

Leaf Man Adventures: “A Leaf Man’s got to go where the wind blows.”

Fall is a terrific time to write about place with Lois Ehlert’s children’s book *Leaf Man*. This activity works well with lower elementary-age students, but consider how it could inspire writing with older students as well. KMWP Fellow Mary Ann Stillerman explains how her middle school students write stories of leaf adventures with second-graders at her school.

Planning:

My school is a P-12 campus, so we are fortunate to be able to visit the lower school classrooms. Every Friday I take a group of middle school students to the lower school to read and write with first and second grade students for a 30-minute lesson. *Leaf Man* is one of our favorites for reading and writing in the fall.

- After reading the book to students and discussing the lyrical text and Autumn-colored die-cut collages, ask students to suggest other places for Leaf Man to visit.
- Select one of the suggested places and brainstorm characteristics of the place: man-made or natural features, people and animals, colors and climate, sounds, smells, and surprises.
- Ask students to create their own Leaf Man (or Leaf Woman, Leaf Girl, or Leaf Boy) and write of an adventure to the place you brainstormed or one of their choice.

Materials for creating a Leaf Man: If you would like to incorporate illustration with this writing, you may want to venture outside to gather some leaves. If your campus allows, take the kids outside to do this. If not, you can bring them in yourself or ask parents to send baggies of selected leaves. If weather does not cooperate, do not despair: die cut leaves will work, especially if you glue googly-eyes on them. Alternatively, use real leaves and create leaf rubbings for the Leaf Man. Kids of all ages love to do leaf rubbings in the fall.



For Older Students:

I find that children’s books make great mentor text for middle schoolers because they offer a nostalgic connection to books they’ve read and enjoyed when they were younger, plus they are short, and beautifully illustrated and written. However, you could also do this in your classroom without the book.

- Older students can write a poem or prose about the adventures of a fall leaf in the wind. Have them bring in fall leaves to create leaf rubbings and illustrate their writing.

Find other ideas for writing with your students and learn more about the Leslie Walker Writers of Promise Contest @ www.kmwp.org