

The Perfect Leaf

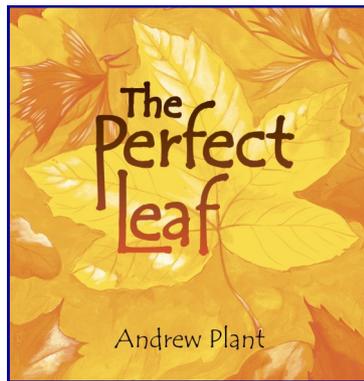
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Inspired by a windy autumn afternoon and two real little girls, *The Perfect Leaf* takes the simple joy of leaf-kicking and turns it into an extraordinary flight of the imagination.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Autumn
- Making Friends
- Joys of Childhood
- Imagination

Discussion Questions & Activities:

- Why do you think the author has put the text in different places all over the pages, and not just in a block, or along the bottom? Does it change the way you read the story?
- Why do you think the author didn't write any text for the last pages. Do they need words? Do you think it is better without words? Why?
- Do you think that the girls really fly away? Why or why not? (There is, of course, no correct answer.)
- Little acorn fairies and leaf dragons appear throughout the story, flitting around the edges. Do you think they are meant to be real, or are they part of the children's imagination? Can the children in the story see them, or only the reader? Why?
- Find all the hidden creatures in the story!
- Have the students collect leaves from home, and bring them to school. Try to identify what tree they came from, using school books or the Internet.
- Break the class into teams, and see which team can find leaves from the greatest number of different types of trees from around the school. Identify them.
- Have students collect leaves and paste them on paper to create 'leaf creatures'. Encourage the students not to tear or cut leaves into the shapes they want, but to use only those shapes that are available. Let the leaves' shapes lead the creation rather than planning a particular creature beforehand.
- Have the students search for shapes and patterns in clouds, trees, asphalt playgrounds, carpets etc. Older students can be given iPads to photograph them. Encourage students, when photographing, to frame the photos in such a way, if possible, that the object itself is not obvious, but the imagined shape is clear. Use close-ups, unusual angles, silhouettes etc. Imagined shapes do not have to be an animal – they can be anything at all, the more varied the better.
- The last pages of the story are silent. Have the students write the ending of the story as if it were not a picture book, but a chapter book.
- There are several metaphors and similes in the story. Have the students create their own to describe leaves, colours, tastes, friends, etc.
- Have students compose simple poems, and write them on the page in a way that reflects the meaning. Encourage the use of verbs in particular. For example: Leaves, drifting, whirling, spinning down in Autumn.