

## 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 and making a “roar” to foster a life-long commitment to active citizenship.

Included 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

**45–60 minutes** (approx.)

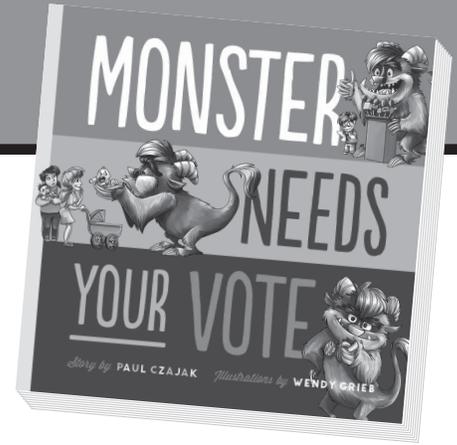
- › Introduce Self and Book
- › Read *Monster Needs Your Vote*
- › Play Monster ROAR Bingo
- › Voting: Visual Reality Activity
- › Assessment Activity: What’s Your ROAR?
- › Candidate Alert! Activity
- › Wrap Up

### 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

# VOTING ACTIVITY & TOOL GUIDE

## Grades 9–12



## Let's Make a ROAR!

### PLAY MONSTER ROAR (VARIATION OF BINGO)

- › For large group options, use your feet to vote. Call out the bulleted statements on **page 7** 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.”
- › Give a thumbs up for “yes” and a 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 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 out each response.

After each square, ask:

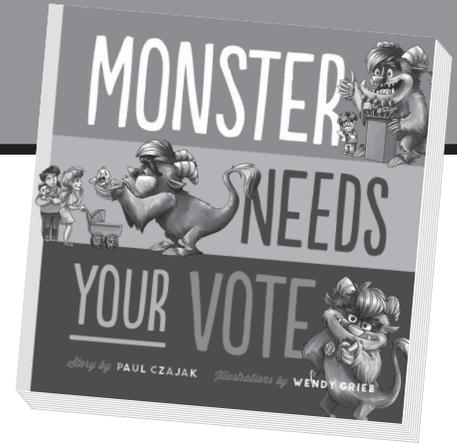
- › What did X say about this topic?

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, repeating the share/ask question process. Call on 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.”

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### 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?
- › 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.*)
- › 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.*)

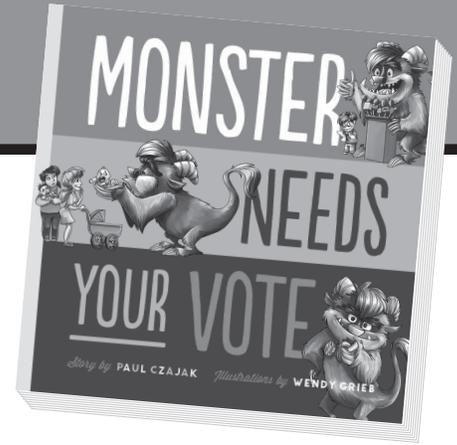
### ADDITIONAL BINGO SQUARE SUGGESTIONS

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 peers.
- › Knows someone who put others' needs first.
- › 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.
- › Stood up for an issue that didn't impact you but was important for someone else. (ex.; wheelchair ramp, Black Lives Matter, etc.)
- › Talked to a friend about she/he lying or cheating.
- › Asked your friends to volunteer with you.
- › Helped keep the peace at school.
- › Spoke up when a friend bullied someone else.
- › Knows someone who is respectful of others.
- › Name a leader who 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.
- › Identified a problem in the school that is being ignored.

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### ASSESSMENT: WHAT'S YOUR ROAR?

Use the handout on **page 8** to gauge the level of understanding your students or group has about the critical issues at stake in political elections. You will need to print out the handout and copy for each person in your group.

- › Let's look at the issues ("platforms") that get all the attention today. (*Distribute Where's the Roar handout.*)
  - › Tell the group that this list reflects the issues that are getting the majority of attention in the world right now.
  - › Ask each student to think about what she/he sees, hears, and knows. What issues do he/she encounter each day or see friends and others have to struggle with?
  - › Now, have each student look at the list and mark whether he/she personally agrees that the listed issues are the most critical issues in the political election right now.
    - List of issues (*Include items like gun control, racial tension, immigration, education, jobs, etc.*)
  - › Next, ask the group to write in any issues they feel are important that aren't reflected on the provided list. (*This will be his/her "platform."*)
  - › Finally, have each student star the issue that is the most important to him/her. (*This is his/her "roar."*)

Conclude with a discussion about what some of the most important issues are and ideas for how your students can make a "roar" for that issue. (*Write a letter to a candidate/representative, join an organization with a focus on a specific issue, participate in a service project, start a social media campaign, initiate a kindness campaign, plan a flash mob to support an issue, etc.*)

### VOTING: VISUAL REALITY

When Monster saw that the library was closing, he realized he was part of something bigger than just being concerned about himself. Running for public office shouldn't be about you, it should be about how you can help the community.

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

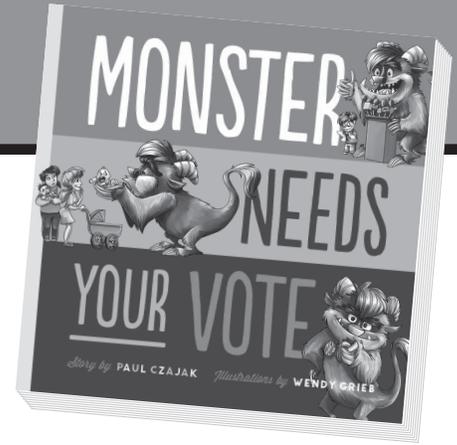
- › Have the group call out issues that they think are the most important concerns facing their school or community right now. Narrow down the issues to four choices. (*Write the issues on a white board or large piece of paper.*)
- › Split the group in half. Have one-half stand on one side of the room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

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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?

### CANDIDATE ALERT!

Tell the class or group you are going to call out some statements and you want them to move to the left or to the right in response to each statement. Tell them you want them to consider: *How many of you have ever been influenced by these elements or thoughts when you vote for something or when you consider who or what you support?*

Say:

- › Stand up and move to an open space. When you hear a statement, if your answer is "yes," take a step to the LEFT. If your answer is "no," take a step to the RIGHT.

At facilitator's discretion, you can choose to pause the activity and ask someone to share his/her thoughts. Where possible, try to elevate the group's thinking by giving new thoughts to consider so that they think more deeply and critically. Or, you can have students turn to each other to share something, giving everyone a chance to converse and be heard.

*How many of you have been influenced by this thought when considering whom you support . . .*

- › The candidate looks cool.

*How many of you have been influenced by this thought when considering whom you support . . .*

- › The candidate seems like someone I would hang out with.
- › The candidate is "blue" or the candidate is "red."

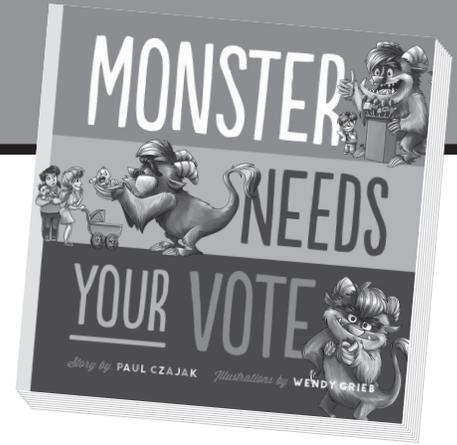
Remind the class or group of the question and to move left or right periodically to keep them focused.

*How many of you have been influenced by this thought when considering whom you support . . .*

- › The candidate cares about things I care about.
- › The candidate looks presidential.
- › I like the sound of his/her voice.
- › The candidate shows respect to other candidates in debates or on the campaign trail.

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- › I read or watch the news to learn more about a candidate’s mission and background—I want to know what he/she stands for.
- › He/she looks familiar. (*Dresses same as me, or has the same colored skin, or looks like someone I know.*)
- › The candidate has been a government leader for many years.
- › The candidate walks the talk. (*Does what he/she says he/she will do.*)
- › The candidate focuses on things that really matter to my community.
- › I like how he/she dresses.
- › I vote for the person my friends like and would vote for.
- › I would only vote if someone goes with me.
- › I will ask my teacher (*or parent*) whom I should support.
- › The candidate really wants to make the world a better place.
- › The candidate is from my state so I support him/her.
- › It doesn’t matter if I would vote or not because I don’t like any of the candidates.
- › The candidate is from a family that has been in politics so he/she must be qualified.

## WRAP UP DISCUSSION

Say:

- › You’ve thought about issues you care about—things you would be willing to take action to make better. We’ve brainstormed ideas for addressing issues at school. We’ve looked at the reality of how many people actually step up to vote and have their voice heard. And then we assessed what factors influence our thinking about whom we would want to choose when we vote.
- › And we probably realized that sometimes our “surface” thoughts don’t match our heart and passion for the issues we care about.
- › That “ah-ha” shows it takes work to sift through the noise of the candidates’ issues or platforms to figure out what is meaningful, what truth is, and what they really stand for.
- › What can we do to make sure we make well-informed decisions about whom we select? How can we make sure that the candidate we choose best believes in our “roar” as much as we do?

# MONSTER ROAR BINGO



<p>SPOKE UP FOR SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS YOU</p> <hr/>	<p>SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE FOR SOMEONE</p> <hr/>	<p>STOOD UP WHEN YOU SAW SOMEONE BEING BULLIED</p> <hr/>
<p>RAISED MONEY FOR SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IN</p> <hr/>	<p>MY ROAR!</p> <hr/>	<p>WORKED THROUGH A DISAGREEMENT WITH A FRIEND</p> <hr/>
<p>HELPED OUT IN THE COMMUNITY</p> <hr/>	<p>WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO HELP SOMEONE</p> <hr/>	<p>PARTICIPATED IN A RALLY, MARCH, OR VIGIL</p> <hr/>

# WHAT'S YOUR ROAR?



One of the biggest things to learn from Monster is that his “roar” counted the most when he was focused on matters that impacted everyone.

**Step 1:** Think for a minute about the struggles you see and what you know those around you encounter. Write down a few of the problems your home, school, neighborhood, and community faces.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2:** Now, look through each of the platform issues that get all the attention with today’s candidates. These are the platforms and where each candidate is spending his/her time “roaring.”

How do these issues compare to what you see, know, and experience in your school, family, neighborhood, and community? Are they the same? Which of the candidates’ issues reflect what is happening in your world?

**Step 3:** Place a checkmark in the columns below that fit your world view. Which issues are really important and reflect “we,” and which ones don’t?

Issue Platforms	Really Important “WE” Matter Right Now	Really NOT Important “WE” Issue Right Now
Immigration		
Gun Control		
Health Care		
Climate Change		
Our “we” issue:		
Our “we” issue:		

**Step 4:** Add in any issues that are important but aren’t being addressed. (See Step 1 to fill in your “platform” issues.)

**Step 5:** Star the issue most important to you—where you want to see a change or your “roar.” (Remember, you get the most power when you select a “roar” that is a “we” issue.)

## HEAR MY ROAR!

**Step 6:** Record the common “we” issues in the room on a white board or large piece of paper.

**Step 7:** Vote to select the “we” issue that is most important to the whole group. You can also use the Kids Voting USA voting software to create a private voting experience versus a show of hands or paper ballot option.

**Step 8:** Brainstorm ways to make a “roar” for that issue. (Examples: write a letter to a candidate/representative, join an organization with a focus on a specific issue, participate in a service project, start a social media campaign, initiate a kindness campaign, plan a flash mob to support an issue, etc.)

**Step 9:** After collectively picking an idea, create a plan of action to support positive engagement concerning the issue. Then take action! Let everyone hear your ROAR!

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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.