Leo
the Late Bloomer

Robert Kraus
Pictures by Jose Aruego

A Study Guide
Written by Garrett Christopher
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

For the Teacher .......................................................... 1
Suggestions For Using Activities ............................... 1 - 2
Synopsis ................................................................. 3
Author/Illustrator Information ................................... 3
Pre-Reading Activities .............................................. 4
Word Study ............................................................. 5
Understanding the Story .......................................... 6 - 7
Understanding Pictures ........................................... 8
Graphic Organizer ..................................................... 9
Extension Activity .................................................... 10 - 12
Follow-Up Activities ............................................... 13 - 14
Suggestions For Further Reading .............................. 15
Answer Key ........................................................... 16
Notes ................................................................. 17

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For the Teacher

This reproducible Little Novel-Ties study guide consists of activities to use in conjunction with the book Leo the Late Bloomer. The picture book and its corresponding guide can become an important element in your whole language reading program. The guide contains a synopsis; background information on the author and illustrator; suggested pre-reading activities; exercises that focus on vocabulary; visual literacy, story comprehension, and critical thinking skills; and extension activities that link the story to other curriculum areas.

Suggestions For Using Activities

Pre-Reading Activities – Before You Read

These activities are designed to activate children’s prior knowledge and build concepts or background information. They will motivate children to read and help them to understand the story better. Children can discuss answers to the questions with a partner, in a small cooperative learning group, or with the entire class.

Word Study – Antonym Choices

This page presents examples and brief instructional material on antonyms. Children then read context sentences and select an antonym for an underlined word contained in each sentence.

Understanding the Story – Story Questions, Picture Questions

The story questions include a number of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions that help children focus on major story elements. The picture questions help children draw inferences from the illustrations.
BEFORE YOU READ

1. Read the title of the book. 
   Then study the picture on the cover. 
   Who is Leo?

2. What does the word bloom usually mean? 
   Name some things that bloom. 
   The word bloom can also mean to grow or change. 
   Can people or animals bloom? 
   What does it mean to be “a late bloomer”?

3. Make a list of some things you have just learned to do. 
   Compare this list with a partner. 
   Do your lists differ? Why?

4. Draw a picture. Show a way you would like to “bloom” this year.
STORY QUESTIONS

1. Who are some of Leo’s friends? How are they different from Leo?

2. What happens when Leo tries to draw or write something?

3. How does Leo’s father feel about Leo? How does his mother feel?

4. What advice does Leo’s mother give to Leo’s father? Do you think this is good advice? Explain your answer.

5. Why does Leo’s father start watching television?

6. What finally happens to Leo? When does it happen?

7. What does Leo mean when he says, “I made it”?

8. The author never explains why Leo blooms. How would you explain the change in Leo?

9. How do Leo and his parents feel at the end of the story?

10. Pretend you have a friend who is like Leo at the start of the book. What advice would you give your friend? What could you say to help your friend feel better? Would you suggest your friend read Leo the Late Bloomer? Why or why not?