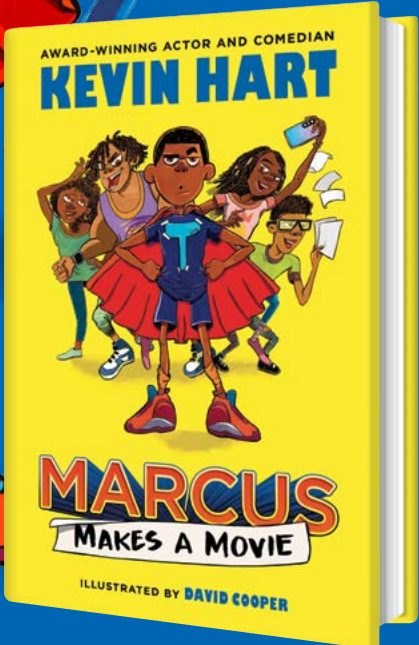
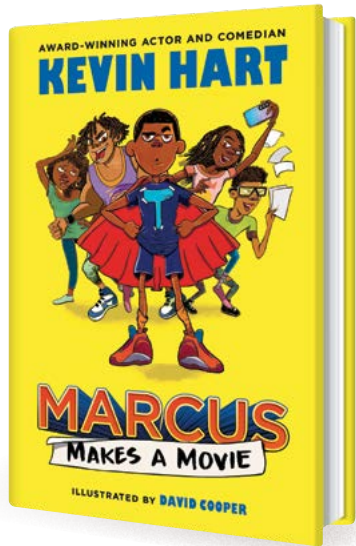


EDUCATORS' GUIDE



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ABOUT THE BOOK



Stand-up comedian and Hollywood superstar Kevin Hart keeps the laughs coming in an illustrated middle-grade novel about a boy who has big dreams of making a blockbuster superhero film.

Marcus is NOT happy to be stuck in after-school film class . . . until he realizes he can turn the story of the cartoon superhero he's been drawing for years into an actual MOVIE! There's just one problem: he has no idea what he's doing. So he'll need help: from his friends; his teachers; Sierra, the strong-willed classmate with creative dreams of her own; even Tyrell, the local bully who'd be a perfect movie villain if he weren't too terrifying to talk to.

Making this movie won't be easy. But as Marcus discovers, nothing great ever is—and if you want your dream to come true, you've got to hustle to make it happen.

Comedy superstar Kevin Hart teams up with award-winning author Geoff Rodkey and lauded illustrator David Cooper for a hilarious and inspiring illustrated story about bringing your creative goals to life and never giving up, even when nothing's going your way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Photo credit: Kevin Kwan



KEVIN HART is an award-winning actor, comedian, and author. His films, including *Jumanji*, *Captain Underpants* and *The Secret Life of Pets*, have earned billions at the box office, and his stand-up comedy tours have sold out arenas and football stadiums, leading *Forbes* to name him the “king of comedy.” *I Can't Make This Up*, his adult memoir, was a number one *New York Times* bestseller, remaining on the list for ten weeks straight. Kevin is also an entrepreneur, a television producer, and the chairman and CEO of HartBeat Productions. Inspiration for his debut middle-grade novel came from being told no when he was younger: “No, you can't. No, you're not good enough. No, you don't have the right education or know the right people. I'm stubborn, so I turned those no's into fuel. Every time I heard one, it just made me work harder to prove wrong whoever said it.” It is Kevin's hope that *Marcus Makes a Movie* will show kids that they are the only ones who can really say no to their goals: “If they can dream it, then they can do it.” Kevin lives in Los Angeles with his family. He can be found on Twitter and Instagram at @KevinHart4Real.



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GEOFF RODKEY is the author of the bestselling Tapper Twins comedy series; the Chronicles of Egg adventure trilogy; *We're Not from Here*, an NPR and *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of the Year; and *The Story Pirates Present: Stuck in the Stone Age*, a comic novel bundled with a how-to guide for kids who want to create stories of their own. His first novel for adults, *Lights Out in Lincolnwood*, publishes in July. He's also the Emmy-nominated screenwriter of such films as *Daddy Day Care* and *RV*. Learn more at geoffrodkey.com, and follow Geoff on Twitter at @GeoffRodkey.

DAVID COOPER is a multimedia artist and muralist, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. His work has appeared on book covers, ad campaigns, and editorial publications, such as the *New York Times*, *Print* magazine, and *POZ* magazine. He has painted large-scale murals at Miami Art Basel, Brooklyn, and has been exhibited at the New York Society of Illustrators. Learn more about David's work at davidcooperart.com.

DEAR SUPERSTAR TEACHER,

Get ready for the most relatable and heartfelt book of all time! It is sure to inspire all your readers—even those who may sometimes roll their eyes at you when you make book suggestions. *Marcus Makes a Movie* was made for this generation of readers. It's fun to read. It's real. It's packed full of valuable life lessons. It's perfect for your classroom library.

Marcus Makes a Movie is Kevin Hart's latest and greatest masterpiece. Kevin Hart is a household name to both kids and adults alike, and his infectious spirit is heartwarming, joyful, and absolutely hilarious. From his work on-screen to his books, Kevin Hart truly is remarkably skilled at making us laugh and feel all the deep feels. Geoff Rodkey is a bestselling author and Emmy-nominated screenwriter. David Cooper's illustrations make the words jump off the page. They all work seamlessly together to bring Kevin Hart's book to life!

Marcus isn't just a kid who likes to play video games. He's complex and full of emotions, and he experiences problems, just like you and me. He also happens to be the creator of the superhero Toothpick. He wants his comics to be BIG. ABSOLUTELY MASSIVE. Marcus wants to become a household name. However, all he has is a dream, the seemingly corny Afternoon Adventures Filmmaking class, and his phone, which dies a lot. Are those enough to make his dream a reality?

The purpose of this guide is to support teachers in facilitating intentional and *authentic* learning opportunities for students to grow as readers, writers, and remarkable humans. *Marcus Makes a Movie* is an extraordinary story of real-life childhood that oozes authenticity. Marcus is relatable and full of feelings—feelings that young people actually have. This is a story about teamwork, relationships, and making your dreams a reality.

Marcus Makes a Movie reminds us that learning can happen ANYWHERE, and sometimes it happens in a messy, mash-up sort of way. Sometimes those are the BEST ways. Marcus's love of comics shows us, as teachers, the potential that comics and other art forms have in the classroom. Students have stories to tell, and by giving them a voice, we can support the way they learn. The activities in this guide will give students a chance to elevate their voices and build connections to other content areas through writing, sharing, and creating.

—Shanika Parker and
Room 228 Educational Consulting



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do the kids in *Marcus Makes a Movie* take control of their project? How can you apply this to your own life? Describe a time when you felt empowered and in charge.
- Why is it so important for Marcus to film in the hospital? What kinds of issues does this decision cause in his friendships? How does it affect his movie?
- What kinds of emotions did you feel when you read about why filming in the hospital was so important to Marcus? Why do you think Hart decided to reveal the reasons behind Marcus's need to film there slowly?
- Marcus's mom's death is a defining moment in his life that drives many of his actions and emotions throughout the book. What is one of your defining moments, silly or serious?
- What kind of friend is J.R.? What kind of friend is Sierra? Why do you say this? Compare and contrast Marcus's friendships with J.R. and Sierra. What makes Sierra a different kind of friend than J.R.? Be sure to use specific evidence.
- In order to get help with his movie, Marcus has to help others. Have you ever experienced this in your life? Explain. What other examples of relationship-building do you witness in this book?
- Marcus wants to give up several times throughout the book, but he pushes through and finishes his movie. What is his driving force? What is something that you are passionate about? Were there moments you had to decide whether to give up or to continue? How did you make your decision? How does Marcus make his? What does this reveal about his character?
- How does Marcus change throughout the story?

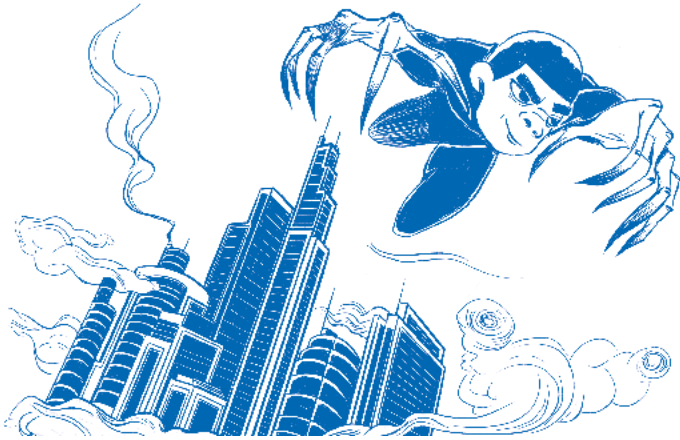


STEP INTO THEIR SHOES

Marcus Makes a Movie is about a young and gifted Black protagonist who creates something incredible. This story allows Black students and other students of color to see themselves as the main characters of a story, while also allowing white students to see their classmates in the spotlight. Marcus learns empathy throughout his filmmaking process. Likewise, this activity gets at the heart of learning empathy. Celebrating people of color and what they accomplish is important for cultivating a diverse and respectful community both inside and outside the classroom. In this activity, students will pick a famous person who is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC) to focus on. This person can be famous in any way you and your class choose (e.g., artists, scientists, historical figures). After researching a BIPOC's life, have your students write a letter as Marcus to this person, exploring common ground. Ask your students, "What does Marcus think they have in common? How do they both face struggle? Are they both funny?" Then you can take it a step further and ask your students, "How are you, Marcus, and the BIPOC you researched alike? How are you different? What makes your famous person just like the rest of us? What makes them 'famous'?" When students learn about people who are like them and who are different from them, and then celebrate those similarities and differences, the learning community is strengthened. And plus, it's just cool to be kind.

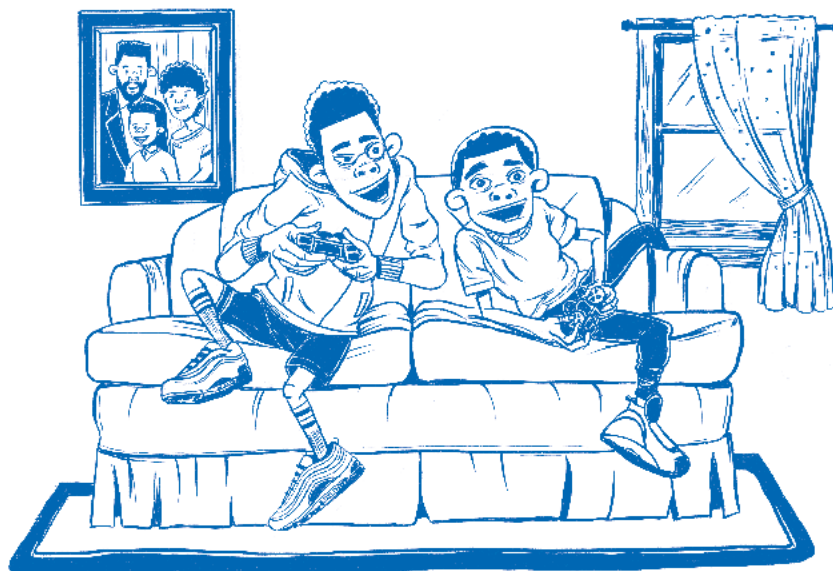


MARCUS MAKES A _____ (You Fill in the Blank!)



Marcus makes a movie with his comics, but what other art forms could we make using a comic? What if *Marcus Makes a Movie* was actually *Marcus Makes a Play*? Or a song? Or a _____? Change the tune! Students can make a play, song, dance, sculpture, or anything else using Marcus's comics. The possibilities are endless! Your students are in control! They are the expert artists and creators. This is where knowing your students' strengths will come in handy. This project can be a collaborative effort or it could be an individual project. Working together builds community in the classroom, and if we lead by Marcus's example, we can see that everyone can be part of creating something special. Marcus was able to cast Big Tyrell to play DOOM, even though he was scared of him. Now *that's* community building. Everyone has a place in this project.

- Students choose the art form they want to use to tell Marcus's story. This new art form should explore the themes, conflicts, and feelings that Marcus examines in his comics. Be sure to have students thinking and discussing before they jump in. Students can work in partners or groups based on interest (e.g., students who like to paint might design a painting, students who love to dance can choreograph a dance, students who love to sing or rap might write and perform a song). Groups can even collaborate with one another! If one group writes a song, another group might choreograph a dance to it and perform it.
- Provide check-in opportunities for groups as they prepare their art. Remind students to really think about how particular elements of their art are telling Marcus's story. And if they notice that Marcus's comic story overlaps with Marcus's personal story, give them a high five. Okay, that may be too corny, but definitely celebrate their thinking.
- Once students have perfected their craft, have them perform for or share with the class! Before, during, or after the performances, ask your students guiding questions, like "How does an artist or illustrator create feelings in their characters? How do other artists (e.g., dancers, painters, writers, rappers, sculptors) create feelings, express worry, fear, relief, etc. in their art? How are these art forms different? How are they similar?" This is such a special way to build trust in a classroom community, to celebrate art, and to provide an opportunity for your students to showcase what they are learning and what new knowledge they are building from that learning.



SUPERHERO SHOWDOWN!

Have you ever wanted to be the main character of a story? Or maybe even a superhero? In this activity, students will be like Marcus and create their very own superhero. Their superheroes can be their own alter ego like Toothpick, Marcus's alter ego, or the superhero can be someone completely different. Marcus constructed his superhero to express some deep feelings that he didn't yet feel comfortable talking about directly. What purpose will your students' superheroes have? The best part of this activity is that students get to showcase their creative talents AND battle it out against their peers in a Superhero Showdown!

- **Students WRITE About Their Superhero!**

Give your students the prompt: If you could create your own superhero, who would you create? What is your superhero's origin story? Ask them, "What is your superhero's power? Why do they need this power? What internal and external conflicts or struggles do they have?" to guide them as they write. Encourage your students to be as specific and descriptive as possible about their superhero and their superhero's skills as this will be vital for their battle. Have students create a rough draft of their superhero first, confer with a peer for edits, then create a final draft. When creating his comic book art and his movie, Marcus didn't always get it right the first time. Revision is key!

- **Students DESIGN Their Superhero!**

Using their writing as a template, give your students the artistic freedom to bring their superhero to life through drawing! Ask them, "What kind of outfit does the superhero wear? How does their look differ from their everyday clothes? What makes them the very best? What is their main weakness? How will they protect themselves against this weakness? How will they defeat their enemies?" to guide them as they design. This may cause students to revise their writing, which is a GOOD thing!

- **Students SHARE and BATTLE with Other Superheroes!**

Students will share their superhero with their peers in a unique way—through a SUPERHERO SHOWDOWN! They will have a battle! Students will use the descriptive brainstorm and the background information they prepared to persuasively and dramatically explain how their superhero would fare against their partner's. Students may work in partners or in groups of three (the third person being the judge). You could also invite judges from elsewhere in your school! You could also hold a round-robin tournament-style showdown. Who will become the winner of the ultimate Superhero Showdown?

Additional Teacher Resources:

Stan Lee talking about creating a superhero:
youtu.be/uJJTEgNtSTo

Parts of a comic:
youtu.be/vyYJquBHyDo

Why comics belong in the classroom:
[youtu.be/Oz4JqA\]bxjo](https://youtu.be/Oz4JqA]bxjo)



YOU Make a Movie!

A Step-by-Step Movie-Making Adventure

Kevin Hart’s hilariously entertaining and moving *Marcus Makes a Movie* reminds students AND teachers that we should never give up on our dreams, no matter how hard it may seem to achieve them. From writing comic books to creating his very own movie, Marcus doesn’t dream small. With their *own* dreams and ideas in mind, your students will make their very own movies! Students will write their scripts, draw their storyboards, cast their characters, film their movies, and more! Students were born to be storytellers! Whether they know it yet or not, students have lived a lot of life . . . and definitely have wonderfully meaningful (and sometimes wonderfully wacky!) material to pull from. If they want their movie to be pure fiction, that’s great, too! The point is the process—sticking with it and never giving up, all with a sense of humor and a can-do attitude!

- **Free Write or Free Draw!**

Get your students thinking. What might they want their movie to be about? Ask them, “What dreams do you have? How can you use the lessons Marcus learned while making his movie to achieve them? What are your or your character’s movie-worthy moments? What conflicts might they have? What big experiences in your life stand out as really funny, really moving, or really worth telling?” to get them thinking about what they want their movie to be about. This is where student storytelling really makes its debut. Have your students free write or free draw for ten minutes (or more) to get an idea of where they are in their thinking. You can have your students share aloud, or you can hold individual conferences with them. Remind your students that Marcus learns that making a movie is a team sport, and that they will need to work together in order to create something marvelous.

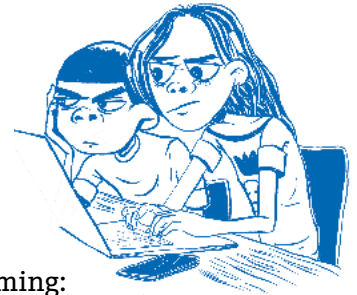


Additional Teacher Resources:

Kid President Pep Talk:
youtu.be/l-gQLqv9f4o

Teacher’s guide to brainstorming:
youtu.be/GLpZ6RZHyoM

Brainstorming: youtu.be/mgMIRYSX-xQ



- **Outline and Script!**

Using their free writing or drawing, have students write an outline for their movie and use the outline to begin working on their scripts. These are **ROUGH** drafts. Remind students of what Sierra said to Marcus in chapter 8 about writing: “You gotta sit your butt in the chair. Write the **BAD** version first. Then you **RE**write it. Make it **GOOD**. But you can’t write the good version till **AFTER** you write the bad version.” Marcus thought that was a lot of work, and Sierra told him that it absolutely was. We find out that making a movie has many moving parts. Give students the freedom to take chances, make mistakes, and write the bad version first. You can work on revisions and jazzing it all up together.

Additional Teacher Resources:

Screenplay: youtu.be/TARsoxSTotQ

Film production crash course playlist: youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtPnisE6CrrLOooQoe67TDpx

- **Writing Process!**

After students have written their “bad version,” have them work to jazz it up. You can really focus on the writing process here with prewriting, peer-editing, revising, etc. This is a great way to connect what they are learning about writing in school to the real world and to things they are interested in.

- **List!**

Once the scripts have been beautified, have students break down exactly what they will need to do next . . . which is make a list of what they need to do! They’ll need storyboards, props, costumes, actors, equipment, places to shoot their movie, a schedule

for when they will shoot it, etc. There is SO much to think about. Have them make a list just like Marcus! They can do small things each day to make their list smaller. Remember to have students think realistically about their movies. This is where trust, teamwork, and community all come together. You can talk about how important it is to share but also how important it is to be someone worth sharing with (i.e., discuss how we treat people and how we treat the things that we borrow).

Here is an example list and guiding questions (just to get you started):

- **Props:**
What can we make?
Who can help us make this? (Think artistic students in your class and around your school.)
- **Technology:**
Is this something we can shoot with the technology we have at school or home? Do we need to ask for help? If yes, from whom?
- **Costumes:**
What do we have in our classroom or around the school that we could use?
What do we have at home we could use?
- **Actors:**
Who do we know that fits the description of our characters?
Who could we get to volunteer to help?
Family? Friends? Pets? Stuffed animals?
- **Places to Shoot:**
Can we shoot this in the classroom or around the school?
Do we need special permission to shoot in these places? (We don't want to repeat Marcus's hospital scene in real life!)
- **Schedule for Shooting:**
How much time are we committing to this project? When can all the people we need to make this happen meet? Can I film some during the week and some on the weekend?



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• **Storyboard!**

Remember when Marcus and Sierra fought about storyboarding? Marcus wanted them to look just like his comics, but Sierra wanted them to be a specific way. Marcus says, "Storyboards made everything go faster and smoother." He defines storyboards as "little stick-figure drawings that showed how the shots should look. They were basic, but it didn't matter. They got the job done." Think of them as a graphic organizer for your movie. Students will create storyboards for their scenes. These don't have to be perfect! They just need to be unique to their own ideas and show everyone what is going on in each scene.

Additional Teacher Resources:

How to make a storyboard: youtu.be/BzxmGy8oL_g

• **Film!**

After students recruit their cast and crew, rehearse their lines, and complete all tasks on their to-do list, it's time to get to (more) work! Have students film their movies! Once they've filmed all their scenes, have them work to edit and tighten their movies, just like they did with their scripts.

Additional Teacher Resources:

Example movie: youtu.be/uH0ooG5cMVM

Filmmaking apps: Flipgrid, Loom, iMovie, Spark

List of apps: commonsense.org/education/top-picks/websites-and-apps-for-making-videos-and-animation

• **Share (and Show Off a Little)!**

Yes, show off! Your students have earned it! After the movies are created, it's time to share them! Have your students share their masterpieces with their peers, other classes, and their families, just like Marcus and his friends did at the showcase! Maybe you could host a mini film festival and have students select their favorite scenes to share! Marcus shows us that we can ALL be movie makers, and when students have the freedom to be creative, they shine!

This teaching guide was written by Room 228 Educational Consulting, with public school teacher Shanika Parker as lead teacher. We at Room 228 believe great books inspire young people to create, to tell their own stories, and to express their own knowledge. And we believe in laughter . . . lots and lots of laughter. To learn more, visit rm228.com.