



"Middle school readers who are just beginning to recognize their own skills and abilities will appreciate Sam's struggles and root for her as she does whatever it takes to make her dreams come true."

-VOYA

"Sweet and humorous with a main character you will root for like crazy."

-Randy Ribay, author of *AN INFINITE NUMBER OF PARALLEL UNIVERSES*

"From its downbeat, Mike Grosso's *I AM DRUMS* is in perfect time with this story of a girl with a different drummer inside her head. Despite her drive to be the only girl drummer in her school band, Sam's story of a seventh-grader who has found her life's passion is right on the beat, one that many kids who don't exactly fit into the rhythm of middle school life will feel in their hearts.

-BooksForKids Blog

"There are some books that do a perfect job of feeling both super current but also somehow timeless. *I AM DRUMS* is one of those books, both an older kindred spirit to the *Ramona* books with how well it handles a challenging economy and the strain that puts on a family, and something that I could share with a kid right now who would see herself in Sam."

-Jenn Bishop, author of *THE DISTANCE TO HOME*

"This book is the song of my middle-school heart, back when I was a percussion prodigy (minus the talent). Sam's determination to become a rock star – or at least master the paradiddle – despite a homemade encyclopedia-and-old-newspaper drum set and budget cuts threatening to end her school's band program proves drummers are anything but slackers...and that for many kids, music is much more than just a hobby."

-Michelle Schusterman, author of the *I HEART BAND!* Series





Discussion Questions

The book begins with a bang, literally, as Sam smacks another student with a drum mallet. What specific things does Danny say, and why do they upset her so much? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6](#))

Compare and contrast Sam and her friend, Kristen. How are they alike or different? Explain why you think Kristen is or is not a good friend. ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1](#))

How does Sam's little brother, Brian, feel about his older sister? What evidence from the text tells us how he truly feels? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2](#))

Sam makes a lot of questionable choices. Why does Sam decide to keep her drum lessons a secret? Why does she keep erasing the voicemail messages? What would you have done in her shoes? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6](#))

Why does Pete react to Sam negatively at first? Why does he finally agree to give her drum lessons? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3](#))

Sam uses learns many different drum terms throughout the story. Identify 3-5 drum terms within the text and use context clues to determine their meaning. ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.6](#))





Come up with some character traits to describe Pete. What are some ways in which he does or does not act like a typical teacher? Does he remind you of any teachers you've had? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10](#))

Sam uses a lot of different language to describe how music sounds and makes her feel. What are some examples of this, and what is she trying to say? How would you describe something you really love to someone who doesn't understand it? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5](#))

How do you think it felt to be in Sam's shoes when her father finally met Pete? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6](#))

Do you think Sam will grow up to be a successful musician? Why or why not? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3](#))

I AM DRUMS is about Sam working really hard for the one thing she wants more than anything in the world. What is your one thing you'd work your heart out to accomplish? ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2](#))





Extra Activities

- 1) Sam makes a homemade drum set out of encyclopedias, dictionaries, comic books, and newspapers. What other instruments can be made out of ordinary objects? Design an instrument out of something you can find around your house or classroom and play a basic song.
- 2) Use a blank sheet of construction paper and the description of each part of a drum set in chapter two to design and draw your own kit. How many of each drum would you have? Where would they be placed? Remember that some drummers like to mount drums not typically found on a kit.

