The Bridge That Never Fell

A Story of Counting, Balance, and Getting It Right

(and a Little Night Music)

APPENDICES FOR AUDIOBOOK LISTENERS

The Math Explorers Series – Volume 1

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Toad University Press

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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. The mathematical concepts, however, are very real.

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Note for Parents, Tutors, Mentors, and Educators

This book was written to be read first as a story. As the entire series is.

The animals notice. They think. They adjust. The math is already doing its work long before it is named. That is intentional.

Readers learn mathematics best when it is grounded in meaning—when numbers describe something real, when measurement solves a problem that matters, and when patterns reveal themselves through experience rather than instruction alone. *The Bridge That Never Fell* is built on that idea.

The appendices at the back of this book are here to support you.

They are not meant to interrupt the story, slow it down, or turn it into an assignment. Instead, they give you language for what is already happening on the page and tools to extend that thinking in ways that fit your setting—home, classroom, tutoring session, or quiet conversation.

Appendix A identifies the core math ideas in each chapter using standard instructional terms. It explains how those ideas appear in the story and suggests ways to strengthen understanding through discussion, observation, and applied thinking. You do not need to cover every idea at once. The goal is depth, not speed.

Appendix B is a glossary. It includes mathematical vocabulary as well as story words that may be unfamiliar to young readers. Readers are encouraged to return to it as needed. Learning the language of math is part of learning math itself.

Appendix C offers games and activities designed to reinforce the ideas in the story without relying on worksheets or drills. These activities emphasize thinking, cooperation, estimation, and decision-making—the same skills the characters use throughout the book.

You are not expected to teach everything at once.

Instead, listen for moments when a reader pauses, wonders, or asks a question. Those moments are invitations. The appendices exist so that when those invitations appear, you have somewhere to turn.

Math, at its best, is not loud. It does not announce itself. It works quietly in the background, making things stronger, fairer, and more reliable.

Like a bridge that never falls

Appendix A — Teaching Moments & Extensions

This appendix is designed for **teachers, parents, and tutors** who want to extend the ideas in *The Bridge That Never Fell* without turning the story into a lecture.

Each chapter includes:

- **What's happening**
- **What students are learning**
- **One or two simple teaching ideas** (5–15 minutes, no prep)

Use what fits. Skip what doesn't.

Chapter 1 — Where the Water Slows

What's Happening in the Story
Elm notices the stream sounds "heavier." Nothing looks wrong yet, but something has changed. Instead of acting, the beavers observe and listen.

What students are learning
Students are being introduced to the idea that systems have a normal state. Before fixing anything, you must understand how it usually behaves. This is the foundation of measurement, scientific thinking, and careful listening in music.

Math ideas at work
Observation before measurement
Comparing "before" and "after"
Understanding that adding or removing one small unit can matter

Music ideas at work
Listening for change in sound
Recognizing when something feels heavier or lighter
Hearing texture, not just volume

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Elm doesn't guess. What does he do first?"
Ask: "What does 'carrying one extra' mean without numbers?"

Quick classroom exercises
Show two similar pictures or arrangements of objects (for example, 8 vs. 9 items). Ask students to identify what changed and how they know.
Have students listen to a short rhythm, then hear it again with one extra beat added. Ask where they noticed the change.

Chapter 2 — The Weight of Quiet Things

What's Happening in the Story
Oak arrives with great physical strength but moves carefully. He notices when a log is "too much" because it will force pressure elsewhere.

What students are learning
Strength is not just force. It's control. This chapter introduces load, redistribution, and the idea that fixing one problem can create another.

Math ideas at work
Load and weight
Trade-offs in systems
Checking work more than once

Music ideas at work
Balance in an ensemble
Why adding volume or power can destabilize music
The importance of restraint

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why does Oak say the log is 'too much' instead of just wrong?"
Ask: "Why does he count, then count again?"

Quick classroom exercises
Balance a ruler on a pencil and add coins one at a time. Ask what must change to rebalance.
Give simple math problems and require students to verify answers using a second method.

Music connection
Add one loud clap to a steady rhythm. Ask how it changed the balance.

Chapter 3 — Carry One

What's Happening in the Story
Alder adds one branch, expecting improvement. Instead, the system reacts poorly. Oak fixes the problem by making a tiny adjustment somewhere else.

What students are learning
Not all fixes involve adding more. Sometimes correction means transferring or redistributing.

Math ideas at work
Incremental change
Cause and effect
Compensation and transfer (the true meaning of "carry one")

Music ideas at work
Micro-adjustments in timing
Fixing rhythm without restarting

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why didn't Oak remove the added branch first?"
Ask: "What changed when he moved something only one paw-length?"

Quick classroom exercises
Move one counter from a group of 7 to a group of 3. Ask what changed and what stayed the same.
Give a solved problem with a small error and challenge students to fix it with the smallest possible change.

Music challenge
Tap four steady beats with one hand while tapping only beats 1 and 3 with the other.

Chapter 4 — What Goes In, What Comes Out

What's Happening in the Story
Aspen scales a recipe for more guests. Oak explains that not all ingredients scale the same way ("herbs don't eat").

What students are learning
Scaling is not just multiplying everything equally. Real-world math requires judgment.

Math ideas at work
Ratios and proportions
Estimation
Nonlinear scaling
Subtraction as saving (leftovers)

Music ideas at work
Balancing an ensemble
Why doubling performers doesn't mean doubling volume
Dynamics as seasoning

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "If six roots feed four beavers, how do we reason about eight?"
Ask: "Why don't herbs scale the same way?"

Quick classroom exercises
Have students scale a simple snack recipe and explain which ingredient should not double.
Present a scenario where extra food is saved rather than thrown away and label it as subtraction.

Chapter 5 — A Murder of Estimates

What's Happening in the Story
The crows estimate distance, argue, and realize estimation fails when repetition matters. They need shared units.

What students are learning
Estimation is useful, but precision is necessary for coordination.

Math ideas at work
Estimation versus measurement
Units
Shared standards

Music ideas at work
Tempo without a reference versus tempo with a metronome
Why ensembles need common timing

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why does estimating stop working for the crows?"
Ask: "What happens when everyone uses a different unit?"

Quick classroom exercises
Estimate the length of the classroom, then measure it.
Let half the class measure using "steps" and half using "desk lengths." Compare results.

Chapter 6 — An Orchestra of Time

What's Happening in the Story
Crickets learn that music depends on counting and shared timing.

What students are learning
Time can be divided, shared, and counted.

Math ideas at work
Counting in groups
Fractions of time
Repeating cycles

Music ideas at work
Meter
Downbeats
Synchronization

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why do they count to four before playing?"
Ask: "What breaks when timing isn't shared?"

Quick classroom exercises
Clap while counting to four, then remove the counting and keep the rhythm.
Have one group clap every beat and another every two beats.

Coordination challenge
Tap four beats with one hand and two beats with the other.

Chapter 7 — Pieces That Fit

What's Happening in the Story
Blocks are built carefully. Some pieces do not belong, and forcing them causes problems. "No" is treated as information.

What students are learning
Fit matters more than force. Constraints define systems.

Math ideas at work
Constraint satisfaction
Testing before committing
Structural compatibility

Music ideas at work
Arrangement
Why not every instrument belongs in every song

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "What does it mean when something almost fits?"
Ask: "How is 'no' useful information?"

Quick classroom exercises
Build structures with a no-forcing rule and explain why pieces don't fit.
Add one extra block to a stable structure and observe the effect.

Chapter 8 — Dronevius Notices Something

What's Happening in the Story
Dronevius notices patterns connecting the bridge, wood cutting, and crow routes before a problem occurs.

What students are learning
Early observation prevents later failure.

Math ideas at work
Pattern recognition
Multi-variable reasoning
Anticipation

Music ideas at work
Listening beyond one's own part
Detecting errors early

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why doesn't Dronevius panic?"
Ask: "What clues does he connect?"

Quick classroom exercises
Show a repeating pattern and remove one element. Ask when students noticed the change.
Play a rhythm with one wrong beat and ask when they heard it.

Chapter 9 — The Missing Tuba

What's Happening in the Story
The orchestra prepares to play, but something is wrong. There are more players than instruments. The imbalance is felt before it is fully understood.

What students are learning
Counting isn't just about totals—it's about matching parts to roles. This chapter introduces subtraction and comparison as tools for diagnosing problems, not just solving worksheets.

Math ideas at work
Addition and subtraction
Matching quantities
Identifying what is missing rather than what is wrong

Music ideas at work
Ensemble balance
Instrument roles
Why every voice needs support

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "How did they know something was wrong before they counted?"
Ask: "Why does having eighteen players and sixteen tubas matter?"

Quick classroom exercises
Set up a scenario with more students than chairs. Ask what the problem is and how to describe it using numbers.
Give a list of items and roles (for example, players and instruments) and ask students to identify mismatches.

Music connection
Ask students what happens to a song if an important instrument is missing—even if everyone else is ready.

Chapter 10 — Maple Counts the Days

What's Happening in the Story
Maple notices construction near the stream and begins thinking not just about what is happening now, but what will happen soon.

What students are learning
Time can be estimated, planned, and used for preparation. Counting days helps reduce worry by turning uncertainty into something manageable.

Math ideas at work
Time estimation
Prediction
Planning over multiple steps

Music ideas at work
Anticipating entrances
Knowing when to wait before playing

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "What changes when Maple starts counting days instead of worrying?"
Ask: "Why doesn't Elm give an exact answer?"

Quick classroom exercises
Have students estimate how long a familiar task takes, then compare to reality.
Create a simple timeline for an upcoming class activity.

Music connection
Ask students how musicians know when to come in after resting for many measures.

Chapter 11 — How Far Is Far Enough?

What's Happening in the Story
The crows argue about distance until they invent a shared unit: the CrowJump.

What students are learning
Units make abstract distances understandable. Measurement becomes useful when it matches how something is actually done.

Math ideas at work
Custom units
Repeated measurement
Multiplication through repetition

Music ideas at work
Measuring music by measures instead of minutes
Counting phrases instead of seconds

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why did the crows invent their own unit instead of using miles?"
Ask: "What makes a unit useful?"

Quick classroom exercises
Have students invent a classroom unit (for example, one step or one arm-span) and measure the room.
Convert that unit into another (steps to feet, for example).

Music connection
Measure a song by verses or measures instead of time.

Chapter 12 — The Problem No One Was Supposed to See

What's Happening in the Story
The beavers discover a misalignment in the bridge that others haven't noticed yet.

What students are learning
Some problems are invisible until you look carefully. Responsibility sometimes means noticing what others miss.

Math ideas at work
Alignment
Error detection
Predicting future outcomes

Music ideas at work
Detecting off-beat timing
Recognizing tuning issues before performance

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why is 'almost right' not good enough here?"
Ask: "What could happen if they ignore the problem?"

Quick classroom exercises
Show a nearly correct math solution and ask students to find the hidden error.
Have students listen to a rhythm with one subtle mistake and identify it.

Chapter 13 — When the Crickets Learned to Listen

What's Happening in the Story
The crickets learn that music depends on shared counting and listening, not just sound.

What students are learning
Coordination requires attention to others. Counting is a way to stay together.

Math ideas at work
Counting cycles
Grouping
Shared structure

Music ideas at work
Meter
Listening across sections
Counting to four

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why is listening just as important as playing?"
Ask: "What does counting give the orchestra?"

Quick classroom exercises
Count to four aloud while clapping, then remove the counting and maintain rhythm.
Have one group clap every beat and another every two beats.

Coordination challenge
Tap four beats with one hand while tapping two beats with the other.

Chapter 14 — When Tootsie Asked the Right Question

What's Happening in the Story
Tootsie converts CrowJumps into familiar units quickly and accurately.

What students are learning
Math is translation. Understanding matters more than speed.

Math ideas at work
Unit conversion
Mental math
Estimation

Music ideas at work
Translating tempo markings
Understanding time signatures across styles

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why doesn't Tootsie need a calculator?"
Ask: "What makes her fast—practice or understanding?"

Quick classroom exercises
Convert simple measurements between units (steps to feet, minutes to seconds).
Practice breaking numbers into easier parts for mental math.

Chapter 15 — The Emergency That Was Definitely Necessary

What's Happening in the Story
The minnows hold an emergency meeting to summarize everything that's changing.

What students are learning
Organizing information helps reduce confusion. Groups can think together.

Math ideas at work
Categorization
Summarizing data
Recognizing patterns across systems

Music ideas at work
Section rehearsals
Listening across an ensemble

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "Why do the minnows meet even when nothing has collapsed?"
Ask: "What patterns do they notice?"

Quick classroom exercises
Have students summarize a chapter in three bullet points.
Group information into categories and discuss what belongs where.

Chapter 16 — Well, All Is Well Near the Well

What's Happening in the Story
The bridge is corrected quietly. No one falls. No one takes credit.

What students are learning
Good solutions often go unnoticed. Knowing when to stop is part of problem-solving.

Math ideas at work
Verification
Final checks
Knowing when a system is stable

Music ideas at work
Final tuning
Endings and resolutions

Suggested teaching moments
Ask: "How do we know the problem is solved?"
Ask: "Why is it important that no one noticed?"

Quick classroom exercises
Review a completed problem and ask how students know it's finished.
Discuss examples where success is quiet rather than dramatic.

Final Note for Appendix A

This appendix is not meant to turn the story into a lesson plan.

It exists to make something visible that the book is already doing quietly:
teaching readers how to notice, how to count, how to listen, and how to act with care.

Across these chapters, students encounter math and music not as separate subjects, but as shared ways of thinking. Counting appears before calculation. Listening comes before correction. Units are invented because they are needed. Systems are adjusted gently rather than forced.

Teachers and parents are encouraged to use these moments flexibly. A single question asked at the right time is often more powerful than a full worksheet. Many of the suggested activities take only a few minutes and can be used as warm-ups, discussion starters, or extensions.

Most importantly, this book models a process:

observe first
notice patterns
count carefully
adjust slowly

check again
and stop when things fit

That process applies to math problems, musical ensembles, engineering challenges, and everyday decisions alike.

If readers finish this book more willing to pause, to listen, and to trust careful thinking, then Appendix A has done its job. Book Two is already on its way.

Appendix B — Glossary

Vocabulary

adjustment (n.) — a small change made to improve how something works.
agreement (n.) — when parts work together in the same way without fighting each other.
ambitious (adj.) — aiming to do something big, difficult, or impressive.
awe (n.) — a feeling of wonder mixed with surprise.
balance (n.) — when weight or forces are spread so nothing tips or falls.
beam (n.) — a long, strong piece of wood or metal used to hold things up.
behavior (n.) — how something acts or responds, especially over time.
bridge (n.) — a structure built to cross over water or land.
crowjump (n.) — a standard distance crows use to measure flight, equal to forty-two feet.
consistency (n.) — doing something the same way each time.
count (v.) — to say numbers in order to measure how many.
current (n.) — the movement of water in a stream or river.
delivery route (n.) — a planned path used to bring items from one place to another.
distribution (n.) — how something is spread out.
elevation (n.) — how high something is compared to the ground around it.
estimate (v.) — to make a careful guess using what you know.
flow (n.) — the way water or movement travels smoothly.
flow rate (n.) — how fast water moves through a space.
fraction (n.) — a part of a whole.
ledger (n.) — a book used to record numbers or information.
load (n.) — the weight something must carry.
measure (v.) — to find the size, length, or amount of something.
misaligned (adj.) — not lined up correctly.
orchestra (n.) — a group of musicians playing together.
pattern (n.) — something that repeats in a predictable way.
pressure (n.) — a force that pushes or presses on something.
proportion (n.) — how parts relate to the whole.
redistribute (v.) — to spread something out again in a better way.
rhythm (n.) — a repeated pattern of sound or movement.
route (v.) — to guide something along a chosen path.
scale (v.) — to change size while keeping relationships the same.
sequence (n.) — an order in which things happen.
structure (n.) — something built from parts that work together.
system (n.) — many parts working together to do a job.
timing (n.) — choosing the right moment.
triple (v.) — to make something three times larger.

unit (n.) — a standard way to measure something.
weight (n.) — how heavy something is.

Animal Group Names

cluster (n.) — a group gathered closely together, often moving as one.
murder (n.) — a traditional name for a group of crows.
orchestra (n.) — a group of crickets playing music together.
romp (n.) — a playful group of otters.
school (n.) — a group of fish moving together.
leash (n.) — a group of foxes traveling or hunting together.
group (n.) — a general word humans use for many individuals gathered together.

Musical Instruments

violin (n.) — a string instrument played with a bow, known for its bright, expressive sound.
cello (n.) — a larger string instrument with a deep, warm tone.
flute (n.) — a wind instrument that produces sound through moving air.
clarinet (n.) — a woodwind instrument that uses a reed to create sound.
trumpet (n.) — a brass instrument with a bold, clear voice.
timpani (n.) — large drums that provide rhythm and support.
tuba (n.) — a large brass instrument with a deep, grounding sound.
baton (n.) — a small stick used by a conductor to guide musicians.

Final Note

Some words measure distance.
Some name sound.
Some describe how groups move, build, or listen.

All of them belong in the same system.

Appendix C — Games and Activities for Parents, Teachers, and Curious Readers

This story teaches math.

It also teaches music.

More importantly, it teaches how both work the same way—through **pattern, timing, grouping, balance, and attention**.

Nothing in this book requires formal lessons. Everything can be explored through noticing, talking, listening, and trying small things together.

Below are optional ideas to extend what appears naturally in the story.

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1. Counting Is Not Just Numbers

Throughout the book, characters count:

- steps
- beats
- distances
- instruments
- days
- routes

They often do this **without saying "math."**

Try this:

- Ask a child to count something familiar (steps across a room, claps, jumps).
- Ask them *why* they counted.
- Ask what would happen if they didn't.

The goal is not speed.
The goal is **awareness**.

---

2. Grouping Changes Meaning

The story introduces many group names:

- a **school** of fish
- a **murder** of crows
- an **orchestra** of crickets
- a **romp** of otters
- a **leash** of foxes

Each group behaves differently because it is grouped differently.

Try this:

- Ask a child to group toys, books, or sounds in more than one way.
- "What changes when you group by size instead of color?"
- "What changes when everyone moves together?"

This builds early understanding of **sets, classification, and structure**.

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3. Music Is Counting You Can Hear

In the story, the crickets learn to count to four.
They do not rush.
They do not skip.
They listen.

Music works because time is divided evenly.

Try this listening exercise:

- Tap four steady beats on a table.
- Count aloud: *one, two, three, four.*
- Repeat.
- Change speed, but keep the spacing even.

Ask:

- "Which felt harder?"
- "Which felt better?"

This builds **rhythm, sequencing, and timing**.

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4. A Coordination Challenge (Very Important and Very Fun)

This is harder than it sounds—and that's the point.

Try this:

- With one hand, tap the table and count to **four** evenly.
- At the same time, with the other hand, tap the table and count to **two** evenly.
- Do both together.

Most people cannot do this immediately. The four beats and the two beats occur in the same pocket of time. Not easy to do. Even musicians struggle – especially if you ask the musician to switch the hands. (In other words, right hand doing four beats while left hand does two – now switch it up.)

That's okay.

That moment of confusion is learning happening.

Ask:

- "What was hard?"
- "Did one hand want to copy the other?"
- "What helped?"

This builds:

- attention
- pattern recognition
- division of time
- early understanding of ratios

It is also excellent for brains.

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5. Estimation Is Not Guessing

Characters often estimate before measuring.
They do not guess wildly.
They use what they already know.

Try this:

- Ask how many steps it takes to cross a room.
- Estimate first.
- Then count.
- Talk about the difference.

Estimation builds confidence and flexibility.

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6. Silence Is Part of the Pattern

In music, silence matters.
In building, waiting matters.
In thinking, pauses matter.

The book models this repeatedly.

Try this:

- Count silently.
- Tap only on certain beats.
- Stop before finishing and notice what happens.

This teaches restraint and control—skills math and music both require.

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7. No One Needs to Be Perfect

The characters:

- check twice
- pause
- revise
- adjust
- correct quietly

That is how real systems work.

If a child says, "I did it wrong," you can say:

- "Good. What did you notice?"

That question matters more than the answer.

Final Thought on Appendix C

Math and music are not about being fast.

They are about being **accurate, attentive, and kind to patterns**.

This book does not teach children to perform.

It teaches them to **listen, notice, and think**.

That skill lasts far longer than any answer key.

A Final Note to Readers, Parents, and Educators

Thank you for spending time in this world.

The Bridge That Never Fell is a story about math—but not the kind that lives on worksheets or disappears after a test. It is about the kind of math that lives in **listening**, **planning**, **counting carefully**, and **knowing when a small adjustment matters more than a big reaction**.

It is also about music.
About rhythm.
About timing.
About how shared patterns help groups stay together—whether they are building a bridge, delivering messages, or learning to play as one.

Throughout the book, numbers are used quietly.
Rarely named.
Often felt before they are counted.

That is intentional.

Young readers are invited to notice:

- how grouping changes meaning
- how counting supports coordination
- how estimation builds confidence
- how patience prevents failure
- how good systems rarely announce themselves

For parents and educators, this story is meant to be a **starting point**, not a lesson plan. The appendices offer gentle ways to extend the ideas—through conversation, listening, and small experiments—without turning reading into work.

Most of all, this book is about **quiet competence**.

The kind that fixes things before they break.
The kind that counts twice.
The kind that leaves no trace—except that everyone is safe.

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About the Author

David I. Schoen, known to generations of students as Professor Dave, has spent decades helping learners of all ages discover clarity, confidence, and even a little joy in the worlds of language, math, and learning. A veteran educator, tutor, and writer—and an unapologetic lover of books—he specializes in turning complicated ideas into simple, friendly explanations that actually stick.

Dave has guided thousands of students through English, math, writing, grammar, and test preparation, as well as the always-adventurous process of becoming a stronger thinker. His teaching blends humor, precision, and storytelling—a combination that has helped learners from elementary school through adulthood feel empowered instead of intimidated.

He is also an active private pilot, and has been flying for over three decades—an experience that has shaped the realism, detail, and sense of wonder behind The Day *Tamias Looked Up* and *The Flying Explorers Series*. Before becoming an author and educator, he worked as an Air Traffic Controller at JFK International Airport, one of the world's busiest airports, for almost two decades. Aviation is in his blood, just as it is slowly coming to be in Tamias'.

When he isn't teaching or writing, Dave can usually be found creating new educational books, experimenting in the kitchen, playing the piano, or working on inventive projects that combine family, learning, and fun. He lives on Long Island, New York, where he is constantly surrounded by stories waiting to be told.

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Keep your head up!