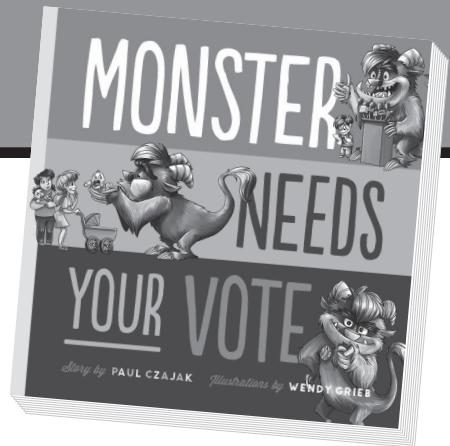


# VOTING ACTIVITY & TOOL GUIDE

Grades 5–8



## Civic Engagement and Character Building with *Monster Needs Your Vote*

*Monster Needs Your Vote* is a timeless, humorous, and positive story about building character, the democratic process, and the responsibility of voting for adults and kids of all ages! Monster figures out the differences between “me” and “we” as he perseveres to make a difference for the good of the community. His message emphasizes the importance of standing up for what you believe to foster a life-long commitment to active citizenship.

Includes are materials to use with the book or on their own to enhance the reader’s understanding, knowledge, and participation in character development and civic engagement.

### AGENDA

- 45 minutes** (approx.)
- › Introduce Self and Book
  - › Pre-assessment Activity: ME vs. WE Mash-up
  - › Read *Monster Needs Your Vote*
  - › Voting: Visual Reality Activity
  - › Re-assessment Activity: ME vs. WE Mash-up (Take 2)
  - › Play Monster ROAR Bingo

### WHAT YOU NEED

- › *Monster Needs Your Vote* book/eBook
- › Skype/online connection (bring in author and/or developmental specialist—optional)
- › Read through activities and determine what tools and timeframe to use
- › Print out handouts for each person in your group if using the paper versions
- › Online access to Kids Voting USA to build your own voting ballot, as applicable

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## ME vs. WE

### ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Use the handout on **page 7** to gauge the level of understanding your students or group has about needs and wants, or “ME” versus “WE.” Print out the handout and copy for each person in your group.

- › Online version
- › Paper version
- › Active group interaction version
  - › Quieter version for space and control of group needs
  - › Movement version for engaging interactive fun

*For the active group interaction version:*

Tell the group that for each item you will call out, he/she needs to decide if the item is a “me” or a “we.”

Next, choose a response method from below:

**Quieter version**—Demonstrate how he/she should respond. Stretch arms up over her/his head for “we.” Stretch arms down toward feet for “me.”

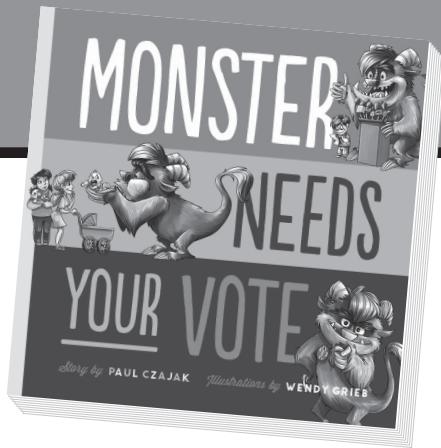
**Movement version**—Demonstrate how he/she should respond. Stretch arms up over his/her head in a “w” shape, fingers wide spread. Roar out “we” for a ‘we’ answer. Do a Hulk-like imitation and scrunch body down with arms at side and fists rounded in toward the center of their bodies for “me.” Roar out “me” for a ‘me’ answer. (see YouTube video sample: <https://youtu.be/SE6CBykZS88>). Have the group mirror each move. Make corrections as needed.

### PRE-ASSESSMENT: ME VS. WE MASH-UP

Instruct students to get into pairs and stand back-to-back. After the item is called and a 3-count given from leader, students will turn toward each other and roar “me” or “we” depending on his/her view.

Write the item on a white board or large sheet of paper. Ask for a show of hands of those who said “me” for that item. Record the total number for “me.” Ask for show of hands for “we.” Record the total number for “we.” Go to next item and repeat process. If desired, have students switch partners for the roar off.

Pick as many me and we items as you have time for. Be sure to choose items from both “me” and “we” lists. You can add your own items to the lists to extend the activity for your group as needed.



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### LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BOOK (OPTIONAL)

In the story, Monster had to learn the difference between for "me" and for "we." For instance: "*Ice cream—is it something I want or something WE need?*"

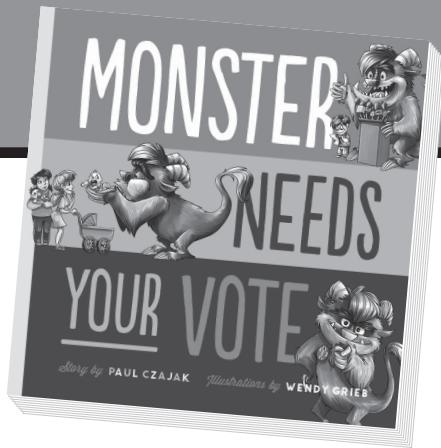
Ask:

- › What is something for ME—a "want?"
- › What is something that benefits WE—a "need?"

Monster discovered that longer summers, dessert for dinner, and ice cream were all things that he *"wanted"* and liked but did not necessarily *"need."* When he saw that the library was closing, he realized THAT was a *"need."* Everyone *"needed"* and benefited from it being open. Once Monster understood the difference between a ME/WANT and a WE/NEED, he then understood how he could best help his community.

Ask:

- › What are some needs you see at your school?
- › What are some needs you see in your neighborhood?
- › What are some needs you see in your family?
- › Is there something you can do to "roar" for one of these causes?



### VOTING: VISUAL REALITY

As Monster shifted his perspective from "me" to "we," he realized he was part of something bigger than just being concerned about himself. When he saw the library was closing, Monster had an epiphany about the importance of "we." His whole life changed as he started talking and working with others.

Ask:

- › Have you ever been inspired to take action for something important like Monster?
- › What motivated you?
- › What helps you continue to be aware of issues that may not impact you directly but are still important to others?

Running for public office shouldn't be about "me." It should be about "we."

One aspect of being a government leader is determining what are the most pressing issues that impact the most people.

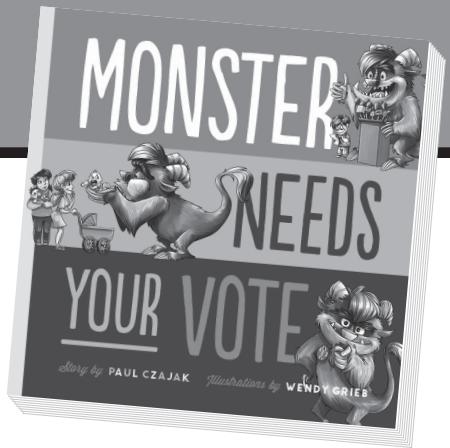
- › Have the group call out issues that they think are the most important concerns facing their school or community right now. Narrow down the issues to four choices. (*Write the issues on white board.*)
- › Split the group in half. Have one-half stand on one side of the room and one-half stand on the other side of the room.

Say:

- › Voting is important and yet half of the United States' eligible voters don't vote. You all represent our country.

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Designate which group will vote and which group will stay home today.

- › Which cause is more important to you? Ask the group that is voting to choose the issue they feel is most important and go stand by that issue. (*Call out each corner of the room by one of the four issues or post the issues on paper signs on the walls.*)
- › Repeat the activity. This time, have the whole group vote.

Say:

- › When you don't vote, you're letting only a few people have the say and make decisions for you. Ten people may have the say for twenty. Your "roar" is missing. What do you think I mean by "roar?"
- › Your "roar" is your voice for an issue that means something to you. Your voice counts. You need to "roar."
- › Where have you seen your voice count? Where have you said something or taken an action that you knew made a difference?
- › What could we do as a group or class to have our "roar" heard for an issue at school or in the community that needs to be addressed?

## RE-ASSESSMENT: ME VS. WE MASH-UP (TAKE 2)

Do assessment again to see if there is a shift in thinking about "me" to "we" and how important it is to consider others.

Ask:

- › Why the change?

## PLAY MONSTER ROAR (VARIATION OF BINGO)

- › For large group options, use your feet to vote. Call out the bulleted statements on **page 6** and tell group to move:
  - › One step to left for "yes" or right for "no."
  - › Go to this side of room for "yes" or the other side for "no."
  - › Thumbs up for "yes" and thumbs down for "no."

## MONSTER ROAR BINGO DIRECTIONS

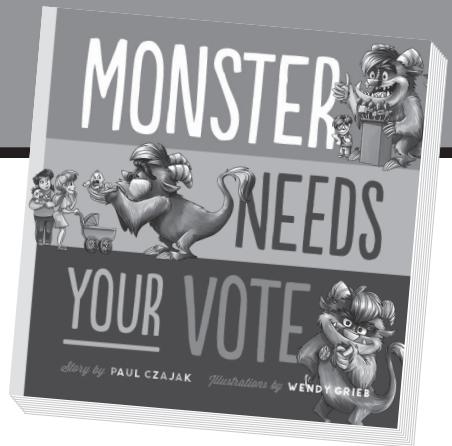
Use the Monster ROAR Bingo handout on **page 8**. Copy for each person in your group or create an online ballot with the content that correlates. You can also create your own paper Monster ROAR Bingo card at [www.bingobaker.com](http://www.bingobaker.com). You will find some additional bingo text blocks at the end of the directions or you can create your own content.

Say:

- › You have 5 minutes to mingle, learn, and get as many people to sign off on your card as you can. You can only have one

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person's signature on your card. You can't have one person sign off on every square. However, note that the center space is a special space. It's YOUR space to think about what YOUR "roar" would be. You will answer in that space!

- › Mingle, ask questions, and get signatures except for the middle one. Each time someone signs off on a space, both parties "roar" in unison. When your card is complete, yell out "MONSTER BINGO" when done. (*Note: you may have to encourage students to keep going once the first person yells out. Remind them of how much time they have left.*)

Students mingle and fill out cards. When the first person finishes, acknowledge it and tell him/her to hang on. Keep the group going until the 5 minutes is up. As each person finishes, tell him/her to think about what his/her "roar" would be and fill it in (*the middle ROAR square*).

When time is up, ask the first person done to share his/her card responses sharing each speaker's name as she/he reads each response.

After each square, ask:

- › What did X say about this topic?

If the person had great conversations, you found a winner. If he/she didn't, offer thanks for sharing, and ask for someone else to share his/her card, and repeat share/ask question process. Call out 2–3 people. Ask someone to reflect on what he/she learned about the people who she/he spoke with during the game. Repeat share/ask questions process as time allows.

Announce as winner(s) the one(s) who took the time to listen and get to know his/her "community members." Have the group give the winner(s) a double-down "roar."

### DEBRIEF WITH WHOLE GROUP AFTER MONSTER ROAR BINGO

- › Who thought the point of the game was to be the first one done?
- › What were the instructions ( *mingle, learn, sign*)?
- › This activity is sort of how politics go. Every candidate makes the rounds (*like if you just signed off your name and didn't really chat*)—shakes hands, hugs babies, or smiles and nods.
- › Is that kind of interaction (*simply signing names*) meaningful? Do you feel like you know the person or that he/she knows you?
- › What does it take to really connect with someone else?
- › Why is it sometimes more challenging to connect with people who are different than us in some way?
- › The best leaders take the time to know his/her community—and EVERYONE in it, listen to needs, ask questions, and get opinions and ideas for making the community a better place for everyone. They listen; they learn; they care about all.
- › When did Monster become his "best leader" self? (*When he got excited about the library and education.*)

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- › What happened when Monster didn't run? Did he give up on the issue and go home? Did Monster say, 'I didn't win so I'm done'? (*No, he continued to speak out for the library.*)
- › Quality leaders do what they say they will do. They know what's important; they stand up for others, causes, and work to make the world a better place. They don't just go with what's popular or makes them look or sound good.
- › They exhibit character. What character traits do you think a leader should have? (*Examples could include honesty, integrity, compassion, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, citizenship, self-discipline, courage, fairness, patriotism, perseverance, etc.*)



### ADDITIONAL BINGO SQUARE SUGGESTIONS

To customize your own bingo cards, use the suggestions below or create your own items in regards to civic engagement, voting, and character traits.

- › Stood up for what you believed in with others your age.
- › Worked through a disagreement with a friend.
- › Have been brave and stood up for your self.
- › Gone out of the way to help someone out.
- › Spoke up when you saw a friend bullying someone else.
- › Knows someone who was honest even when it was a difficult choice.
- › Knows someone who put others' needs before his/her own wants.
- › Supported an issue you care about.
- › Voted in a mock election.
- › Helped at a community garden and shared the produce with someone in need.
- › Wrote a thank you note to a community or school leader.
- › Asked your friends to get involved as volunteers with you.
- › Helped keep the peace at school.
- › Spoke up when you saw someone getting bullied, or teased, or called names.
- › Knows someone who is respectful of others.
- › Name a leader who you feel is honest and trustworthy.
- › Solved a problem at home with your parents or siblings.
- › Ran for office in a school or community club.
- › Learned more about a political candidate.
- › Knows someone who is a leader for an important cause.
- › Have had an idea for helping a need you see in your community.
- › Voiced a problem in the school that is being ignored.
- › Have been part of a group that did a service project.

# ME VS. WE MASH-UP

Monster realized that his “roar” counted the most when he was focused on matters that also concerned others. Checkmark either a ‘me’ or a ‘we’ matter for each statement. Is it only a concern for “me” or if it is a “we” that also matters greatly to other people and impacts their lives?



Issue	This is a “me” matter	This is a “we” matter
Another student never has lunch in the cafeteria.		
People in my neighborhood are afraid to go outside.		
My bedroom is messy.		
I don’t have a coat.		
I don’t know anything about the candidates running for office.		
There are no sidewalks or bike paths to safely ride or walk.		
Pickles taste terrible on sandwiches.		
If someone is mean to me, I am mean to him/her.		

Issue	This is a “me” matter	This is a “we” matter
The library isn’t open on the weekends.		
Our school doesn’t have recess.		
My teacher doesn’t call on me, so I never get a chance to answer.		
My family plays board games together, so I play, but it’s not my favorite thing to do.		
The park by our house is dirty with lots of trash.		
My soccer team loses every time I don’t play.		
I don’t like to share my things with others.		
An older neighbor needs help.		

# MONSTER ROAR BINGO



SPOKE UP FOR SOMETHING THAT CONCERNED YOU	SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE FOR SOMEONE	SAW OTHERS BEING MEAN TO SOMEONE
RAISED MONEY FOR SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IN	MY ROAR!	WORKED THROUGH A DISAGREEMENT WITH A FRIEND
HELPED OUT IN THE COMMUNITY	WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO HELP SOMEONE	DID A SECRET ACT OF KINDNESS

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### ABOUT MIGHTY MEDIA

**Mighty Media Press**, for-profit children's publisher, is partnering with non-profit, Kids Voting USA, to support civic engagement for kids in grades K–12 across the country. Mighty Media Press has developed a free, downloadable Civic Engagement & Character Building Activity Guide around its recently published and nationally-distributed picture book, *Monster Needs Your Vote*, to teach youth about democracy, nonpartisan politics, character building, and the importance of taking a stand for what you believe.

Our goal is to get young people involved in the democratic process at an early age in order to cultivate life-long active citizenship and strong character. Mighty Media offers books or eBooks, publicity, buttons, and posters, plus Core Curriculum and National Social Studies assessment tools, resources, and activities that correlate to all Kids Voting affiliates' efforts and materials.

Mighty Media Inc., parent company of Mighty Media Press, has a successful history of working with non-profit organizations to engage youth to become compassionate, confident, well-informed, and socially conscious kids who want to make a difference through such organizations as: YMCA of the USA, BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MINNESOTA, DO SOMETHING, EDUCATION MINNESOTA, and MINNESOTA ALLIANCE WITH YOUTH.

To purchase books/eBooks at a special single product or bulk rate discount and to set up a Skype session, contact: Nancy Tuminelly, publisher, [nancy@mightymedia.com](mailto:nancy@mightymedia.com). To find out more, go to [mightymediapress.com](http://mightymediapress.com).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Paul Czajak** got an F with the words, "get a tutor," on his college writing paper and, after that, never dreamed he'd become an author. But after spending 20 years as a chemist, he knew his creativity could no longer be contained. Paul believes in exposing young readers to higher-level concepts and vocabulary in his humorous, read-aloud verse to build life skills and foster creativity. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and two little monsters. In addition to the best-selling *Monster & Me™* series, he's also the author of *Seaver the Weaver*. Connect with Paul at [pczajak@gmail.com](mailto:pczajak@gmail.com).

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Wendy Grieb** is a professional working and teaching in the Los Angeles animation industry. She is an award-winning storyboard artist, who has worked as a developmental artist, illustrator and character designer for many major animation film productions. Wendy lives in Yorba Linda, California.

### ABOUT THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

**Susan Ragsdale** is a nationally-recognized positive youth development specialist and a best-selling co-author with seven titles to her name, including best-sellers *Great Group Games: 175 Boredom-Busting, Zero-Prep Team Builders for All Ages, Groups, Troops, Clubs & Classrooms: The Essential Handbook for Working with Youth*, and the newest creation, *Brain Boosters for Groups in a Jar*.

Susan partners with youth-focused agencies for professional development. Her experience includes civic engagement, service-learning, and character building. You can learn more about her workshops and books through her website and blog. Connect with her at [susan@TheAssetEdge.net](mailto:susan@TheAssetEdge.net) or follow her on Twitter @TheAssetEdge.