

# DON'T WORRY, LITTLE CRAB

CHRIS HAUGHTON

## TEACHERS' GUIDE

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Little Crab and Very Big Crab live in a tiny tide pool. Today they're going for a dip in the big ocean. "This is going to be so great," says Little Crab. But then Little Crab catches a first glimpse of the water . . . Oh. The waves! They're ENORMOUS. Will Little Crab be brave enough to go in?

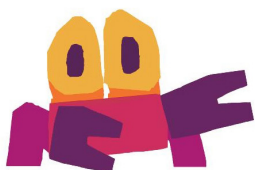


From the award-winning creator of *Little Owl Lost*; *Oh No, George!*; *Shh! We Have a Plan*; and *Goodnight Everyone* comes a bold, beautiful picture book about working through anxiety and, with the support of a loved one, building up the courage to try something new.

*This guide was written by the teachers at the **Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)** in the UK to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.*

## READING ALOUD AND KEY TALKING POINTS:

- Share the front cover of the book with the children and encourage them to focus on the illustration of the crab before looking at the title. Who is this? What kind of creature is it? What do you know or think you know about it? Have the children consider the size of the creature, its facial expression and body position, and how it sits on a plain background with no scenery. What do all these things make you think about the character? How do you think it is feeling? What might it be thinking? Make a note of the children's ideas around a copy of the cover to capture their initial thoughts.
- Now share the title of the text: **Don't Worry, Little Crab**. Does the title reflect how you thought the character was feeling? What do you think a story with this title and featuring this character might be about? What do you think might have happened or will happen to make Little Crab worry?
- Open the book and spend some time looking at the front endpapers. What does this illustration show us? What do you think about the place you can see? Where do you think it is? Why do you think this? Is there anything that might worry Little Crab here? What does the landscape make you think about the story that lies ahead?
- Turn to the copyright and title pages, where you can see the setting in more detail. What can you see here? What are the features of the landscape? What do you think it feels like to be there? Why do you think this? Encourage the children to share any prior knowledge or personal connections with the setting. Have any of them been to a place like this before? Where was it? What was it like?
- Have the children look really closely at the illustration and, if they haven't already, ask them if they can see Little Crab. Putting the book under a projector might help the children to see more clearly, or you could hand around the book for the children to look in greater detail. When they have spotted Little Crab in the tide pool, take some time to consider what this environment might be like from Little Crab's perspective. Do you think Little Crab is aware of the whole scene we can see on the page?
- Turn the page and read the text on the first spread. Give the children time to think about what they have heard and to look carefully at the illustration. What do you think the relationship is between Little Crab and Very Big Crab? How do you think they both feel about living in the tiny tide pool? Do you think they feel the same way about it? Think about the words the author used to describe the crabs and the tide pool: Little, Very Big, and tiny. What does this language make you think about the situation and what might happen next? You may wish to record the children's ideas around a copy of this spread to come back to later.
- Now turn the page and read the next spread. Take time to look at the illustration. Think about the size of the crabs and how this compares with the scale of the rocks. What do you think this adventure is going to be like? What do you think the ocean will be like compared with their tiny tide pool? Revisit the words on the page. What is the impact of the author choosing to write **THE OCEAN!** in capital letters, punctuated with an exclamation mark? Allow the children to practice reading this sentence in different ways to show the effect of this. Now look at and think about Little Crab's reaction. How do you think Little Crab feels about going to the ocean? What in the text or illustration makes you think this? How do you think Little Crab says **"This is going to be so great"**? Allow time for the children to think about this and then volunteer suggestions if they have them.

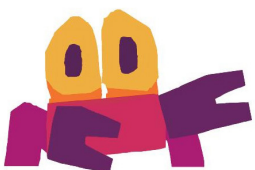


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- Read the next spread, detailing the journey to the ocean. Talk about the words you have read, the onomatopoeic sounds in words like *TIC-A-TAC*, *SPLISH SPLASH*, and *SQUELCH SQUELCH SQUELCH*, and the alliteration in *slimy, slippery seaweed*. Encourage the children to sound these out, feeling the shape of the words in their mouths, then reread the page with the children chiming in with these words and phrases. How do these words make you feel a part of the journey? What do they help you to do? Children may draw parallels between this part of the book and *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* if they have read that book.
  
- Continue reading to **"I can go ANYWHERE!"** and talk about what we know about Little Crab so far. On a large sheet of paper, draw an outline of Little Crab and encourage the children to share what they know about the character from what they have read so far. They may look at direct, external observations, such as "Little Crab lives with Very Big Crab," or they may begin to make inferences about Little Crab's internal characteristics, such as "Little Crab is brave" after reading the line **"I can go ANYWHERE!"** Record the external observations around the outside of the outline drawing and look at whether these allow us to infer more about the character. For example, we might infer Little Crab is young from the word Little and because Very Big Crab lives with Little Crab. Write any inferences about internal characteristics on the inside of the outline drawing.
  
- Now read on to **"Oh," says Little Crab**. How do you think Little Crab feels about the ocean now? How can you tell? Continue reading to **"Don't worry," says Very Big Crab. "It will be OK."** What is Very Big Crab doing here? Why do you think Very Big Crab does this? Read on to **"I think you'll like it."** Why does Little Crab think they've had enough of the ocean? Why do you think Little Crab says **"we've had enough"**? What is Little Crab hoping Very Big Crab will do or say now? Why do you think Very Big Crab continues to encourage Little Crab, rather than agreeing?
  
- Continue reading to **"Maybe we should go home."** Encourage the children to chime in with the repetitive parts of the text as you read, such as **bigger . . . and bigger; Hold tight! Here it comes!**; and **WHOOSH!** Reflect together on what Little Crab says. What is the impact of seeing Little Crab alone here? Come back to your thoughts about Little Crab's character on the outline drawing. What do you know about Little Crab now? What can we tell from the outside? Do you think Little Crab feels the same on the inside? Note these reflections on your outline drawing in a different color from the first observations. How do you think Little Crab is changing?
  
- Look at this page again. From whose position are you seeing Little Crab here? Do you think Very Big Crab should decide to go home now? Take a large sheet of paper, divide it into two columns, and list the reasons the children think they should and shouldn't go home. Many children will readily empathize with Little Crab and his fears and may find it difficult to see the potential benefits of continuing on the journey, so you may need to support them in thinking about what these might be and why Very Big Crab may want them to keep going. When you have reasons on both sides, encourage the children to reflect on these and decide what they think Very Big Crab should say or do next. You could record these ideas around a copy of the illustration.
  
- Now read on to **"I'm here. Come! Just a few more steps."** Look at the impact of Very Big Crab's language and actions. What do you think Very Big Crab is trying to do? How is Very Big Crab trying to make Little Crab feel? Can you think of a time when someone has supported you to try something new or that you weren't sure of? How did they make you feel safe while encouraging you not to give up? Allow time for children to share their personal experiences in relation to Little Crab's situation.
  
- Continue reading up to **until . . .** What is happening to Little Crab over these pages? Encourage the children to look at how he is actually growing on the page as the illustrations progress. What does this make you think? What does it mean when we say a person is growing? Is it always about height? Turn the page and read the next spread: **"I'm in the ocean!" says Little Crab**. Come back again to the reflections on Little Crab's character, and in a third color write how this experience makes the children think about Little Crab now.

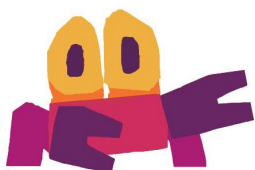


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- Read on to ***But then they see an ENORMOUS wave.*** Look at the way this sentence starts: *But*. What is the impact of this? What does it make us think about Little Crab and what might happen next? Have they seen this before in the text? Look back at the sentences in this section of the story that start with *But*. How does this word make us feel? What do you think will happen next? Turn the page, read the text, look at the illustration, and give the children another opportunity for prediction. Does your mind change from what you first thought? Turn the page again and allow the children to chime in with the repetition of ***WHOOSH!*** Look carefully at this illustration. Where are they? What do the children think will happen now?
- Continue reading to ***“LOOK, Little Crab!”*** Take time to look at the world under the ocean, the shapes, colors, and wildlife you can see. What is it like? How do you think Little Crab feels seeing this?
- Read on to ***“I LOVE THE OCEAN,” says Little Crab.*** Be careful not to share the text on the next page. You could cover it with a sticky note if you wish. Can you recall all the things that the crabs have done while they were there? Why do you think Little Crab loves it there? How does it compare to the tiny tide pool? Turn back in the book to look at and remember what the tide pool was like. Then reveal the text ***“Yes, but it’s time to go home now,” says Very Big Crab,*** and read on to ***“I really don’t want to go home!” says Little Crab.*** How do you think Little Crab is feeling now? How might this affect how these words are read? Give the children an opportunity to read these words in a way that reflects Little Crab’s feelings. Why do you think Little Crab doesn’t want to go home? Have you ever been somewhere so exciting that you didn’t want to leave? Allow time for the children to share personal experiences that enable them to empathize with Little Crab.
- Turn the page and read on to ***“Can we go up this way?” asks Little Crab.*** What do you think about the path Little Crab chooses? What does this tell us about Little Crab? Go back to the outline drawing of Little Crab and talk about how you would describe Little Crab now. Note the external and internal characteristics in a fourth color on the outline drawing. Come back to everything you have written on this drawing and talk about how Little Crab has changed from the beginning of the story to now. What made that happen? This gives you an opportunity to summarize the important stages of the story. Reflect on the different emotions that Little Crab went through in the book. How would you describe Little Crab’s character at the start of the text? In the middle? At the end?
- Now read to the end of the book. How would you describe Very Big Crab? What was Very Big Crab’s role in the story? Do you have someone like this in your own life? Give the children the opportunity to talk about the special people in their own lives who support them.
- Come back to the book again and reread the entire story as a whole. Allow the children to begin to explore their responses to it through booktalk with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls “the four basic questions.” These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
  - Was there anything you liked about this book?
  - Was there anything you disliked?
  - Was there anything that puzzled you?
  - Were there any patterns—any connections—that you noticed? Did it remind you of anything else you’ve read or seen?
- The openness of these questions, unlike the more interrogative *Why?* question, encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of a wrong answer. Asking this type of question will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than asking more general questions. You may, for example, ask the children if they had favorite parts of the story, and why this was.



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- Extend the children's thinking through more evaluative questions, such as: Why do you think Chris Haughton chose to write this book? Who do you think would like this book? You could also compare the front and back endpapers and look at what these tell us about the story.
- Leave multiple copies of the book in the book corner for children to revisit and reread in independent reading time, by themselves or in a group.

## AFTER READING

- Provide an opportunity to write another adventure for Little Crab—this could be the journey home or a visit to somewhere new.
- Find out more about crabs and other underwater animals. How could you share this information with other people? Could you make a poster? A leaflet? A book?
- Have students write a poem, song, or descriptive piece of writing about life under the ocean.
- Find out how underwater creatures are in danger from humans. You might look at clips from David Attenborough's Blue Planet II series to expand children's knowledge of this. How can we help protect this beautiful world? The children could create a poster, leaflet, magazine article, web page, or TV segment to share this information.
- Encourage the children to write about the special people in their life or make a card or write a letter to thank these people for being there for them.
- Let the children write a personal narrative about a time they did something new, overcame a fear, or were brave.

## OTHER SUGGESTED TITLES BY CHRIS HAUGHTON OR TO FURTHER EXPLORE THEMES ARISING FROM THE BOOK

### Books by Chris Haughton

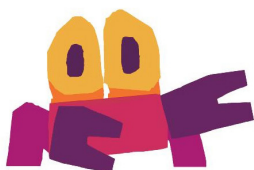
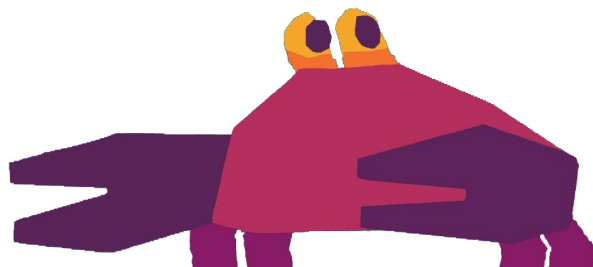
*Goodnight Everyone*  
*Little Owl Lost*  
*Oh No, George!*  
*Shh! We Have a Plan*

### Books about facing one's fears

*A Brave Bear* by Sean Taylor, illustrated by Emily Hughes  
*Anxious Charlie to the Rescue* by Terry Milne  
*Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* by Martin Waddell, illustrated by Barbara Firth  
*Happy in Our Skin* by Fran Manushkin, illustrated by Lauren Tobia  
*Jack's Worry* by Sam Zuppardi  
*The Mouse Who Wasn't Scared* by Petr Horáček  
*We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury

### Books about the ocean

*A First Book of the Sea* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Emily Sutton  
*Alba and the Ocean Cleanup* by Lara Hawthorne  
*Gentle Giant Octopus* by Karen Wallace, illustrated by Mike Bostock  
*Hooray for Fish!* by Lucy Cousins  
*Sea Horse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea* by Chris Butterworth, illustrated by John Lawrence  
*See What a Seal Can Do* by Chris Butterworth, illustrated by Kate Nelms



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