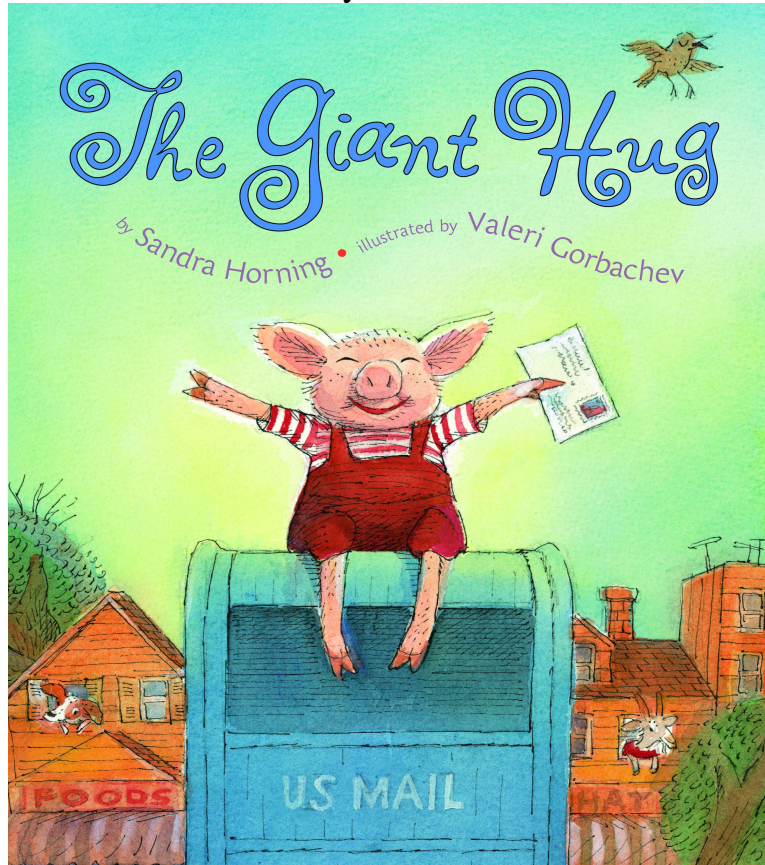


A Teacher's Guide to

# The Giant Hug

Written by Sandra Horning  
Illustrated by Valeri Gorbachev



**The Giant Hug © 2005 by Sandra Horning, illustrated by Valeri Gorbachev,  
Knopf Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House**

## Summary

How do you give your granny a hug when she lives far away? Send it through the mail, of course! Owen's hug travels across the country in a series of hilarious, sometimes awkward, always heartfelt embraces between animals of different shapes and sizes. Valeri Gorbachev's adorable artwork pairs beautifully with Sandra Horning's charming text, and makes for a fun, funny, and educational read-aloud. An unexpected twist at the end will delight readers and have kids asking for this book again and again.

- Random House publishing catalog

# Pre-Reading

## Hugs Poll

Poll your students about hugs. Keep track of answers on a chart, such as that shown.

	Yes	No
Do you like to give hugs?		
Do you like to receive hugs?		
Do you feel better when you get a hug?		
Do you feel worse when you get a hug?		

Analyze: How many children enjoys hugs? Display the results of the Hug Poll with a pictograph. Students will analyze and make connections between reading and their own knowledge of hugs.

Common Core:

[CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.C.4](#): Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.

## Take a Book Walk

Point out the title and names of the author and illustrator.

Ask: What does the title mean? Who is on the mailbox on the cover?

Turn the pages and ask what is happening with the hug?

Before you reach the last page, ask how the book might end.

Your students may be unfamiliar with the following words:

awkwardly	blushed	cringed	grimace	bellowed	brightened
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Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.4](#): Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.6](#): With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.7](#): With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.4](#): Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

## Discussion Questions

1. How do letters get sent through the mail? (knowledge)
2. Who is helping to get the hug to Owen's granny? (comprehension)
3. Which character do you like best? Take a class poll and graph the results. (application)
4. How can you tell the hug is being passed in each scene? How do the animals giving and receiving hugs feel? How can you tell? (analysis)
5. What do you need to send a letter? Write down your address. (synthesis)
6. What happened to Granny's kiss? How do you know? Do you think it really is possible to send a hug or kiss through the mail? (evaluation)

Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1.a](#): Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1](#): Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4](#): Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.6](#): Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7](#): Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2](#): Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

## Activities

### *Language Arts/Communications Skills*

- Discuss the fundamentals of letter writing. Then have students write letters or thank you notes. Set up a classroom “post office” and have students “mail” their correspondence.
- Discuss sequencing and have students identify what happens first, second, and third.
- Turn the book into a play and have the students be the various animal workers involved.
- Have students compose a short story about one of the postal workers in the story. Is that postal worker happy to receive and give a hug?

Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3](#): Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2](#): Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2.b](#): Use commas in greetings and closings of letters.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.5](#): Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

### *Math*

- Count the number of animals touched by the “Giant Hug” as it traveled from Owen to Granny.
- Compare and contrast the distance a letter travels in one day via horse, truck, train, airplane. Graph results.

- Create a classroom post office and have students practice counting money and making change for various stamp purchases.
- Have students calculate the cost for the entire class if each student posts one letter at today's postage rate. Calculate the total classroom cost if stamps cost \$.10, \$.29, \$.50, \$100.00, ...

#### Common Core

[CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.B.4](#): Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.

[CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.C.4](#): Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.C.8](#): Solve word problems involving dollar bills, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies, using \$ and ¢ symbols appropriately. Example: If you have 2 dimes and 3 pennies, how many cents do you have?

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.D.10](#): Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories. Solve simple put-together, take-apart, and compare problems using information presented in a bar graph.

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.OA.A.1](#): Use addition and subtraction within 100 to solve one- and two-step word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.

[CCSS.Math.Content.3.OA.A.1](#): Interpret products of whole numbers, e.g., interpret  $5 \times 7$  as the total number of objects in 5 groups of 7 objects each.

#### Science

- Discuss the five senses and the ways you can “reach out to others” with each sense.
- Make a chart of the various animals from the book that shows if they are domesticated or wild animals. Find information about the actual habitat of each animal.
- Discuss the food chain and determine if these animals could happily coexist without eating one other.

#### Common Core

[CCSS.Math.Content.K.MD.B.3](#): Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1](#): Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

#### Social Studies/History/Geography

- Discuss the history of the postal service. Have students write stories about sending important letters during different time periods. (i.e., via pony express, telegraph, snail mail, or internet.).
- Create a civics lesson about community helpers and discuss postal workers.
- On a world map, chart distances a letter can travel in one day by the various modes of transportation. Estimate the amount of time it would take correspondence to reach other cities, states, countries, and remote areas of the world.

#### Common Core

[CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.B.3](#)

Tell and write time in hours and half-hours using analog and digital clocks.

[CCSS.Math.Content.3.MD.B.3](#): Draw a scaled picture graph and a scaled bar graph to represent a data set with several categories. Solve one- and two-step “how many more” and “how many less” problems using information presented in scaled bar graphs.

### ***Internet / Computer Skills***

- Use the website [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and find the zip code for a variety of addresses (i.e., students' homes, police station, school)
- Have students type a letter and address an envelope using proper formatting.

### ***Art & Music***

- Create a class postage stamp.
- Create a mail carrier pouch with brown construction paper and yarn. Punch out and lace the "pouch."
- Play popular music mentioning letters & postal workers (i.e., "Please Mr. Postman" by Berry Gordy, "The Letter" by Wayne Carson Thompson, "Mail Myself to You" by Woody Guthrie)
- Sing In His Mail Truck (Sung to: "She'll be Comin' Round the Mountain")

He'll be coming in his mail truck when he comes,  
He'll be coming in his mail truck when he comes,  
He'll be coming in his mail truck,  
He'll be coming in his mail truck,  
He'll be coming in his mail truck when he comes.  
He'll be wearing his blue uniform.....  
He'll be bringing a package for me.....  
He'll bring mail for mom and dad.....  
He'll pick up letters from our mailbox....

### ***Physical Fitness***

- Recreate the Pony Express via running: Run relay races where the runners pass the package to the next child on their team.
- Have each class member represent a piece of mail and see how far a "letter" can travel in one minute by various physical movements. (i.e., taking baby steps, skipping, crab crawls, etc. ...).

### ***Additional Resources***

- *The Post Office Book*, by Gail Gibbons (HarperCollings, 1986)
- *Delivering Your Mail: a Book about Mail Carriers*, by Ann Owen, illustrated by Eric Thomas (Picture Window Books, 2003)
- *Dear Annie*, by Judith Caseley (Greenwillow Books, 1994)
- *With Love, Little Red Hen*, by Alma Flor Ada, illustrated by Leslie Tryon (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004)
- Fun mail activities for preschool and kindergarten:  
[http://www.makinglearningfun.com/themepages/mail\\_carrier.htm](http://www.makinglearningfun.com/themepages/mail_carrier.htm)
- Smithsonian National Postal Museum: <http://postalmuseum.si.edu/>
- Crafts with Kindness: [http://apps.bright Horizons.com/Campaign/Landingpage.aspx?id=3017&utm\\_source=Crafts%20with%20Kindness&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_term=CampaignTrackingTool&cid=craftswithkindness&utm\\_content=&utm\\_campaign=craftswithkindness&](http://apps.bright Horizons.com/Campaign/Landingpage.aspx?id=3017&utm_source=Crafts%20with%20Kindness&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=CampaignTrackingTool&cid=craftswithkindness&utm_content=&utm_campaign=craftswithkindness&)
- *Giant Hug* Reading Unit: <http://suzyred.com/mbird2007giant hug.html>
- Preschool Mail Unit: <http://www.confessionsofahomeschooler.com/blog/2012/06/kindergarten-mail-carrier-unit.html>
- Three attached printables at the end of this guide, pages 7-9.

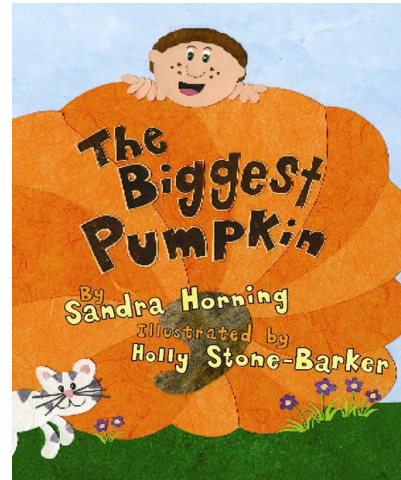


## About the Author and Illustrator

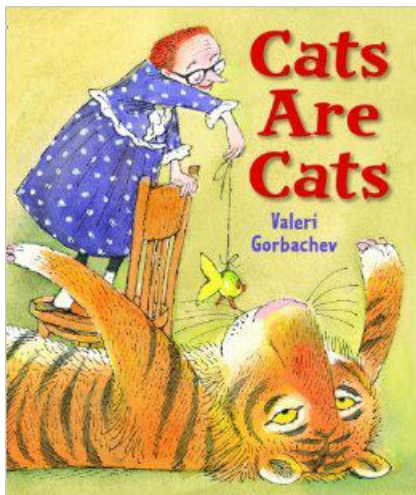


**Sandra Horning** is also the author of *The Biggest Pumpkin* and *Chicks!* Sandra's love of family, friends, pets, and nature inspires much of her writing. Her family lives in Connecticut with 7 chickens. To learn more, visit Sandra at [www.sandrahorning.com](http://www.sandrahorning.com).

Also by Sandra Horning!



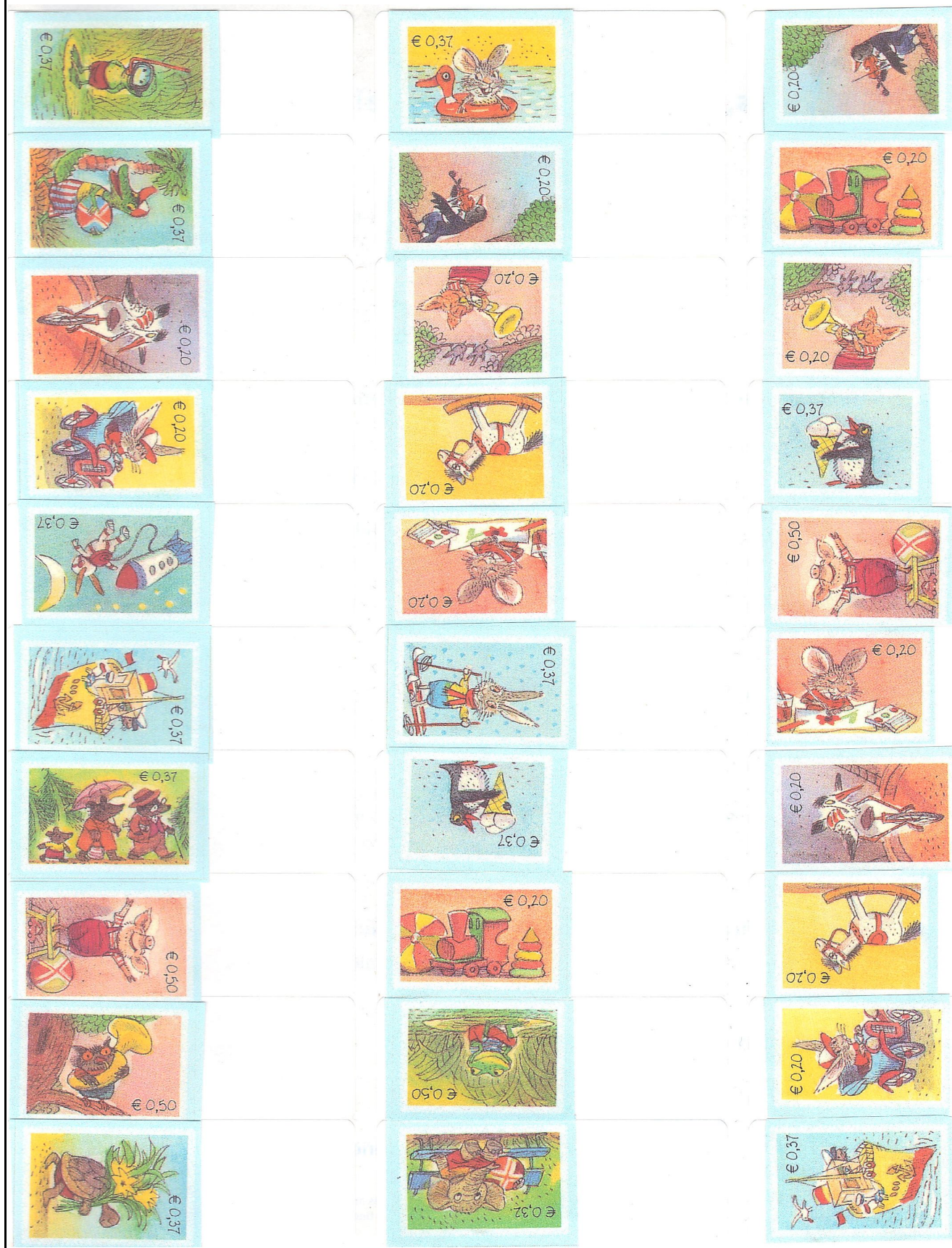
**Valeri Gorbachev** is the author and illustrator of many children's books, both in the United States and Europe, including *Turtle's Penguin Day* and *Cats Are Cats*. Valeri immigrated to the United States from the Ukraine in 1991 and now lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York.



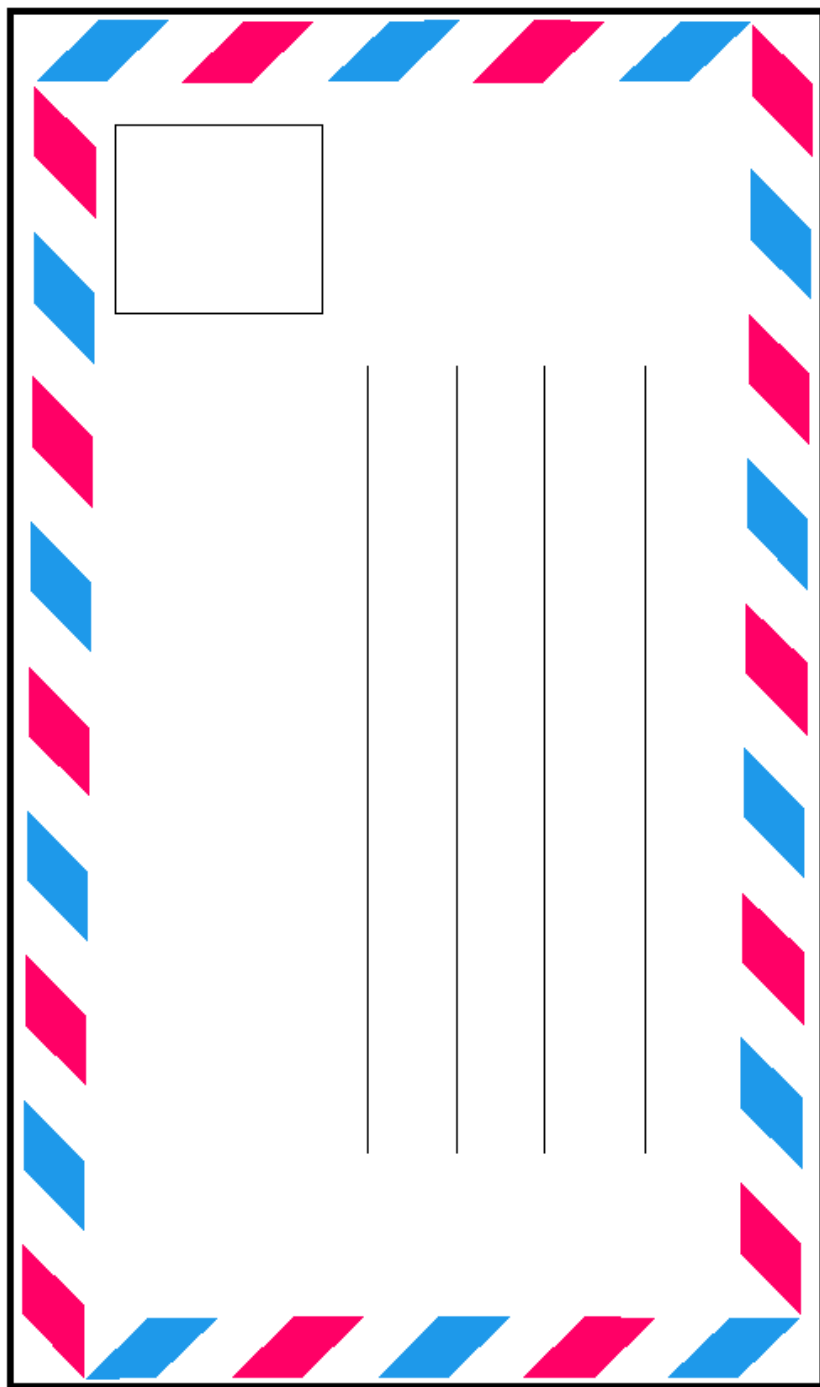
Also by Valeri Gorbachev!



Cut out these play stamps from the Italian edition of *The Giant Hug*, Illustrations © 2005 by Valeri Gorbachev

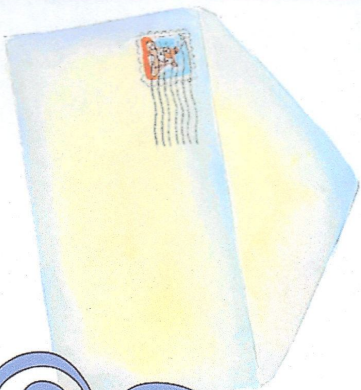






Practice addressing an envelope, from DLTK's Crafts for Kids © by [Leanne Guenther](http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/miscellaneous/maddress.html),  
<http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/miscellaneous/maddress.html>





# Giant Hug Certificate

Good for one giant hug.

This certificate hereby entitles

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of hug recipient)  
to one hug from

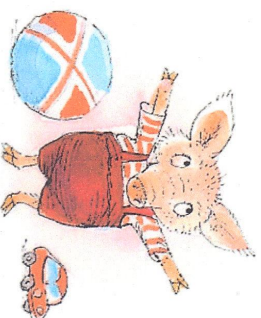
\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of hugger)

redeemable at any time.



On Sale Now!  
The Giant Hug  
by Sandra Hartung  
Illustrated by Valeri Gorbachev  
O-375-82477-4 • \$15.95

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