

### Focus Question:

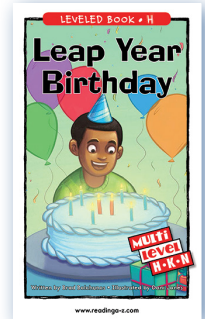
*What makes Leroy's birthday different from most people's birthdays?*

### Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic

Students love celebrating their birthdays! But what if their birthday came only once every four years? *Leap Year Birthday* tells the story of Leroy, a boy whose birthday falls on February 29. Leroy wants to learn more about leap day and why it happens only once every four years. Detailed illustrations and engaging text will help students learn about the scientific principles behind leap day. This book can also be used to teach students how to analyze characters as well as to retell the events of a story in the correct sequence.

The book and lesson are also available for levels K and N.



### Lesson Essentials

#### Instructional Focus

- ☐ Retell story events to understand text
- ☐ Analyze characters in a story
- ☐ Describe information provided by a glossary
- ☐ Segment syllables
- ☐ Identify consonant *th* digraph
- ☐ Identify the names of the months and days of the week
- ☐ Place words in alphabetical order

#### Materials

- ☐ Book: *Leap Year Birthday* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Analyze character, consonant *th* digraph, alphabetical order worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

#### Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com). (\*) word appears in the lesson but not the book.

- **High-frequency words:** *day, he, old*
- **Words to Know**  
**Story critical:** *beamed* (v.), *Earth* (n.), *leap day* (n.), *leap years* (n.), *librarian* (n.), *Sun* (n.)
- **Academic vocabulary:** *analyze* (v.)\*, *character* (n.)\*, *however* (adv.)

### Guiding the Reading

#### Before Reading

##### Build Background

- Place on the board a copy of the poem "30 Days Hath September" from Mother Goose. Read the poem aloud with students. Have students work in groups to sort the months according to how many days are in each month. Invite volunteers to share their sorting with the class.
- Reread the last few lines of the poem that focus on the month of February. Explain to students that February has 28 days each year, except in a leap year, when it has 29 days. Point out that February is a special month because it is the only month that is affected by a leap year.

##### Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Leap Year Birthday*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

##### Introduce the Reading Strategy: Retell

Explain to students that engaged readers stop now and then while they are reading to retell in their mind what has happened so far in the story. Stopping to retell the events of the story helps readers understand and remember what they are reading. Explain that when retelling a story or event, it is important that the details are explained in order. Point out that people retell stories as part of their daily lives, such as what they did after school or what happened in a movie they just watched. Use a book that the class has recently read or a familiar story, and demonstrate how to retell a story in correct order. Invite volunteers to help you with the retelling.

### Guiding the Reading (cont.)

#### Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

##### Analyze character

- Explain to students that when reading a story it is important to learn about and understand the main character. Write the word *Analyze* on the board and read it aloud to students. Point out that when readers *analyze a character*, they are considering the character's words, thoughts, and actions. Create three columns on the board with the headings *Words, Thoughts, Actions*. Explain to students that as they read the story they should consider the main character's words, thoughts, and actions, and what these traits tell about the character.
- Read pages 3 and 4 aloud to students as they follow along. Invite students to use information from this page to identify the main character, Leroy. Then, have students identify Leroy's words, thoughts, and actions. Record students' responses in the chart on the board and then discuss as a class what this tells them about Leroy as a person.

#### Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

#### Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Leroy's leap year birthday. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

### During Reading

#### Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *When is Leroy's birthday?* (level 1) pages 3–4
- *Why does Leroy think he might be only two years old?* (level 1) page 4

- *Why would Leroy go to the library to learn more about leap day?* (level 3) page 6
- *How many extra hours does Earth need to spin each year?* (level 1) page 10
- *Why do leap years have 366 days?* (level 2) multiple pages

#### Text Features: Glossary

Explain that a glossary helps readers learn the definitions of the words in the book. Have students work with a partner to review the glossary on page 16. Ask students: *How are the vocabulary words arranged in a glossary? Can you define the word beamed? On which page can you find the word librarian?* Have students review other vocabulary words in the book and discuss in groups where they would be found and how they know. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

#### Skill Review

- Model for students how to retell what you have read so far, and then have them stop at certain points during the story to retell in their mind what they have read. Have students retell the story from the beginning to a partner. Listen to see whether they include the events in detail and in the correct order. Encourage students to use transition words such as *first*, *next*, and *last* when retelling the story.
- Model analyzing character.  
*Think-aloud: As I read the story, I paused often to consider the words, thoughts, and actions of the main character, Leroy, so that I can better understand him. For example, I read that Leroy wanted to learn about leap day, so he and his mom headed to the library. On the basis of this information, I can tell that Leroy is inquisitive and willing to do research to find the answer to his questions. Pausing often while I am reading to consider the main character's words, thoughts, and actions helps me to better understand the character and to enjoy what I am reading.*
- Have students work in small groups to share one quality about Leroy and one detail that supports this quality. Remind students to refer back to the text directly to show Leroy's words, thoughts, or actions. Have groups share their responses with the class.
- Model how to complete the [analyze character worksheet](#). Remind students to use specific examples and details from the text.

### After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Guiding the Reading (cont.)

#### Skill Review

##### Graphic Organizer: **Analyze character**

Review the analyze character worksheet that students completed. Invite volunteers to share their findings with the class. Remind students that analyzing characters is one way to better understand and learn more about the characters in a story.

#### Comprehension Extension

**Discussion cards** covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

#### Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Students should include that Leroy's birthday falls on leap day, which happens only once every four years.)

#### Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

### Book Extension Activities

#### **Build Skills**

##### Phonological Awareness: **Segment syllables**

- Explain to students that every word contains one or more parts. Point out that these parts are called *syllables* and one way to identify them is to clap out the parts in a word. Provide several examples for students using the following words: *beamed, librarian, Leroy, Earth, birthday, cake, celebration*.
- Provide practice for students to identify the number of syllables in a word by having the class clap out the names of several authors and book characters with which the class is familiar.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in small groups and invite each group to clap out the syllables in the first and last names of each group member.

##### Phonics: **Consonant digraph th**

- Write the word *month* on the board and read it aloud to students. Ask what sound they hear at the end of the word *month* and what letters make this sound. Underline the consonant *th* digraph.
- Explain that the letters *t* and *h* together make the /th/ sound. Write the following words on the board, leaving out the consonant *th* digraph: *thin, bath, thud, math, thick, sixth*. Invite volunteers to the board to add the consonant *th* digraph and read each word aloud as a class.
- **Check for understanding:** Review pages 3 through 6 with students and have them circle all of the words containing the consonant *th* digraph. Invite volunteers to share their findings with the class.

- **Independent practice:** Have students review pages 7 through 16 in small groups and circle all of the words containing the consonant *th* digraph. Invite volunteers to share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **consonant th digraph worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

##### Grammar and Mechanics: **Proper nouns:**

##### **Months and days of the week**

- Review or explain to students that words used to tell the names of specific people, places, and things are called *proper nouns*. Explain that these words begin with a capital letter. Explain that two types of proper nouns that always begin with capital letters are *months of the year* and *days of the week*.
- Have students sing versions of the "Months of the Year" and "Days of the Week" songs to help remind them of these proper nouns.
- Divide students into small groups. Give each group the names of the months of the year and days of the week on note cards. Have the group work together to put these note cards in the correct order. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the names of three months and three days on the board, using lowercase letters. Have students write these words with the correct capitalization on a separate piece of paper.

##### Word Work: **Alphabetical order**

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order.
- Write the words *Earth, Sun, and rotate* on individual pieces of paper and display them on the board. Discuss how to put these words in alphabetical order, reminding students to look at the first letter in each word. Have a volunteer move the words into the correct order.
- Put students into small groups, and give each group the following three words: *birthday, Leroy, and cake*. Have students work together to put these words in alphabetical order. Invite volunteers from each group to share their answers.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *party, beamed, and leap* on the board. Have students write the words in alphabetical order on a separate sheet of paper and share their answers with a partner.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **alphabetical order worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

##### Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.