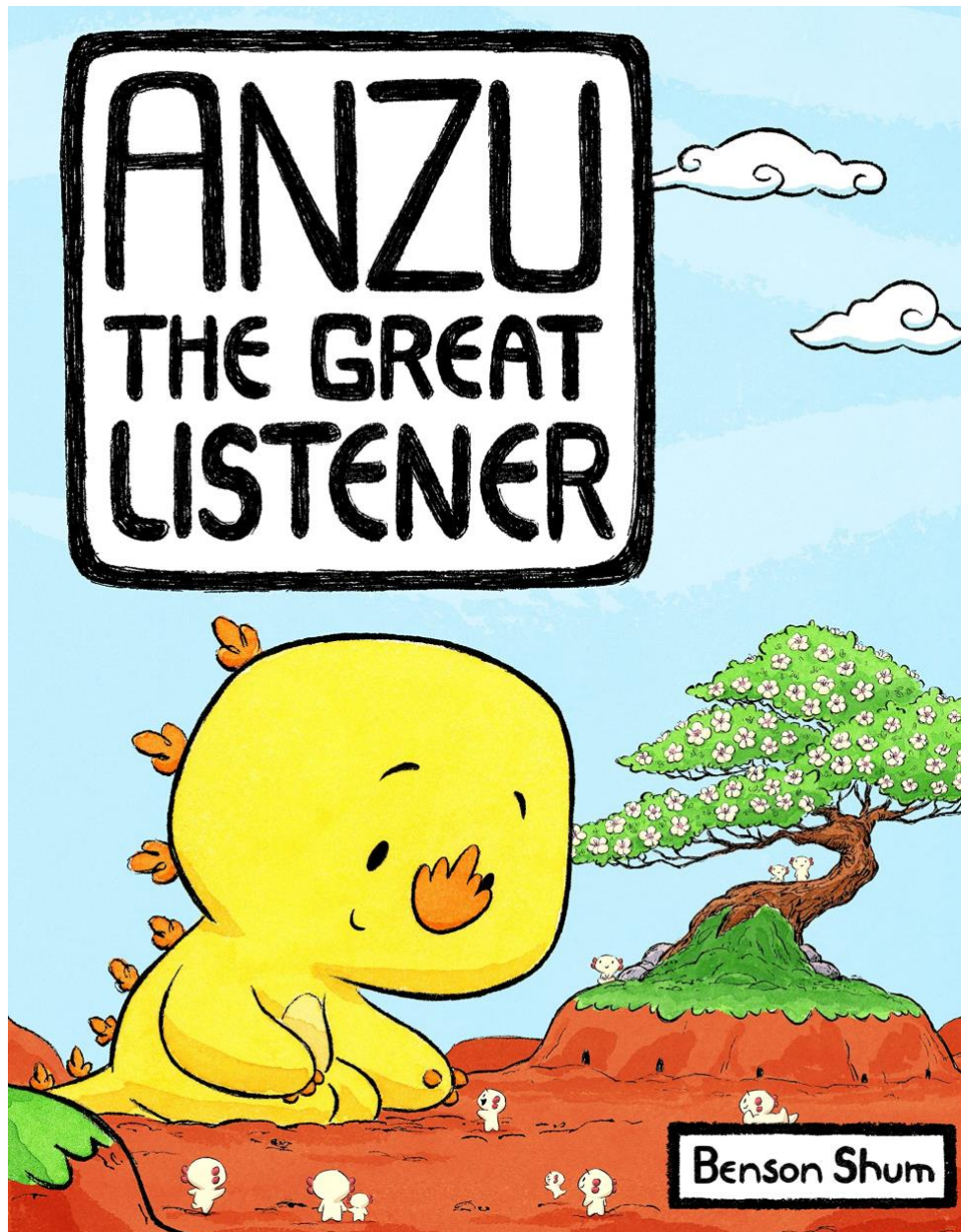


Anzu the Great Listener

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen
based upon the picture book
written and illustrated by Benson Shum



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Benson Shum, Author-Illustrator

Benson Shum is a children's book author and illustrator of *Anzu the Great Kaiju* (Book 1), *Little Seed* and *Alex's Good Fortune* (A Lunar New Year book) and has illustrated a number of picture books like Adam Lehrhaupt's *Sloth Went* and Jennifer Sattler's *Go to Sheep*. Aside from writing and illustrating, Benson is also an animator at the Walt Disney Animation Studios, where he was a part of such films as *Frozen*, *Big Hero 6*, *Zootopia*, *Moana*, *Frozen II*, *Raya and the Last Dragon* and *Encanto*. Originally from Vancouver, BC, Benson now lives in sunny southern California. Visit him at www.bensonshum.com.



Marcie Colleen Curriculum Writer

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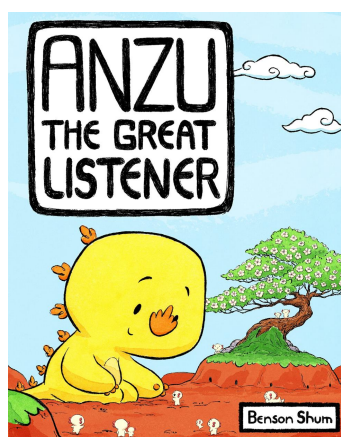
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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Anzu the Great Listener* is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Anzu the Great Listener* into their curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in English Language Arts.



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Illustrator: Benson Shum

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In this follow-up to *Anzu the Great Kaiju*, created by Walt Disney Studios animator Benson Shum, we follow sweet and well-intentioned Anzu as he learns a valuable lesson about patience and empathy in the face of sadness—perfect for fans of *The Rabbit Listened*.

Anzu the kaiju loves to tend to his bonsai.

Whenever he feels overwhelmed or unsettled, it helps him pause and reminds him to just . . . breathe.

One day, when Anzu hears crying in the distance, he's eager to help! The flower-power that makes his bonsai bloom has a way of making others smile.

But when Anzu's flowers seem to lose their power, hurting more than they help, he's not sure where to turn—until he remembers some valuable lessons he learned from his bonsai tree.



Named on the January/February 2023 Kids' Indie Next List by American Booksellers Association

Table of Contents

English Language Arts (ELA)

Reading Comprehension	4
Who is Anzu? ~ Character Study	6
Critical Thinking	7

Writing Activities

Write the Scene	
Writing Narrative and Dialogue	
Illustrated Feelings	8
Mixed Feelings Jars	

Speaking and Listening Activities

Talking About Feelings	9
Listen and Share	
Breathing Exercises	10
Drama	11

Language Activities

New Vocabulary: Apology	
Vocab Detectives	

Math

Word Problems	12
Under Where? Spatial Sense	13

Science

Five Senses Nature Mindfulness	
--------------------------------	--

Social Studies

Gathering Memories	14
Memory Flags	15
A Grieving Child or Children in the Classroom?	

Downloadable Activity Kit	16
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English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *Anzu the Great Listener*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, etc.

- Look at the cover illustration. Describe what you see.
- How many characters do you see?
- How would you describe the large yellow kaiju center of the cover?
- Mimic what the kaiju is doing. How does it make you feel?
- Look at the illustration on the back cover. Describe what you see.
 - Have you ever seen a bonsai tree before?
- Now take a close look at the front endpapers. Describe what you see.
- Looking at the title page. Describe what you see.
 - What THREE words would you use to describe the kaiju?
- Can you guess what the story might be about?

Now read or listen to the book.

- Tending to his bonsai, reminds Anzu to breathe. Why is remembering to breathe important?
- In what ways does Anzu care for his bonsai?
- How do you think his bonsai reminds him to breathe?
 - In what ways does tending a bonsai or any plant require listening?
- Why is Anzu's neighboring city sad?
- What is Anzu's first reaction to hearing his neighbors cry?
- Name three ways Anzu tries to stop the villagers from crying.
 - Then, explain how the villagers react to each of Anzu's attempts.
- Anzu returns to his bonsai and is reminded to breathe. What does the bonsai help Anzu understand?
- What does Anzu say to the villagers when he returns the next day?
- Why do you think it is important to listen rather than try to fix everything?
- What does Anzu learn when he listens?
- When the villagers finally ask for help, what does Anzu help them create?
- What gift does Anzu give the villagers?

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about using the chart below.

Beginning	Middle	End
"Anzu loved to tend to his bonsai."	Working to solve the conflict.	Resolution. How are things solved?
Introduce Anzu:	Describe the problem Anzu faces and how he works to solve his problem:	
Enter the conflict:	The Climax, when everything changes or becomes out of control/heightened...	The ending (How things have changed...)
"One day, a somber cry pulled Anzu out of his zen."	<i>"Did I do something wrong? Did my flowers lose their power?"</i>	

- **BONUS:** Using the basic plot structure above, students can create an original story about Anzu and his neighbors. Students can work individually or as a class. Use both *Anzu the Great Kaiju* and *Anzu the Great Listener* for inspiration.
- 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 for their stories.
- Drama center ~ Provide puppets, costumes, and props so students can recreate *Anzu the Great Listener* or their new stories.

Now, let's look closely at the illustrations.

- Draw your own bonsai.
- Just like Anzu, make sure its shoots are pruned, its watered, and that the roots are given space to grow.
- Try to remember to breathe while you draw your bonsai, being mindful of each mark you make on your paper.
- Along the bottom of your paper, write a reminder to breathe and listen.
- Display the finished drawings in the classroom.

Who is Anzu? ~ Character Study

How a character acts and what a character says can tell readers a lot about who the character is.

Read *Anzu the Great Listener* paying close attention to the character of Anzu. Scene by scene, record your thoughts, in a chart like the one below.

What he does	Why do you think he does what he does?	How would you describe him?	What might he say?
Example: Tends to his bonsai.	Anzu loves to care for plants and flowers. He tends to the bonsai when he feels overwhelmed or unsettled.	Caring, thoughtful, nurturing	"I must remember to breathe."
He listens closely for the buds to be ready.	He is patience and observant.		

After gathering information regarding Anzu's character, use the scenarios below to write a new scene for *Anzu the Great Listener*. What would he do and say in one of the following situations?

- The neighboring village is celebrating their lost kaiju.
- Anzu sees a kaiju trying to move into the neighboring village.
- Anzu feels unsettled and overwhelmed.

Critical Thinking

In fiction stories, a character or characters usually changes in some way. Do you think Anzu changed in the story? How?

Do you think any of the other characters changed in some way? If so, who and how?
(*Analyzing, inferring, giving support to an idea*)

What do you think is the message of this story? (*Empathy, kindness, patience, mindfulness, it's okay to be upset or sad, the power of listening*)

Writing Activities

Write the Scene

Choose one of the moments Anzu shares with his neighbors after he listens and then ask him for help. Then create the scene. For example, what happens when they create the place to cry when it hurts or shout when nothing makes sense? How do they feel? What do they say? What do they do? What happens? Be sure to include a beginning, middle, and end.

Writing Narrative and Dialogue

Anzu the Great Listener is mostly written in narrative. Most of the text is told through a narrator who tells the story. This provides a great springboard to discuss narrative and dialogue in a story.

Narrative ~ An account of the connected events. Often through a narrator who gives information on the feelings and actions of the story.

Speech/Dialogue ~ The written conversational exchange between two or more characters.

Rewrite *Anzu the Great Listener* using the following:

- Write a version of the story using only dialogue. For example, "I love tending to my bonsai. Whenever I feel overwhelmed or unsettled, my bonsai helps me pause and just breathe." Continue through the entire story like this, describing the action on each page with only the use of dialogue.
- Combine the two versions into a new version of *Anzu the Great Listener*, in which all of the characters speak and a narrator carries the action of the story.

How do the new versions compare with the original version of *Anzu the Great Listener*? Which do you prefer? Why?

Illustrating Feelings

When Anzu hears the cries of his neighbors, he quickly tries to stop their cries. But sometimes feelings need to be felt. It's not wrong to cry when you are sad.

All feelings are beautiful. They are part of being human. There are no right or wrong feelings.

Make feeling charts.

- List as many feelings as students can think of in the Feelings column (sad, mad, fear, nervous, happy, disappointed, excited, etc.).
- Have children choose a color for each feeling and explain why they are choosing each color for each feeling.
- Then, in the "When I Felt That Way" column, students should write about a time they felt that feeling.

FEELING	COLOR	WHEN I FELT THAT WAY

- Choose one of the situations in the "When I Felt That Way" column and illustrate it using the color included on the chart.

Mixed-Up Feelings Jars

Using clear wide-mouth plastic jars, create some mixed-up feelings jars.

Provide students with slips of paper, each including the name of a feeling on it.

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.

- With the lid on the jar, shake the jar. Explain to students that sometimes, especially at times of big changes and loss, we may have mixed-up feelings. Having mixed-up feelings can be confusing so it is helpful to talk about our feelings.

- Shake the jar again. 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. Were the predictions correct? Explain that especially in a time of grief or big change or stress, feelings can be unpredictable. We might not even know why we feel the way we do and that's ok.

Speaking and Listening Activities

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *Anzu the Great Listener* to life in your classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills!

Talking About Feelings

Anzu and his neighbors experience many different feelings throughout the story. Look through the book, page by page, and ask how each character might be feeling at each moment. Keep track on a list of each emotion named.

Once the list is finished, have children choose one and make a sentence about that feeling.

Just like Anzu and his friends, we all feel various feelings at different times. It is ok to feel happy or sad or angry.

Ask children to share a time when they felt the same emotions as Anzu and his friends.

“Today I feel happy because we have pizza for lunch.”

“Last week I felt lonely because my brother went away.”

“Yesterday I felt worried because I lost my jacket.”

Listen and Share

Sometimes understanding someone simply comes from listening to them and allowing them a chance to express themselves. Instead of trying to stop his neighbors from grieving and trying to fix everything, it's best to listen to them. Just like his bonsai tree, his friends tell him when they are ready to share.

With students sitting in a circle, hand one student a small plush doll. Explain that only the person who is holding the stuffed animal can talk. Everyone else's job is to listen. When the stuffed animal is put down again, the teacher/classmates respond to that

student, then the stuffed animal moves to the next person to talk (a volunteer or the former talker can pull a name from a basket).

Use the Listen and Share method for sharing sentences or personal stories about feelings.

Breathing Exercises

When a stressful event happens (like an unexpected dinosaur in your living room or the loss of someone you love), your body automatically goes into what is known as “flight, fight or freeze” mode. Your heart rate increases and your breathing becomes shorter and quicker.

The goal of calm breathing exercises is to move from “flight, fight or freeze” mode back to rest mode. Deep breathing helps get more oxygen into the bloodstream, opening up the capillaries, ultimately creating calm and eliminating stress.

So deep breathing does make a big difference. Here are a few ways to experiment with props to help practice deep breathing.

Bubbles

Blowing gently is a good way to be playful and breathe deeply. Holding the bubble wand a few inches from your mouth, take a deep breath and blow carefully and slowly to make the bubbles.

Stuffed Animal Friends

Lay down on your back and put a stuffed animal on your belly. Take a deep breath in and see the stuffed animal rise up, then breathe out and see the stuffed animal lower back down. This helps you use your belly to take big deep breaths.

Pinwheels

Practice breathing out slowly or more quickly, using the speed of the pinwheel as a measure. Determine which way works and feels best most calming for you.

Feathers

Breathe in deeply and hold your breath for a count of 3, then breathe out going up on one side of the feather and down the other side, watching the feather move with your breath.

Drama

Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read *Anzu the Great Listener*.

Language Activities

New Vocabulary: Apology

Once Anzu finally understood, he returned to the village and said, "I'm sorry." Lead students in a class discussion on what an apology is and why Anzu apologized. 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.
- Did Anzu do something to hurt the villagers?
- Why do people say they are sorry when someone loses someone, even if they had nothing to do with it?

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

- Finish this statement: "Anzu said he was sorry 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.

Vocab Detectives

Anzu the Great Listener contains a few words which may be new for students. Encourage them to use context clues from both the text and illustrations to infer meanings.

- While they read, ask students to look carefully for words they do not know. As soon as they come across a new vocabulary word, they should jot it down.

- Look up the unknown word in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this, or the teacher can.) Read the definition.
- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.

Math

Word Problems

For younger students, the use of pictures or props can be helpful in figuring out word problems. Note to teachers: Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on the illustrations in Anzu the Great Listener or any other book of study.

The "FLOOSH! A splash of cherry blossoms painted the sky" illustration:

- 1) How many pink cherry blossoms do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 4 pink cherry blossoms.

Draw 5 more pink cherry blossoms.

How many pink cherry blossoms are there now?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if three pink cherry blossoms blew away? How many pink cherry blossoms would you see?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

The "BAP! BAP! BAP! Bamboo sprung up..." illustration:

- 2) How many bamboo stalks do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 6 bamboo stalks.

Draw 2 more bamboo stalks.

How many bamboo stalks do you have?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if 3 of the bamboo stalks disappeared. How many bamboo stalks would be left? Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

Under Where? Spatial Sense

Look at the “And he listened closely for the buds to be ready” illustration in *Anzu the Great Listener*.

Describe where Anzu is.

[examples: behind the rock, on the grass, next to the bonsai tree, under the wispy clouds]

Describe where the bonsai tree is.

[examples: on top of a little hill, in the red dish, next to Anzu, above the flowers]

Have students choose another illustration in *Anzu the Great Listener* and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

Now look around your classroom.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.
- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?

Science

Five Senses Nature Mindfulness

Nature can be very calming. Activities such as hiking and gardening, when done mindfully, can ease overwhelm. Anzu tends to his bonsai tree whenever he feels unsettled or overwhelmed.

Brainstorm some other nature activities that can have a calming effect.

Then find a safe place outside to use your five sense to create a sense of mindfulness.

- Look: Try and find 5 different shades of the color green. Look around you and notice the different shades of colors that surround you. Maybe the light reflecting off wet grass or a shadow on the underside of a leaf. What about the different patterns on plants, such as veins?

- **Listen:** Listen for a few minutes and identify 4 different sounds. Notice any background sounds that you would normally filter out, such as birds singing, the wind rustling through the leaves, any water flowing nearby.
- **Touch:** Find three different textures that you can feel. Pick up an object such as a stone or a leaf, notice how it feels. Look for other items such as lichen and dead wood, or the bark on a tree. Do these things feel wet/dry, hot/cold, hard/soft, smooth/bumpy?
- **Smell:** Find two different smells. Move around and find something that might have a scent. Can you find flowers or grass to smell? Are there any trees around you? Can you smell them?
- **Taste:** Taste the air. Take a big breath in and notice the cold air passing over your tongue, down your throat, and into your lungs. Can you notice a taste in the air? Different environments have different tastes, especially if it has been raining heavily or the sun is out. Notice what the air tastes like where you are. As you exhale, notice how the air has been warmed up by your body as it passes out your nose and mouth.

How do you feel? Are you calmer? What else could you add to your nature mindfulness routine?

Create a poster about how to create calm in nature.

Social Studies

Gathering Memories

Interview a family member or someone in your school or community who has known someone who has died.

- How did you know the person?
- Can you describe that person?
- What is a favorite memory of that person?

Write down the memory. Thank the person for sharing that memory.

Collect the memories gathered by the class and create a vibrant memorial to those who have died, using the information in the memories to help decide what to include in the memorial.

Memory Flags

Cut out squares (about 10 in. or 25 cm. square) of lightweight plain colored cotton fabric. Lighter colors work best.

On paper, have students write a memory of someone who died—their own memory or the memory of a person they interviewed (above).

Then, using marker pens, have students write the memory (or draw a picture of the memory) on a cloth square to create a colorful memory flag.

Tie, stitch or staple the flags to a ribbon or string and drape them in the classroom to create memory flags for remembering.

A Grieving Child or Children in the Classroom?

The Dougy Center has extensive resources, including the podcast *Grief Out Loud*, and these key sections in How to Help a Grieving Child (<https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/how-to-help-a-grieving-child/>) and advise the following:

- Answer the questions they ask, even the hard ones.
- Give the child choices when possible.
- Talk about and remember the person who died.
- Respect differences in grieving styles.
- Listen without judgment.
- Hold a memorial service and allow for saying goodbye.
- Take a break.