

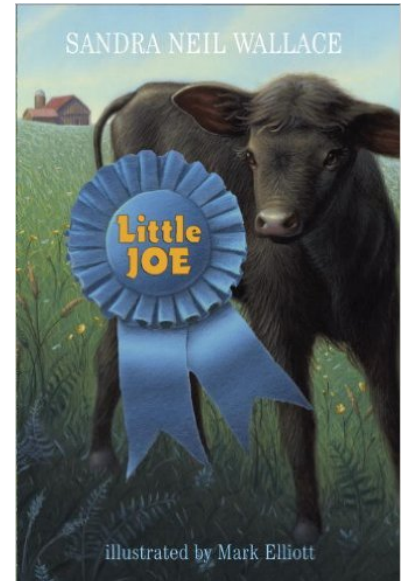
April 2016 Chapter Book of the Month

Little Joe

By: Sandra Neil Wallace

It's a cold December night and Fancy, the Stegner family's cow, is about to give birth. Out pops Little Joe, a huge bull calf, and with him comes nine-year-old Eli's first chance to raise an animal to show at next fall's county fair. Over the next ten months, Eli, and Little Joe, learn some hard lessons about growing up and what it means to take on bigger responsibilities, especially when it comes to taking care of another living thing. But one thing Eli is trying not to think about is what will happen to Little Joe after the fair: it's auction time, and he'll have to sell Little Joe!

This chapter book will give students insight to what it is like to live on a farm and raise an animal that provides food for so many people. Americans consume more beef products than any other country. Use the activities below to learn more about the beef cattle industry.



Beef Facts:

- Every day, 76 million Americans eat beef.¹
- Beef is meat from full-grown cattle about 2 years old.¹
- A live steer weighs about 1,000 pounds and yields about 450 pounds of edible meat.¹
- More beef is consumed on Memorial Day than any other day of the year. The Fourth of July and Labor Day typically tie for second place.¹
- Beef is one of the most important dietary sources of iron. To obtain the same amount of iron found in a 3-ounce serving of beef, you'd have to eat at least 3 cups of raw spinach.¹
- There are more than 800,000 ranchers and cattle producers in the United States.¹
- More than 97 percent of beef cattle farms and ranches are classified as family farms.¹

Vocabulary:

- **Bull:** an adult male capable of reproducing
- **Calf:** a male or female up to 1 year old
- **Cow:** an adult female
- **Heifer:** a young female calf that has not borne a calf
- **Steer:** a male that has been castrated; not capable of reproducing offspring
- **Sire:** the male parent of an animal
- **Stanchion:** a frame used to hold the head of a cow in place
- **Weaned:** when an animal is taken off its mother's milk
- **Halter:** a rope or strap placed around the head of cattle, used for leading

Activities

Text Talk Time:

1. Ask students to go to an area in the classroom and sit in a circle for a *Text, Talk, and Time* discussion. Have them bring their copy of *Little Joe* and three questions they have about what they read or answers to questions you provided on an index card.
2. Refer to the *Text, Talk, and Time Chart* to emphasize the rules of this strategy. To see a demonstration, watch this [Text, Talk, and Time strategy video](#)¹.

Procedures:

- Thumbs up: Share new information
- Two fingers: Add to an answer
- Teacher's hand up: Students are quiet, the next question is asked

Questions that can be posed to students:

Chapter 1

- What is a stanchion and what is it used for?
- Why did Grandpa instruct Eli not to wash his chore coat?
- How did Little Joe get his name?

Chapter 2

- What are some differences between Holsteins and angus cattle?
- What jobs do Eli's parents have besides running the farm?
- How are Pa & Grandpa different in the way they talk to Eli about Little Joe?
- What is the difference between a dairy operation and the steer operation the Stegner's now operate?

- Why did Pa have Fancy in a halter?

Chapter 3

- What is weaning and why does it happen?
- What topic does Keller bring up that worries Eli about Little Joe?
- How are Eli and Keller different? How are they the same?

Vocabulary Smack:

1. Divide students into even groups; 4, 6, 8 and give each group 18 3x5 index cards.
2. On 9 of the index cards, students will record the vocabulary words presented in this lesson.
3. On the remaining 9 index cards, students will record the definitions of the vocabulary words presented in this lesson.
4. After cards are complete, students will choose a place in the classroom to post the vocabulary index cards with masking tape.
5. The 9 definition cards will be given to a student identified as the “caller”. This student will call out the definition as students try to compete for the correct answer.
6. Divide the students (without the caller) into two lines and hand two students flyswatters. As the caller shares out a definition, the two front students will use the swatter to choose the correct answer from the index cards posted in the classroom.
7. The student with the correct answer will remain in place, the student with the incorrect answer will retreat to the back of the line and let the person behind them have a turn.
8. **Challenge:** Have student winners from each small group compete against each other for a class winner.

The Steaks are High:

Using the link below students will be able to play a fun math game and learn about the different ways that beef cattle are feed in order to grow to their maximum weight. To make it more challenging have students complete the activities without using a calculator.

<http://www.myamericanfarm.com/classroom/games>

At Home on the Range:

A full lesson plan you can use to teach students about rangelands by participating in a hands-on activity to grow their own grass to represent a beef

ranch. http://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?lpid=279&search_term_lp=beef

Illinois Ag Mag:

Use this resource to teach students specifics about the beef cattle industry. Put a North Carolina spin on it by having students create their own newsletter with facts pertaining specifically to the beef cattle industry in NC.

http://www.agintheclassroom.org/TeacherResources/AgMags/Beef%20Ag%20Mag%202013%20for%20Smartboard_2.pdf

Additional Resources:

1. <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/socratic-seminar>
2. <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/vocabulary-strategies>
3. http://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?lpid=179&search_term_lp=rising

Sources:

Beef Facts

1. <http://www.farmflavor.com/beef-farm-facts>

Activities

1. <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/analyzing-text-as-a-group>