

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio resident and award-winning author Marcy Campbell.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading *Rule of Threes*.

Discover interviews, readalikes, websites, and other resources to explore topics and themes in depth.

Rule of Threes

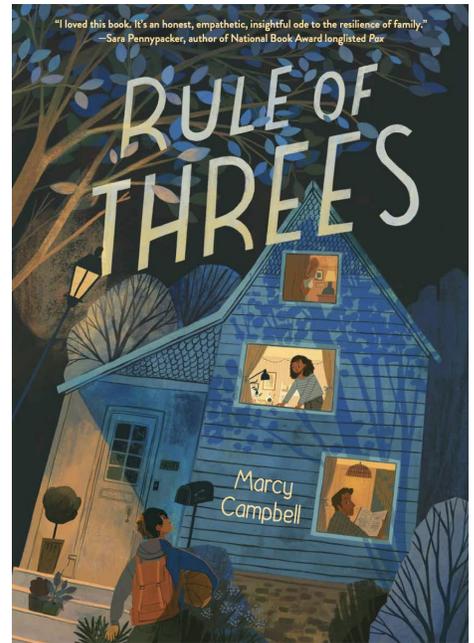
By Marcy Campbell



About the Book

An interior design enthusiast, twelve-year-old Maggie Owens is accustomed to living her life according to her own precise plans. But when she learns about Tony, a mysterious half-brother her own age who needs a place to stay, any semblance of a plan is shattered. Tony's mom struggles with an addiction to opioids, and now she's called upon Maggie's dad—who is also Tony's dad—to take him in. On top of everything, Maggie must also come to terms with the Alzheimer's afflicting her beloved grandmother.

While Maggie can strive for—and even succeed in—a picture perfect design, when it comes to family, there is no such thing as perfection. To work through the sudden struggles rocking her world, Maggie must learn the importance of having an open heart.



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Book Details

Rule of Threes by Marcy Campbell
Chronicle Books, 2021. ISBN 9781797201238.
320 pages. Ages 10+. Leveled Reading: 760 Lexile.
www.chroniclebooks.com/products/rule-of-threes

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library:
ohdbks.overdrive.com/ohdbks-statelib/content/media/6051480

Picture books by Marcy Campbell:

Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have a Horse. Illustrated by Corinna Luyken. Dial Books, 2018.

Something Good. Illustrated by Corinna Luyken. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2021.

The More You Give. Illustrated by Francesca Sanna. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2022.



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“You should try and enjoy the good times, whenever they happen. Pretty good rule for life in general, when you think about it.”

About the Author

Marcy Campbell has been making books since she was five, when they were just taped-together pages of pictures she drew. Her debut picture book, **Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have a Horse**, was published in 2018. Since then, Marcy has published her debut middle-grade novel, **Rule of Threes**, and two more picture books, **Something Good** and **The More You Give**.

Unlike many authors, Marcy did not grow up in a book-filled home, but she wanted books so badly that they became, and remain, some of her most treasured objects. Her little town did not have a public library, and her school had only a makeshift library in a conference room, but today, libraries are among her very favorite places.

Marcy had many jobs as a teen and later worked in public relations. Through it all, she had a passion for storytelling and kept writing whatever idea came into her head in whatever form that idea wanted to take. She lives in northeastern Ohio with her husband, children, a rescue dog named Turtle, and two formerly stray cats.

Author Resources

Marcy Campbell's official website

marcycampbell.com

Watch Marcy Campbell introduce her book *Rule of Threes*:

youtu.be/vdSbMgKG3z8

Read an interview with Marcy Campbell about *Rule of Threes*:

readingmiddlegrade.com/marcy-campbell-interview-rule-of-threes/
Afoma Umesi interviews Marcy Campbell for Reading Middle Grade

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

Contact Carrie Gao at Chronicle Books

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Talk About It!

Topics to share when discussing **Rule of Threes** with young readers.

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. See examples below. Other Learning Standards such as Social and Emotional Learning: Self Awareness and Social and Emotional Learning: Relationship Skills may also apply. Discussion questions and educational activities for **Rule of Threes** align with Learning Standards for Grades 3-5.

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, education.ohio.gov. From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

Spoiler warning! Some discussion questions refer to key elements in the book. Do not read if you do not want to find out what happens.

Talk About It (continued)

- Now that the BFFs are in sixth grade, Rachel wants to be known as “Ra-kell.” Why does this bother Maggie so much? How do you think Rakell feels when Maggie continues to call her Rachel?
- Describe your family or your close friends. In what ways are they like you? In what ways are they different? What makes them special to you? How are Maggie’s family and friends alike and different? What makes them special to her?
- When Tony’s mom enters rehab, a social worker takes him to his father’s house. How do you think Tony feels about staying with a family he doesn’t know? How does Maggie react to learning that she has a half-brother? How does the relationship between Tony and Maggie change over time?
- Why is Maggie’s seashell so important to her? After the shell is destroyed, Maggie realizes that she associated the shell with worries as well as happy memories. How do you think she’ll deal with worries going forward? Will she need another object to recall happy memories?
- Maggie’s grandmother shows signs of forgetfulness, and at one point she doesn’t recognize Maggie. Maggie’s mother tells her that her grandmother is in the middle stages of Alzheimer’s. How does Maggie react to this news? How does Alzheimer’s affect the special bond Maggie has with her grandmother?
- While Maggie’s grandmother waits for a room at the assisted living facility, she comes to stay in the room where Tony had been sleeping. Why do Maggie and Tony get upset when their dad calls it the “spare bedroom”?
- How does the group dynamic of the BFFs change over the course of the book? Why do you think Maggie has trouble adjusting to these changes? Do you think the BFFs will continue to be friends?
- Why do you think the author titled this book **Rule of Threes**? How does Maggie adjust the rule at the end of the book?

Some discussion questions are from the **Rule of Threes Educator Guide**; used with permission. Download this guide for additional discussion questions and activities: https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0261/7291/5805/files/Rule_of_Threes_Educator_Guide.pdf

Go Further!

*Ideas for extending the experience of reading **Rule of Threes**.*

Rule of Threes is told from Maggie’s perspective. How would the story be different if it had been told from the perspective of another character, such as Tony, Rakell, or Olive? Have students imagine how one of the other characters was feeling during the events in the book, then choose one event and write a short story or describe a scene from that character’s point of view.

Interior designers create spaces that are both beautiful and functional for their clients, much like the way Maggie and the other BFFs tried to make the outer office work better and feel better for Mrs. Abbott. However, a design project doesn’t have to include an entire room. Encourage students to try a smaller design project at home or in the classroom, such as displaying a collection of their favorite objects or organizing a desk or closet. They can use online resources available to students through INFOhio (infohio.org) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (ohioweblibrary.org) to find inspiration and learn more about design and decorating.

Have students use collage to design a room they would like to spend time in. They can print out images from INFOhio and the Ohio Web Library, use cutouts from old magazines, make shapes from textured or colored paper, and so on. This activity from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art includes instructions and a packet of printable images to help students get started:

www.sfmoma.org/read/collaging-a-space-just-for-you/

Explore More!

Additional ideas and resources to use with **Rule of Threes**.

SAMHSA National Helpline

www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing substance use disorders. The web page also links to "[What Is Substance Abuse Treatment? A Booklet for Families](#)," which addresses the questions and concerns of children whose parents have substance abuse problems.

What Is Friendship?

people.howstuffworks.com/what-is-friendship.htm

From HowStuffWorks, an overview of friendship and its benefits, the different types of friends, and healthy ways to respond when a friendship is under stress.

Alzheimer's Disease

www.alz.org/help-support/resources/kids-teens/for_teens

The Alzheimer's Foundation website has books, videos, and other information that can help tweens and teens better understand a loved one with Alzheimer's.

Coping With Stressful Situations

kidshealth.org/en/teens/stress-situations.html

Many of the characters in **Rule of Threes** are in stressful situations involving illness, substance misuse, divorce, and interpersonal relationships. This article from Nemours TeensHealth can help tweens and teens practice self-care and develop coping skills to get them through tough times.

Check It Out!

Recommended for readers of **Rule of Threes**. Look for these books at your school or public library and ask your librarian for more recommendations!

Amina's Voice by Hena Khan

Big & Little Questions (According to Wren Jo Byrd) by Julie Bowe

Blended by Sharon M. Draper (A Choose to Read Ohio selection)

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Forever This Summer by Leslie C. Youngblood

The Great Wall of Lucy Wu by Wendy Wan-Long Shang

Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly

Merci Suárez Changes Gears by Meg Medina

Roll with It by Jamie Sumner

The Secret Life of Lincoln Jones by Wendelin Van Draanen

Things That Surprise You by Jennifer Maschari (A Choose to Read Ohio selection)

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: library.ohio.gov/ctro.

Toolkit created by Stephanie Michaels, State Library of Ohio, October 2022. Links and other information are accurate at the time of publication.