

# Little Joe



By: Sandra Neil Wallace

Companion Guide From



MICHIGAN'S VOICE OF AGRICULTURE



Adopted From



When paired with this 5th grade reading novel, this lesson plan will address the following standards for Common Core for 6th grade:

Key Ideas and Details:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.3

Text Types and Purposes:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

This lesson plan will also address the following standards for Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations for 5th grade:

Organization of Living Things:

- L.OL.05.41
- L.OL.05.42

Heredity:

- L.HE.05.1

Inquiry Process

- S.IA.05.15

For 6th grade:

Inquiry Process

- S.IA.06.15

Ecosystems

- L.EC.06.32

## ***Introduction***

*Little Joe* can serve as an introduction to the livestock industry, told from the perspective of a 3rd grade boy showing his first bull calf. Join Eli Stenger and his family and neighbors as they spend nine months preparing a cow, some rabbits and a couple pigs named after candy for their adventure at the county fair!

In this companion guide you will find:

**“Power Words”** and **“Vo-Cow-Bulary”** - These are words from each chapter that may be unfamiliar to students. Students could define these, use them in sentences or work to use them in writing.

- **“Power Words”** are more traditional vocabulary words.
- **“Vo-Cow-Bulary”** are words associated with agriculture.

Not all chapters have unusual vocabulary words, so in some cases there is not a vocabulary section included.

**“Questions”** to use as discussion starters or as reading checks

- Writing prompts called **“Write Away”** to encourage students to write more about a specific topic.
- An **“Extension Activity”** has been added to some chapters with links to other Agriculture in the Classroom activities.

Some questions, writing prompts and art activities build on previous examples. Consider having students using special notebooks or folders to store all materials for this book, to make referencing information easier.

## Chapter 1: A Special Delivery

### Power Words

|         |           |          |           |
|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Nervous | Rustling  | Nostril  | Stanchion |
| Sired   | Tradition | Rafters  | Cooed     |
| Nudged  | Navel     | Infected |           |

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Bovine*- a scientific classification of a family of mammals which include cattle

*Hen*- a female chicken

*Holstein*- a breed of dairy cattle that are black and white or red and white

*Heifers*- an immature female bovine that has not had a calf

*Angus*- a breed of black cattle

*Bull*- an uncastrated male bovine

*Loin*- the part of an animal between the hips and lower ribs

*Rump*- the hind part of the animal

*Birth Pen*- a pen that is specifically designed for the birth of an animal and its mother

*Feed Bin*- a sealed container that hold feed. It is important that feed is kept dry and free from pests

*Kernels*- a whole seed grain

*Muzzle*- an animal's nose

*Carhartt*- a brand of clothing company that sells clothes to work in

### **Questions**

1. Why was Eli helping in the Barn?
2. How does Grandpa describe the barn?
3. Eli describes the heart beat as a fluttering butterfly.
  - How would you describe an animal heartbeat?
  - How would you describe your own heartbeat? Is it similar or different from an animals?
4. Describe Hannah. How is she different than Eli?
5. What does Hannah want to name the bull calf?
6. Why does Eli chose 'Little Joe' as a name?
7. What does it mean that everyone would want to get a piece of Little Joe? Why would they want this?
8. What does it mean that Eli is starting a new tradition?

### **Write Away**

- \* Eli helped pull a calf! Wow—write about how he felt about this event. How would you feel?
- \* The Stenger Family has their own traditions. What traditions does your family have?

## ***Extension Activity***

- \* Map out Eli's family tree. Include everyone you have met in the book so far. Hold on to this and add to it throughout the book. Make a family tree for your family. Check out [www.grandparents-day.com/html/family\\_tree-nv.html](http://www.grandparents-day.com/html/family_tree-nv.html).
- \* On the Michigan Farm Bureau website, watch the video of the Macomb County Beef Cattle Farmer, Bret Schapman. Compare the duties in Eli's family to the duties of this farmer. Are they similar, different, or the same. Make a graph comparing the farms. [www.michfb.com/MI/Learn\\_from\\_a\\_farmer/](http://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn_from_a_farmer/)

## Chapter 2: Tattoo Day

### Power Words

Corral  
Piercing

Weaned  
Gentling

Moist  
Disinfectant

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Market Steer*- a male bovine castrated when young, which has not begun to develop the secondary physical characteristics of a bull and will be used for meat

*Pitchfork*- a large, long-handled fork used for manual lifting

*Alfalfa*- a legume plant that is turned into a forage crop for food for animals

*Halter*- a rope or strap that helps with the leading of animals

*Crossbred*- the mating of animals of different breeds; an animal that is two different breeds combined

*Milk House*- the building where the milking of cows is done

### **Questions**

1. Why is the farm named 'Windswept Farms'?
2. Why is the ax important to Eli on the farm?
3. Why does Spider name fit him?
4. What can you compare tagging to?
5. Who is E-1?
6. Eli's parents work on the farm, but they also have other jobs. What are their other jobs?
7. What is the difference between animals and people according to Pa?

### **Write Away**

- \* Describe the differences Eli notices about various types of cobwebs. Write about what you think of cobwebs, and their similarities and differences to the ones Eli noticed.
- \* What do you think about naming a calf instead of giving it a letter and a number combination? Why?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Check out Beautiful Bovine at [www.agintheclassroom.org](http://www.agintheclassroom.org)
- \* On the Michigan State University Extension website, look at the Fact Sheets and other information on Michigan's cattle tracking system. Discuss it with the class. How is it similar or different to tattooing? <https://beefteam.msu.edu/Resources/Identification/RFIDInformation/tabid/576/Default.aspx>

## Chapter 3: Sweet and Sour

### Power Words

Camouflage

Hyperventilating

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Scours*- an animal's upset stomach that normally comes in a form of diarrhea

*Akita*- a breed of dog which is large, muscular and usually bred for hunting

*Steer*- a male bovine castrated when young, which has not begun to develop the secondary physical characteristics of a bull

*Needle Teeth*- two large teeth on each side of the upper jaw

*Wallow*- to roll about or lie in water for refreshment

### **Questions**

1. Describe Keller, his hands and his teeth.
2. How does Keller name his hogs?
3. Why does Keller clip the teeth of his hogs?

### **Write Away**

- \* Keller seems to tell some tall tales. What do you think about his bee hunting and eating story? Have you ever met someone who tells tall tales? What has been one of their tall tales?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Watch "The Amazing Pig Video" on the Michigan Pork Producers Association website. Discuss with the students the differences and similarities in how Keller raises his pigs and how Michigan farmers do it. [www.mipork.org/Youth/717/Youth.aspx](http://www.mipork.org/Youth/717/Youth.aspx)
- \* Also learn about other Michigan hog farms, like Erin Ehinger's farm, by watching this video on the Michigan Farm Bureau website. [https://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn\\_from\\_a\\_farmer/](https://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn_from_a_farmer/)

## Chapter 4: Don't Let Go

### Power Words

Raspy

Thrashed

Blotchy

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Brisket*- cut of meat taken from the chest area

*Dairy*- animals concerned with the production of milk and milk products

*Dewclaws*- hard, horn like structures above the hoof on the rear surface of the legs of cattle

*Muck Boots*- boots worn to do work and are meant to get dirty

*Silo*- a structure in which forage is kept

*Muzzle*- nose of cattle

*Progeny*- offspring of the parents

### **Questions**

1. Describe how the Stenger barn was built.
2. Pa doesn't want Eli to name Little Joe, but what did Eli find out about Pa's first cow?
3. Why does a cow have four stomachs?
4. Who is Eli's father?
5. How does Eli describe Little Joe's ears?
6. Explain Trick or Treat for Little Joe.

### **Write Away**

- \* Explain what Grandpa means when he says you can give a cow a name?
- \* Explain if you think Eli should have taken Little Joe out by himself. Why do you feel this way?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Want to know more about barns? Check out [www.thebarnjournal.org](http://www.thebarnjournal.org)
- \* The chapter talks about beef parts and cuts. Use the interactive bovine site to learn more about the cuts of beef and what they mean. Also, look on the attached sheet to see which cuts of meat you eat come from which part of the animal. <http://bovine.unl.edu/eng/index.jsp>



## Chapter 5: Mending Fences

### Power Words

Nickering

Kindle

Callus

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Free Range*- animals which are free to roam

*Appaloosa*- a breed of horse which is usually white over the loin and hips, with dark round or egg-shaped spots thereon

*Mini-Lops*- a breed of rabbit

### **Questions**

1. Why did Eli get stitches?
2. Who is Tess?
3. Why did Eli and Pa have to fix the fence?

### **Write Away**

- \* Pa wants Eli to show Little Joe who is boss. Why does Eli wonder if Pa has calloused up for good? What does this expression mean?
- \* Explain how unicorns are like cows and dogs.

### **Extension Activity**

Check out various rabbit breeds at [www.arba.net/Breeds.htm](http://www.arba.net/Breeds.htm) and horse breeds at <http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/horses/>

## **Chapter 6: Sorry**

### **Power Words**

Quickening

### **Vo-Cow-Bulary**

*Currycomb*- a comb used to brush animals hair

### ***Questions***

1. What is Eli sorry about?
2. How does Little Joe belong to Spider?

### ***Write Away***

- \* Who is Ned Kinderhoff and how is he in competition with Pa?

### ***Extension Activity***

- \* Want to grow a giant pumpkin? Check out this website [www.merebrow.com/homembgp/how\\_to\\_grow.html](http://www.merebrow.com/homembgp/how_to_grow.html).
- \* Have you attended your local county fair? If not, check out these websites, and find the fair that is closest to yours. Compare what you saw at your fair to what Eli says about his. [www.michigan.org/fairs-festivals/](http://www.michigan.org/fairs-festivals/) [www.countyfairgrounds.net/michigan/michigan.php](http://www.countyfairgrounds.net/michigan/michigan.php)

## **Chapter 7: Big Night**

### ***Questions***

1. Where does Eli go every Wednesday night?
2. Why does Grandpa love tomatoes?
3. Describe how Eli walks across the apple orchard.
4. Describe the conflict between Grandpa and Dad.

### ***Write Away***

- \* Describe what Big Night is and what happens on that night.
- \* Why did Grandpa allow Eli to join in the Big Night, when Ma and Pa wouldn't let him?

### ***Extension Activity***

- \* Spotted Salamander migration is an event that happens on the east coast of the U.S. Learn more about this at [http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature\\_Connection/wildlife/index.php?subject=Reptiles%20and%20Amphibians&id=58](http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/wildlife/index.php?subject=Reptiles%20and%20Amphibians&id=58).
- \* There are various You Tube videos on the spotted salamander migration as well.

## Chapter 8: Missing Mama

### Power Words

Warbled  
Bawling

Brittle  
Yowled

Gnarled

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Hay Mow*- an area where hay is stored in a high place in the barn

### **Questions**

1. How does the author describe the color of clover?
2. How does Pa want Little Joe to look at the time of the fair?
3. Why does Pa call Little Joe E-1? How does this make Eli feel?
4. How do Pa and Eli trick Little Joe?
5. Why does Little Joe spend the night bawling?
6. Pa finds Eli with Little Joe, what does he make him do for an hour before school that day?

### **Write Away**

- \* Describe how Eli helps Little Joe? Would you be willing to help out in the rain in the same way? Write your thoughts.

## Chapter 9: First Cut

### Power Words

Coaxing  
Frantic

Prodding  
Impressive

Amber

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Show Stick*- a stick used when showing cattle to help move their feet or comfort them

*Silage*- forage preserved by fermentation that produces acids similar to the acids used to make pickled foods for people

*Rations*- feed fed to an animal during a 24-hour period

### **Questions**

1. What did Eli discover about Pa and his first animal?
2. How did Pa raise money to help with his first animal?
3. In Chapter 5 (page 52) Ma ask Pa about selling eggs. Pa says they don't sell eggs. Why is this ironic?
4. What is Pa's secret to making his pumpkin grow?

### **Write Away**

- \* It seems like Pa wants to win, what does Eli want?
- \* Eli is very concerned about when he has to sell Little Joe at the fair. Predict what you think will happen to Eli and Little Joe and how the fair will go.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Learn about cattle and why eating forages, hay, is important to their health. Make a chart as to what hay does for the cattle's digestive system. <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/beef/facts/91-066.htm>

## Chapter 10: Trading Eggs

### Power Words

Condiment

Metallic

Interfere

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Roper*- a style of western book

*Blower*- a piece of equipment that blows out air so that cattle can be dried after a wash

### **Questions**

1. What is Ma's job?
2. How long has Ma been selling eggs?

### **Write Away**

- \* Describe what Ma means when she says "pumpkins don't hurt," when she and Eli are talking about his Pa.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Meet a Michigan poultry farmer, Harry Herbruck, on the Michigan Farm Bureau website and compare their farm to Ma's egg selling. [https://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn\\_from\\_a\\_farmer/](https://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn_from_a_farmer/)

## Chapter 11: Cow Tipping

### Power Words

Spiky  
Katydid

Encouraged  
Stammered

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Lupine*- a plant in the eastern U.S. which bears edible seeds and in dense clusters of blue, pink or white flowers

*Lobelia*- a woody plant that has long clusters of blue, red, yellow or white flowers

### **Questions**

1. Why is Pa worried about Eli checking fields?
2. Describe Keller's new look.
3. What is cow-tipping?
4. How does Eli feel about cow tipping?
5. What happens when Keller sees the snake?

### **Write Away**

- \* Describe how the chapter ends and the fun time the family has on July 4th.
- \* Write about your own July 4th traditions compared to Eli's.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Learn about the perennials like the ones that Eli is discussing on the Michigan State University Extension webpage. Learn how you could use these perennials in your garden and what different perennials are: <http://www.extension.org/pages/13056/flowers:-perennials>

## Chapter 12: In the Show Ring

### Power Words

Instinct

Girth

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Show Box*- a box used to store all materials needed to show animals

### **Questions**

1. Eli wishes he had a hat on. Why isn't he practicing with a hat?
2. What should Eli do if he sees trouble?
3. Why did Grandpa give Eli the show box early?
4. What was inside the show box?

### **Write Away**

- \* Write about a special gift you received for a special birthday or early birthday present.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Eli's show box has many items to help keep Little Joe properly groomed. Visit [www.sullivansupply.com](http://www.sullivansupply.com) to see grooming videos and to see a variety of grooming supplies.



## Chapter 13: Poison Weeds

### Power Words

Wobbly

Crouched

### **Questions**

1. What did Pa find?
2. What could happen if a cow eats the weeds?
3. Why will Eli get money even if he doesn't go to the fair?
4. What happened to Shamrock?

### **Write Away**

- \* Eli discovered why Pa was so hard. Write why you think Pa is so upset. How could Eli help him?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Go to the Explore Beef website and read about the stages of beef production which Eli is experiencing with Little Joe. Identify what stage Little Joe is in now and what his next stages will be. <http://www.explorebeef.org/raisingbeef.aspx>

## Chapter 14: No Trespassing

### Power Words

Trespassing  
Skittish  
Whitewashed

Waddled  
Mimicked

Frolicking  
Disqualified

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Foal*- a baby horse

*Dachshund*- a breed of dog that is long bodied and low to the ground

*Yearling*- a horse that is one year old

### **Questions**

1. How does Eli describe the colt's mane?
2. How does Tess describe what beef farmers do?
3. What does Eli say about eating horses?
4. Where is Eli going to hang his blue ribbon?
5. Why doesn't Eli want to go into the barn?

### **Write Away**

- \* Write what you think happened after Eli heard the rumble from the barn.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Learn all about horses and how to work with them on this website. Have students describe their experiences with horses as well. <http://www.discoverhorses.com/all-about-horses/>

## Chapter 15: Broken Bones

### Power Words

Frisky

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Willow*- a type of tree

### **Questions**

1. What happened to Keller's arm?
2. Will a broken arm stop Keller from showing at the fair?
3. Why does the family need straws for spaghetti?
4. Why is Eli so quiet?
5. Why isn't this a regular evening?

### **Write Away**

- \* Why can't Eli sleep? Write what you think is going through his mind.
- \* Write about an experience you have had or someone you know has had with broken bones.

## Chapter 16: All Jittery

### Power Words

Show

Kindling

Dozing

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Bedding*- what the animal lays on or steps on in the pen

*Grooming Chute*- a pen that holds the animal still

*Simmental*- a breed of cattle which is generally red and white, which are used for meat and milk

### **Questions**

1. Why can't Little Joe have breakfast?
2. Why don't you think Eli had breakfast?
3. How easy was it for Grandpa and Pa to load Little Joe? Why do you think this is?
4. How does Grandpa describe what the birds will do?
5. How much does Little Joe weigh?
6. List 3 items that weigh about the same as Little Joe.
7. Where is Little Joe's stall located?
8. What surprise did Hannah bring for Little Joe?
9. How did Spider react at the fair?
10. How is showing cattle different than showing pigs according to Keller?
11. What does Keller predict will happen at the show?
12. What did Eli tell the judge he fed Little Joe to make him so big?
13. What prize did Eli and Little Joe win?
14. What happened to Keller and his pigs?
15. What does Pa get for Hannah?

### **Write Away**

- \* Grandpa offers Pa a hand when he falls, but Pa brushes it aside. Describe what you think is wrong.
- \* Write about what you think is going through Eli's mind in the show ring as the judge is talking to him.
- \* At the end of the chapter Eli talks to Pa about Shamrock. Write what you think Pa is thinking about.
- \* How does Eli's view of his Pa change from the beginning of the novel towards the end?

## Chapter 17: Sold

### Power Words

Blister

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Carcass*- the dead body of an animal

### **Questions**

1. What will Eli leave with Little Joe after he is sold?
2. What does Eli wish Little Joe would do to help him not be sold?
3. What is Eli thinking about as Little Joe is sold?
4. What does Eli think a real farmer would be thinking about?

### **Write Away**

- \* At the end of the book there is a surprise ending. Why did Grandpa buy Little Joe? Write in detail what you think will happen to Little Joe and Eli in the next couple of months.
- \* Look back at your Chapter 9 prediction of how the fair would go for Little Joe and Eli. Is your prediction correct? What is similar and what is different between your prediction and the actual ending.

### **Looking Ahead**

- \* Imagine Eli in 10 years. What is he like? Does he feel the same way about cattle that his dad does or does he agree with Grandpa? What is Eli doing in his life?



