

SUMMARY

Norman the goldfish isn't what this little boy has in mind. He wants a different kind of pet — one that can run and catch, or chase string and climb trees, a soft furry pet to sleep on his bed at night. Definitely not Norman. But, when he tries to trade Norman for a “good pet,” things don't go as he plans. Could it be that Norman is a better pet than he thought?

THEMES

Disappointment

The little boy is not happy to receive Norman as a pet. He is disappointed because he was expecting a pet that could run, jump, and play. Because he is disappointed, the little boy tries to trade Norman for a different pet.

Gratitude

Norman may not have been the pet the little boy wanted in the beginning, but by the end of the book, the little boy decides that Norman is the perfect pet. After comparing Norman to different animals, the little boy realizes that Norman is one amazing fish.

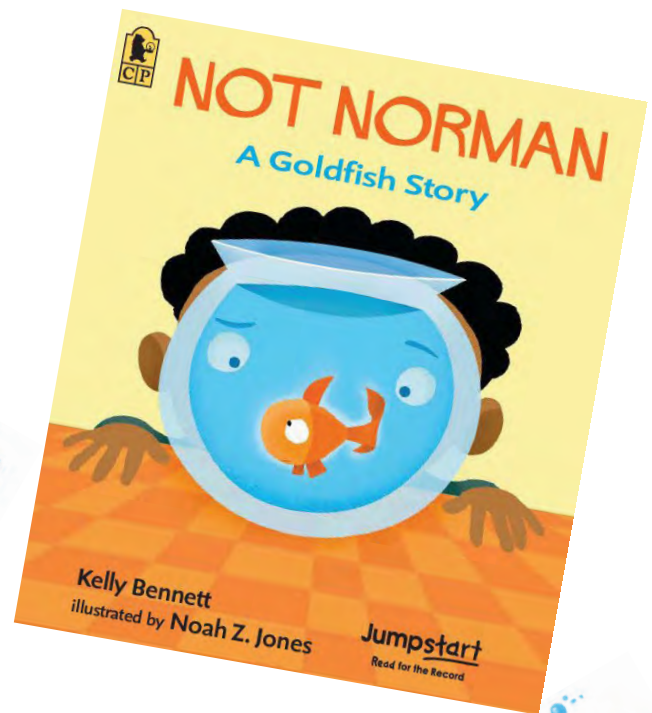
Friendship

Throughout the book, Norman shows that he is a good friend by helping the little boy. Norman is goofy, sings along during music lessons, listens, and is always there for the little boy. The little boy helps Norman too; he cleans out Norman's bowl and refills his water.

PURPOSES

Sharing a story can encourage and help children to:

- Increase the number of words in their vocabulary.
- Develop an understanding of story events.
- Learn about the themes in the book.



SUGGESTED VOCABULARY

Take time to provide a simple explanation for words that might be new to children. These explanations can be verbal or something more active such as gestures, pointing to an illustration, or using tone of voice to convey a word's meaning. Here are some words to talk about while reading *Not Norman*:

- **goofy**: silly
- **maestro**: conductor or leader of a band
- **rescue**: to save from danger
- **tuba**: a large brass instrument
- **twitch**: a quick movement

#ReadfortheRecord



readfortherecord.org

INTRODUCE THE BOOK

Story introductions are a wonderful way for children to learn about books. They are also an opportunity for children to meet the important characters that they should pay attention to during the storybook reading. Introduce *Not Norman* by sharing the following details and looking at the cover together.

- The title of this book is *Not Norman: A Goldfish Story*. The author of this book is Kelly Bennett. This book was illustrated by Noah Z. Jones.
- Whom do you see on the front cover of the book? (Point to the little boy and to Norman, the goldfish – allow time for children to respond.)
- This goldfish is named Norman, and he is swimming in his bowl. There is also a little boy looking at him, and Norman looks sad.
- At the beginning of the story, the little boy receives Norman as a birthday present. He wants a different pet, one that can run, and catch, climb trees, and chase strings. He wants a pet that is soft and furry. Norman cannot run or catch and is not soft and furry. Something changes the little boy's mind about Norman. Let's find out what happens to the little boy and Norman.

ASK QUESTIONS



While reading the story, or after reading the book once, help children develop comprehension skills by asking the following questions. Use the book to support children's understanding of the answers to these questions.

- The little boy is not excited about receiving Norman as a gift. How can you tell that he is disappointed with his present?
- How do you think Norman felt when the two puppies were drinking the water out of his fishbowl?
- What are some of the ways Norman shows he is a good friend to the little boy? What are the ways the little boy shows he is a good friend to Norman?
- At the end of the story, why does the little boy decide to keep Norman as a pet? Why does the little boy think that Norman is the perfect pet?



TALK ABOUT THE BOOK

Children can deepen their understanding of the story by making connections between story events and their own lives. This helps children develop expressive language skills as they share their thoughts aloud. Ask children:

- At the beginning of the book, the little boy does not think that Norman is a fun pet. He is disappointed when he receives Norman as a gift. By the end of the book, the little boy changes his mind and is happy to have Norman as a pet and friend. Tell me about a time you changed your mind and realized you actually liked something that you didn't like at first.
- In the pet store, the little boy sees different types of animals. What animals do you see on this page? Which one do you think would make a good friend and a perfect pet for you?
- When the little boy wakes up in the middle of the night, he hears something at the window and is afraid, but Norman is not scared at all. If you are feeling scared, who or what makes you feel better?
- At the end of the story, the little boy is playing his tuba, and Norman is "singing" along. It looks like they found a game to play together. What games do you like to play with your friends?