



Heroes

Adventures in Reading:

Reading Adventure Packs from Reading Rockets



Funded in part by the
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Contents:

- Two books — one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey

For teachers and librarians



Use this Reading Rockets reading adventure pack to support family reading activities at home. We've chosen fiction and nonfiction titles about heroes, appropriate for a second and third grade interest level, and developed related activities for some hands-on fun and learning. Send these materials and suggested books home with your students and launch family reading adventures!

When packing for this reading adventure about heroes we suggest you include *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer and *Tasty Baby Belly Buttons* by Judy Sierra. In *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, William figures out how to build a windmill and bring electricity to his village. *Tasty Baby Belly Buttons* is a traditional Japanese folktale featuring a girl born from a melon who rescues babies from the *oni* — monsters who steal babies to eat their belly buttons.

Reading Rockets carefully chose these titles because they are widely available in libraries and appealing to young readers. If they are not available, or you prefer other titles, substitute books related to the theme. You'll find more titles about *heroes* included on the bookmark and at www.worldcat.org/profiles/ReadingRockets/lists.

How to assemble the Reading Adventure Pack

1. Print the Welcome sheet, How To sheet, the three activities, and the bookmark/survey.
2. Into a two-gallon zip top bag, pack:
 - Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
 - Welcome and How To sheet
 - Three themed activity pages
 - ★ Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
 - ★ Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
 - ★ Get Real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
 - Bookmark, which lists both the featured titles and additional titles
 - Survey for parents
3. Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you when they are finished reading and exploring. You might want to include a due date slip with the packet to ensure return of the books.
4. Let Reading Rockets know what you think of this resource for families by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/contact. Click on "Reading Adventure Packs"

START YOUR READING ADVENTURE!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets reading adventure pack about **heroes** was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- How to use your reading adventure pack
- Two books to share with your child
- Three related activities
- Bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- Short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The “how to” sheet, bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets activity packet by _____ .

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

Teacher signature

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org



Reading Adventure Packs: Hands-on fun & learning from Reading Rockets
Find more themes and activities at ReadingRockets.org/readingadventurepacks

How to use your Reading Adventure Pack about heroes

This Reading Rockets Reading Adventure Pack about heroes will take you and your child on a learning adventure that starts with books. Exploring new ideas together lets your child see you learning and reading too. The activities give your child learning experiences to build knowledge and comprehension.

Getting started

Read the three activities. Which ones would your child enjoy? Which ones do you have the time and materials to do right away? You'll need at least 20 minutes to read and do one activity together. Plan a good time to take your Reading Adventure together. You don't have to do the activity right after you read, but chances are, after you read your child may want to do an activity right away!

Start with a book

Two books about heroes are part of your Reading Adventure Pack. One book is **fiction** – a “make-believe” story. The other book is **nonfiction**, or informational and true. Explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. With your child, choose which book to read first.

Read together

Talk about the cover of the book. Can your child guess what it is about? Has your child ever read a book by the same author or about the same topic? Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder together what will happen next. Follow the same steps when you read the other book.

Learn together

Pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child's interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Or look at your local library for more books about heroes. There's list of additional fiction and nonfiction books in your Reading Adventure Pack. Most important: have fun!

When you're done...

Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or after talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.
- Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index and word list (glossary) to find answers to specific questions.
- Don't be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don't have to read a nonfiction book straight through.

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.
- Explore the pictures with your child.
- Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!
- You don't need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.





Heroes in action

Superheroes are popular — especially with kids. Kids get a sense of power and control when they put on a Superman cape or send LEGO Batman flying across the room. The same can happen when you help your child engage in some make-believe play with action figures of real heroes that you make together.

What you'll need

- Paper, cardboard (cereal box thickness), scissors, pencil, markers and glue, or
- Modeling clay in different colors, scraps of fabric, ribbon or yarn (optional)

Directions

Talk with your child about the heroes in the books you read together as well as the real heroes that have touched his life. What things would he like to say to these heroes? How would he like to interact with them? How does he think they would act together? He can explore his ideas by making and playing with action figures of these heroes.

Have your child select which heroes he wants to make into action figures. He should plan to make at least two, and he may also want to make a figure of himself.

If you have modeling clay, let your child roll or sculpt the figures as he likes. To make the figures durable for playing, they should be about an inch in thickness and not more than three inches high. Adding fabric clothes or yarn hair is optional.

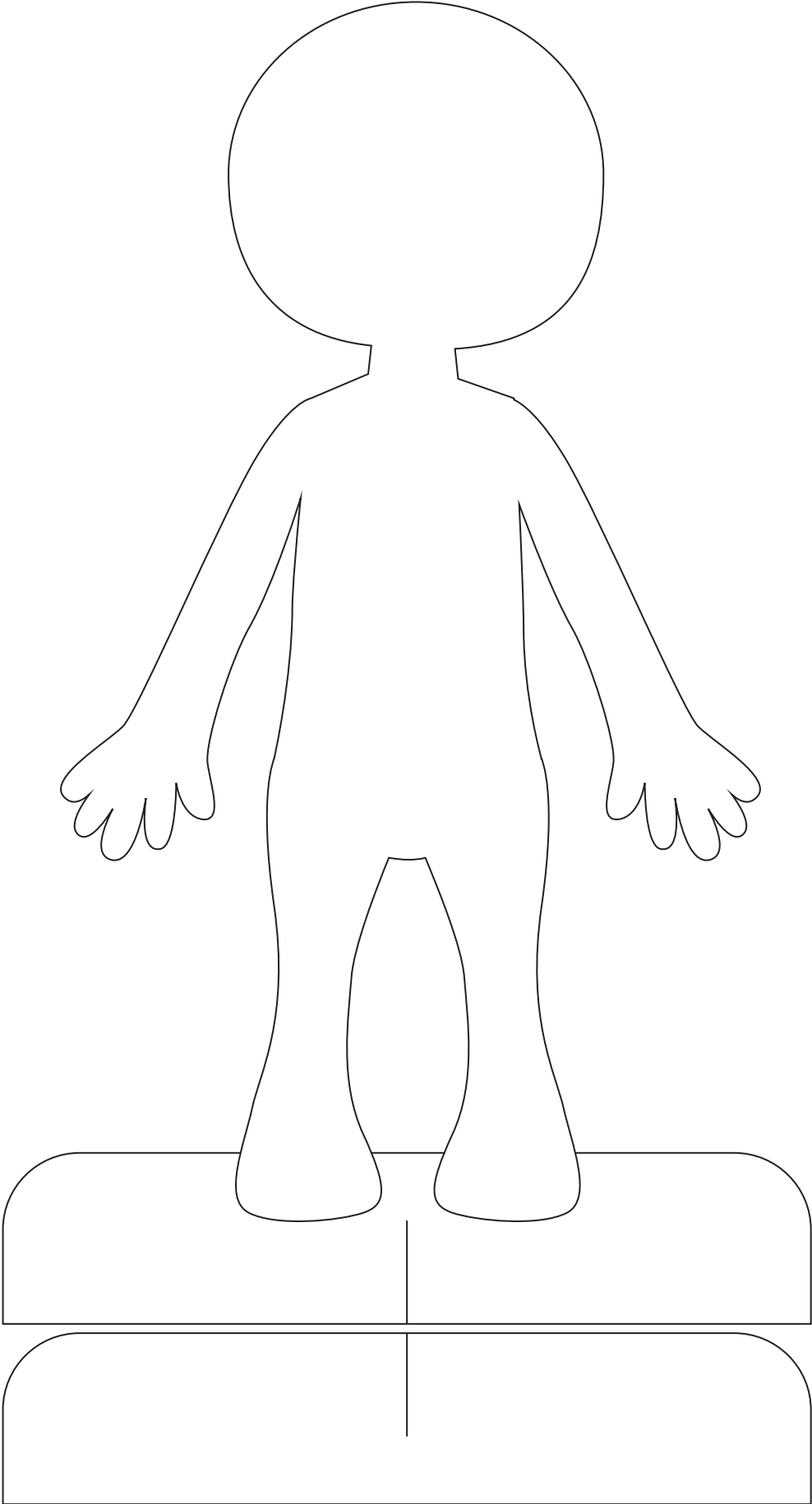
To make paper action figures, your child can start with the enclosed template or draw his own figures. Have him fill in the heroes' features and wardrobe using markers. Your child may also want to draw and color accessories associated with his heroes. Then glue the sheet of paper with the figures to the piece of cardboard. After the glue dries, have your child carefully cut out the figures and the crosspieces for the stands.

Then encourage your child to activate his imagination and play! You might play along at first, but let your child take the lead and give voice to his hero action figures.

Variation: Your child may want to experiment with other materials for different action figures and:

- Make an environmentalist or inventor hero out of materials from the recycling bin
- Create a chef, lunch lady or hero who helps the hungry out of toothpicks and cut fruit
- Design and fashion community heroes, like a teacher or doctor, out of materials related to their profession — for example, erasers or bandages.

Action figure template





Be the hero in your own story

When your child is the author, he can choose to become whatever hero he wants. Help your child tell his own story of how he is brave, kind, helpful, patient, thoughtful and generous.

What you'll need

- Paper
- Pencil and markers

Directions

Talk with your child about the values and qualities of a hero. If a hero is someone who has done something to make her home, her community or her world a better place, ask your child what he has done to be heroic. Did he call for help when a friend was hurt or in danger? Did he search for a neighbor's missing pet? Or was he especially kind and brave to make the new kid at school feel welcome?

It only takes a small act to be a hero for someone. Let your child know that whether he does small things without being asked that make life easier for others or sees bigger problems and works toward a solution, he is being heroic.

Explain to your child that a problem in a story can be any kind of problem — an ordinary everyday problem or a big, complicated problem. Talk with your child about the problems faced by heroes in the books you read together. How did they solve their problems? How would your child try to solve it?

Now it is your child's turn to write a story about a hero — him! Brainstorm together to find an important experience when he acted heroically. Talk about your own experiences too. Then have your child write a story about his experience while you write the story of yours.

If your child is not sure what to include or where to get started, remind him that his story needs:

- Characters, including the hero!
- Setting — when and where the story happens
- Plot — all the things that happen in the story
- Conflict — the problem or challenge that characters face
- Resolution — how the hero solves the problem
- Illustrations, if your child wants to draw them

Read your stories aloud to each other and to other family members. You'll learn more about each other and create family pride in your everyday heroes.

Unsung hero



Heroes of all kinds have been celebrated through poetry and song for thousands of years. Help your child write a song or poem to recognize an “everyday hero” that is part of her life.

What you’ll need

- Paper and pencil
- Musical instrument (can be a real instrument or homemade, such as a container of rice to shake)
- A recording device (optional)

Directions

After you’ve read books about heroes, ask your child what makes someone a hero. Who else does she think is a hero? What makes that person a hero? Why does she admire that person? Talk with your child about the characteristics of a hero. Explain the difference between a hero and a celebrity.

Real heroes are everywhere and most are not famous. Mostly they are the caring, helpful people who are closest to us or are right in your community. Ask your child to think of a person they know personally and consider a hero. Have her write a poem or simple story based on her experiences with that person that includes the answers these questions:

- What is his or her name?
- What does he or she do?
- What impact has he or she had on your life?
- What makes this person a hero?
- If you could do anything, how would you honor or celebrate this person?

Ask your child about what she wrote. She could share her story or poem with her hero, or use her words as song lyrics. To generate a melody, have her try to sing her words and see what comes out! If she needs more help, borrow or modify another familiar or favorite song. Your child might also get ideas by listening to other songs about heroes, such as Stevie Wonder’s “Happy Birthday” to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or The Neville Brothers’ “Sister Rosa” tribute to Rosa Parks.

Once your child is ready to perform her song, invite her hero to hear it. If that’s not possible, record her song so it can be shared with her hero. Show your enthusiasm by singing along or offering musical accompaniment during her performance.

