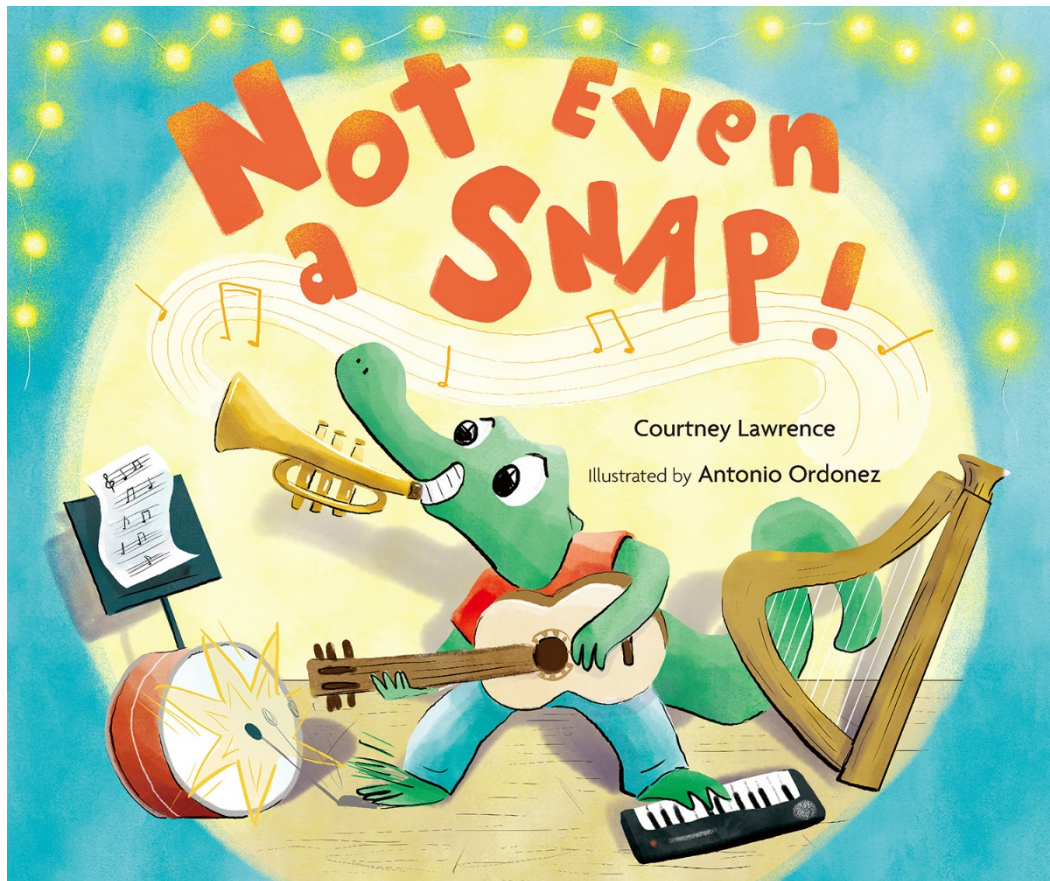


# Not Even a Snap! Teaching Notes

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Illustrator: Antonio Ordóñez



## SYNOPSIS

Inspired by the sound of musicians at a local street festival, young Zi becomes determined to learn an instrument. With support from his family and music teachers, Zi tries out a guitar, violin, and much more. But each one ends in disaster—a SNAP or a CRACK! Just as Zi is ready to give up, a moment of rhythmic tapping gives him an idea and the discovery of an unexpected talent. Not Even a Snap! Is a wonderfully energetic and funny story about resilience and self-discovery, with illustrations that capture the beat of this wonderful tale!

### **About the book**

Not Even a Snap is a story about a young crocodile who has dreams of playing music in a band. He's not sure which instrument he is drawn to, but he is willing to try anything. Unfortunately, like all crocodiles, he has big teeth and sharp claws, which makes it difficult because musical instruments are delicate and easily breakable. With the support of his parents, Zi tries many things before finding the perfect fit: the drums!

### **Themes that are important for young readers**

Not Even a Snap illustrates the highs and lows of trying a new skill or hobby. When things don't go smoothly, Zi must figure out how to be resilient. Having the support of his parents is crucial. Importantly, they do not mind if Zi sticks with music or not, but they can see how much it means to him, which is why they push Zi to not give up. All activities and discussions should move in the direction of children learning to understand the concept of self-efficacy and self-doubt.

Furthermore, there are many approaches his family could have taken in supporting him, but they chose to be *compassionate* and *curious*. Discussion should focus on how this sets an example for children on how to support and be there for someone who is sad or doesn't know how to believe in them. Instead of approaching with opinions and judgments, we can be empathetic listeners and journey alongside others with curiosity and openness.

### **In the Classroom**

#### **Before Reading:**

##### Discuss what is seen on the cover:

- Introduce the book by looking at the cover:
  - What can children see?
  - What emotion is the character on the cover feeling?
  - Why do you think this?
  - How many instruments can you see?
  - Do you know their names?
- What do you think the story is about?
  - Why do children think this?

##### Additional cover discussion:

- Do any children share the same letters from the title in their name?
- What colours can be seen on the cover?

#### **During/After Reading:**

##### Questions to ask children during or after the story:

#### **Broad discussion questions (any age group):**

- Why did Zi want to be in a band?
- Have you ever been inspired by someone or something?
- What makes someone or something inspiring?

- How do you think Zi felt when his instruments kept breaking?
- What makes us get better at new hobbies?
- When was a time you felt like you were no good? What lifted your spirits?
- How could you comfort a friend who is trying to learn something new, like kicking a football, and having trouble? What kind of comments might make them sad?
- How did Dad help when Zi 'felt useless'?
- How did Zi pick himself up and have another go?
- If you were having a hard time, what would you like a friend to say to you?
  - What shouldn't they say?

### **Deeper discussion questions for upper primary:**

- How was Zi feeling during the story?
  - Why do you think this?
- Have you ever felt that it is not okay to be feeling sad or down?
- Is it okay that Zi felt like giving up?
- What attitudes did Zi demonstrate when he chose to have another go at a musical instrument? (discuss resilience, a 'can-do' attitude, perseverance, determination; even explain the concept of self-efficacy)
- At the end, why was Zi happy even though he snapped a drumstick?

### **Classroom Activities:**

1. Teacher has a set of flash cards with various animals (such as sloth, fish, tiger, elephant, mouse, etc.), and another set with various activities (such as swimming, painting, playing piano, horse riding, etc.). Students select at random an animal and an activity. They discuss in pairs or small groups how the animal might go and why. After a few rounds, they present to the class the animal & activity pairing that is most suitable and the least suitable and why. They can add silly demonstrations to add an extra layer of fun.  
Through this, students learn aptitude and matching inherent traits with activity prerequisites. If they are able, it can be a platform to discuss their own skills and passions.
2. Literacy Activity: In pairs, students rewrite the story, but with a different ending where Zi will not try drums; he gives up and stays sad.
  - a. Discuss how the story has changed.
  - b. Read the story to the class; how does it make you feel?
  - c. After each group has read their story, get the audience members to discuss how they would encourage Zi. What would you say to him now, after reading the new story?
3. Music Activity: The teacher has basic percussion parts for the kids to learn in groups. They work together on creating lyrics about resilience, and the teacher helps it be sung to a pre-planned melody. They perform.
4. Drama Activity: The students are split into groups where one member reads the story to the class, and the rest of the group performs it. As a fun alternative, the reader can swap the 'instruments' with other activities as they please – making their group members mime skiing, ballet, or hula hooping, for example.
5. Read the story to the class, pausing at moments where Zi does not succeed with an instrument and hears a 'SNAP!' In groups, students are given the opportunity to act out how his friends and family may respond – with the audience grading the responses on a

scale of very empathetic to not at all!

**About the Author:**

Courtney Lawrence is an Australian writer and musician. She has a double degree in English, Applied Linguistics, History, and Italian, as well as a passion for the wonderful silliness of words. Her short stories, poetry, and nonfiction words have been published in her alma mater magazine, where she later worked as Editor. She now works as a bookseller in North-West Victoria.

**About the Illustrator:**

Antonio Ordonez (known as AtOLONia) was born in Madrid, Spain. Inspired by the birth of his first child, Antonio decided to change careers and move into the world of children's illustration. His work is distinguished by the cute, friendly, and expressive characters he creates. He loves to combine digital drawing with watercolour and give free rein to his imagination.