



How to use this guide:

This activity guide for *Marvelous Mistakes* is intended for students in pre-K through second grade. The activities help students make connections from the book to social-emotional learning, STEM, and more. Parents and teachers, you are welcome to use and adapt these activities to meet your students' needs, at home or in the classroom.

If you enjoyed the book, please consider leaving a review at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and/or Goodreads. Please reach out to me at calliebdeanwrites@gmail.com if you have any questions or feedback on these activities, or if you would like to share your marvelous mistake from Activity 2 (page 3).

Book synopsis:

Everybody makes mistakes. Some mistakes go down in history . . . for all kinds of reasons.

This picture book takes readers on a playful, rhyming journey through eight famous mistakes made by historical figures. Some mistakes led to discoveries or new inventions. Others forced their makers down new, more successful paths. But every mistake highlighted in this book led to something good.

From discoveries born of accidents to careers reshaped by setbacks, these stories show that success isn't always a straight line—and that even the greatest achievers mess up sometimes.

Marvelous Mistakes explores both the creative and scientific process, showing that success is not always linear and that even famous people mess up sometimes. Teaching history while encouraging resilience and a growth mindset, *Marvelous Mistakes* makes a great read-aloud for classrooms, libraries, and families.

Marvelous Mistakes by Callie Dean Illustrated by Ana Latese

ISBN: 9781506496009

Age: Early Grades (5–8 years)

Publisher: Beaming Books

Table of Contents:

Discuss the Book	2
Write About Your Own Marvelous Mistake	3
Make a Mantra Bracelet	4
Build a Tower	6
Research a Marvelous Mistake	8
Puzzle Page	9
For Further Reading	10

ACTIVITY 1: DISCUSS THE BOOK

(ELA: Reading Comprehension)

Common Core Connections: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.2, CSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI3

Before Reading:

- What do you notice about the cover?
- Who do you think these people might be?
- Why do you think this book is called *Marvelous Mistakes*? How can a mistake be marvelous?

During Reading:

- *[on the pages with the modern children]* What problem are these children facing? What do you think they should do next?
- *[after reading about the corresponding historical figure]* How are the children's mistakes similar to or different from the mistakes made by *[historical figure]*?

After Reading:

- Can you give an example of a mistake that turned out to be a good thing?
- Which mistake was your favorite? Why?



ACTIVITY 2: WRITE ABOUT YOUR OWN MARVELOUS MISTAKE!

(ELA: Narrative Writing)

Common Core Connections: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3

Write about a mistake you once made. Use as many sensory details as possible to share what happened and how you responded. Then illustrate your mistake in the box below.

Share your marvelous mistake with the author!
Take a picture of your story and email it to calliebdeanwrites@gmail.com. Please indicate whether or not you would like your creation to be shared on social media.

ACTIVITY 3: MAKE A MANTRA BRACELET!

(Art, Social-Emotional Learning)

Create a wearable reminder that you can grow and learn from your mistakes.

Materials Needed:

- Bracelet strips (page 5, cut out ahead of time)
- Crayons, markers, or other decorative materials
- Clear packing tape
- Hole punch
- Ribbon

Discuss:

- How do you feel when you make a mistake? What do you do when you make a mistake?
- It is easy to become frustrated when you make a mistake. Sometimes you might even feel like giving up after you make a mistake!

A **mantra** is a short sentence that you can say to yourself whenever you make a mistake. Here are a few*:

- Mistakes help my brain grow.
- Everybody makes mistakes
- I can always try again.
- Mistakes are how I learn.
- I have grit and I won't quit!
- Do my best, forget the rest.

*Source: *Big Life Journal*. Which mantra do you like best?

Make:

1. Let each child pick a bracelet strip from the following page. You may want to encourage older children to write their own mantra instead.
2. Have each child decorate their bracelet however they want.
3. When they are finished, reinforce their bracelet using clear packing tape.
4. Punch a hole in each end of the bracelet, about ½ inch from the edge. (For smaller wrists, you may want to cut the bracelet down to size first). Loop the ribbon through each hold and tie it together.

Extension Idea:

Have each child hold up a posterboard or whiteboard that has their mantra written on it. Take a picture of them with their mantra, and hang it up on the wall so they can see it every day.

Mistakes help my brain grow!

Everybody makes mistakes.

I can always try again.

Mistakes are how I learn.

I have grit, and I won't quit!

DO MY BEST; FORGET THE REST!

ACTIVITY 4: BUILD A TOWER!

(STEM)

NGSS Connections: K-2-ETS1-1, K-2-ETS1-2, K-2-ETS1-3

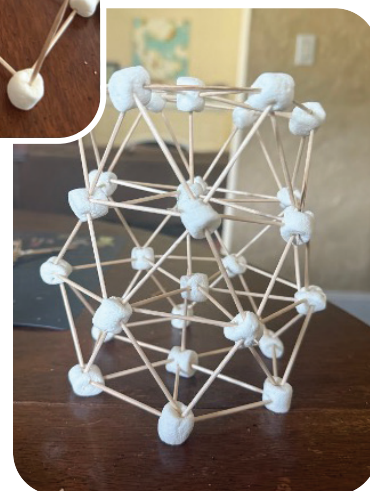
Design and build a tower out of toothpicks and marshmallows.

Materials Needed:

- toothpicks
- mini marshmallows
- ruler

Instructions:

1. Divide students into groups of 2 – 4 each. Give each group the same number of toothpicks and mini marshmallows.
2. Say, "Build the tallest tower you can in 15 minutes using only toothpicks and marshmallows. In order for your tower to count, it must be able to stand on its own at the end of the time period. Are you ready? On your mark, get set, go!"
3. Set a timer for 15 minutes (or adjust to fit your time constraints). When time is up, measure the structures to see which tower is the tallest.



Discuss:

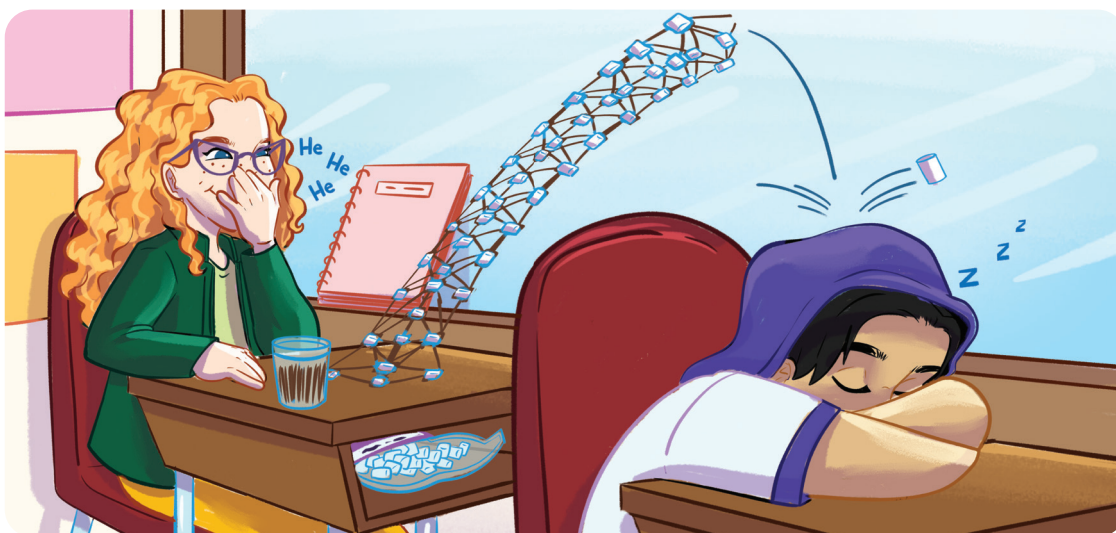
- What strategy did your team use when you started building your tower? Did your strategy change along the way?
- What kinds of mistakes did you make? What did you learn from your mistakes?
- What surprised you the most about this challenge?
- If you could start again, what would you do differently?
- What kinds of skills did you use to build your tower? (Encourage students to think not only about their technical skills but also skills like perseverance, teamwork, and communication)

- **Go deeper:** As teams discuss their experience, refer to the [Engineering Design Process](#) and have them identify what they did at each stage of the process. Point out that there are often many different ways to solve the same problem, so it is important to compare and evaluate their ideas and prototypes to pick the best solution.
- **Connect to the book:** Which people in *Marvelous Mistakes* used the Engineering Design Process? (Peggy Whitson and Shane Kimbrough had to solve a problem using a limited number of materials available to them in space; Soichiro Honda created lots of prototypes until he found a solution that worked).

If time permits, let teams try the challenge again and learn from their previous mistakes. You may want to give them an additional 5 minutes at the start of the second round to make plans. During the planning phase, they can discuss their ideas and sketch their design on paper, but they may not touch the materials.

Variations:

- Encourage students to build a structure that most closely resembles the Leaning Tower of Pisa. How does their strategy change?
- Repeat this challenge using other materials. Examples: construction paper and masking tape; plastic drinking straws, popsicle sticks, and tape; toilet paper rolls and scissors; or plastic cups. Get creative!



ACTIVITY 5: RESEARCH A MARVELOUS MISTAKE

(ELA and Social Studies)

NCSS Connections: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8

Choose one of the people featured in the book (or find your own example of a marvelous mistake-maker from history!) to research. Fill out the worksheet below with facts that you learn from your research.

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Date of death (unless still alive): _____

Place of birth: _____

Job: _____

Famous for: _____

Draw a picture of the person you chose:

Fun fact: _____

In what year did they make their marvelous mistake? _____

What else was happening in the world when they made their mistake? _____

Tip: Be sure to use trustworthy websites to do your research. Look for sources like encyclopedias (like kids.britannica.com), government websites (.gov), and academic sites (.edu). Kid-friendly search engines like kiddle.co can help you find information while staying safe online!

ACTIVITY 6: PUZZLE PAGE!

Name: _____

(ELA and Social Studies)

WORD SEARCH

There are lots of ways to describe mistakes! Find all 10 **synonyms** in the word search below. Words can be forward, backward, up, down, or diagonal.

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

Word List:

Accident Blooper Blunder Bug
Error Flub Gaffe Glitch
Malfunction Typo

ALL SCRAMBLED UP

Can you unscramble the names of these four people who are featured in *Marvelous Mistakes*?

REAV NAWG

OHCIROSI DONAH

IJM AAHMLRSL

GEPYG TNWISOH

FIND THE MISTAKE

Look at the patterns below. Circle any pictures or numbers that don't fit the pattern. Then draw the shape or number that should come next.



FOR FURTHER READING:

Here are a few other books about making mistakes. I hope you enjoy them, too!

Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao
by Kat Zhang and Charlene Chua

Beautiful Oops!
by Barney Saltzberg

Bella's Recipe for Success
by Ana Siqueira and Geraldine Rodriguez

Broken
by X. Fang

Ping's Perfect Pot
by Helen H. Wu and Zihua Yang

Snake's Big Mistake
by Sarah Kurpiel

The Magical Yet
by Angela DiTerlizzi and Lorena Alvarez Gomez

The Most Magnificent Thing
by Ashley Spires

Y is for Yet
by Shannon Anderson and Jake Souva

