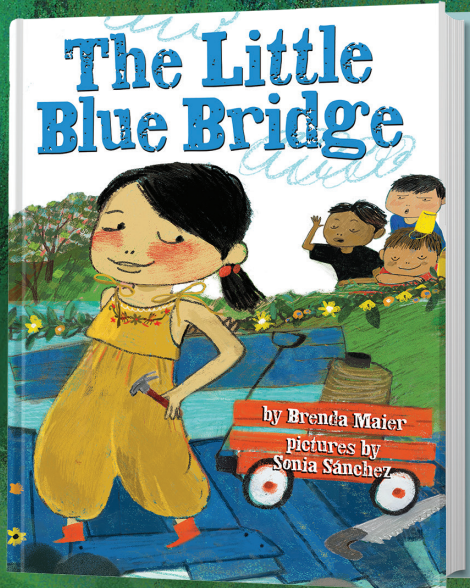
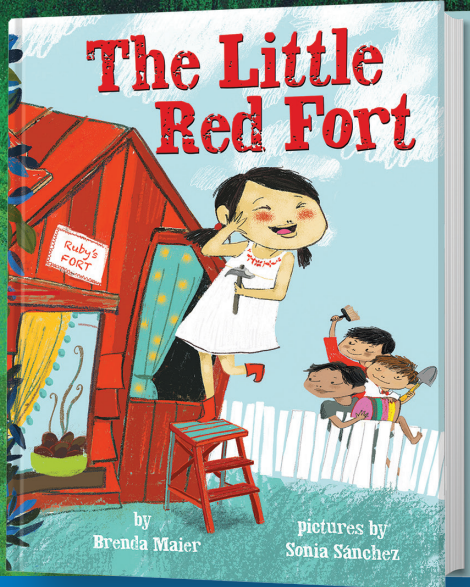


# ACTIVITY GUIDE

## Little Ruby's Big Ideas

AGES 4–8  
GRADES  
PRE-K–3



**Reproducibles in this guide reinforce:**

**STEAM/STEM Themes • Basic Engineering Concepts • Literary Analysis**

**The  
Power  
of Story**

Building Equitable  
Bookshelves

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# Ruby's mind is always full of ideas.

*The Little Red Fort*, *The Little Blue Bridge*, and *The Little Green Swing*, known collectively as Little Ruby's Big Ideas, are award-winning STEM/STEAM picture books written by Brenda Maier and illustrated by Sonia Sánchez. Independent Ruby, the star of these empowering tales, refuses to be deterred when her three older brothers tell her she can't do something. Each story offers a fresh take on a classic tale while introducing young readers to basic engineering concepts:

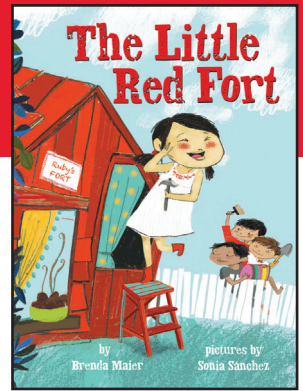
- *The Little Red Fort* offers a modern spin on *The Little Red Hen* as Ruby designs and builds an amazing fort.
- Echoes of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* resonate in *The Little Blue Bridge* as Ruby creatively solves the problem of a bully on a bridge and builds her own way to cross a creek.
- *The Little Green Swing*, loosely adapted from *The Three Little Pigs*, emphasizes the importance of planning before building when Ruby makes a stupendous swing for herself and her brothers.

## Discussion Questions for Young Readers

- What three adjectives would you use to describe Ruby?
- How does Ruby react when her brothers tell her she can't do something or they ignore her ideas?
- How does Ruby achieve her goals?
- How do you come up with ideas for projects?
- If you could build anything, what would it be? Why do you want to build it?
- How do you share your ideas to help others know what you're thinking about? Do you write them down, draw them, talk to others, or do something else?
- If you were going to build a fort, what materials would you use and why?
- Why is it important to have a plan before you build something?
- How would you complete this sentence, "Ruby inspires me to . . . "?



# Build a Fort



Ruby creates a dazzling fort to play in! Forts can be made with blankets, couch cushions, chairs—just about anything! Alone or with a partner, follow the steps below to design and build a fort. Use a separate sheet of paper for your sketches.

## Step 1: BRAINSTORM

What type of fort do you want to build? How many people need to fit in it? Will your fort be indoors or outdoors? What type of building materials are available to use? What other questions come to mind as you brainstorm about your fort? Describe your ideal fort:

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## Step 2: DESIGN

Sketch your fort design and list needed materials:

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## Step 3: BUILD YOUR FORT

## Step 4: TEST AND EVALUATE

How do you like your design? Does it make for a sturdy fort?

## Step 5: MODIFY

What changes do you want to make? How do these changes make your fort stronger or better?

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Sketch your finished fort. How is it different from your original design?

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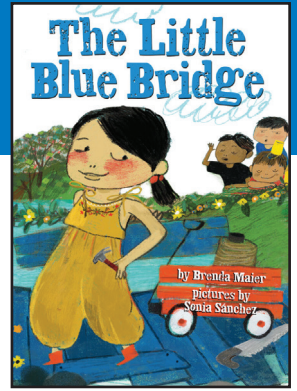
## Step 6: SHARE SOLUTIONS

Describe your fort building experience to another team or person. Talk about the ways you fixed problems and improved your original design.



# Comparing Stories

*The Little Blue Bridge* is based on the Norwegian folktale *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. In the folktale, a hungry troll stops three billy goats from crossing his bridge. Each goat tricks the troll into letting him pass by saying that his brother, coming behind him, is bigger and tastier. Think about these two stories and answer the questions below.



In what ways is *The Little Blue Bridge* **similar to** *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*?



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In what ways is *The Little Blue Bridge* **different from** *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*?

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What other folktale would you want Ruby to star in? What character would she play in that story?

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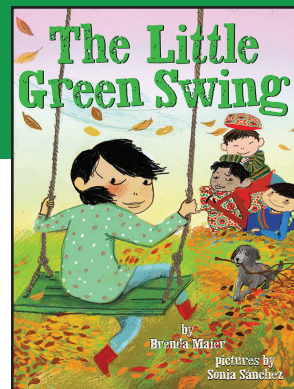
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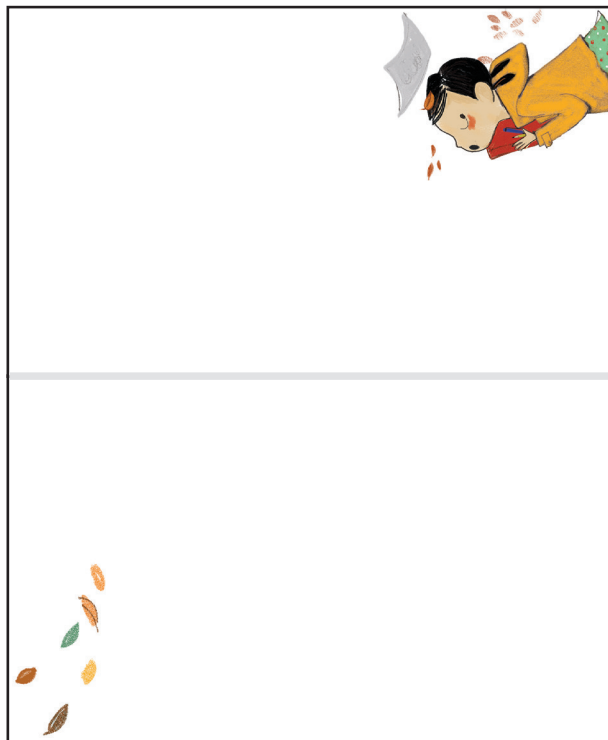


# Project Ideas Notebook

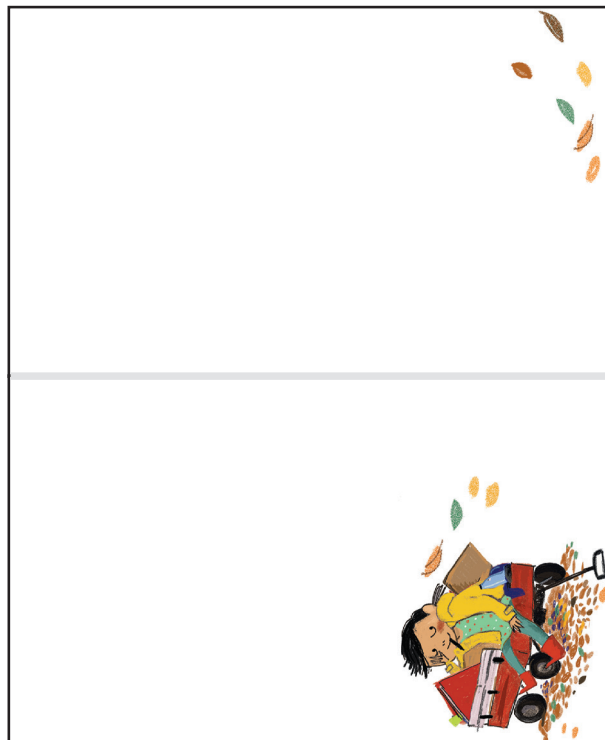
Before she builds anything, Ruby spends time brainstorming and sketching plans. What project ideas do you have? What problems would you like to solve? Make this notebook to keep track of your ideas and design sketches!



2



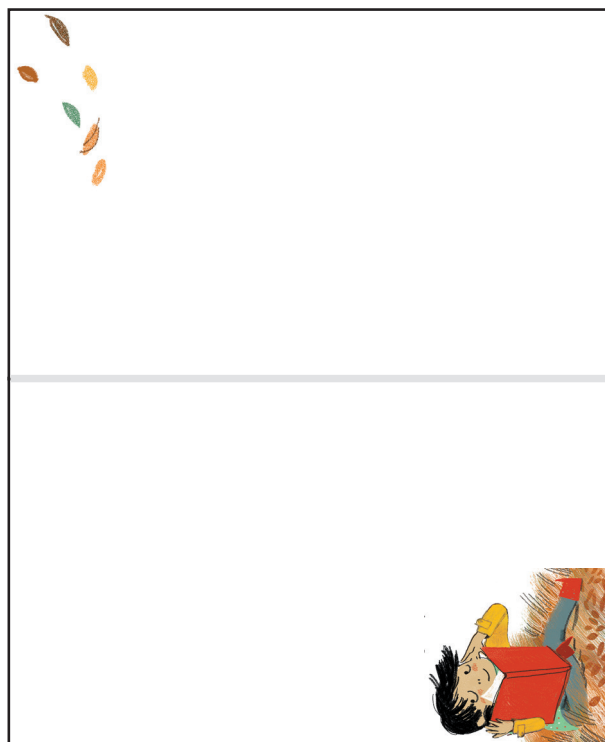
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1

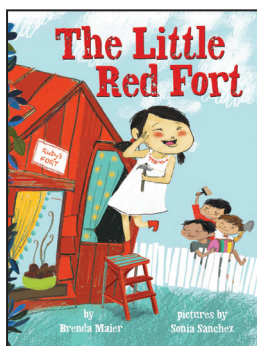


3



Cut out the rectangles and stack the pages in order with #1 on top. Staple along the center line and fold to create a mini notebook.

# Praise for Little Ruby's Big Ideas



## RUBY'S MIND IS ALWAYS FULL OF IDEAS.

One day, she finds some old boards and decides to build something. She invites her brothers to help but they just laugh and tell her she doesn't know how to build. "Then I'll learn," she says. And she does! When she creates a dazzling fort that they all want to play in, it is Ruby who has the last laugh.

With sprightly text and winsome illustrations, this modern spin on *The Little Red Hen* celebrates the pluck and ingenuity of young creators everywhere!

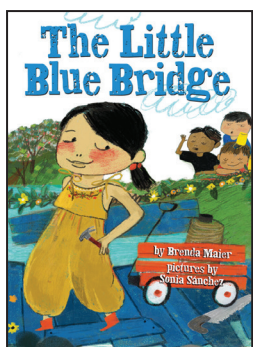
ONE BOOK FOR COLORADO WINNER  
BANK STREET COLLEGE BEST CHILDREN'S BOOK  
CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY BEST BOOK

★ "The Little Red Hen gets an appealing girl-power update . . . Young makers of all genders will be inspired."

—*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, starred review

"A lively picture book that's fun to read-aloud."  
—*Booklist*

*The Little Red Fort* — HC: 9780545859196 • \$17.99 — Also available in Spanish and ebook — Ages 4–8 • Grades PreK–3



## WHEN RUBY SPIES SOME BLUEBERRIES

across the creek, she invites her brothers to pick some. Unfortunately, the bridge is blocked by scary Santiago who won't let them cross. But resourceful Ruby refuses to be bullied and creates her own way to cross the creek!

This fresh take on *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* pays tribute to creative problem solving and building bridges of friendship.

BANK STREET COLLEGE BEST CHILDREN'S BOOK

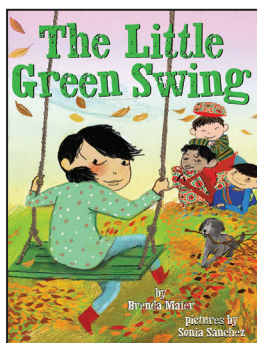
"A worthwhile refresh of a classic with a slight Latinx twist."

—*Booklist*

"Neither Ruby's size nor gender is an obstacle to success . . . A fun read-aloud experience."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

*The Little Blue Bridge* — HC: 9781338538014 • \$18.99 — Also available in Spanish and ebook — Ages 4–8 • Grades PreK–3



## ONE WINDY DAY, RUBY INVITES HER

brothers to help build something stupendous. But her brothers don't want to plan—they want to play. As the wind huffs and puffs and blows their hasty efforts down, can Ruby prove that patience and persistence pay off?

Loosely adapted from *The Three Little Pigs* and brimming with pluck and fun, *The Little Green Swing* will inspire readers everywhere to make their own stupendous creations!

AVAILABLE  
FALL 2024!

*The Little Green Swing* — HC: 9781338816198 • \$18.99 — Also available in ebook — Ages 4–8 • Grades PreK–3

## About the Author and Illustrator



Resolusean Photography

**Brenda Maier** is a public school teacher and a gifted education specialist. When she isn't writing, Brenda enjoys traveling with her family, baking peanut-free cookies, and watching her five children build amazing creations from found materials. She lives near Tulsa, Oklahoma. Learn more about her at [brendamaier.com](http://brendamaier.com).



Sonia Sánchez

**Sonia Sánchez** paints with both traditional and digital brushes, using layers of texture in her work to evoke emotion and movement. She is the illustrator of *Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away* by Meg Medina and other acclaimed picture books. Sonia lives with her husband and young children in Barcelona, Spain. Learn more about her at [soniasanchez.ultra-book.com](http://soniasanchez.ultra-book.com).



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