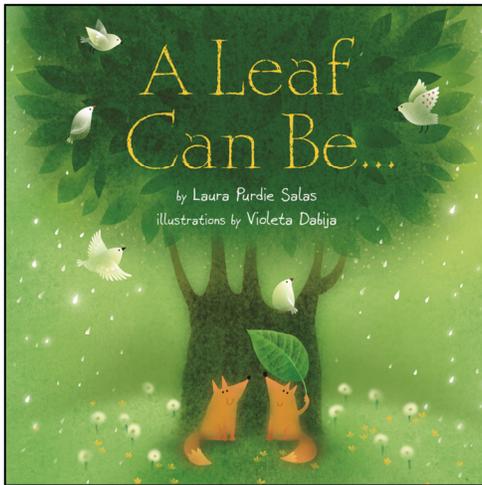


A Leaf Can Be...

written by Laura Purdie Salas
illustrated by Violeta Dabija
Millbrook Press, 2012
www.lernerbooks.com
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Story Summary: A leaf can play so many roles! A leaf can be a ... shade spiller ... mouth filler ... tree topper ... rain stopper ... and more. Find out what leaves can be in this poetic exploration of leaves throughout the year.

Laura Purdie Salas is a poet and writer who has made all sorts of things out of leaves, like Barbie clothes, love notes, and necklaces. She lives and writes in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and she loves leaves in every season. Laura has written more than 100 books, including *Stampede! Poems to Celebrate the Wild Side of School* and *BookSpeak! Poems About Books*. Learn more at laurasalas.com.

Violeta Dabija lives in Moldova, a small Eastern European country. She has illustrated about 25 children's books and she enjoys creating magic pictures and unique environments for her characters. Learn more at violetadabija.com.

Honors: Bank Street Best Books; IRA Teachers' Choice; NCTE Notable; Minnesota Book Award Finalist; Scholastic Book Club; Riverby Award for Nature Books; SCBWI Golden Kite Honor Book; Finalist for KRA's Bill Martin, Jr. Picture Book Award

Reviews:

New York Times: “[F]or young children, each new spring seems like the very first, an occasion for wonder...Two luxuriant new picture books beautifully capture this sense of awe...*A Leaf Can Be...*, written by Laura Purdie Salas and illustrated by Violeta Dabija, explores the many forms and functions of its subject.”

Publishers Weekly: “Salas explores the many functions a leaf can serve with simple grace.”

School Library Journal: “A lovely observation about nature, suitable for a variety of science units or individual sharing.”

Kirkus: “Simple and pleasing, with classroom-discussion and read-aloud appeal.”

Teaching guide for A Leaf Can Be... (Millbrook Press), by Laura Purdie Salas.
This guide can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/7bqnb2u>.

Pre-Reading: If possible, go on a walk and look at leaves. Where do you see them? What are they doing? How are people or animals using them? Ask the class to brainstorm different things leaves can do or be used for. Start a brainstorming list on the board.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever seen an animal drinking water from a leaf? If you go outside in the early morning when there is dew on the leaves, you might see insects or other small animals sipping up the dew. Can you think of other ways animals might get water from leaves?
2. What kind of plants might give you welts on your skin? Poison ivy has a liquid inside its leaves that gives most people a rash. Some plants, like nettles and thistles, have sharp, stinging leaves. Have you ever gotten a rash or cut from a plant?
3. Leaves are food for many animals, including humans. What's your favorite edible leaf: Romaine lettuce? Spinach? Kale? Did you know that some kinds of dandelion leaves are edible? Note: Never eat a leaf without checking with your parents first!



4. Growing plants is one way to help planet Earth, since plants filter tiny bits of pollution out of the air. Have you ever grown a plant? What are the three things every plant needs to grow? (Soil, sun, water.)

5. Leaves are definitely useful, but they are beautiful, too. When do you think leaves are the prettiest? Have you ever picked a leaf up off the ground just because it looked neat?

Response to Story:

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Math: Measure Up Have students measure the length of 10 leaves in inches and in centimeters. On a bulletin board or piece of paper, create a simple bar graph to represent the lengths of the leaves. Have students order them in 1st to 10th place, with the longest leaf being 1st.

Science: The Leaf Cycle Learn about the life cycle of a tree (see my book, *From Seed to Maple Tree*). Create a display of how trees grow (or do not grow!) during different seasons. Let kids write facts and draw pictures to represent each season.

Creative Thinking: List It Up! Use the format of *A Leaf Can Be...* with other common objects. What can a box be? What can a puddle be? Do creative brainstorming and also factual research to complete your list.

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Language Arts: Be the Leaf! Imagine that you are a leaf. Pick one job leaves do and write about your job in a poem or a story. Write as if you ARE the leaf. For instance, if you choose “water ladle,” you might write a poem like this:

Waiting Water

I cup my edges,
catch May rain
and wait wait wait

until

a lizard teps on me
flickers its tongue
and gobbles y drops

Reader’s Theater: Put On a Show! Assign each “leaf job” to a student (there are 22 jobs, like “soft cradle” and “water ladle”). Read the book aloud, with the whole class reading the three “A leaf is a leaf...” sections and each student reading and acting out an individual leaf job.

Art: Classroom Tree On a bulletin board, draw a tree with a trunk and branches, but no leaves. Create simple leaf templates on cardstock. Give each student construction paper to trace a leaf template on. Kids write their name on the leaf and then decorate it. Encourage them to use fun materials like buttons, feathers, tree bark, crayons, aluminum foil, string—whatever inspires them. Staple on the leaves to create a colorful and personalized classroom tree.



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More Materials:

Book Trailer: Watch the video at <http://tinyurl.com/6qr8kcy>.

Extras: Find out how this book began, print out bookmarks, or read reviews of this book at <http://tinyurl.com/6od4bcu>.

Projects/Lesson Plans: There are tons of great leaf-related crafts and experiments in books and online. Some of my favorites are at *Family Fun*’s website (<http://familyfun.go.com>). Scholastic has great free lesson plans available in its Teachers area (<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers>). And check out the Pinterest Board A LEAF CAN BE... for Educators, at <http://www.pinterest.com/salaslpl/a-leaf-can-be-for-educators/>.

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Write A Kid Can Be...: Write a class poem together describing some of the many things a kid can be. Put a pair of words on the board—for instance:

_____ baker
_____ maker

Ask students, “Who likes to bake?” Have volunteers share what they like to bake and fill in the blank with an answer. Then ask, “What do you like to make?” Maybe you end up with a muffin baker and a robot maker. Continue on with other pairs of words, like: stopper/shopper, filler/spiller, rider/hider, grower/thrower, getter/petter, player/stayer, reader/feeder, and skater/creator.

Once each student is represented in at least one line, create your class poem, opening with:

*A kid is a kid
who is awesome like me.
Here are some things
a kid can be.*

A kid can be a...
[Fill in the middle section with all the lines your class creates.]

*A kid is a kid.
That’s someone like me.
Now let’s all discover
what else we can be!*

Have kids illustrate your class poem, and then proudly display it on a bulletin board or on a hallway wall.

Note to Educators: Laura would love to see/share what you do with A LEAF CAN BE.... If you use this book in your classroom and are willing to share how you used it with other educators, please visit Laura’s website and email her to share pictures or ideas. Thanks!

Coming April 1, 2014! WATER CAN BE...

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