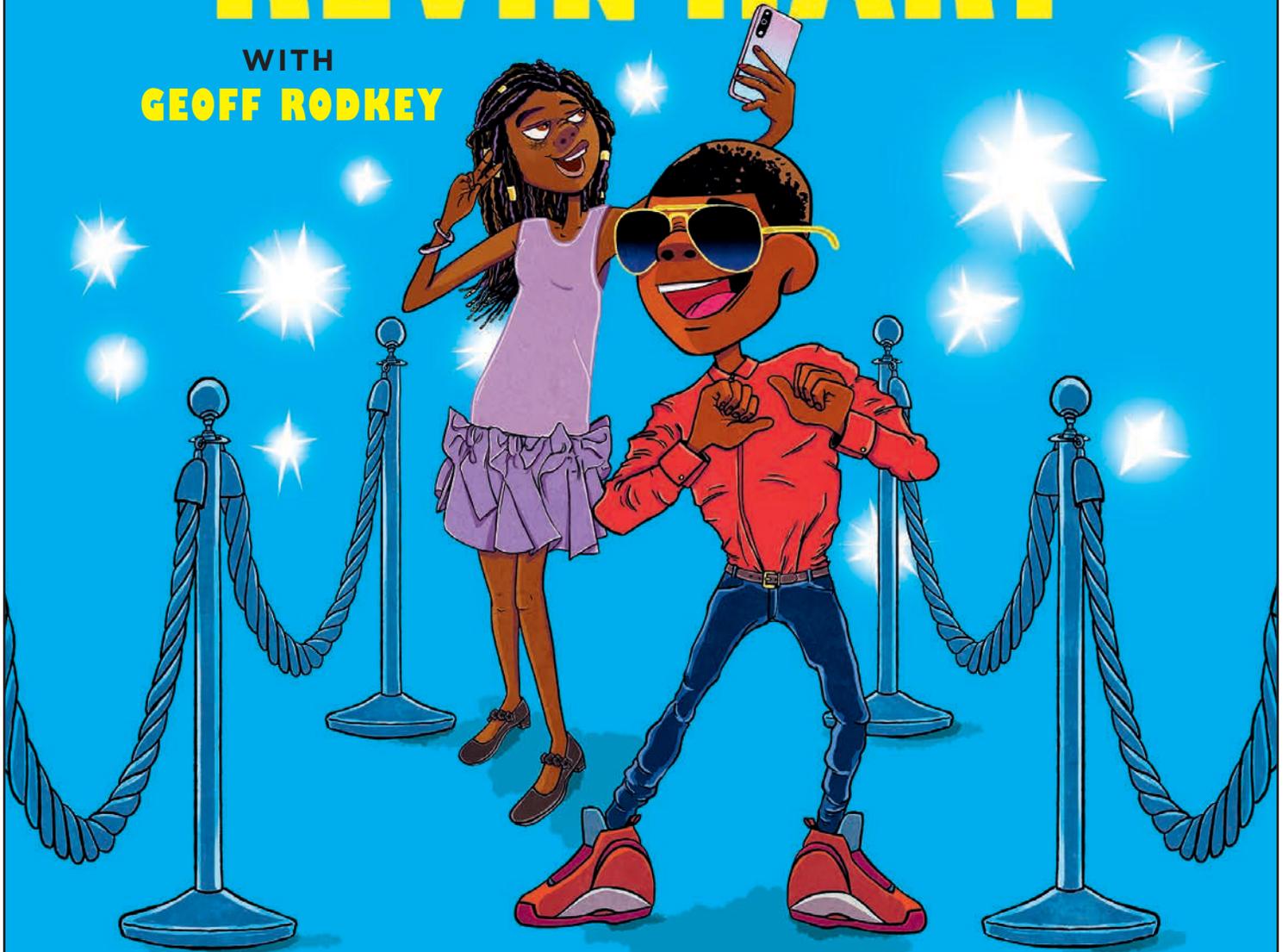


ACTOR, COMEDIAN, #1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# KEVIN HART

WITH  
**GEOFF RODKEY**



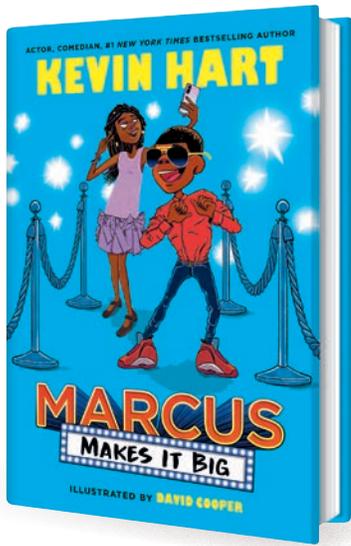
# MARCUS

**MAKES IT BIG**

ILLUSTRATED BY **DAVID COOPER**

**EDUCATORS' GUIDE**

RHTeachersLibrarians.com



Grades 3–7

HC: 978-0-593-17918-5

EL: 978-0-593-17920-8

## ABOUT THE BOOK

From comedy superstar Kevin Hart comes the laugh-out-loud sequel to *Marcus Makes a Movie*: a story about friends, family, and how hard it can be to keep your feet on the ground when your dreams take you sky-high.

Marcus's movie, *Toothpick Fights the Doom*, is a viral HIT! Millions are watching! To keep those eyes on him, Marcus needs to make a new movie NOW. But Sierra and his other film-class friends are busy with their own videos. Sparks start to fly—and when Marcus and Sierra get invited to appear on a daytime talk show, their rift threatens to explode on national TV! Can Marcus keep his friends AND his fans? Or will making it big come at a price?



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emmy & Grammy nominated **Kevin Hart** was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he launched his career as a comedian during an amateur night at a local comedy club. Over the years Hart has become Hollywood's box office powerhouse, opening ten films at number one at the box office with \$4.23 billion revenue at the global box office. Hart is the Chairman of HARTBEAT and Founder of HartBeat Ventures. Both of these companies play an integral part of his eco-system serving as an incubator for extraordinary growth and creativity. Hart continues to develop, star, and produce feature films and television and podcasts via HARTBEAT for his various partners which include Netflix, Peacock, Sirius XM and Audible. In 2020 Hart released his seventh hour long stand-up special, which quickly became Netflix's biggest stand-up special of 2020 and earned him a Grammy nomination for "Best Comedy Album." Hart also earned Emmy nominations for "Die Hart," for "Outstanding Actor in a Short Form Comedy or Drama Series" along with an Emmy nomination for his 2019 Docu-series. Kevin is a *New York Times* Best Selling author twice over and his first Audible original, "The Decision," was nominated for an Audie award for "Best Original Audiobook in 2021."

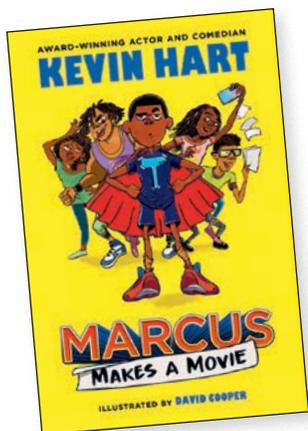
Kevin's brand partnerships include Fabletics Men, Chase J.P Morgan, Hydrow, NutraBolt, Brüush, Tommy John and Therabody.

### Praise for *Marcus Makes a Movie*

"A charming read that demystifies the work of making a movie and celebrates the gifts of authentic friendship." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"This energetic love letter to the artistic process provides both practicality and encouragement." —*Publishers Weekly*

"A glimpse of what working hard to make a dream a reality looks like." —*Booklist*



# DEAR SUPERSTAR TEACHER,

You better hold onto your socks because this book is about to knock them right off! *Marcus Makes It Big* is the book of this generation. Students are sure to love its texts and emojis and realistic, REAL-LIFE conflicts.

It is wholesome, relatable, FUNNY, and an inspiring, heartfelt sequel to the incredible *New York Times* bestseller [Marcus Makes a Movie](#).

Its creators are a truly all-star trio: [Kevin Hart](#) is a comedian and do-it-all achiever who knows how to make kids and adults laugh. He is also a talented author and imaginative storyteller. [Geoff Rodkey](#) is a bestselling author and Emmy-nominated screenwriter. Award-winning artist **David Cooper**'s unique illustrations pop off the page.

In this story, Marcus has made his movie and is feeling pretty good about himself . . . until the weight of success changes his tune. Marcus seems to have gotten himself in a pickle with his friends. He starts to think that being famous and making money are the most important things in life. But what happens when everything comes crashing down? is an incredible, relatable story of Marcus, his friends, his feelings, and everything in between. It's a story about being yourself, taking care of yourself, working with others, and learning when to ask for help—not always easy tasks for young people (or adults!).

This guide contains questions and activities to inspire lifelong readers, learners, and creators. The activities in this guide will give students a chance to dive deep into some big feelings, as well as get creative and cultivate a classroom community. They give students a chance to be challenged, express themselves, and have fun, all while learning about themselves and others!

Happy reading!



## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Sierra apologizes to Marcus for clowning him on *The Helen Show*, but Marcus is the one who started the argument. He called her videos “dumb vlogs.” (p. 149) One theme in this story is that our words have meaning. Why do you think Marcus doesn’t realize until later that *he* was the one who started the argument? Do you think Marcus knew that he hurt Sierra’s feelings at the time? Explain.
- Discuss the role of the adults in the book. What role does Marcus’s dad play in Marcus’s life when he is struggling? What about Tevin Bart? Which other adults in the book affect Marcus’s life? Characterize the relationships between Marcus and these adults. What makes a grown-up worth listening to?
- Marcus talks about feeling a “ZAP!” or an “Elektro jolt” when he receives attention. (p. 19) When he visits his mom, he is worried about the electricity going to his head again. Why is he afraid? What is most important to him? What can he do to keep himself in check?
- Marcus goes to *The Helen Show* in a mildewy shirt. What events lead up to this? How do they all build on one another? Has anything like this ever happened to you? How did you react?
- Tevin Bart tells Marcus that he does his own laundry and Marcus is surprised. (p. 168) What does Marcus learn from this exchange?
- Marcus asks Mindy to make sure that Helen doesn’t talk about his mom on *The Helen Show*. Why do you think this is such a big deal to Marcus?
- Marcus gets a lot of things from his movie. He gets some fame and fortune. However, throughout much of the book, he is unhappy, tired, and at odds with his friends. How can we be content with what we have and be kind to those around us, while also striving for greatness? Is that even possible? Explain.
- Tyrell is seen as a BIG bully, but he turns out to have a lot of depth as a character. What can we learn from Tyrell? Were you surprised to learn that he cares so much about mental health? Why do you think Hart included Tyrell in this story?
- Through all the ups and downs, Marcus keeps his promise to his friends to share the money he earned from MeTube. What does this say about Marcus and his character?
- At times, it feels like everything in Marcus’s life is going from bad to worse and that things will never get better. How does Marcus change throughout the story? What leads to these changes? What is the turning point in the story?



# INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

## Empathy Exchange

Marcus navigates conflict the best way he can. Toward the end of the story, as he starts to reflect on how he treated his friends, he learns a lot about the importance of words and actions and their effect on others. In this activity, students will get to learn about empathy while having fun with texting.



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As a class, create a list of characters from *Marcus Makes It Big*, and discuss how Marcus interacts with those characters. What does he say to them? How does he treat them? Then divide students into small groups or pairs. Each group will choose one character from the book. After choosing a character, the groups should identify a scene where this character has a conflict with Marcus.

Have students think about how Marcus responds to conflict in the book and how he might have responded if he had chosen empathy and compassion in that moment instead. The real trick (and maybe the most fun part!) is matching Marcus's humor and voice as well as that of their chosen character. Use these questions to guide their thinking.

- How does each character feel? How do you know?
- How would you feel if this happened to you?
- How does Marcus feel?
- How would you feel if you were Marcus?

After brainstorming about their character and conflict, groups will write a text message exchange between their character and Marcus. Have your students show off their acting skills by performing the conversation for the class!

## Humor: A Powerful Tool

Humor improves retention, reduces stress, and helps to create classroom community! [Learn more](#) about how humor can be a powerful tool in the classroom. Humor can also help us move through difficult or challenging moments. Humor is also one way we can make concepts “sticky” for students and increase student engagement and retention. Invite humor into the classroom in the following ways:

Did you know?

- First, discuss with students:
  - What kind of humor makes you feel connected to other people?
  - What kind of humor makes you feel excluded?
- Together, create a poster in your classroom that features the “Dos” of humor that makes everyone feel included. Or, you could create a checklist of questions students might ask themselves before they tell a joke. (For example, “If someone told me this joke, how would I feel? Will everyone laugh at this joke, or is this an ‘inside’ joke? Is this joke about a person or a group of people?”). Once you’ve had this conversation, you’re ready to invite more laughs into the classroom!
- Ask students to identify moments when Marcus uses humor to help him deal with his problems. Have a discussion:
  - What does humor help Marcus feel?
  - What does humor help Marcus do?
  - Does humor ever cause more problems? Explain.
- Marcus uses his Toothpick comic to help process a difficult situation (p. 4). Invite students to work with a partner or independently to identify a problem in their own lives or in the life of a character from a favorite book, TV show or movie.
  - Ask them to draw a superhero and label their sketch with the different qualities their superhero has. (Hint, think unique and funny!)
  - Encourage them to give their superhero a silly name.
  - Students brainstorm how their superhero might use humor to deal with their problem,

just like Marcus does in so many of his tricky life experiences. If students need to create other characters for their superhero to interact with, then wonderful!

- Next, ask students to make a movie—they can record themselves acting in a short video in which they adopt the attitudes, voice, dress, and/or mannerisms of their invented superhero. The challenge—use humor to connect with others and/or manage their problems. The funnier the better!
- Share movies as a whole class.
  - Encourage students to comment on what they liked most about their peers’ problem-solving through humor.
  - Did students choose to make their superhero’s humor realistic or totally fantastical? Why?
  - Which creative choices seem most effective? Explain.
  - How do your peers’ humor strategies compare with Marcus’?

This is a great time to partner with your school’s counselor and do a unit on mental health.

## Gratitude It Up!

Showing gratitude is one of the best things we can do for ourselves. When we show gratitude, we feel happier.

[Studies](#) show when we give something to someone, we often feel better than we do when we receive something. At the end of the book, Marcus shares his earnings with his friends as he promised. Throughout the book, he has so many people helping him and rooting for him: his dad, Tevin Bart, the memories of his mom, his teachers, and his friends. As the book comes to a close, Marcus is finally able to see these people clearly. How does he show them his gratitude?

Think about people in your life who inspire or challenge you. This could be a teacher, a friend, a grown-up, a nurse, a custodian, a coach, or someone who works in the cafeteria. It could be your grandma or a mentor. Whoever they are, it’s time to tell them how much they mean to you. Get creative!

Let students lead this activity. You can give them as much or as little support as you want and let them run with it! They can create a card, perform a rap, or create

a video. They could write a poem or do an interpretive dance. Give students the freedom to choose how they want to express their gratitude! Students can share their gratitude with one another or with the person they are grateful for, or you could create a compilation video to share with the whole school!

## CUSTOM PROGRAM

### Own Your Thing

Marcus really struggles with the idea of people laughing at him. Sierra, on the other hand, tells him to embrace it and OWN it. How can you own who you are?

What makes you unique?

In this project, students will get to be part of something bigger than themselves

and work together as a team! Students will create their own pages in a book or portfolio. Each student

will be responsible for their page, which should showcase what makes them, well . . . them! What role do they play in their classroom? Their school? Their city? Their state? Their country? Their world?



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### Step 1. Brainstorm

After you finish reading *Marcus Makes It Big*, have students brainstorm what they own about themselves. Maybe it’s their curly hair or their outgoing personality or the gap between their front teeth or their impressive gaming skills. Maybe it’s the way they show love to others or their musical ability! Whatever it is, have them choose a word or phrase for what they own about themselves—give it a name!

### Step 2. Draft

Give students space to be creative. Let them decide how they want to show the world what they own. They could create a poem, an essay, a drawing, a collage, a video clip, or something completely different and unique. Whatever they choose to create will have a special place in the class portfolio—just like each child has a special place in the classroom and the world.

### Step 3. Create

Give students the opportunity to CREATE. This is uninterrupted, nonstructured, FREE CREATING. Students can use whatever materials speak to them! Give them construction paper, magazines, paints, or an iPad to record a video. Think outside the box! Make it interesting and exciting!

### Step 4. Edit

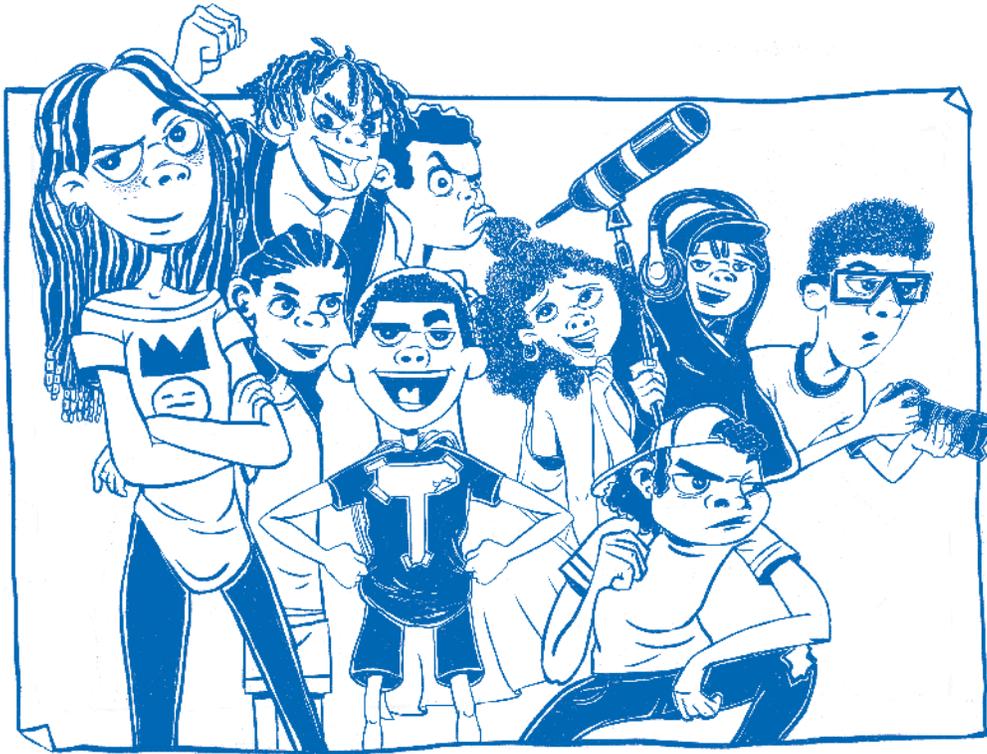
This is where the magic happens! Students share with their classmates. Before you start, be sure to establish boundaries and set goals and expectations. Talk about the importance of words and how words have power. Reread chapter 27, “A Talk in the Park,” and have students discuss how to use words respectfully and how to effectively voice feelings. Alternatively, you can hold conferences with them. Students can show what they have created so far, and you can give feedback and advice.

### Step 5. Publish

Once students have finished editing, it's time to publish. Work with your students to compile the pages to make your book. Maybe you put the pages in alphabetical order, or maybe you arrange them in a way that really tells a story. There are several options to publish your class book. Check out this [website](#) to explore different ideas. The opportunities are endless!

### Step 6. The Limo

Time to congratulate your kids on a job well done! We're not saying you get all your students a limo ride (although we can dream!), but do something special when the book is fully published. Invite families for a show-and-tell! Do a showcase for the grade or the school! Get the news involved! Show your students that no matter what they create, they are stars who deserve to shine. They own their thing, whatever that is.



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This teaching guide was written by Room 228 Educational Consulting, with public school teacher Shanika Parker as lead teacher. We at Room 228 really like the idea of a limo ride, but we would be just as happy with students learning unending empathy. To learn more, visit [rm228.com](http://rm228.com).



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