GEMMA

Time with Leo

Sample lesson plan

Sam Peterson is an average high school student—until he falls through a portal in time and space and lands in the studio of Leonardo da Vinci. This is worse than algebra!

Da Vinci imagined the airplane, the helicopter, the submarine, and more—long before anyone else. Who better to design a time machine to get Sam home? Sam gets hooked on art and science as he gets to know Leonardo. And Leonardo becomes intrigued by common items of 21st century life.

Introducing the book and chapters 1-2

Today we'll begin reading **Time with Leo** by John Bliss. The book tells the story of Sam, a boy from modern times who accidentally falls through a door into the past while trying to run away from school bullies. Fortunately, he lands in the workshop of the famous artist, inventor and scientist Leonardo da Vinci.

Vocabulary

Provide new vocabulary ahead of reading, or flag difficult words during group reading. Tip: Make a note of vocabulary words that come up in class and send the list to students by email or text message before the next class.

Suggested vocabulary for Chapters 1-2

humiliate	gall	smock
inconspicuous	neutron gun	vitriol
ridicule	dodgeball	torment
ragtag	Goon Squad	birthplace
wedgy/wedgies	inkwell	glee

Notes on Italian References

- Florence, Naples, Bologna, Venice, Rome: Italian cities that were at war with one another in Leonardo's time.

- Borgias, Medicis, Sforzas: Powerful Italian families that fought one another for dominance.

- Virgil, Dante: Prominent Italian poets.

Before Reading (10-15 Minutes)

- Summarize story

- Cover any unfamiliar language, place and character names

- Discuss title and cover image

- Draw on students' prior experience and knowledge

Class activities and discussions

- Read the blurb on the back of the book as an introduction.

- Ask the students what they know about Leonardo da Vinci:

  Who is he? What did he do? Have they ever seen any of his paintings?

- Look at the cover. What does it make one think the story will be about?

- Places: Locate Florence on a map or online. Which country is it in?

During Reading (15-20 minutes)

In the first two chapters, we learn how Sam manages to land in Leonardo's workshop. We meet Leo for the first time as he and Sam struggle to understand what has happened.

Reading

Students read the chapters silently, or the class reads them together. The teacher can model by reading the first paragraph. Then students can read aloud one at a time or as a group. Alternatively, while the class reads silently, the teacher can choose to listen to some students read quietly ("whisper read") to check fluency.

After Reading (15-20 minutes)

Discuss the chapters. Clarify confusion, target and note unknown vocabulary, revisit parts of the text that caused problems. Encourage students to anchor their comments using specific examples from the text: Where on the page were the words that tell you that? How does the writer let you know?

Questions to elicit discussion:

- Who is Sam? Where does he live? What is his problem?

- How does Sam get to Leonardo's workshop?

- Who does he think Leonardo is at first?

- Who does Leonardo think Sam is?

- How does Sam figure out who Leonardo really is?

- What is Leonardo's attitude toward Sam? Is he angry, frightened, curious?

Suggested class activity

Have the class read some or all of the dialogue between Sam and Leonardo from pages 13-18. Choose individual students to play the roles, changing readers with every few lines, or divide the class in two parts and have one be Leo, the other Sam.

Introduce the next lesson (5 minutes)

Next class, we'll read and discuss chapters 3 and 4 of **Time with Leo**.

- Read the chapters before class

- Highlight any difficult words or confusing parts

- Keep these questions in mind as you read:

How does Leonardo react when he sees the things Sam brings from the future (cell phone, pen, books)?

What does Leonardo's attitude tell us about him?

Media links

Leonardo da Vinci is most famous as a painter but, as we learn in **Time with Leo**, he was also a scientist and inventor, far ahead of his time in his thinking. Here are some videos and links to more information about Leonardo and especially his achievements in science.

- *Newsthink*: "Why Leonardo Da Vinci was a Scientist, Not Just an Artist" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhMt9pnt714
- 10 Leonardo Da Vinci Facts That Might Surprise You https://www.leonardodavinci.net/facts.jsp

Microsoft founder Bill Gates owns one of only three surviving copies of Leonardo da Vinci's 72-page illustrated manuscript, the **Codex Leicester**, also known as the **Codex Hammer**. It includes drawings and notes by Leonardo covering diverse topics such as the diffusion of light in the heavens, musings on why the moon is luminous, and a study of hydrodynamics.

Look inside the rare Leonardo notebook that cost Gates more than $30 million:

https://www.businessinsider.com/look-inside-the-codex-leicester-which-bill-gates-bought-for-30-million-2015-7?r=US&IR=T

Video: Bill Gates talks about his copy of the Codex https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwGdnCNi8Ss

Da Vinci—the Genius, from the Boston Museum of Science https://www.mos.org/leonardo/node/1