

A TEACHER AND LIBRARIAN GUIDE TO THE SERIES

IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM INTEGRATION • IDEAL FOR READER'S ADVISORY



ALIGNED TO COMMON CORE STATE
STANDARDS FOR GRADES K-3



ORDINARY PEOPLE CHANGE THE WORLD

Ideas for Classroom Integration



Grades K-1 LANGUAGE ARTS

(ALL) RI.K.10, SL.K.2, SL.1.2

Dear Educator and Librarian,

Heroes are everywhere in our local communities. The *Ordinary People Change the World* series helps young children realize how their passions, hobbies, and interests can help shape their dreams, goals, and aspirations. And that they, too, can become heroes! Through extensive research, Brad Meltzer has woven important historical facts about each hero's life into his engaging text, supported beautifully by Chris Eliopolis' inviting illustrations. Each book in the series can be used as the foundational text to teach your readers about some of today's most famous and beloved heroes. At the end of each book, you'll find a comprehensive list of references that provide a platform for a deeper discussion about primary and secondary sources. The stories begin with the heroes as children and provide students with the opportunity to dream big, and to follow and eventually realize those dreams.

We have put together this curriculum guide to support classroom instruction and reader's advisory for these titles. Organized by grades K-1 and 2-3, we have lessons focusing on language arts, math, science, and social studies for each grade bracket.

Throughout this guide, you'll find teachable content for the series that you can customize to your grade, class, small group, or individual student's needs. Choose the lessons, activities, and prompts that are right for your teaching style, and have fun bringing such a culturally important and inspiring series into your classroom and library!

We are thrilled to take this journey with you, and we hope you can instill in your students the drive to become a hero, whether to their family, their town, our nation or our world.

-Penguin School & Library



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This guide was written by Rose W. Truong, Ed.M. Rose has been an early childhood educator since 2006, and has taught internationally and in several states. She has an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Language & Literacy program and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Indiana University. Two of her favorite parts of being a teacher are storytelling and exploring children's literature, so she is thrilled to share ideas about extending literature in the classroom.

- **Ordinary Heroes** W.K.2, W.1.2, W.K.8, W.1.8 - SL.K.4, SL.1.4, SL.K.5, SL.1.5 - L.K.1, L.1.1, L.K.2, L.1.2

Teachers, ask students to draw a picture of an "ordinary" person THEY know and consider a hero. What makes this person a hero to them? (Beginning writers can write 1-5 descriptive sentences; otherwise, teacher can record answer.)

- **What makes me different?** W.K.2, W.1.2, W.K.8, W.1.8 - SL.K.4, SL.1.4, SL.K.5, SL.1.5 - L.K.1, L.1.1, L.K.2, L.1.2

Teachers, explain to your students that the heroes featured in these books had special interests and characteristics that made them seem different and helped them achieve great things. Ask them to draw a self-portrait and write about what makes THEM different and great.

- **Heroic Alphabet** RF.K.3A, RF.1.3 - W.K.7, W.1.7 - L.K.5, L.K.6

Teachers, as a class, create an ABC poster using words that describe a hero (e.g., A is for achieving, B is for brave).

- **Acrostic Poems** RI.K.2, RI.1.2, RF.K.3A, RF.1.3 - L.K.2, L.1.2

Teachers, explain to students what an acrostic poem is. Then, ask students to describe one of the main characters of the series in an acrostic poem using that hero's name. For instance, each line of a Rosa Parks poem would begin with a letter of her name in the proper sequence.



- **Vocabulary and/or Spelling** RI.K.4, RI.1.4 - L.K.4, L.1.4, L.K.6

Teachers, choose 3-5 vocabulary or spelling words from each book in the series. Use them to frame a vocabulary or spelling lesson. For example:

- from *I am Amelia Earhart*: flight, dare, record, high, dream
- from *I am Abraham Lincoln*: right, fight, equal, strong, essay
- from *I am Rosa Parks*: expect, respect, doubt, refuse, fair
- from *I am Albert Einstein*: genius, practice, curious, mystery, special

• Shape Collages K.G.2, K.G.5, K.G.6

Teachers, ask students to arrange and glue a variety of paper shapes in different sizes to create an illustration representing an important part of a character's story. For example:

- Amelia Earhart's airplane
- Abraham Lincoln's cabin
- A bus that Rosa Parks rode
- Albert Einstein's sailboat



• Math with Pennies K.CC.4, K.CC.5 • K.MD.1, 1.MD.2 • K.MD.1, 1.MD.2 • K.OA.1, 1.OA.1

Teachers, explain to students that Abraham Lincoln is remembered and honored on every American penny. Use pennies to practice important math skills! For example:

- Measure the lengths of various objects using pennies as a nonstandard unit.
- Measure weight using pennies and a balance scale.
- Do simple addition and subtraction problems using pennies as manipulatives.

• Exploration and Play

for *I am Amelia Earhart*:

- Teach your students how to fold a paper airplane. Practice flying your planes outside!

for *I am Abraham Lincoln*:

- Make penny rubbings by covering a penny with thin paper, then firmly rubbing a bare crayon on top of the penny.
- Shine old or dirty pennies in a mixture of vinegar and salt (1 tsp salt for each ¼ cup of white vinegar).

for *I am Albert Einstein*:

- Explore the school or playground using a compass. Which way is north from your classroom?



• Kindness Web SL.K.1, SL.1.1 • SL.K.4, SL.1.4 • SL.K.6

Teachers, explain to students that each of the heroes in this series met people who bullied them or said unkind words about their dreams. As a class, ask your students to sit in a circle and make a "Kindness Web" with a ball of yarn. Each student should hold their piece of yarn and pass the rest of the ball to a friend while saying something that they like about that person. That friend will go next, passing the ball to someone else, until everyone in the class is part of the Kindness Web.

• How to approach a bully without fighting RI.K.1, RI.1.1 • SL.K.1, SL.1.1 • SL.K.2, SL.1.2

Teachers, point out a scene in which one of the main characters encounters bullying. Brainstorm as a class ways to respond to a bully. **Do you think character's name handled the situation in the best way? Why or why not?**

• Class Discussion: RL.K.9, RL.1.9 • RI.K.1, RI.1.1 • SL.K.1, SL.1.1 • SL.K.2, SL.1.2 • SL.K.4, SL.1.4

Teachers, hold a class discussion about being a hero: **What made character's name a true hero?** (List some of the characteristics and adjectives on the board or on chart paper.)

In what ways was character similar to another character from series? In what ways were they different?

• Dramatization RL.K.2, RL.1.2 • SL.K.6

Teachers, ask students to role-play an important scene from one of the books. For example:

- When Abraham Lincoln demanded that the abused turtles be set free
- When Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat

• Make an American Flag

Teachers, remind your students that each of the heroes in the series helped make our country a better place for us to live. Create or decorate an American flag using crayons, paint, markers, handprints, or other available art supplies.





• **Letter Writing** RL.2.3, RL.3.3 • RL.2.6 • W.2.1, W.3.1 • W.3.4 • L.2.1, L.3.1 • L.2.2, L.3.2 • L.2.3, L.3.3

Teachers, ask students to write a letter AS the main character of a book in the series. Address the letter to someone who doubted the hero during his or her lifetime. What would the hero have said to explain his or her choices? For example:

- Write a “letter to the editor” as Amelia Earhart in response to an article stating that women cannot fly.
- Write a letter as Abraham Lincoln explaining to a lawmaker why slavery should be outlawed.

OR . . . Write a letter TO a character of a book in the series. For example:

RL.3.3 • RL.3.6 • W.2.2, W.3.2 • L.2.1, L.3.1 • L.2.2, L.3.2 • L.2.3, L.3.3

- Write a letter to the bus driver who got Rosa Parks arrested. Explain how you think people should be treated.
- Write a letter to your favorite hero in the series. How has our world changed because of them? What would you like to say to them if they were alive today?

• **YOUR Ordinary Hero** W.2.2, W.3.2 • W.2.8 • RI.2.5, RI.3.5 • RI.2.10, RI.3.10 • W.2.2, W.3.2 • W.2.7, W.3.7 • L.2.1, L.3.1 • L.2.2, L.3.2 • L.2.3, L.3.3

Teachers, let your students act as the author! Ask them to:

- Write a story about an “ordinary” person they know. What has that person done that makes him or her heroic?
- Ask students to think of someone who is alive today and considered a modern-day hero. Research the person’s accomplishments, and write about what makes him or her heroic. For example, a politician; a celebrity; someone who has founded a charity or organization; an activist, etc. (Parents or teachers may provide ideas and assistance with information.)

• **Vocabulary and/or Spelling** RI.2.4, RI.3.4 • L.2.4, L.3.4

Teachers, choose 3-5 vocabulary or spelling words from each book in the series. For example:

- from *I am Amelia Earhart*: eventually, natural, altitude, bounds, record
- from *I am Abraham Lincoln*: opponent, confident, character, equal, dedicate
- from *I am Rosa Parks*: respect, doubt, refuse, ignite, segregation
- from *I am Albert Einstein*: structure, genius, patent, curiosity, patience

MATH & SCIENCE



• **Number Line/Timeline of Events**

RI.2.3, RI.3.3 • 2.OA.A.1 • 2.MD.B.6

Teachers, ask students to write a number line. On the number line, with the numbers representing age, create a timeline of events that took place in one of the books in the series. Use the timelines in the back of the books as a reference.

• **How old would they be today?** 2.OA.A.1 • 3.NBT.A.2

Teachers, ask students to find out what year a hero from the series was born. If s/he were alive today, how old would s/he be?

• **Unit Conversion** 3.OA.A.3 • 3.OA.A.4 • 3.OA.D.8

Teachers, ask students to convert the measurements from a book into different units. For example:

- Amelia Earhart set a new women’s altitude record by flying up to 14,000 feet. How many miles is that? Yards? Inches? Choose a non-standard unit of measurement, and figure out how many of those units would equal 14,000 feet (e.g., the book’s author chose the Empire State Building as a unit of measurement).
- Abraham Lincoln walked six miles to get a book. How many feet is that? Yards?
- Rosa Parks inspired the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted 381 days. How many hours is that? Months?

• **Exploration & Play**

- for *I am Amelia Earhart*: Learn to fold and decorate a paper airplane. Practice flying your planes outside! Record how long your plane remains in the air.
- for *I am Abraham Lincoln*: Shine old or dirty pennies in a mixture of vinegar and salt (1 tsp salt for each ¼ cup of white vinegar). Record observations of the pennies before and after they soak in the mixture.
- for *I am Albert Einstein*:
 - Explore the school or playground using a compass. Which way is north from your classroom? Draw a map of the classroom or playground with the compass directions labeled.
 - Experiment with gravity. Measure how long it takes different objects to fall from a certain point. Test objects of different weights, shapes, and sizes. (Teachers can facilitate discussions of air resistance, weight, etc.)

SOCIAL STUDIES

(though most lessons related to this series should be considered part of the Social Studies curriculum, due to the historical content of the books)

• Kindness Web SL.2.1, SL.3.1

Teachers, explain to students that each of the heroes in this series met people who bullied them or said unkind words about their dreams. As a class, ask your students to sit in a circle and make a “Kindness Web” with a ball of yarn. Each student should hold onto their piece of yarn and pass the rest of the ball to a friend while saying something that they like about that person. That friend will go next, passing the ball to someone else, until everyone in the class is part of the Kindness Web.

• How to approach a bully without fighting: RI.2.1, RI.3.1 • RI.3.6 • SL.2.1, SL.3.1

Teachers, point out a scene in which one of the main characters encounters bullying. Brainstorm about ways to respond to a bully without using violence. **Do you think _____ character’s name handled the situation in the best way? Why or why not?**

• Research: RI.2.5, RI.3.5 • RI.2.9, RI.3.9 • RI.2.10, RI.3.10 • W.2.7, W.3.7

Teachers, ask students to find three to five more resources about one of the main characters of the series (with instruction/assistance from librarian, teacher, and/or computer resource center).

• Interview a Hero: W.2.7 • SL.2.2, SL.3.2 • SL.2.4, SL.3.4 • L.2.3, L.3.3

Teachers, put students in small groups. Ask them to script and tape (or perform) a talk show interview with one of the main characters of the series. Have each student ask about the hero’s childhood, hobbies, proudest achievements, etc.



Word Search

Find the words below in the word search, and you’ll understand what it takes to become a hero. Good luck!

Courage Originality Kindness Thoughtfulness
 Inventiveness Bravery Daring

F D C L Y Q W C B E M O B H S X
 Y T A U R W H O B H G F Z S D A
 I E C R T R P I T L C P E X M D
 H H E J I N L F M E K N L D K E
 L J I K U N R K E G E M J F A L
 O F M E R D G Z S V H E D E R I
 R L E W O T P M I Q K R E U M O
 G A D E P K L T G D A S R I N E
 I R G R S W N L F E L T F T R K
 N M I S Q E Q A G B P H G R I I
 A N K R V F C O L N E J Y Y A N
 L L N N G D O G P T L U U B C D
 I I I U H A U J E Y R I B R L N
 T S Y I O R R B M P L D S A V E
 Y D K P K L A L D H Y L S V F S
 F T H O U G H T F U L N E S S
 B M I J E T Y S M V Z R H F
 T F U E I M Q H D C X Y M G

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



BRAD MELTZER (www.bradmeltzer.com) is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of adult thrillers. His two nonfiction gift books, *Heroes for My Son* and *Heroes for My Daughter* were *New York Times* Bestsellers as well, and he has won the prestigious Eisner Award for his comic book work. Brad is also the host of the History Channel TV show *Brad Meltzer's Decoded*. He lives in Florida with his wife and their three children.

A Note from the Author:

This project began four years ago when my daughter was looking for clothes to wear and all she could find were pink shirts with princesses on them. I saw the mission right there.

I wanted my kids to see more than princesses and sports figures. I wanted them to see real heroes—Amelia Earhart . . . Abraham Lincoln—real people no different than themselves. For that reason, each book tells the story of a hero when THEY were a kid. We see them as children. So it's not just Amelia Earhart and Abraham Lincoln being famous—but them being just like us.

If you're gonna do books about heroes, might as well start with the best ones. Amelia Earhart's whole life is about taking chances, being brave, and finding the strength to do what everyone else said couldn't be done. Lincoln's life is just as powerful, especially when you see how many times he stood up for others. But what I love most is that we start with their childhoods. You see Amelia Earhart as a little girl, building a homemade roller coaster in her backyard; you see Lincoln as a boy, standing up to local bullies. For our kids and for us, these aren't just the stories of famous people. They're what we're all capable of on our very best days.

The end result is this line of children's nonfiction picture books, at least three per year. My publisher's hope is to create a true franchise in the children's book world. For me, though, that's not the important part.

For me, this isn't just a book series. It's my dream for my daughter. My dream for my sons. My dream for all of us who need to see the power of an ordinary person . . . and the power—and potential—in each of us.

We all love to complain that there are no current heroes today. But the truth is there are heroes everywhere. Forget about obvious ones like Nelson Mandela or Sesame Street creator Joan Ganz Cooney. There's also policemen like Frank Shankwitz, who helped a little boy with leukemia ride a toy motorcycle and then used the idea to come up with the idea for the Make-A-Wish Foundation . . . or Team Hoyt, where father pushes his son in a wheelchair through marathon after marathon. Look around. Heroes are far more local than you think.

If you like the books, please share them with your students. This is our chance, together, to change the world.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



CHRISTOPHER ELIOPOULOS (www.chriseliopoulos.com) began his illustration career as a letterer for Marvel, and has worked on thousands of comics, including the popular series *Lockjaw* and *the Pet Avengers* and *Franklin Richards: Son of a Genius*, for which he was nominated for multiple Eisner Awards and received a Harvey Award. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and their identical twin sons.

A Note from the Illustrator:

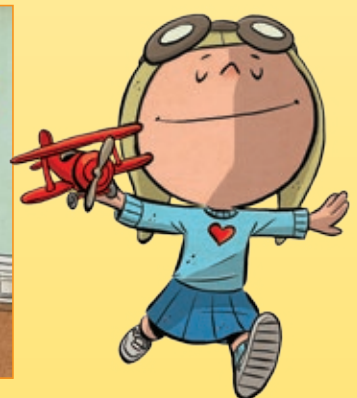
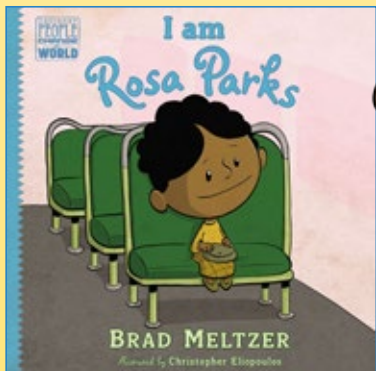
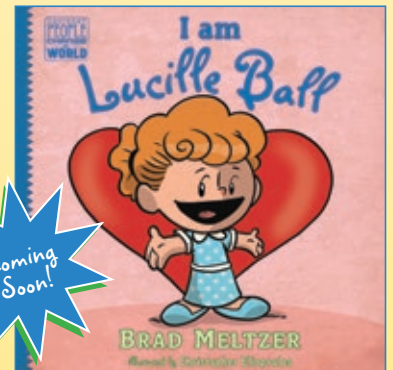
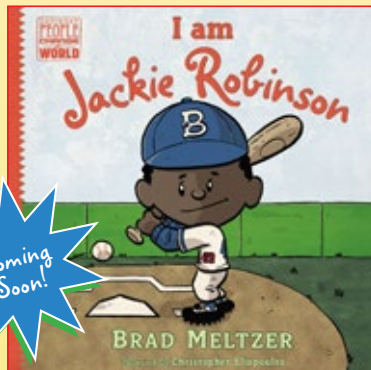
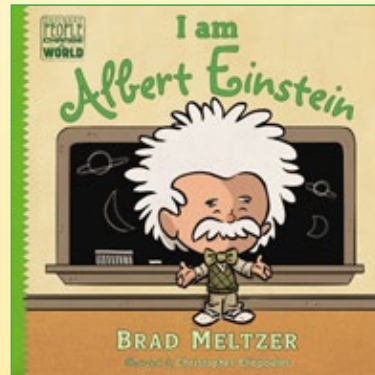
When I was very young, I was extremely shy. I would sit in my room and just draw. It was the way I expressed things. In fact when I was upset by something, I would draw a little comic of what I was feeling. I'd fold it up into a paper airplane and express mail it down the steps. My mother would read it and then come up to talk to me. Drawing has always been a way for me to let others into my mind, my thoughts, my feelings.

My family spent a lot of time traveling and visiting historic sites when I was a kid, and it was something that sparked my imagination—I became a history buff. As I grew older, that passion evolved into an interest in the actual people. So many figures have been turned into marble statues—gods, even. But if you look at them as humans, faults and all, they are much more interesting and impressive. The fact that these amazing figures were once like you and me—that's something I wish I'd known as a child. I try to help make these books as fun and exciting as I would have wanted them to be.

My parents were always heroes to me. My biggest creative hero was Charles Schulz, the author of the *Peanuts* comic strip. I would find every book I could on him to learn about the man behind the art. Another was the actor Michael J. Fox. I was a really short kid growing up, and seeing someone else who was on the smaller side become a star meant a lot to me. When he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, he became more of a hero in how he took a bold stance and didn't shrink away. He helped others realize they weren't alone.

The biggest thing I hope children get from this series is that they are no different than any of the heroes in these books. The qualities that those people had are also inside the readers. With hard work, or faith in themselves, or compassion for others, they can be just like those heroes.

COLLECT ALL OF THE HEROES!



OrdinaryPeopleChangeTheWorld.com

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