Little Joe

by

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Companion Guide

From

Illinois AGRICULTURE in the Classroom®
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 9 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, where as “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. There are “Questions” to use as discussion starters or as reading checks and 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. Teacher might consider having students using special notebooks or folders to store all materials for this book for easy reference.
Chapter 1 A Special Delivery

Power Words
Nervous
Rustling
Nostril
Stanchion
Sired
 Tradition
Rafter
Cooed
Nudged
Navel
Infected

Vo-Cow-Bulary
Hen
Holstein
Heifers
Angus
Bull
Loin
Rump
Birth Pen
Feed Bin
Kernels
Muzzle
Carhartt

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?
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?
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.
Chapter 2 Tattoo Day

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
1. Describe the differences Eli notices about various types of cobwebs. Write about what you think of cobwebs.
2. What do you think about naming a calf instead of giving it a letter and a number combination?

Extension Activity
Check out Beautiful Bovine at www.agintheclassroom.org

Chapter 3 Sweet and Sour

Questions
1. Describe Keller, his hands and his teeth.
2. How does Keller name his hogs?

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom
3. Why does Keller clip the teeth of his hogs?

**Write Away**
1. Keller seems to tell some tall tales. What do you think about his bee hunting and eating story?

**Extension Activity**
Learn more about Illinois Pork at www.ilpork.com

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**Chapter 4 Don’t Let Go**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Power Words</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vo-Cow-Bulary</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raspy</td>
<td>Brisket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrashed</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blotchy</td>
<td>Dewclaws</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muck Boots</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Silo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Muzzle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Progeny</td>
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<td>Marbling</td>
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**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**
1. Explain what Grandpa means when he says you can give a cow a name?
2. Explain if you think Eli should have taken Eli out by himself.

**Extension Activity**
Want to know more about Barns? Check out www.thebarnjournal.org.

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**Chapter 5 Mending**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Power Words</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vo-Cow-Bulary</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nickering</td>
<td>Free Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindle</td>
<td>Appaloosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callus</td>
<td>Mini-Lops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Why did Eli get stitches?
2. Who is Tess?
3. Why did Eli and Pa have to fix the fence?

**Write Away**
1. Pa wants Eli to show Little Joe who is boss. Why does Eli wonder if Pa has calloused up for good?
2. 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 [www.horsebreedslist.com](http://www.horsebreedslist.com).

### Chapter 6 Sorry

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Power Words</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vo-Cow-Bulary</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quickening</td>
<td>Currycomb</td>
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**Questions**
1. What is Eli sorry about?
2. How does Little Joe belong to Spider?

**Write Away**
1. 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/home/mbgp/how_to_grow.html](http://www.merebrow.com/home/mbgp/how_to_grow.html). Illinois Ag in the Classroom’s Pumpkin Ag Mag could be helpful too.

### 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**
1. Describe what happens on Big Night.
2. 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 US. Learn more about this at 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**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Words</th>
<th>Vo-Cow-Bulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warbled</td>
<td>Hay Mow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittle</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gnarled</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bawling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yowled</td>
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**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?
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**

1. 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**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Words</th>
<th>Vo-Cow-Bulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaxing</td>
<td>Show Stick</td>
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<td>Prodding</td>
<td>Silage</td>
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<td>Amber</td>
<td>Rations</td>
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<td>Frantic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impressive</td>
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**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**
1. It seems like Pa wants to win, what does Eli want?

**Chapter 10 Trading Eggs**

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<tr>
<th><strong>Power Words</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condiment</td>
<td>Hens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metallic</td>
<td>Roper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interfere</td>
<td>Blower</td>
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**Questions**
1. What is Ma’s job?
2. How long has Ma been selling eggs?

**Write Away**
1. Describe what Ma means when she says “pumpkins don’t hurt”.

**Chapter 11 Cow Tipping**

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<tr>
<th><strong>Power Words</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vo-Cow-Bulary</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiky</td>
<td>Lupine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraged</td>
<td>Lobelia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katydid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stammered</td>
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**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**
1. Describe how the chapter ends and the fun time the family has on July 4.
**Extension Activity**
Various forms of Lupine and Lobelia grow in Illinois as perennials. Check out urbanext.illinois.edu/hortihints/0104b.html to see what grows in Illinois, then enter that name into an image search to see what it looks like.

**Chapter 12 In the Show Ring**

<table>
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<th>Power Words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instinct</td>
<td>Show Box</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girth</td>
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**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**
1. 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 to see grooming videos and to see a variety of grooming supplies.

**Chapter 13 Poison Weeds**

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<th>Power Words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wobbly</td>
<td>Crossbred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crouched</td>
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**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
1. Eli discovered why Pa was so hard. Write why you think Pa is so upset. How could Eli help him?

Chapter 14 No Trespassing

Power Words
- Trespassing
- Waddled
- Frolicking
- Skittish
- Mimicked
- Disqualified
- Whitewashed

Vo-Cow-Bulary
- Foal
- Dachshund
- Yearling

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
1. Write what you think happened after Eli heard the rumble from the barn.

Chapter 15 Broken Bones

Power Words
- Frisky

Vo-Cow-Bulary
- Willow

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
1. Why can’t Eli sleep? Write what you think is going through his mind.
Chapter 16 All Jittery

Power Words
Show
Kindling
Dozing

Vo-Cow-Bulary
Bedding
Grooming Chute
Simmental

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?
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
1. Grandpa offers Pa a hand when he falls, but Pa brushes it aside. Describe what you think is wrong.
2. Write about what you think is going through Eli’s mind in the show ring as the judge is talking to him.
3. At the end of the chapter Eli talks to Pa about Shamrock. Write what you think Pa is thinking about.

Chapter 17 Sold

Power Words
Blister

Vo-Cow-Bulary
Carcass

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

1. 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.