

# Marvelous Mistakes

TRY  
LEARN  
GROW  
REPEAT



Mistakes  
help  
brighter  
minds  
shine!



Oops  
happens!



Every  
mistake  
is a step  
forward!



IT'S OKAY

TO MAKE

MISTAKES!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

♥ A BRIGHTER YOU IS A BRAVER YOU ♥

# MARVELOUS MISTAKES

A classroom packet for helping elementary students take healthy risks, recover from errors, and keep learning.

|                  |                  |               |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>TRY</b>       | <b>OOPS!</b>     | <b>NOTICE</b> |
| <b>CHANGE IT</b> | <b>TRY AGAIN</b> | <b>GROW</b>   |

## Inspired by the Good Tidings poetry-story “Mistakes”

Designed for real classrooms: quick routines, low-prep activities, student pages, teacher language, reflection tools, and simple ways to make mistakes feel normal rather than embarrassing.

Good Tidings  
where reading feels like fun

## Start Here: What This Packet Is For

Some students erase until the paper tears, whisper “I don’t know” before trying, copy a classmate, avoid raising a hand, melt down over one wrong answer, or choose work that feels safely easy. Those behaviors can look different, but the classroom problem is often the same: being wrong feels risky.

Marvelous Mistakes helps teachers shift the goal from “never be wrong” to “know what to do when you are wrong.” The aim is not to celebrate careless work. It is to build the habits that make productive mistakes useful: attempt, notice, explain, revise, and try again.

| “Is this right?” every 30 seconds | “What have you tried so far?”                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Hiding or erasing every error     | Marking the change and naming what was learned |
| Avoiding hard work                | Choosing a manageable stretch                  |
| Teacher immediately fixing it     | Teacher giving a clue, question, or next step  |

### A helpful distinction

Productive mistake: a reasonable attempt that gives information about what to try next.

Careless mistake: an error caused by rushing, skipping directions, or not checking.

New-learning mistake: an error that happens because the student is working at the edge of what they know.

All three can be corrected. The teacher response changes depending on what caused the error.

# Packet Map

## 1. Teacher Quick Guide

A simple classroom approach and what to say in the moment.

## 2. Read-Aloud Connection

Discussion prompts to pair with “Mistakes” from Good Tidings.

## 3. Mistake-Friendly Classroom Routines

Fresh, repeatable practices that do not require a special lesson.

## 4. Marvelous Mistake Lab

A low-stakes whole-class activity for practicing recovery.

## 5. Mistake Detective

Students investigate an error instead of hiding it.

## 6. My Try-Again Plan

A student reset page for frustrating moments.

## 7. The Almost Museum

A class display that showcases revision and growth.

## 8. Brave Choice Challenge

A short challenge that rewards learning risks, not correctness.

## 9. Teacher Language Cheat Sheet

Helpful replacements for common phrases.

## 10. Family Connection

A take-home page that keeps the message consistent.

## 11. Reflection + Progress Check

Teacher observation tool and student exit ticket.

# Teacher Quick Guide: The 5-Step Mistake Reset

## 1. Pause the panic

Keep the error small. "You found a spot that needs another look."

## 2. Protect the attempt

Ask the student not to erase immediately. Let the first thinking stay visible.

## 3. Get curious

"What were you thinking here?" "Where did it start to feel confusing?"

## 4. Choose one next move

Reread, use a model, draw it, check one step, ask a partner, or try a smaller example.

## 5. Name the learning

After the correction: "What will you remember next time?"

## Keep the response calm and predictable

Students who fear mistakes often need a smaller emotional demand before they need a bigger academic explanation. Avoid turning every error into a speech. A short, familiar reset gives the student something concrete to do next.

## Read-Aloud Connection: “Mistakes”

Use your Good Tidings poetry-story “Mistakes” as the shared text that opens the conversation. Read it for enjoyment first. On a second read, invite students to listen for ideas about what mistakes mean and what people can do after making one.

### Discussion questions

#### Talk About It

Which part makes you think the character understands mistakes differently by the end?

#### Talk About It

What is the difference between making a mistake and being a mistake?

#### Talk About It

Why might someone hide an answer they think is wrong?

#### Talk About It

What can a mistake tell your brain that a correct answer sometimes cannot?

#### Talk About It

When has changing your mind, plan, drawing, sentence, or answer made something better?

#### Talk About It

What could our class do so people feel safe enough to try?

#### Try this closing line

“In this room, a wrong answer is not the end of the thinking. It is information for the next part of the thinking.”

Optional 5-minute follow-up: Give each student a sticky note. Ask them to finish: “When I make a mistake, it helps when...” Collect the notes anonymously and use the responses to shape class routines.

# Mistake-Friendly Classroom Routines

## Keep the First Try

In math, writing, drawing, or problem solving, have students circle or lightly cross out the original attempt instead of erasing it. Once a week, ask: “What changed between Try 1 and Try 2?” This makes revision visible.

## Two Before “I Can’t”

Before saying “I can’t,” students try two next moves from a posted menu: reread, underline the clue, use a tool, sketch it, look at an example, break it into parts, or ask a specific question.

## The Teacher Oops

Once or twice a week, intentionally or naturally share a small teacher mistake and model the recovery without drama: “I skipped a step. I noticed it because \_\_\_\_\_. I’m fixing it by \_\_\_\_\_.” Model competence in recovering.

## Wrong-Answer Warm-Up

Show one believable wrong answer and ask pairs: “What might this person have been thinking?” Students learn to analyze errors without attaching them to a classmate.

## Revision Receipts

When students revise something meaningful, they jot: BEFORE / I NOTICED / AFTER. Save a few as evidence of learning growth.

## Question Upgrade

Replace “Is this right?” with: “Can you check my thinking on this part?” It moves help-seeking from approval toward reasoning.

# Marvelous Mistake Lab

Purpose: Practice what to do after an error when nothing important is at stake. Time: 20-30 minutes.

Materials: scrap paper, pencils/markers, optional building materials.

Choose one playful challenge: draw a cat without lifting your pencil; build the tallest paper tower; copy a simple pattern from memory; write a four-line rhyme; solve a puzzle with one missing direction.

## Round 1 - Try

Students attempt the challenge quickly. No erasing.

## Round 2 - Notice

Students circle one part that did not go as planned and write or tell what happened.

## Round 3 - Change

They choose one adjustment and try again.

## Round 4 - Compare

Partners discuss what changed. Ask: "What did the first try teach you?"

## Round 5 - Transfer

Ask: "Where could this same reset help during real classwork?"

## Teacher watch-out

Do not award the "best" final product. Notice recovery behaviors instead: trying a new strategy, asking a useful question, slowing down, checking, revising, or persisting.

MARVELOUS  
MISTAKES

# TRYING A NEW STRATEGY

BRAVER  
LEARNERS  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

NEW  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
BIG  
THINGS!

This certificate celebrates your courage  
to try a new way when something was challenging!  
You showed a growth mindset and kept learning!

DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

MISTAKES HELP US FIND NEW PATHS!

Good Tidings  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

DISCOVER

LEARN

IMPROVE

GROW

TOGETHER

MARVELOUS  
MISTAKES

# ASKING A USEFUL QUESTION

BRAVER  
LEARNERS  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

CURIOUS  
MINDS  
CHANGE  
THE  
WORLD!

This certificate celebrates your curiosity!  
You asked a thoughtful question, which helped you  
(and others) learn, grow, and problem solve!

DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

MISTAKES HELP US FIND NEW PATHS!

Good Tidings  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

DISCOVER

LEARN

IMPROVE

GROW

TOGETHER

MARVELOUS  
MISTAKES

BRAVER  
LEARNERS  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

PAUSE  
THINK  
DO YOUR  
BEST!

# SLOWING DOWN

This certificate celebrates your patience!  
You took time, thought carefully, and made  
a thoughtful choice!

DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

DISCOVER

LEARN

IMPROVE

GROW

TOGETHER

MISTAKES HELP US FIND NEW PATHS!

Good Tidings  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

MARVELOUS  
MISTAKES

BRAVER  
LEARNERS  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

LOOK  
THINK  
DOUBLE  
CHECK!

# CHECKING

This certificate celebrates your careful thinking!  
You checked your work and made it even better!

DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

DISCOVER

LEARN

IMPROVE

GROW

TOGETHER

MISTAKES HELP US FIND NEW PATHS!

Good Tidings  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

MARVELOUS  
MISTAKES

TRY  
TWEAK  
IMPROVE  
GROW!

# REVISING

This certificate celebrates your determination!  
You looked at your work, made changes,  
and made it even better!

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

MISTAKES HELP US FIND NEW PATHS!



*Good Tidings*  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

BRAVER  
LEARNERS  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!

DISCOVER

LEARN

IMPROVE

GROW

TOGETHER

MARVELOUS  
MISTAKES

KEEP  
TRYING  
YOU GOT  
THIS!

# PERSISTING

This certificate celebrates your perseverance!  
You kept going, even when it was challenging,  
and didn't give up!

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

MISTAKES HELP US FIND NEW PATHS!



*Good Tidings*  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

BRAVER  
LEARNERS  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!

DISCOVER

LEARN

IMPROVE

GROW

TOGETHER

# MISTAKE DETECTIVE

A mistake is a clue. Investigate it before you fix it.

## 1. What was I trying to do?

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## 2. Put a star by the place where things started to go off track.

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## 3. What do I think happened?

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## 4. Which clue or strategy could help me?

☐ Reread   ☐ Check a step   ☐ Draw it   ☐ Use an example   ☐ Ask a useful question

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## 5. My new try:

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## 6. What did this mistake teach me?

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# MY TRY-AGAIN PLAN

Use this page when a mistake feels bigger than it needs to feel.

## First: name the moment

☐ frustrated ☐ embarrassed ☐ stuck ☐ worried ☐ annoyed ☐ ready to quit ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_

## What happened?

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## What is one thing I DO understand?

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## Pick one next move.

☐ Try a smaller part ☐ Reread directions ☐ Look at an example ☐ Draw/model it  
☐ Check one step ☐ Ask a partner ☐ Ask the teacher a specific question ☐ Take a short reset

## My next try:

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## After I tried again, I noticed...

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# The Almost Museum

Create a bulletin board, binder, wall strip, or digital slide called The Almost Museum. Instead of displaying only polished final work, occasionally display a before-and-after pair that shows useful revision.

## What goes in the museum?

A math strategy that was corrected; a sentence revised for clarity; a drawing with a changed plan; a science prediction updated after evidence; a spelling pattern a student finally noticed; a project prototype that did not work the first time.

## Display card:



## Keep it safe

Participation should be voluntary at first. Never post an error to make an example of a student. The display should communicate growth, not “look what this child got wrong.”

# The Almost Museum

Celebrating Mistakes,  
Trys, and Works-in-Progress!

Ordinary  
Mistakes  
Extraordinary  
Stories! ♥

Different  
Ideas  
Lead to  
Amazing  
Things! ♥

LEARN

GROW

TRY AGAIN

BELONG

IDEAS  
IN PROGRESS

MISTAKES  
MAKE  
GREAT  
STORIES! ♥

♥ MISTAKES HELP US  
FIND NEW PATHS! ♥

♥ *Good Tidings*  
KINDER PEOPLE  
BRIGHTER WORLDS

# The Whoops Wing



OOPS!

Where mistakes  
happen!



# The Try Again Gallery



Where effort  
lives!



# Creative Detours



Unexpected ideas  
can lead to  
amazing places!



# Happy Accidents



Sometimes  
mistakes create  
something new!



# Works-in-Progress



Great things  
take time!



# The What If? Room



Questions  
spark new  
discoveries!



# Growth Zone



A little progress  
every day  
adds up!



# Student Spotlight



Real stories.  
Real courage.  
Real learning!



## BRAVE CHOICE CHALLENGE

Collect evidence that you were willing to learn - not evidence that you were perfect.

☐ Attempted something before asking if it was right.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Shared an idea even though I was not completely sure.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Kept my first try visible and revised it.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Asked a specific question instead of saying "I don't get it."

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Changed my thinking after new evidence.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Used feedback to improve something.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Tried a different strategy after the first one did not work.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Helped a classmate feel okay about making a mistake.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The brave choice I am proudest of:**

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# Teacher Language Cheat Sheet

Small wording changes can make mistakes feel manageable instead of threatening.

| Instead of...                 | Try...                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "No, that's wrong."           | "Let's look at where the thinking changed."                               |
| "Be careful!"                 | "What could you check before you continue?"                               |
| "That's easy."                | "You may know this strategy already. Show me how you know."               |
| "You're so smart."            | "You changed strategies when the first one didn't work."                  |
| "Don't make silly mistakes."  | "Slow down and use your checking routine."                                |
| "Who knows the right answer?" | "Who has a first idea we can test?"                                       |
| "Try harder."                 | "Choose one different strategy to try."                                   |
| "Perfect!"                    | "What part are you most satisfied with, and what would you still revise?" |

## Praise the recovery, not the error

Useful feedback sounds like: "You noticed," "You checked," "You revised," "You asked a precise question," "You used the feedback," or "You tried a new approach." Students do not need to believe mistakes are wonderful. They need to believe mistakes are manageable.

# MARVELOUS MISTAKES - FAMILY CONNECTION

A simple way to keep the classroom message going at home

Our class is practicing a useful learning skill: what to do after something goes wrong. We are helping students see mistakes as information they can respond to - not as proof that they “aren’t good” at something.

## At home, try asking:

- What did you try first?

- What did you notice?

- What could you change on the next try?

- Do you want help, a hint, or time to try it yourself?

- What did you learn that you did not know before the mistake?

## A family challenge

At dinner or another routine time, each person can share one small “oops” from the day and what they did next. Keep it light and brief. Adults can go first.

## Try to avoid

“You knew that!” “That was careless!” or “Why did you do that?” before hearing the child’s thinking. If the mistake truly came from rushing or not checking, name the habit and teach a checking routine without turning the error into a character judgment.

IT'S  
NOT A MISTAKE...  
IT'S A STEP  
FORWARD!

# MARVELOUS MISTAKE

## EXIT TICKET

REFLECT ♥ LEARN ♥ GROW ♥ TRY AGAIN



DIFFERENT  
IDEAS  
LEAD TO  
AMAZING  
THINGS!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1** What was your mistake or challenge today?

★  
CHALLENGES  
HELP US  
GROW!  
♥

**2** What did you do about it?

- |                                                  |                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tried a new strategy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Checked my work        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asked a useful question | <input type="checkbox"/> Revised / made changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slowed down             | <input type="checkbox"/> Kept going (persisted) |

★  
THERE  
ARE MANY  
WAYS TO  
SOLVE A  
PROBLEM!  
♥

**3** What did you learn?

★  
MISTAKES  
TEACH US  
SOMETHING  
NEW!  
♥

**4** What will you try next time?

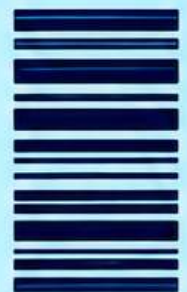
★  
I CAN  
DO THIS!



**PROGRESS** LOOKS GOOD ON YOU! ♥

♥ GOOD THINGS

KINDER PEOPLE ♥ BRIGHTER WORLDS



ADMIT  
ONE  
GROWTH  
MINDSET



# Teacher Progress Check

Use this as a quick observation tool every few weeks. The goal is growth, not a grade.

| Student / Group | Attempts before seeking reassurance                                                               | Can explain an error                                                                              | Uses a next-step strategy                                                                         | Recovers emotionally                                                                              | Notes |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|                 | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> often |       |
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Look for a classwide pattern: If many students are avoiding attempts, the work may need more modeling or a lower-stakes entry point. If students attempt but cannot recover, teach the reset routine explicitly. If students repeatedly make careless errors, add a concrete checking routine rather than more “be careful” reminders.

# Teacher Progress Check — Continued

Use one row per student. Add brief notes only when helpful.

| Student | Attempts before reassurance                                                                             | Explains an error                                                                                       | Uses a next-step strategy                                                                               | Recovers emotionally                                                                                    | Notes |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often |       |
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Quick reminder: look for growth over time rather than using this as a grade.

# Teacher Progress Check — Continued

Use one row per student. Add brief notes only when helpful.

| Student | Attempts before reassurance                                                                             | Explains an error                                                                                       | Uses a next-step strategy                                                                               | Recovers emotionally                                                                                    | Notes |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often |       |
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Quick reminder: look for growth over time rather than using this as a grade.

# Teacher Progress Check — Continued

Use one row per student. Add brief notes only when helpful.

| Student | Attempts before reassurance                                                                             | Explains an error                                                                                       | Uses a next-step strategy                                                                               | Recovers emotionally                                                                                    | Notes |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often |       |
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Quick reminder: look for growth over time rather than using this as a grade.

# Teacher Progress Check — Continued

Use one row per student. Add brief notes only when helpful.

| Student | Attempts before reassurance                                                                             | Explains an error                                                                                       | Uses a next-step strategy                                                                               | Recovers emotionally                                                                                    | Notes |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes<br><input type="checkbox"/> often |       |
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Quick reminder: look for growth over time rather than using this as a grade.

## A Simple 2-Week Rollout

|                      |                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Day 1</b>         | Read “Mistakes.” Discuss what a mistake can tell us. Introduce the 5-Step Mistake Reset.                                   |
| <b>Days 2-3</b>      | Model one Teacher Oops and use “Keep the First Try.”                                                                       |
| <b>Day 4</b>         | Do a Wrong-Answer Warm-Up with an anonymous example.                                                                       |
| <b>Day 5</b>         | Run the Marvelous Mistake Lab.                                                                                             |
| <b>Week 2</b>        | Introduce Mistake Detective and Brave Choice Challenge. Start an Almost Museum only after students understand its purpose. |
| <b>End of Week 2</b> | Use the exit ticket. Choose one routine to keep as a permanent class habit.                                                |

### The big idea

A mistake-friendly classroom is not a classroom with lower expectations. It is a classroom where students have a reliable path from “I got it wrong” to “I know what to do next.”

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