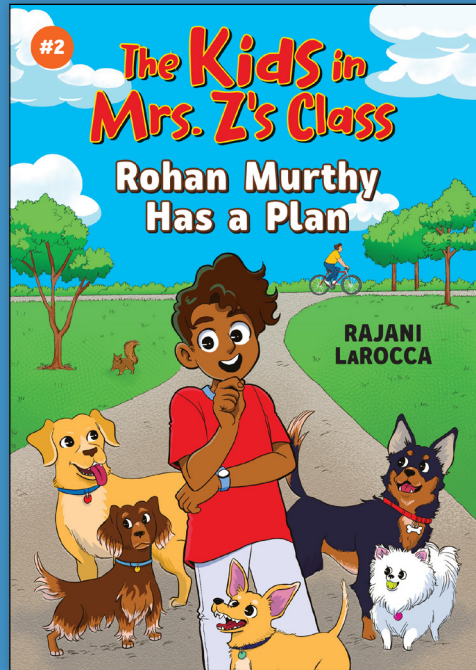
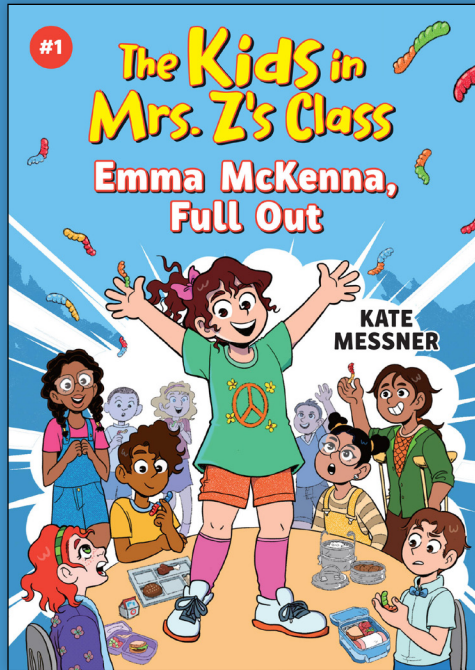


# The Kids in Mrs. Z's Class

TEACHING & DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR BOOKS 1 & 2



## MEET THE KIDS IN MRS. Z'S CLASS,

an innovative new chapter-book series where every book will focus on a different kid in the same third-grade class, with characters created by a stellar lineup of beloved authors . . .

Kate Messner

Rajani LaRocca

Karina Yan Glaser

William Alexander

Linda Urban

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich

Kekla Magoon

Kyle Lukoff

Tracey Baptiste

Martha Brockenbrough

Lamar Giles

Hena Khan

Mike Jung

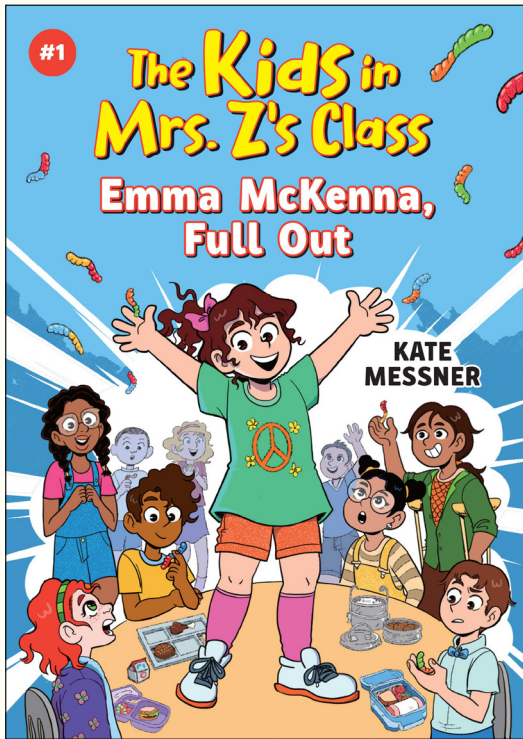
Laurel Snyder

Meg Medina

Eliot Schrefer

# Book 1: EMMA MCKENNA, FULL OUT

by Kate Messner



## About the Book:

Emma McKenna can't wait for third grade at the brand-new Curiosity Academy. She'll have a cool teacher who wears high-tops and science earrings. She'll meet interesting classmates from all over Peppermint Falls. Best of all, she'll get a fresh start after last year's talent-show disaster left her with that awful nickname. It's going to be the best year ever!

Then Lucy walks into Mrs. Z's room.

Lucy, Emma's best-friend-turned-enemy.

Lucy, who gave Emma that nickname and spread it all over school!

Emma's fresh start is doomed . . . unless she can make friends before Lucy ruins everything.

So Emma sets out to be pals with everyone, just like her favorite animal, the copybara. As her classmates argue over the choice of a new school mascot, Emma stays quiet and doesn't pick sides. (The last thing she needs is another enemy.) But maybe speaking up could be the thing that helps her really connect with her class—and saves her at last from third-grade doom.

Both sweetly poignant in its attention to kids' worries and friendships and laugh-out-loud funny in its storytelling, with black-and-white illustrations throughout by Pura Belpré Honor artist Kat Fajardo, *Emma McKenna, Full Out* is the perfect launch for the exciting new Kids in Mrs. Z's Class chapter-book series.



## About the Author:

Kate Messner is passionately curious and writes books for kids who wonder, too. Her award-winning titles include picture books like *Once Upon a Book*, *Over and Under the Snow*, and *The Scariest Kitten in the World*; middle-grade novels like *All the Answers* and *Breakout*; the Fergus and Zeke easy reader series; the Ranger in Time chapter book adventures; and the History Smashers illustrated nonfiction series. A former middle-school Language Arts teacher, she splits her time between New York's Champlain Valley and Florida's Gulf Coast. Visit her online at [katemessner.com](http://katemessner.com) and find her on social media at [@katemessner](https://www.instagram.com/katemessner).

# Book 1: EMMA MCKENNA, FULL OUT

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## Discussion Questions:

- CHAPTER 1:** Do you think Emma is telling the truth when she says she's not nervous about her first day at Curiosity Academy? How did you feel on your first day of school?
- CHAPTER 2:** How does Emma's mood and outlook change in this chapter? What do you think happened with Lucy? If you got to share One Interesting Thing about yourself with new classmates, what would it be?
- CHAPTER 3:** When Aunt Cassie asks Emma if she wants to talk about her friend troubles, Emma says no thanks because "grown-ups never understood friend trouble." Do you think that's true? What do you wish adults understood about being in elementary school?
- CHAPTER 4:** Why do you think Lucy keeps asking to go to the nurse? Emma had a lot of plans for making new friends in this chapter, but none of them quite worked out. If you were in Mrs. Z's class, what advice would you give Emma on how to make friends?
- CHAPTER 5:** Why do you think Emma is so unhappy with her recorder? Have you ever been disappointed when you were looking forward to something that didn't work out?
- CHAPTER 6:** Why do you think Emma likes capybaras so much? Do you agree with her that they'd be a good school mascot?
- CHAPTER 7:** Even though Emma didn't want to play recorder, she's intrigued by Mrs. Berry's challenge. Can you think of a time when you weren't excited about something you had to do, but then it turned out to be fun?
- CHAPTER 8:** Why do you think Emma stopped herself when she started to tell Rohan what happened last year? If you were her, would you have shared more with him? Why or why not?
- CHAPTER 9:** Why do you think Emma is so intent on not speaking at the assembly? If you were in Mrs. Z's class, would you want to speak in front of the whole school? When you're nervous about doing something, what do you do to feel braver?
- CHAPTER 10:** Who do you think is to blame for what happened between Emma and Lucy? Have you ever accidentally hurt a friend's feelings? What advice would you give Emma for dealing with Lucy now?
- CHAPTER 11:** Why do you think Emma changed her mind about speaking? How well do you think she argued for capybaras? How well do you think Lucy did in making a case for orcas? Which speaker do you think was the most convincing, and why?
- CHAPTER 12:** Do you think Emma and Lucy will be friends again? At the end of the book, Emma notices that her classmates look as if they might have worries of their own. What predictions do you have about what might happen in future books?

# CHOOSE YOUR OWN DRAGON NAME

When Emma sits at the Dragon Table at lunch, Memo asks her to choose a dragon name. He goes by Memodor the Undauntable, while Theo is Theofire the Fierce, and Wyatt is Wyvern the Magnificent. What dragon name would you choose for yourself?

Here are some ideas to help you pick the perfect name.

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**the**

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(Part I)

(Part II)

**For the first part of your dragon name**, start with your real first name, or a part of it. Then add a syllable or word to the end to make it sound more dragony. Some possibilities include:

**-dor**

**-ora**

**-flame**

**-fire**

**-flight**

**-illa**

**-enna**

**-wing**

If your name is Jacob, for example, you might decide to be Jacobador or JacoFire.

If you're Elizabeth, you might change that to Elizanora or ElizaWing.

**For the second part of your dragon name**, choose an adjective that relates to strength or another power you'd like to have. Here are some possibilities:

**Ferocious**

**Unstoppable**

**Valiant**

**Brave**

**Tenacious**

**Audacious**

**Formidable**

**Gallant**

**Brave**

**Courageous**

**Gargantuan**

**Daring**

**Stalwart**

**Unswerving**

**Stouthearted**

**Fearless**

# WRITING TO PERSUADE

If you could choose any animal to be your school mascot, what would it be?  
Do some research about your animal to learn about its habits and qualities.  
Why would that animal make a good mascot?

**MY ANIMAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

## SOURCES FOR MY RESEARCH:

(Be sure to include the title of your book, the author, publisher, and copyright date.  
For websites, include the title of the page, author, date, and the URL.)

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## NOTES ABOUT MY ANIMAL:

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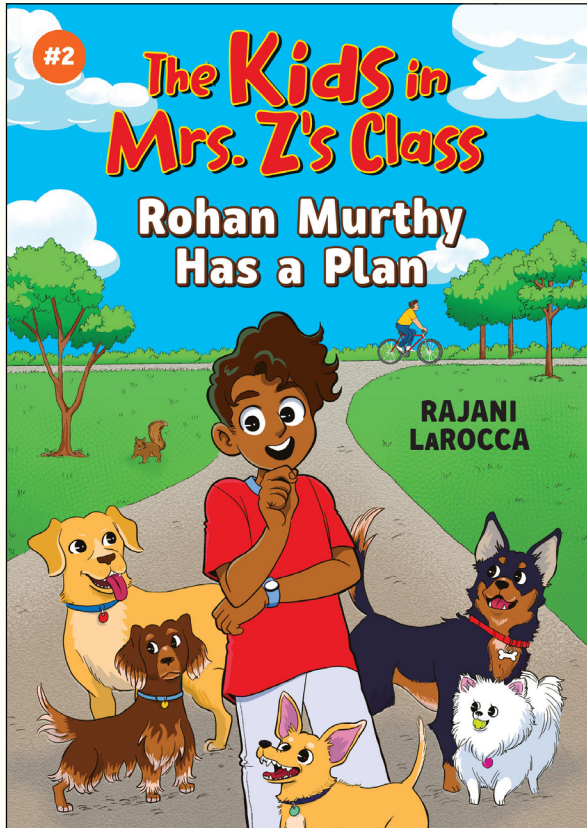
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Imagine that you're in Mrs. Z's Class and you've been selected to speak at the school assembly!  
Write a short speech to convince the school that your animal should be the mascot.  
Be sure to use facts from your research to support your arguments!

# Book 2: ROHAN MURTHY HAS A PLAN

by **Rajani LaRocca**



## About the Book:

Rohan Murthy dreams of running a successful business like his creative and kind mom. When Mrs. Z announces that Curiosity Academy needs to raise money for a school garden, Rohan sees the chance to launch his dreams right away! He'll start a pet care company to help the people of Peppermint Falls look after their dogs, hamsters, fish, snakes, lizards . . . anything but cats. With hard work, some glittery posters, and the help of his friends from Mrs. Z's class, Rohan knows he can do a lot for the school garden.

His parents point out just one small problem: Rohan has never taken care of an animal before. They think he doesn't even like touching animals. (There is a reason cats aren't on his list.) To prove his parents wrong, Rohan volunteers to spend a weekend watching over Honey, the class guinea pig. But Honey appears surprisingly anxious, which makes Rohan nervous as well. When his big dreams meet his secret fears, what will Rohan do?



## About the Author:

Rajani LaRocca was born in India, raised in Kentucky, and now lives in the Boston area, where she practices medicine and writes award-winning books for young readers, including the Newbery Honor-winning middle-grade novel in verse, *Red, White, and Whole*. She's always been an omnivorous reader, and now she is an omnivorous writer of fiction and nonfiction, novels and picture books, prose and poetry. She also co-hosts the STEM Women in KidLit Podcast. Learn more about Rajani and her books at [RajaniLaRocca.com](http://RajaniLaRocca.com) and Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn at [@RajaniLaRocca](https://twitter.com/RajaniLaRocca).

# Book 2: ROHAN MURTHY HAS A PLAN

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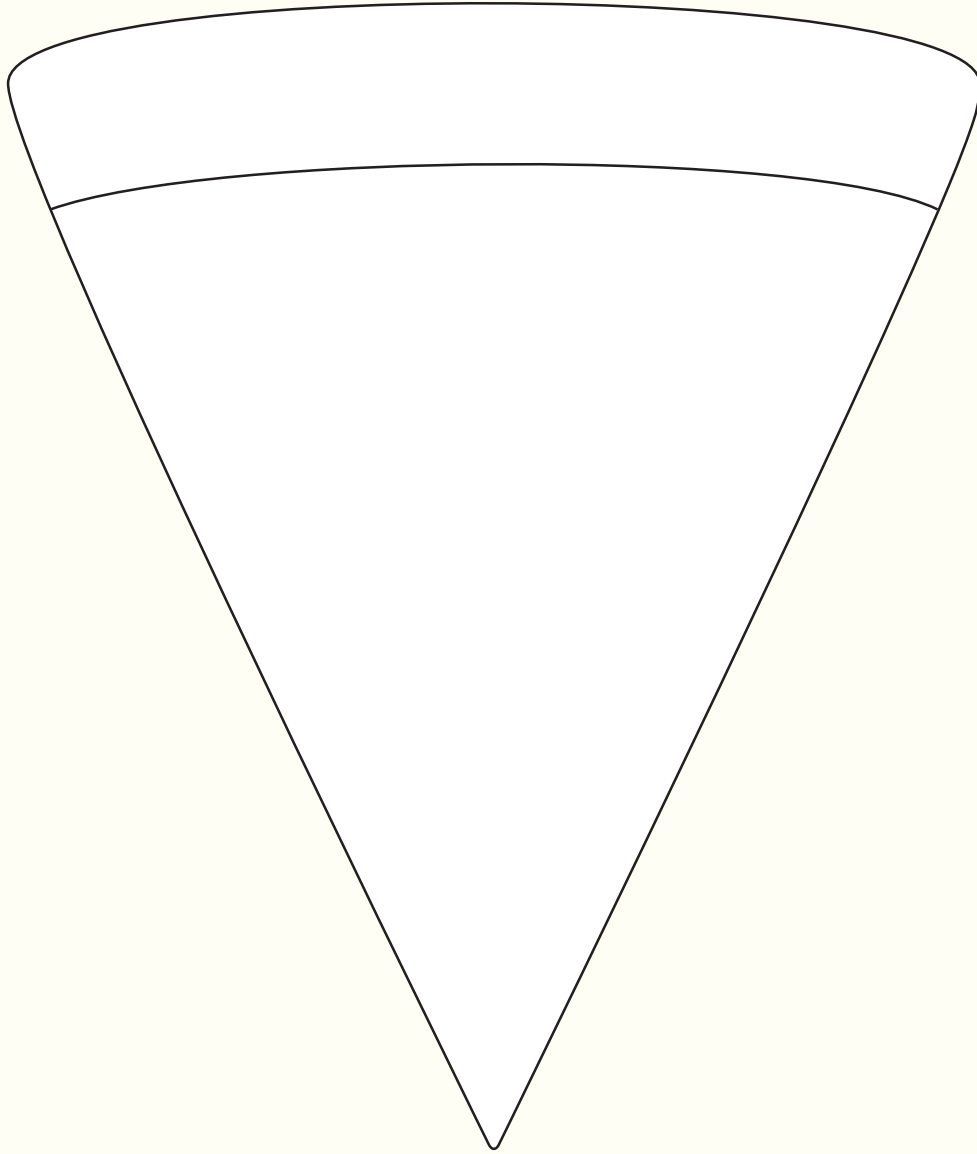
## Discussion Questions:

- CHAPTER 1:** When Rohan's mom visits Mrs. Z's Class, she asks students who has ideas for a business they might want to start. If you were going to launch your own business, what would it be?
- CHAPTER 2:** What do you think Rohan's plan is for raising money for the school garden? Do you think it's a good idea for him? Why or why not?
- CHAPTER 3:** What do you think of Rohan's business plan? Is there anything you'd add? Can you think of any problems he might run into?
- CHAPTER 4:** Do you think Rohan's parents were right to say he needed experience before he could open a pet care business? Can you think of any ways he might get that experience? What kinds of things will he need to learn and practice?
- CHAPTER 5:** Rohan has vivid memories of the day Luna bit his thumb. Do you think he's right to assume that Honey won't be scary at all? What advice might you give Rohan about his fears?
- CHAPTER 6:** Do you think Rohan is telling the truth when he writes that he's not nervous or scared about anything? Can you think of a time when you were nervous or afraid but pretended not to be?
- CHAPTER 7:** How do you think Honey is adjusting to her weekend at Rohan's house? If you were Rohan, how would you try to help Honey feel more relaxed?
- CHAPTER 8:** How would you rate Rohan's pet care so far? Which parts of the job is he doing well, and which could be better?
- CHAPTER 9:** Do you think Rohan might be having second thoughts about his pet care business? Why or why not?
- CHAPTER 10:** Mom tells Rohan, "Sometimes you have to overcome fear. But sometimes you have to listen to fear, because it's telling you something important." Can you think of any examples of fear that it would be good to overcome? What about fears that are healthy and worth listening to, in order to be safe?
- CHAPTER 11:** If you were Honey, where would you hide? Why do you think Kavya was able to help Rohan in this chapter?
- CHAPTER 12:** What do you think of Rohan's new business plan? What makes it a better fit for him?

# PIZZA NIGHT!

In Chapter 9, Rohan's family is having pizza night, and part of their tradition is to suggest disgusting toppings for the pizza. Imagine that you're part of the Murthy family.

**What toppings would YOU suggest? Draw and write them in below!**



## GROSS PIZZA TOPPINGS

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# MAKE YOUR OWN BUSINESS PLAN

If you were going to start your own business, what would it be?  
Use Mrs. Murthy's advice to start with something you love and fill in  
this outline to create your own business plan!

**BUSINESS PLAN FOR** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of your business)

## **WHAT:**

Explain what your business will be.

## **COMMUNITY NEED:**

Explain who will be served by your business and what need it fills.

## **HOW MY BUSINESS IS DIFFERENT:**

What will make your business stand out from the competition?

## **THINGS I NEED:**

What materials and supplies would you need to get started?

## **WHERE I WOULD FIND CUSTOMERS:**

How will you find people who need your product or service?

## **WHY THIS MAKES ME HAPPY:**

# WRITERS' WORKSHOP

## CREATE YOUR OWN CHARACTER TO JOIN THE KIDS IN MRS. Z'S CLASS!

Series authors used this character development worksheet to come up with Emma, Rohan, and all their friends in Mrs. Z's Class. Now it's your turn! Once you finish your character worksheet, try writing a scene that takes place in Mrs. Z's classroom. You can have your character respond to one of Mrs. Z's Daily Scribbles or have a conversation introducing themselves to Emma and Rohan!

### YOUR CHARACTER'S FIRST AND LAST NAME:

What does your character look like? Include things like skin tone, hair color and style, and other distinguishing features, such as glasses, pierced ears, visible scars or birthmarks.

How does your character usually dress for school? Do they prefer shorts or dresses or three-piece suits? Is there any jewelry they always wear? Backpacks or bags they like to carry?

Is there anything that your character always does or always says? Little habits, sayings, expressions or favorite phrases?

Where does your character live and how do they get to school? Describe their house or apartment.

Who lives with your character, and what other family members, if any, live nearby and are part of their lives?

What chores/responsibilities does your character have at home?

Does your character speak languages other than English? If so, which ones?

Does your character have pets? If so, please give their names and describe them!

What activities and groups are part of your character's life outside of school?

Do they play on any sports teams or participate in scouts, volunteer work, a church/synagogue/mosque/temple, or music/riding/sports lessons?

What are some things your character *really* doesn't like?

What or who is your character's Most Important Thing?

What is your character afraid of? What do they worry about?

What does your character want to be or do when they grow up?

What's a secret that your character is keeping?

**WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTER'S FAVORITE THINGS?**

Subject in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Sports team: \_\_\_\_\_

Thing to do at recess: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Drink: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobby: \_\_\_\_\_

Dessert: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

Song: \_\_\_\_\_

Holiday: \_\_\_\_\_

TV shows/movies: \_\_\_\_\_

Dinosaur: \_\_\_\_\_

Board game: \_\_\_\_\_

Store: \_\_\_\_\_

Video game: \_\_\_\_\_

Article of clothing: \_\_\_\_\_

Musical instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

Shoes: \_\_\_\_\_

Summer activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Craft: \_\_\_\_\_

Winter activity: \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR CHARACTER HERE!**

