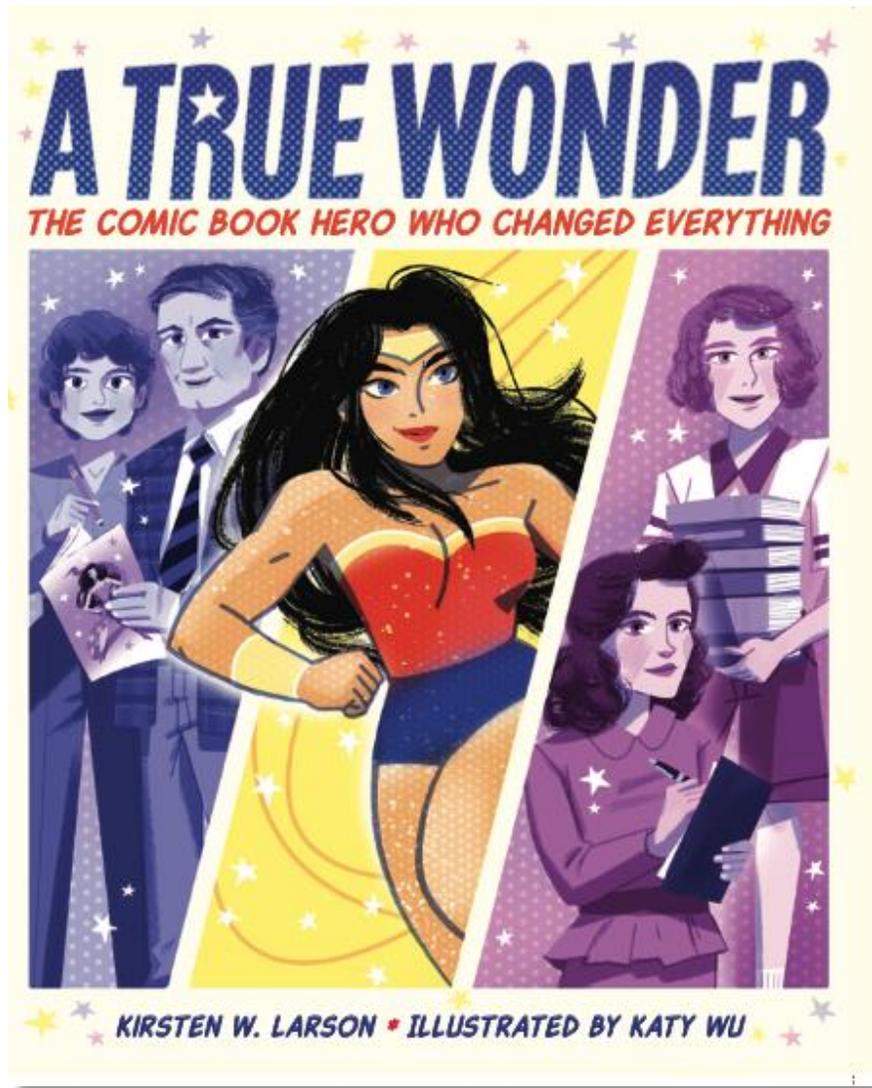


# A True Wonder

## The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen  
based upon the picture book biography  
written by Kirsten W. Larson and illustrated by Katy Wu



Published by Clarion Books  
An Imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

**Kirsten W. Larson**

**Author, *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything***

Kirsten W. Larson used to work with rocket scientists at NASA. Now she writes books for curious kids. She’s the author of *Wood, Wire, Wings: Emma Lilian Todd Invents an Airplane*, illustrated by Tracy Subisak (Calkins Creek, 2020), *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything*, illustrated by Katy Wu (Clarion Books, 2021) *Cecilia Payne: Making of a Star (Scientist)*, illustrated by Katherine Roy (Chronicle, 2022), along with 25 other nonfiction books for kids. Kirsten lives near Los Angeles with her husband, Ihasa-poo, and two curious kids. Her house is filled with LEGO, laughter, and lots of books!



Find her at [kirsten-w-larson.com](http://kirsten-w-larson.com) or on Twitter/Instagram @[KirstenWLarson](https://twitter.com/KirstenWLarson).

**Katy Wu**

**Illustrator, *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything***



Katy Wu illustrated the picture books *A True Wonder: The Superhero Who Changed Everything* by Kirsten W. Larson and *Grace Hopper: Queen of Computer Code* by Laurie Wallmark, among several others. Katy is also an art director in the animation industry. She lives in Portland, Oregon. [katycwwu.tumblr.com](http://katycwwu.tumblr.com), Twitter: @thewildkat, Instagram: @thewildkat

**Marcie Colleen**

**Curriculum Writer**

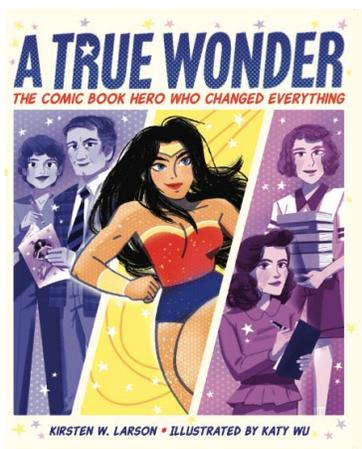
This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and an MA in Educational Theater from NYU. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children’s books, Marcie can often be found writing picture books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything* is designed for students in first through fifth grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.



### **A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything**

**Reading level: Ages 4-7**

**Grade Level: P – 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Publisher: Clarion Books**

**Published: September 28, 2021**

**ISBN-10: 0358238420**

**ISBN-13: 978-0358238423**

**A behind-the-scenes look at the creation and evolution of Wonder Woman, the iconic character who has inspired generations of girls and women as a symbol of female strength and power.**

Perhaps the most popular female superhero of all time, Wonder Woman was created by Bill Marston in 1941, upon the suggestion of his wife, Elizabeth. Wonder Woman soon showed what women can do—capture enemy soldiers, defeat criminals, become president, and more. Her path since has inspired women and girls while echoing their ever-changing role in society. Now a new group of devoted young fans enjoy her latest films, *Wonder Woman* and *Wonder Woman 1984*, and await a third installment being planned for theatrical release. This exceptional book raises up the many women who played a part in her evolution, from Elizabeth Marston to writer Joye Hummel to director Patty Jenkins, and makes clear that the fight for gender equality is still on-going.

Guide content copyright © 2021 by Marcie Colleen. Available free of charge for educational use only; may not be published or sold without express written permission.

# Table of Contents

## English Language Arts (ELA)

Reading Comprehension	4
Reading Nonfiction	6
Writing Activities	
Wonder Woman as Role Model	7
“The Only Hope For Civilization”: Writing a Persuasive Essay	8
A Superhero for Today	9
Real Life Wonders	
Speaking and Listening Activities	
Choral Reading	10
Mime Drama	
Language Activities	
Vocabulary Heroes	11
New Vocabulary: Hero	

## Math

Cookie for President	12
----------------------	----

## Science

Gender Bias in Science	13
------------------------	----

## Social Studies

The Hero in Me	14
Real-Life Wonder Women	
Female Firsts	15
Equality, Justice, Love, and Peace: A Public Mural	

# English Language Arts

## **Reading Comprehension**

Before reading *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything*

Tell students to look closely at the Front Cover ~

- Describe what you see.
- Who do you think the woman in the center is?
- Who do you think the other people on the cover are? What are some clues that tell you who might be?
- Can you guess what the book might be about?

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about.

- “As lovely as Aphrodite—as wise as Athena—with the speed of Mercury and the strength of Hercules—she is known only as Wonder Woman, but who she is, or when she came, nobody knows!” What three words would you use to describe Wonder Woman from this opening quote?
- In America in 1941, “the comic book industry is dominated by white men.” Look closely at the illustration on this page. What do you notice about all the superheroes depicted?
  - How was Wonder Woman different?
  - Why was Wonder Woman important?
- Why do you think kids gobble up comic books?
  - Why did grownups object to comic books?
- Who was Bill Marston?
  - What was his job?
- Who was Elizabeth Marston?
- What did the Marstons have to do with the creation of Wonder Woman?

- Why did Bill Marston believe that Wonder Woman would be a good influence on kids?
- Who was Charlie Gaines?
- How did Wonder Woman become part of the Justice Society?
  - Why do you think kids liked her so much?
  - Why do you think parents objected to Wonder Woman?
- What addition did Alice Marble bring Wonder Woman comics?
- How did Joye Hummel come to be the main writer of Wonder Woman?
- Why did sales of patriotic superheroes slump after World War II?
- With men back in charge, how did Wonder Woman change in the 1950s?
- Bill Marston wanted Wonder Woman to be a strong and powerful role model for young girls. How did his Wonder Woman achieve this?
- The new crew in the 1950s wanted Wonder Woman to be a role model for girls, as well. How so?
- Why do you think Wonder Woman was stripped of her powers in the 1960s?
- Why did Ms. magazine take an interest in Wonder Woman?
  - How did they further Wonder Woman's place in culture?
- "Wonder Woman was conceived...to set up a standard among children and young people of strong, free, courageous womanhood; to combat the idea that women are inferior to men; and to inspire girls to self-confidence and achievement in athletics, occupations, and professions monopolized by men." How is the world today similar to the world that Wonder Woman had first promised when the Marstons first created the idea?
- Can you name any real-life Wonder Woman in our world today?

Let's talk about the people who created *A True Wonder*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?

- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?
- Look closely at Katy Wu’s illustration of Wonder Woman. Then, do an internet search to find original comic versions of Wonder Woman. What do the two versions share in common? How are the two versions different?
  - Draw your own version of Wonder Woman. What would you keep the same? What would you change?

**Reading Nonfiction**

While reading *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything* aloud to the class, have students take notes in two columns:

- Things We Learned
- Questions We Have

Pause before each page turn to add notes to the columns. These columns can either be worked on individually or put on the smartboard and worked on as a class.

Things We Learned (Facts)	Questions We Have	Answers We Found

- Once the story is read, discuss the Questions We Have column.
  - Were any of these questions answered as the story went along?
  - If so, ask students to find the answer within the text.
  - Record the answer next to the question in a third column labeled Answers We Found.
- For all remaining questions in the Questions We Have column, that have yet to be answered, students will need to take the steps to find answers, either through Internet or book research.
  - Discuss how to find answers to questions through research.

- Assign students to specific questions to help them focus.
- Record all answers in the Answers We Found column.
- After the answers have been shared with the class, engage in a discussion on research practices.
  - What was the most difficult part about finding answers?
  - Was it easier to find answers on the Internet or in a book?
  - Which source is more reliable, the Internet or a printed book? Why?
  - How can you determine whether to trust a source?
  - What tips would you give someone who is about to do research?
- Read the Author’s Note (The Origin Story...of This Book) and The Women of Wonder Woman at the back of the book.
  - Create an additional chart to document what information in the back matter was included in the story and what information was not included.
  - Why do you think Kirsten Larson chose to include certain information in the main text and leave other information to the backmatter?
  - Choose three facts from the backmatter and explain why you think each was not included in the story.

Extension: Design and illustrate posters representing each Fact, Question, and researched Answer based on *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything* and display them within the classroom.

## **Writing Activities**

### **Wonder Woman as Role Model**

When Bill Marston first conceived of the idea of Wonder Woman, he wanted her to be a role model for young children. Read the following quote:

“We can’t help what we are, only what life we choose to make for ourselves.”

This quote appears in *Wonder Woman: Warbringer*, a 2017 comic adaptation of Wonder Woman, written by Leigh Bardugo.

Explain this quote in your own words.

- How does this quote reflect Bill Marston's vision for Wonder Woman?
- How has Wonder Woman inspired others to make strong and powerful decisions for themselves?
- What inspiration, if any, do you get from Wonder Woman?
- How will you be the hero in your own story?

### **"The Only Hope For Civilization": Writing a Persuasive Essay**

Wonder Woman was created out of a need. Young children, especially girls, needed a role model. Up until then, all superheroes had been male. The idea of a female superhero was rejected by many within the comics industry and beyond. Bill Marston needed to persuade others to see his vision.

Ask your students if they know what "persuade" means. If not, can they make any guesses?

Discuss:

- What it means to persuade
- Times you might want to persuade someone (e.g., persuade your parents to let you stay up late, persuade your teacher to not give a test)

Writing to persuade tells the reader what you believe, gives the reader at least three reasons why you believe it, and has a good ending sentence. You want to try and convince the reader to agree with you.

Pretending to be Bill Marston, write a letter to the men of All-American Comics persuading them to create Wonder Woman.

Use the following TREE structure:

T = Topic sentences

The topic sentence tells the reader what you think or believe. Example: I am writing to you because I believe strongly that a female superhero would be a good influence and role model for today's young children.

R = Reasons

The reasons why you believe what you believe. Write at least two to four sentences giving

three reasons. Use evidence directly from the text.

E = Ending

Wrap it up with a conclusive sentence.

E = Examine

Look closely. Do you have all of your parts?

Share your essays with the class. Which is the most persuasive? Why do you think so?

Speaking and Listening Extension: Create a TV commercial or PowerPoint presentation to encourage people to read *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything*. Be sure to incorporate the TREE structure!

### **A Superhero for Today**

Times have changed since Wonder Woman was created.

Make a list of today's popular superheroes.

- What do these superheroes have in common?
- Are there any who stand out as unique? How so?
- Do you see any room for more diversity? How so?
- Wonder Woman was created so that young girls could see themselves in her heroism. Where do you see a need for kids today to see themselves in a superhero?

Create your own superhero for today! Draw a picture of your superhero, list what makes them a hero (and super!), and create a poster introducing them to others.

### **Real Life Wonders**

Every day we are surrounded by people who quietly fight for the common good or stand up for what they believe is right. These outstanding individuals show what the power of one can accomplish in our neighborhoods and communities.

Who are the superheroes in your community?

Interview and write a report about someone in your own community who you think makes a positive impact. Topics to include:

- Why you believe this person to be a hero to the neighborhood and community.
- Describe the person activity/activities that significantly benefitted their neighborhood.

- How long has the hero contributed to the neighborhood? What was their most recent activity?
- Describe the creative and innovative methods used by the hero to benefit their neighborhood.
- Include any other interesting information relevant to the hero's activities.
- What is this hero's impact to the neighborhood and/or community at large?

Include documentation such as pamphlets, articles, presentations, photographs, news clippings, letters of support, etc. if applicable.

Present these reports to the class. Invite the hero's for a "Real Life Wonder" celebration.

## **Speaking and Listening Activities**

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything* to life in your classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills!

### **Choral Reading**

- Turn *A True Wonder* into a script. Read the script out loud together. Emphasize memorization of the students' parts as well as good vocal expression.

### **Mime**

- While the teacher reads the book aloud, students can act out the events in the book. Emphasize body motion and facial expressions, as well as listening skills.

### **Drama**

- Create a Flipgrid or PowerPoint presentation to encourage people to read *A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything*.

## Language Activities

### Vocabulary Heroes

*A True Wonder* contains a few “super heroic” words that may be new to students. Encourage the students to use context clues from both the text and illustrations to infer the meanings of any unfamiliar words.

dominated	mission	menace	surrender
ferocious	influence	proposed	protested
capture	landslide	crusade	patriotic
equality	glory	symbolizes	self-reliance
sisterhood	valid	justice	peace
legacy			

#### Additional Exploration:

- While they read, ask students to look carefully for words they do not know. As soon as they come across a new vocabulary word, they should jot it down.
- Look up the unknown word in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.) Read the definition.
- Use the new word in a sentence.
- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.

### New Vocabulary: Hero

Wonder Woman is a superhero. Although she had superpowers, she also had a real-life mission: to inspire young children to be heroes and change the world.

Look up ‘hero’ in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.)

- Read the definition.
- Then, define ‘hero’ in your own words.

After better understanding what a hero is, discuss whether the following examples are 'heroic' or not.

- Showing kindness to someone in need.
- Standing up for someone who is being picked on.
- Helping out a person or animal, even if it might put you in a little bit of danger.
- Taking a stand against an unfair social or economic practice.

Discuss:

- What qualities or actions make Wonder Woman a hero?
- Do you know anyone in your life who is a real-life hero?
- Can you think of a time when you were a hero?
- Something that you can do today to be a hero.

## Math

### **Cookie for President**

**Did you know that Wonder Woman once ran for President on the cover of MS. Magazine in 1972? You can see the cover of the magazine here:**

[msmagazine.com/2021/01/30/smithsonians-sidedoor-podcast-examines-how-ms-made-wonder-woman-a-feminist-icon/](https://msmagazine.com/2021/01/30/smithsonians-sidedoor-podcast-examines-how-ms-made-wonder-woman-a-feminist-icon/).

Wonder Woman encouraged young readers to do their civic duty and participate in acts for justice. She also promoted the importance of the right to vote and voting equality.

Take students through a mock voting process to learn more about this civic duty and how it works.

Choose up to four cookies to be running for President of All Cookies. (Of course, due to allergies, you may choose to vote on class mascot, fruit, or the next book to read as a class).

Assign each student one of the candidates and they will act as a campaign team, creating a presentation based on facts and opinions about their given candidate.

Each campaign team will then present their cookie to the class.

Then, in a mock voting process, students will vote for their chosen candidate.

Count the votes. Provide a vote tally or percentage for each candidate.

- Do you feel like this process is fair? Why?
- What types of things do people vote on today?
- Do you think voting is an important civic duty? Why or why not?

## Science

### **Gender Bias in Science**

We hope students today realize that girls can do and be anything boys can. But bias still exists in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

While we rarely recognize biases within our own thinking, this activity will raise consciousness and spark discussion.

1. Ask children to draw a picture of an inventor or scientist. They may not ask any questions of you or any of their peers. They must simply draw the first inventor or scientist that comes to their minds, with no talking or sharing.
2. Then, students should create a brief written description of who their person is and their person does.
3. Ask them to share their drawings and descriptions with the class.
4. While students are sharing, chart the number of male and female inventors and scientists that students create on a graph. Do not reveal what you are doing to avoid skewing the results.

Discuss the results. Often children draw mostly male scientists or inventors in lab coats with chemicals or something of the sort. Share the graph with the students. Do the results show an internalized gender bias? Challenge the class to discuss where they feel this bias comes from and why it is harmful to society.

Use Wonder Woman in *A True Wonder* as an example.

- How have the STEM fields changed for females since Wonder Woman was created?
- How have they stayed the same?
- How can we take steps to end gender bias in the sciences and engineering?

# Social Studies

## **The Hero In Me**

Brainstorm a list of the qualities and actions that make Wonder Woman a hero.

The Project:

- Have each student lay down on a large piece of paper while someone traces their body with a pencil.
- Once the student has the silhouette of their body, they can write the things that make Wonder Woman a hero outside the outline.
- Inside the outline, they can write some of the qualities they share with Wonder Woman Or ways in which she has inspired them.
- Then students can decorate their silhouette. Photos and other images can be added to create a collage.

## **Real-Life Wonder Women**

Assign a famous real-life Wonder Woman for students to research in the library and on the Internet. A list of 11 who are mentioned or depicted in *A True Wonder* are below, but do not feel limited to those on the list.

- Clara Barton
- Dolley Madison
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Gloria Steinem
- Lynda Carter
- Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
- Kamala Harris
- Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
- Patty Jenkins
- Malala Yousafzai
- Greta Thunberg

Possible sources for information:

- Nonfiction books
- Library research
- The Internet

Take notes and gather as much information as possible on the following five topics about your inventor:

- Early Life/Childhood/Family
- Life
- Famous work
- Legacy
- Other fun facts

Once the information is gathered, work to create either an illustrated poster or booklet of the findings.

### **Female Firsts**

Wonder Woman was one of the first female superheroes. Since her creation there have been a few others. But Wonder Woman was a pioneer.

Did you know that history is filled with pioneer “wonder women” in many different fields?

Type the phrase “first woman to” into a search engine and see how many pioneers you can find.

Write a thank you letter to one of these women. How has their accomplishment influenced your life?

### **Equality, Justice, Love, and Peace: A Public Mural**

Throughout history, art has been used to transform public spaces into places of beauty and reflection. Most importantly, these pieces of public art are used to bring about tighter community and make those in the community aware of issues.

Look up examples of public art on the Internet: examples in subways, under bridges and in parks. Be sure to find examples of traditional murals painted on walls, but also sculptures and knit-bombing.

How can art be used to further awareness of a cause?

- Bring people together to create it
- Reflect all people in the community in the artwork
- Create a space that people will want to visit and hang out in

Students can make their own piece of public art for the school community!

1. Choose a space within the school that could use some brightening or some inspiration.
2. Brainstorm a mural or other piece of temporary art called "Equality, Justice, Love, and Peace" that can be created in this space.
3. Brainstorm how this mural can build community and promote Wonder Woman's most important values.
4. Involve as many people as possible in the creation.