

**Classroom STEAM Activities
for the book, *Gnu and Shrew*
by Danny Schnitzlein**

1. Draw Gnu and Shrew with illustrator, Anca Sandu:

Gnu <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhfWE59a5do&t=74s>

Shrew <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C4W8-VvIhk>

2. Make an “idea box”:

Ideas are valuable. Budding scientists, authors, engineers, artists, and filmmakers need a place to keep them safe. Students decorate a stationery or cigar box using stickers, pictures from children’s magazines, markers, paints, colored paper, Sunday comics, etc. Cut a slot in the lid, if it’s a cardboard box. (Alternately you could use a large mailing envelope with a flap.) Every time students think up an idea, they write it on paper and put it in their idea box. When they’re finished, they’ll have a work of art that encourages them to think, create, and take pride in their ideas.

3. Have students explore non-fiction books with these topics from *Gnu and*

Shrew: Inventions, Inventors, Creativity, How to build a boat, How hot air balloons work, Gnus (Wildebeests), Shrews, Crocodiles, Animal Friends, Cooperation, African Wildlife.

4. Fun Facts about gnus and shrews:

Gnus are also called wildebeests.

Gnu babies can stand up and run 4 minutes after birth! (Why would this be useful?)

Gnus migrate in a circular pattern to follow the rains and fresh grasses.

Gnus sleep in rows on the ground, taking turns standing guard for predators.

A shrew’s heart beats more than 1000 times per minute! (Human hearts beat 60-100 times per minute.)

Some species of shrews are venomous, like snakes!

Some species of shrews can echolocate, like bats!

A shrew eats more than its weight in food every day!

5. Draw an invention that accomplishes an everyday activity in a new way.

(Examples: brushing teeth, playing fetch with dog, turning on a light, hammering a nail, breaking an egg, etc.) Demonstrate Rube Goldberg machine examples to get imaginations steaming along.

6. Visit Peachtree Publishers website for more classroom activities, a thorough Teachers’ Guide, and author and illustrator Q and A’s.

<https://peachtree-online.com/portfolio-items/gnu-and-shrew/>

***Gnu and Shrew* awards and nominations**

Best STEM Books—ASEE / ITEEA / NSTA / SEPA / CBC, 2021

Children’s Gallery Award (Nominee) –National Christian School Association, 2021-2022

Gnu and Shrew book reviews:

“This is not the usual story of industry triumphing over sloth . . . it’s refreshing to see a fable in which a generous spirit mitigates the usual ‘gotcha’ ending.” –*Publishers Weekly*

“Schnitzlein keeps readers aware of the yin and yang of the characters’ relationship without judging them, employing a pleasing pattern of language and syntax—and a few unexpected twists . . . Fun, a few surprises, and something to ponder.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Sandu’s cheerful, digitally colored pencil illustrations contain plenty of amusing details, wonderfully capturing the different energies of the characters. Schnitzlein’s humorous story surprises in its sympathy toward both characters . . . a refreshing demonstration of different approaches and a friendship that transcends those contrasts.” –*Booklist*

Other books by Danny Schnitzlein

The Monster Who Ate My Peas

The Monster Who Did My Math

Trick or Treat on Monster Street

***To invite Danny Schnitzlein for a school author visit (virtual or in-person) or to send a list of questions from your classroom, email him at: dannyschnitzlein@gmail.com.**