

AN ILLUSTRATED READING & ACTIVITY GUIDE

THE ADVENTURES OF MR. E

COURAGE | FRIENDSHIP | SECOND CHANCES



BOOK CLUB KIT

A desk-sized adventure with giant-sized heart

Based on the book by Michael D. Young

A Mystery Worth Erasing

The Adventures of Mr. E turns an ordinary third-grade classroom into a world of bridges, monsters, rescues, and puns. Mr. E is an eraser who would rather help Eli with spelling and math than battle a legendary origami Shapeshifter - but loyalty keeps pushing him beyond the safe edge of the desk.



Beneath the comedy is a thoughtful story about bullying and identity. A mean note creates the Shapeshifter, Josh's plan keeps him dangerous, and Eli's kindness changes the human conflict. The book asks young readers whether someone must become like the person who influences them - and whether a mistake can be erased without erasing the person.

Best for

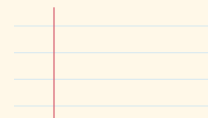
Ages 7-11; family book clubs; elementary classrooms and libraries; anti-bullying, friendship, social-emotional learning, and creative-writing units.

Spoiler map

Pages 2-4 are spoiler-light. Full story details begin on page 5.

Meeting rhythm

Read two chapters. Retell the biggest problem in one sentence. Discuss for 20-25 minutes. Complete one hands-on activity. End with one "second chance" or kindness goal.



Ten Chapters, Five Desk Missions

The novel moves quickly, so paired chapters make satisfying meeting units. For younger groups, read the chapters aloud and let members sketch while they listen.

1	Ch. 1-2	The Broken Bridge	Curiosity, fear, responsibility, and the cost when adults misunderstand.
2	Ch. 3-4	Inside the Lair	Legends, peer pressure, teamwork, and creative escape.
3	Ch. 5-6	The Sticky Plan	Leadership, preparation, loyalty, and Mr. E's bargain.
4	Ch. 7-8	Erase and Rescue	Sacrifice, identity, trust, and Shapeshifter's first good choice.
5	Ch. 9-10	The Way Home	Perseverance, friendship, poverty, empathy, and new beginnings.

Spoiler-light questions

1. What would be the best and worst school supply to be? Why?
2. What rules do you think desk-dwellers need in order to stay safe around Kids?
3. Why might an eraser make a good mystery hero?
4. Which matters more on an adventure: bravery, planning, loyalty, or imagination?
5. What can a person learn about a Kid by looking inside the Kid's desk?

Meet Eli's Desk Crew

Each character turns a school-supply feature into a personality. Watch how the jokes also reveal what each friend contributes to the team.

MR. E

A pink eraser and the first-person narrator. He is anxious, inventive, loyal to Eli, and better at acting bravely than feeling brave.

JACKI BLUE

A cheerful blue pencil with a sharp point, quick jokes, and fierce faith in Mr. E. She makes encouragement an active kind of courage.

CAPTAIN CLIP

A proud paperclip commander with a toothpick sword and an army of linked clips. He loves action, orders, and heroic language.

**PRISCILLA
GLUE**

Mr. E's long-time glue-stick friend. Cautious and expressive, she is still willing to "stick with" the people she loves.

ELMER

An old orange glue bottle who knows the Shapeshifter legend. His age has made him useful, skeptical, and a little too ready to give up.

ELI

The careful third-grader whose desk is their home. Mr. E uses the question "What would Eli do?" as a private compass.

Character watch

Notice when a character's natural strength becomes a weakness: caution can become retreat, confidence can become recklessness, and loyalty can lead to dangerous choices. Growth comes from combining strengths instead of relying on only one.

FULL SPOILERS

Folded Plans and Unfolding Hearts

The ending refuses a simple “good desk versus bad desk” answer. Harmful choices still matter, but the story makes room for changed behavior, trust rebuilt through action, and compassion for the need beneath the bullying.

THE SHAPESHIFTER

A sheet of lined paper transformed by the school's first mean note. Josh's evil plan keeps him dangerous; once Mr. E erases it, he chooses to become a grappling hook, motorcycle, and helper.

JOSH

The neighboring third-grader who bullies Eli and plans to steal bake-sale money. His tears reveal that his family cannot afford ingredients or treats, but the explanation does not make the theft acceptable.

RYAN

A large bottle of whiteout whose brush becomes Mr. E's first weapon against the written plan.

JACKI'S POINT

Jacki loses her sharpened tip during the vacuum escape. The broken point later gives Mr. E a way out, making their rescues mutual.

ELMER'S TURN

He begins convinced that Kids come and go and bullying cannot be changed. He spends his remaining glue on armor and later recognizes Mr. E as a hero.

ELI'S CHOICE

Instead of humiliating Josh, Eli notices his hurt and shares bake-sale money. That act begins the friendship that Mr. E's victory alone could not create.

Across the Broken Bridge

Mr. E follows Captain Clip because helping is “what Eli would do.” The scouting trip fails, the paperclip bridge is cut, and Eli receives a consequence for a mess he did not make.

Chapters 1-2	Courage begins before anyone understands the danger; responsibility becomes complicated when Eli is punished for the supplies' actions.
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Discuss

1. Why does Mr. E cross the bridge even though Jacki gives him permission to stay?
2. How are Mr. E's caution and Captain Clip's confidence both useful? How are they both risky?
3. What clues make Josh's desk feel like a haunted house to school supplies?
4. How does Eli's punishment change the problem for Mr. E?
5. Is it possible to do the right thing and still cause a bad result? What should happen next?

Bridge test

Build the longest bridge you can from paperclips, paper strips, or index cards. Test it with an eraser. After the first failure, change only one feature and explain your reasoning.

The Shapeshifter's Lair

Elmer says the Shapeshifter was born from a mean note and chooses the desk of the year's biggest bully. Mr. E is named the one possible hero, then meets zombie supplies and escapes with a tissue parachute.

Chapters 3-4	A scary legend gives the mission purpose, but the team still enters without enough information and must improvise an escape.
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Discuss

1. How does Elmer's story change the way the group sees the folded paper?
2. Why does chanting Mr. E's name make it harder for him to express fear or disagreement?
3. Which danger in the messy desk is funniest? Which is most serious?
4. Why is Mr. E able to invent the tissue-parachute plan when stronger fighters cannot?
5. What does the abandoned clip's rescue cost, and how does that moment affect Mr. E?

Supply survival

Choose three objects from a pencil box. Invent one safe escape tool that uses each object's real properties. Draw and label the plan without using weapons.

A Very Sticky Plan

Mr. E organizes a smaller team protected by dried-glue armor. When the Shapeshifter threatens to sharpen Jacki at both ends, Mr. E offers to remain behind if everyone else is released.

Chapters 5-6	Better preparation helps, but the heart of the mission is loyalty: Jacki defends Mr. E, Elmer spends his glue, and Mr. E trades himself for his friends.
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Discuss

1. What causes Captain Clip to change from reckless attack to refusing a second mission?
2. Why does Mr. E insist that Eli is not “just any Kid”?
3. How does Jacki's belief help Mr. E borrow courage before he has his own?
4. What makes the glue-armor plan better than the first bridge attack?
5. Was Mr. E's bargain wise, loving, reckless, or all three? Defend your answer.

Courage recipe

Write a recipe with four ingredients for borrowed courage. Examples: one friend who believes you, one fact you know, one small first step, and one reason the effort matters.

Erase the Plan, Save the Team

Mr. E uses Ryan's whiteout brush, faces his fear of noses, and erases the plan from inside the Shapeshifter. The newly freed paper becomes a grappling hook, but the group must decide whether to trust him.

Chapters 7-8	Mr. E fights writing rather than paper. The Shapeshifter's change is proven by the useful shapes he chooses after the plan disappears.
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Discuss

1. What is the difference between destroying the Shapeshifter and erasing the plan written on him?
2. How does the nose scene turn Mr. E's funniest fear into the key to victory?
3. Why does the Shapeshifter say he must be bad because Josh is bad? Is that true?
4. What evidence does Mr. E use when deciding to trust the grappling hook?
5. Why is saving Jacki after the others are safe an important test of Mr. E's character?

Evidence meter

Draw a trust meter from "no evidence" to "earned trust." Place the Shapeshifter at three moments: before the plan is erased, when he offers the hook, and after he helps Mr. E return.

The Long Way Home

Jacki's broken point frees Mr. E from the vacuum. Shapeshifter becomes a motorcycle and catapult to bring him home. The next day, Eli learns why Josh felt excluded and shares his bake-sale money.

Chapters 9-10	Heroism continues after the villain is defeated. Mr. E escapes the vacuum, Shapeshifter returns for him, and Eli answers Josh's hurt with generosity.
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Discuss

1. Why does Mr. E keep moving through the school when waiting until morning would be easier?
2. How does Jacki save Mr. E after he has saved her?
3. Why does the Shapeshifter return to Josh rather than move into Eli's desk?
4. How does Josh's family situation explain his plan without excusing it?
5. What does Eli accomplish through kindness that the desk battle could not accomplish?

Ending after the ending

Imagine the next Monday in both desks. Write six lines of dialogue showing one new habit Josh must practice and one boundary Eli should keep.

Themes to Trace Across the Desks

The school-supply comedy gives young readers concrete images for questions that are much larger than a desk.

COURAGE WITH FEAR

Mr. E never becomes fearless. He keeps choosing what matters while his fear remains present.

ERASING VS. DESTROYING

The hero targets harmful writing, not the paper itself. That difference makes a second chance possible.

INFLUENCE AND IDENTITY

Mr. E wants to act like Eli; Shapeshifter assumes he must act like Josh. The story asks whether influence is destiny.

LEADERSHIP

Captain Clip commands, Mr. E invents, Jacki encourages, Priscilla rallies, and Elmer contributes experience. No single style is enough.

BULLYING AND BELONGING

Josh harms Eli, yet his planned theft grows from shame and exclusion. Repair requires accountability, empathy, and a new way to belong.

MUTUAL RESCUE

Friends do not divide permanently into heroes and helpers. Jacki, Shapeshifter, and Mr. E save one another at different moments.

Capstone question

Which changes the classroom most: Mr. E erasing the plan, Shapeshifter choosing to help, Eli sharing money, or Josh accepting friendship? Explain how the moments depend on one another.

Puns with a Point

The jokes are not decorations. They keep the danger appropriate for young readers, reveal character, and turn the physical features of school supplies into story logic.

DOUBLE MEANING

"Stuck together," "bent out of shape," "has a point," and "sharp" describe both supplies and feelings.

SCALE

A floor becomes a wilderness, a vacuum becomes a monster, and two neighboring desks become separate kingdoms.

RULE OF THREE

A normal comparison often grows into one surprising extra beat, giving Mr. E's narration its comic rhythm.

NARRATOR ASIDE

Mr. E pauses to explain noses, floors, chewing, and school rules directly to the reader.

OBJECT LOGIC

Tissues become parachutes, paperclips become bridges, whiteout becomes a sword, and an eraser defeats written evil.

REVERSAL

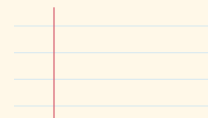
The terrifying Shapeshifter becomes a rescue hook and motorcycle; the "bad Kid" turns out to need kindness.

Try it

Choose a ruler, marker, stapler, crayon, sticky note, or pair of scissors. List three words connected to its real job. Turn one word into a personality trait and another into a problem the character can solve.

Example

A ruler likes rules, measures everyone too quickly, and finally learns that fairness is more than making every line the same length.



Eight Moments Worth Reopening

Return to these scenes and look for the exact choice that changes the direction of the story.

1 | THE FIRST CROSSING

Mr. E decides that doing what would make Eli proud matters even when Eli will never know.

2 | ELI PULLS A CARD

The desk adventure causes a real consequence for an innocent Kid.

3 | THE CHANT

Praise makes Mr. E feel special but also silences his doubts.

4 | THE ABANDONED CLIP

A successful escape is incomplete because one rescuer remains behind.

5 | JACKI SPEAKS UP

Her belief changes the group's mood and challenges Elmer's hopelessness.

6 | INSIDE THE NOSE

Mr. E uses his greatest fear as the route to the writing he must erase.

7 | THE GRAPPLING HOOK

The group must act before complete certainty is possible.

8 | THE BAKE SALE

Eli responds to Josh's hidden need without copying Josh's cruelty.

Close-reading move

For one moment, find: the problem before the choice, the detail that influences the decision, the immediate result, and a later consequence. Then ask what would change if the character chose differently.

Five Activities from the Pencil Box

Choose one activity per meeting. Keep scissors, sharpeners, glue, small objects, and projectiles under normal adult supervision.

DESIGN A DESK-DWELLER

Draw a school supply with a name, strength, fear, favorite saying, and one real property that becomes an adventure skill.

FOLD A HELPER

Fold a simple paper form. Instead of making a monster, explain three rescue jobs the form could perform.

BUILD THE BRIDGE

Use limited materials to span a gap and hold an eraser. Record the first failure, redesign, and retest.

ZOMBIE REHAB

Choose a discarded supply from the lair. Explain how it was damaged and invent a safe repair or new purpose.

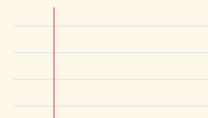
KINDNESS BAKE SALE

Plan a class event where every child can participate without needing money or supplies from home. Include private ways to ask for help.



Club challenge

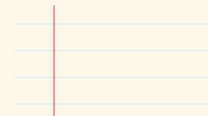
Award titles instead of winners: Strongest Bridge, Cleverest Revision, Funniest Supply Name, Kindest Plan, and Best Use of a Real Object Property.



Facilitator and Educator Guide

The story supports lively fun and serious conversation. Keep the reader's developmental level in mind and separate empathy for a child's circumstances from permission for harmful behavior.

OPEN	Invite a one-minute retelling using "At first / But then / So / Finally." Correct only details that affect the discussion.
ASK	Begin with observation - "What happened?" - before interpretation - "Why?" - and evaluation - "Was it right?"
BULLYING	Name stealing, ridicule, intimidation, and exclusion clearly. A child who is targeted should tell a trusted adult; peers should seek help rather than attempt dangerous rescues.
POVERTY	Do not assume families can contribute food, money, craft supplies, or public explanations. Offer participation privately and universally.
SECOND CHANCES	Changed behavior earns trust gradually. Forgiveness does not require immediate closeness or removal of healthy boundaries.
INCLUSION	Let children pass, draw an answer, dictate to an adult, or discuss with a partner. Avoid requiring personal stories about bullying or family finances.
Helpful distinction	Explanation: what influenced the choice. Accountability: naming the harm and repairing it. Empathy: recognizing the person's need. Boundary: what must change before trust grows.



PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

What Would Mr. E Do?

Use the four-step P.A.P.E.R. pause to work through a difficult choice. The final R reminds us that plans improve when we look back.

P | PROBLEM

What is happening? Who could be helped or harmed?

A | ADVICE

What would a trusted friend or adult say?

P | POSSIBILITIES

List at least three choices, including one that asks for help.

E | EFFECTS

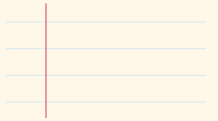
What might happen next for each person?

R | REVISE

After acting, what would you keep or change?

Remember

Real-life courage often means getting a trusted adult, especially when there is bullying, danger, secrecy, threats, or stealing.



Invent Your Own Desk-Dweller

Build a character from a real object, then let the object's properties create both strength and trouble.

Supply and name: _____

What the object really does: _____

Personality strength: _____

How that strength can go too far: _____

Greatest fear: _____

Favorite pun or saying: _____

A friend who balances this character: _____

The problem only this character can solve: _____

DRAW YOUR DESK-DWELLER HERE

FINAL MISSION

The Desk-Dweller's Code

Read the code together, then let each member choose the line that best describes the reader, friend, or leader they want to become.



I can be afraid and still take one wise step.
I will listen before I charge across the bridge.
I will use the tools I have in creative ways.
I will not let another person's choices decide who I become.
I will target the harmful plan, not erase the worth of the person.
I will ask for help when a problem is too big or unsafe.
I will give second chances with evidence, patience, and healthy boundaries.
I will notice the need that may be hiding beneath unkind behavior.
I will stick with my friends - and let them rescue me, too.

Final round

Complete one sentence: "Mr. E taught me...", "The choice I would change is...", or "The desk-dweller I want beside me is..."

About this kit

Created as a companion to The Adventures of Mr. E by Michael D. Young. Character, plot, and thematic references follow the manuscript; all discussion questions, activities, and facilitator materials are original to this guide.