

READING GUIDE

TO THE GROWN-UPS,

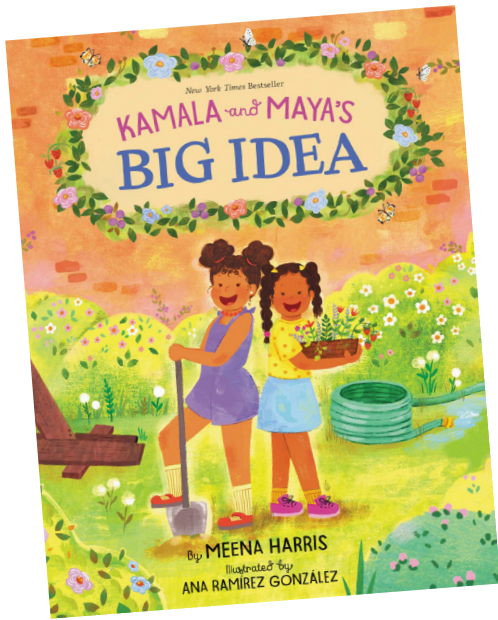
This reading guide can be used when you read the book *Kamala and Maya's Big Idea* with children. When you read together, the words on the page are only the beginning. Reading can open up a world of questions, conversations, and inspired activities that bring the book to life. As you read and talk together, children are developing important language and skills, stretching their imaginations, and learning about how to stand up for important ideas that make the world a better place.

As children learn and grow, they need our help to learn about fairness, justice, and how each of us can contribute to making a better world for ourselves and others. Part of this learning process includes building children's ability to recognize and talk about unfairness, and eventually, being empowered to take action. This learning is often referred to as anti-bias education, and you can learn more about it [here!](#)

Before reading the book to children, read it yourself for a preview. You can watch this [video](#) of the author, Meena Harris (Kamala's niece!), reading the book aloud to help you prepare to read it aloud with children. Then, as you read this book with children, take cues from them. Notice what they are curious about, ask them questions, and allow them to ask questions and make observations. Most of all, enjoy reading this book and many others with children, and have fun! And, as you continue to choose books to read with children, make sure to check out [Teaching for Change's helpful guide for selecting anti-bias children's books.](#)

Thank you for your partnership,
School Readiness Consulting





Kamala and Maya's Big Idea

Written by:

Meena Harris

Illustrated by:

Ana Ramirez González

LEARNING NEW WORDS:

Here are some words that may be new to some children. All of these words are important, but you may want to focus on a few at a time each time you read this book. The more words children learn, the easier it will be for them to learn how to read. When you see these words in the book, you can introduce them. Ask if they know what the words mean. If they don't, you can explain the meaning to them, or you can show them examples or act out the words.

VOCABULARY:

- 1 PLAYGROUND**
An outside area for playing
- 2 COURTYARD**
An open space next to a building that is mostly surrounded by walls
- 3 LANDLORD**
The owner of land or buildings that are rented to other people
- 4 TEETER-TOTTER**
A board that is balanced so that children can sit on opposite ends so that one goes up and the other goes down (sometimes also known as a seesaw)
- 5 EXPENSIVE**
Costing a lot of money
- 6 SHRUG**
Lifting your shoulders up and down
- 7 POSTER**
A big piece of paper to make a sign
- 8 CONSTRUCTION**
To work on building something like a home or bridge
- 9 LUMBER**
Pieces of wood that have been cut and will be used to build something
- 10 MEASURE**
Use a tool to see how big or long or heavy something is
- 11 SANDED**
Used special paper with sand on it to make wood feel smooth

- 12 POTLUCK**
A meal where each person or family brings something to eat for everyone to share
- 13 HUMMUS**
A dip made from mashed chickpeas (a type of bean) and tahini (which is ground up sesame seeds)
- 14 SPRINKLER**
An attachment to a hose that sprays water in the air for children to play in
- 15 ADMIRE**
A feeling that something is good
- 16 AFFORD**
To have enough money to buy something
- 17 SIDEWALK SALE**
When a family or neighborhood sells things they no longer need to raise money
- 18 CONTRIBUTE**
To give something to help reach a goal
- 19 IMPRESSED**
To feel proud of someone for a job well done
- 20 PER-SISTERS**
Two sisters who do not give up (Persister – a person who does not give up)

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION:

BEFORE READING:

Ask children what they think the book might be about. Talk about the cover of the book, point to the name of the author (Meena Harris, the person who wrote the book) and the illustrator (Ana Ramírez González, the person who drew the pictures). Ask if children know anyone who looks like the girl on the cover, and why they think these girls are holding a shovel and a plant. If you have already read the book with the children, ask what they remember about the book.

QUESTIONS FOR MAKING CONVERSATION:

Interacting with children while you read helps them build important skills. After you read the following pages, you can use the question prompts to encourage discussion. Make sure that children can also ask questions about the story and pictures.

Kamala and Maya had an idea....

What ideas have you had before? Who did you need help from? How did your idea help someone?

The landlord thought about it for less than a second...

A landlord is the person in charge of a building. How could the person in charge / landlord have listened more carefully to Kamala and Maya's idea? What do YOU think he should have said? Have you ever been told 'no' by a person in charge? Is a landlord always a man like in this story?

Kamala wrote a letter. Then she wrote a longer letter...

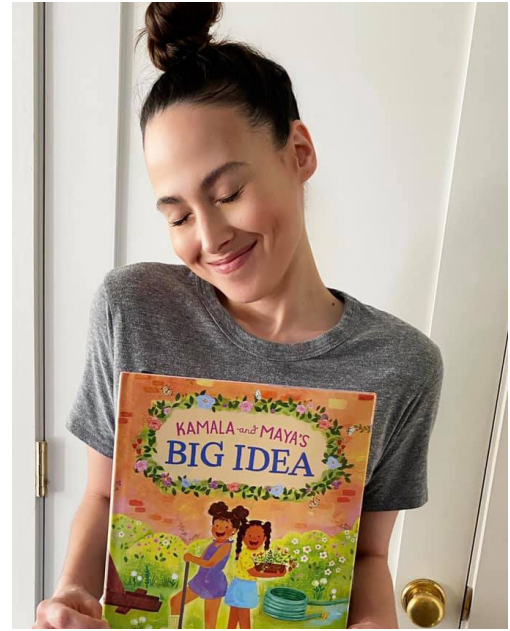
What is a letter? How did Kamala and Maya help other people understand what they wanted by writing about it? How did their letter help them explain their idea? When the letter didn't work in the beginning, how do you think they felt?

But Kamala was not ready to give up...

Sometimes when someone doesn't give up we call it persistence or persisting. Is there a time that you remember when you didn't give up on something? (Children can think about ideas that they have had or things that they have achieved like solving a problem or creating a solution.)

No one could do everything. But everyone could contribute something...

How did Kamala and Maya bring people together to help? Sometimes we call bringing everyone together to work for something "mobilizing" or "organizing". In Kamala and Maya's story, they mobilized people through letters, messages on bulletin boards, a bake sale, and sharing their ideas with others. Why do you think mobilizing is important?



AUTHOR: MEENA HARRIS

Everyone was trying to find a way to turn that maybe into a yes...

What were some ways that the neighbors helped? What do you think made the neighbors want to help? Do you think some of the neighbors decided to help because they saw others helping?

And with a lot of help, they made it happen...

Kamala and Maya's idea ended up making a lot of people happy! How can big ideas change things in our world? What are ways that Kamala and Maya kept working on their big idea? Sometimes we call it persistence when someone keeps trying to change something or get it right. In this book, Kamala and Maya were called per-sisters because they kept working and they were also sisters!

AFTER READING:

Kamala Harris is our Vice President. Before she was elected to be Vice President she had lots of important jobs in our government like Senator, District Attorney and Attorney General. One of the important parts of all of these jobs is to stand up for what is fair. How did Kamala stand up for what was fair for the children in her building in this story?

The landlord in this story told Kamala and Maya "no". The landlord in this story has something that is called POWER in this situation to get in the way of a fair and important idea. There are times when an individual or groups of people use power to get in the way of important things that would make the world more fair or better for children or families.

Kamala and Maya decided to go to the other children and neighbors in their building. Have you ever felt like something wasn't fair? What did you do about it? Is there something you can think of now that you know is not fair to you, to other children, or to our community? What could we do about it? Who could help?



FUN FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

A good book like this one can inspire lots of fun ideas! Follow-up activities that build on ideas in the book can bring the story to life, reinforce what children have learned, and open doors for lots of new learning. After reading the book, you could try some of these activities at home or in your learning community:

Create your own playground using things you can find around your home or at your center/school

- Make a drawing of a playground with all your favorite things to play on
- Build a playground using playdough, legos, blocks or other found materials in your home, classroom or outside. Some ideas:
 - Make a sandbox in a sensory table or using a flat container, like a food storage container. Put in sand (or even mud or dirt from outside) and add toys, legos, blocks and other small items
 - Make a teeter-totter or seesaw with materials from the classroom or your home -- what do you see around you that you could use?
- Make a poster to tell your family and friends about the playground you built!

Bake sale, sidewalk sale or other fundraising activity to contribute funds to a cause

- Work with families or other community members to identify a cause or organization that is relevant to the children and families in your learning community
- Partner with family and community leaders to organize and plan a fundraising event
- Seek volunteers to contribute items for sale, baked goods, etc.

- Support children and families in spreading the word about the fundraiser- making posters, knocking on doors, e-mail or social media campaign, putting an ad in a community newsletter, etc.
- Engage children in the process of distributing the contribution - mailing a check, writing a letter, etc.

Invite your neighbors to a potluck to share food and spend time together

- Take a poll by asking your neighbors the ideal day/time of the week for the potluck to happen
- Work with your family or friends to reserve the space for the potluck
- Select a date
- Share out the details by creating a short invitation
- Create a signup sheet so that each person can sign up to bring one food item or other essentials like plates, utensils, tablecloths or cups

Organize a clean-up activity in your neighborhood with friends and neighbors

- Decide the type of community clean up you'd like to do such as trash and litter collection or a beautification project (Ideas: plant flowers, paint playground equipment)
- Take a poll by asking your neighbors the ideal day/time of the week for the clean up activity to happen
- Select a date and time

Write a persuasive letter to advocate for a cause you care about

- Think about something you would like to change in your school, neighborhood, family, country, etc. How can you convince other people that this is a good idea?
- Some examples:
 - Convince your parents to get a pet
 - Write to the Vice President to ask her to visit your school
 - Write to your senator or congressperson to ask them to make laws about something you care about

We hope you have enjoyed this book and the companion guide! Interested in more books with themes to support children's anti-bias development? Check out [Social Justice Books: A Teaching for Change project](#) for book lists and other resources!

The team at School Readiness Consulting created this guide as part of our commitment to contribute to community efforts at the intersection of early childhood and equity – *in pursuit of our vision to activate all children's potential to create a just society.*



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