About the Book

Robby Novak, also known as Kid President, is an 11-year-old boy from Tennessee. He and his brother-in-law, Brad Montague, teamed up with the media company SoulPancake to create amazing internet videos that entertain, educate, and, most important, inspire. Robby, who suffers from osteogenesis imperfecta (also known as “brittle bone disease”), has endured 13 surgeries and 70 broken bones. Yet Robby shares joy, laughter, and encouragement with millions of viewers. He wants to inspire others to change the world through joy and kindness. The positive energy he exudes will motivate others to be awesome and make the world an awesome place.

The first Kid President video was made during the summer of 2012, in the midst of a fierce presidential race. Robby and Brad wanted to put something online to offset all the political (and often unkind) messages blanketing the internet. Brad writes, “I just thought the world needed grown-ups to pause and see things through the eyes of a kid. What if a kid just told everybody what they thought? What if that kid was Robby? Would anyone hear a happy, small voice over the louder, older ones?” Fortunately the answer was yes, and so began the phenomenon of Kid President.


This book also shares Brad and Robby’s ideas about how to make the world a better place. Teachers can use the book and the videos to encourage their students to bring joy, kindness, creativity, and positive energy into their lives, their school, and their community.

Each classroom activity has at least one corresponding video. Teachers might choose to show the videos first to set the stage for each activity, or they might prefer to use the videos as a culminating activity. The videos and book complement each other, and therefore can be used in either order.

Children and adults alike will connect with Kid President’s infectious laughter, joyous dancing, and powerful messages of hope, joy, and compassion.
Kid President’s Guide to Being Awesome

Teacher’s Manual

I started ‘Kid President’ with my brother-in-law Robby out of a desire to help shape the way kids see the world and the way the world sees kids. Along the way we’ve met some incredible people, but none more inspiring than teachers. You’re changing the world. I believe it. I’ve seen it. One of our greatest honors has been seeing educators use ‘Kid President’ in their classrooms.

We can’t wait to see how you inspire and empower the young people in your life. Let us know how it goes and know we’re cheering you on. You’re a hero.

Keep going!
- Brad

Classroom Suggestions

#1 Kid President includes two pep talks in the book (pp. 24–37 and pp. 222–229). Have students read the pep talks. You can also show the video A Pep Talk from Kid President to You at bit.ly/kidpresident as you introduce this activity. Divide the students into small groups. Have them discuss the pep talks. Ask: How did they make you feel? Were they funny? Were they inspiring? What parts could you relate to? Then ask students to think about what they would include in their own pep talk. In their small group, have students collaborate and compose an original pep talk. If available, they can use Google Docs to write and edit the document simultaneously. The group should then practice delivering their pep talk. When they are prepared, the students should present it. Or, students can record their pep talk to make a video of their own. Have them present the pep talks (or videos) to the rest of the class and to other classes in the school. CCSS: RL.2-5.1, W.2-5.5, W.2-5.6, SL.2-5.1, SL.2-5.2, SL.2-5.5
Classroom Suggestions

#2 Kid President writes about a variety of influential people. Some are famous, such as Nick Hornby (p. 117) and Josh Groban (p. 118), and others are not famous, including Christian Bucks (p. 120), Vivienne Harr (p. 168), and Jeff Shinabarger (p. 169). Kid President suggests, “Let your heroes know they are your heroes.” Students can read about how teacher Nancy Flexer was honored by students (pp. 192–193) and view the video *For the Heroes: A Pep Talk from Kid President* at bit.ly/heroespeptalk. Then ask students to choose someone “awesome” and write a biography about their chosen hero. For a local hero, students should prepare questions and arrange to interview them in person. For someone famous, have students learn about that person and try to contact him or her by letter or email. If the person is no longer alive, have the student research his hero using books, periodicals, and the internet. All students should write about why this person inspires them and how their hero’s actions impact the world around him or her. If possible, invite a local hero in to meet the class. CCSS: RI.2-5.1, W.2-5.2, W.3-5.7, W.3-5.8, SL.2-5.2, SL.2-5.4

Have students read about Yash Gupta’s eyeglasses organization (p. 60), Katie Stagliano’s Katie’s Krops (p. 124), the Socktober drive (pp. 126–129), Ryan Hreljac’s Ryan’s Well foundation (p. 131) and Cassandra Lin’s TGIF (Turn Grease into Fuel) project (p. 174). These are just a few examples of ordinary people described in this book who have done extraordinary deeds simply by helping others. You can also show the video 3 Questions That Could Change the World from Kid President at bit.ly/kp3questions or Kid President—How to Change the World (A Work in Progress) at bit.ly/kpchangeworld. Then, find out what the needs are in your neighborhood by reaching out to local government and/or community-based service organizations. As a class or as a school, organize an event to help others in your area. Students should begin thinking about what changes they want to make in their local community by responding to the questions on p. 219 and writing about how they believe they can help make the world more awesome. CCSS: RL.2-5.1, W.2-5.1, SL.2-5.1

“CREATE SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE THE WORLD AWESOME.”

Kid President
#4 Read pp. 92–101 and view the video Kid President’s 20 Things We Should Say More Often at bit.ly/kp20things. Engage the students in a discussion as a class or in small groups. Do the students agree with Kid President? Why or why not? Then have students come up with their own list of “20 Things We Should Say More Often.” The students should write down and illustrate their ideas. Compile them into a book to share with the class or with other classes in the school. CCSS: W.2-5.1, SL.2-5.1, SL.2-5.2, SL.2-5.3

#5 Read about Bailey Hazouri’s Pop-Up Art Show (pp.144–145) and show students the video Kid President Throws a Pop-Up Art Show! at bit.ly/kpartshow. As a class, create a pop-up art show. Have students bring in photographs that are meaningful, or have students take photographs around the school of people and places that are important to them. Ask students to choose one or more photographs and mount them on paper or cardstock. Then have students write narratives about the photographs, describing why they are meaningful to them and what is most important and special about the person/place/thing featured in the photograph(s). Display around the classroom and invite parents and/or other classes to view the pop-up art show. CCSS: RI.2-5.1, W.2-5.3, W.3-5.4, SL.2-5.4
Other Ideas

- In Kid President’s pep talk, he discusses a Robert Frost poem and a song by Journey. Have students choose a poem or a song that inspires them. This could be linked with a poetry unit or a reading unit that focuses on making connections with a text. As an extension, students can write their own poems or songs. Refer to p. 133 about writing a song and p. 157 about writing a poem.

- Throughout the book, Robby and Brad have a “written conversation” shown with drawings of themselves accompanied by text written in two different colored boxes (see examples on pp. 20, 66, and 110). Pair up kids to have a written conversation. This can be part of a writing unit or done early in the school year to help students become acquainted with one another.

- On pp. 22–23, a timeline illustrates “A Brief History of Awesome.” Have students create a timeline of their own lives or the life of an important person in history. This can easily fit into a social studies unit about the history of Thanksgiving, the presidents, or a famous inventor/explorer.

- Read about taking “brain pictures” (pp. 44–45). Ask students to reflect on the most memorable moments in their lives. These can be small joys or major life events. Have students illustrate and write captions for these joyous moments. This can be part of a family unit or an “All About Me” unit.

- Read p. 52. Students can create a “to-do list” or a “not-do list” about what they should do to be awesome. They can also design “awesome-tinted glasses” (p. 57) and make a list of awesome things that keep themselves feeling positive and inspired. This can be tied into Earth Day (April 22) so that students can focus on what they can do to keep our planet awesome.

- Read pp. 66–67. Have students discuss their passions and then have them write about these passions. Students should share with their peers why their passion is awesome and why others might want to share their passion.

- On pp. 72, 116, and 130 Kid President talks about the power of mailing cards and letters (and corndogs!) to bring joy to the recipient. Have students write and mail letters. This can correspond to Veteran’s Day; students can write letters to active soldiers or veterans.
Other Ideas

• Read p. 107. Then have students leave notes and compliments for their classmates. This is perfect for the December holiday season or for Valentine’s Day.

• On p. 109 there are directions for how to make a tin can phone. Have students design their own phone and use it to converse with a classmate. Have students practice listening to one another. After their conversations, have students share something their partner has said with the rest of the class. This teaches students to become active listeners and how to focus on another person’s thoughts and ideas instead of their own. This activity can be part of a friendship unit or character-building/respect unit.

• Refer to p. 110. Students can interview a parent or grandparent about their own childhood. Then they can use this information to write about their parent or grandparent. This can be done for Grandparents’ Day or as part of a family history unit.

• Students can invent a new handshake (p. 122) or a new dance (p. 162). Great for the beginning of the school year.

• Play a word game activity such as the one described on p. 151. Have students come up with new names for objects (e.g. pants = leg tubes). Great activity for vocabulary development, categorizing, and creative thinking.

• Plan a family day (p. 172) for Mother’s Day and/or Father’s Day.

• Create a class blog or online newsletter (p. 173) about the school. Focus on sharing good news! Write about students’ and teachers’ talents, kind deeds, and funny experiences. Meets common core standard for using digital tools to produce and publish writing.

• Refer to pp. 200-201. Have students think about “Who do I want to be?” This can be tied into a Career Day.

• Have students develop an idea collage similar to the blue end pages of this book. You can use a website like Wordle (www.wordle.net) to create awesome word collages. This can be designed for any topic.

• Read “Make Something Awesome!” (p. 166) and “Use Your Imagination!” (pp. 170-171). Ask students to think about something they could invent. This can be tied into National Inventors’ Day (February 11 in honor of Thomas Edison’s birthday).