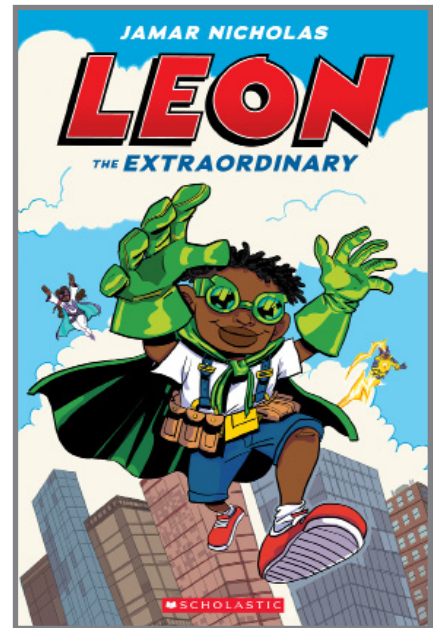


Leon the Extraordinary

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Primary

SYNOPSIS

In the city where Leon lives, superheroes—and supervillains—are just part of everyday life. So how does an ordinary kid like Leon, who has no superpowers himself, become the hero he wants to be? Leon gets his chance when a new supervillain at school turns his classmates into mind-controlled zombies! His best bud, Carlos, is by his side, but his frenemy, Clementine, is a big drag—until Leon finds out a super secret that changes everything!

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Jamar Nicholas is an award-winning artist and educator who has dedicated his career to helping young people realise the power of cartooning. Jamar aims to promote anti-bullying, healing and kindness in his work. He enjoys the 1980s, podcasting, video games and spending time with his family and pets.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What can you see happening on the front cover?
 - Who do you think might be the main character of this book, and why do you think this?
 - After reading the text on the back of the cover, what can you identify confidently in the cover artwork?
 - What genre/s do you think this book might be?
- On the back cover of this book, it asks 'What does it take to be Extraordinary?'. Individually, write a two or three paragraph answer to this question, sharing what you, personally, think it takes to be extraordinary, and why you think this. You can use examples from the story to support your reasons, or you might like to use incidents from your own life to back up your statements.
- In the book, there is a lot of emphasis on making good choices. What are some good choices that Leon makes? What are some poor (or at least less-good) choices that he makes? Why do you think that it is so important to always remember to make good choices?
- If you had superheroes, and dread monsters or villains where you live, what do you think some of them might be? Draw a picture of a superhero of your own invention defeating a villain or monster and saving all the kids in your school.
- Carlos loves drawing his own comic books, featuring the kids in his class in fictional adventures. Draw a comic strip of your own featuring your family, friends or classmates in a fantastic situation, with you or a friend as a superhero saving the day for everyone else.

- Clementine lives in an absolutely enormous house outside the city, but Leon isn't very impressed. If you could choose any house you wanted, and place it anywhere, where would it be and what would it look like? Draw and label a detailed picture of your Absolute Dream Home. Colour it carefully, and include a key alongside your picture with detailed descriptions of all the different features you would like to include. Feel free to ignore physics and incorporate fantastic magical elements into your home if you wish.
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why? Write a short story starring yourself as a superhero with an unexpected power that saves the day.
- Were you surprised by the end of the story? Why/why not? In small groups or as a class discuss any clues that there were in the book along the way that could have given away the ending to you if you'd noticed them.
- Leon builds a special net for catching bad guys (or zombified classmates). Invent a special weapon of your own that you could use to defend yourself from evil. Draw a diagram of your invention, and label it carefully, explaining what the different parts are and how they could be used. Write an instruction leaflet to accompany your invention so that other ordinary heroes can borrow and use it if necessary.
- Thaddeus tells Leon that since everyone always assumes that he and his family are all bad guys, that there is no point trying to be a good guy, and he may as well just be a villain anyway. Hold a class debate about whether it is still worth doing your best even when people have pre-judged you as unworthy. Individually, choose one side of the argument and think of three original points to support your point of view. Then think of three points that support the other side of the argument. Divide the class in half, and assign the different sides of the argument to each team at random.
 - Have each of the two groups choose three speakers to represent them in the debate, and then in small groups have each speaker consult with other members of their team to create a strong argument supporting their position. Rehearse your presentations, and finally hold a formal debate between the chosen three members of each team. Support members of the teams should think of rebuttals to the points brought up by the opposition, and can share them with the team members who haven't yet spoken so they can defend their position better.
- Leon creates a superhero costume from household items and clothes, that he then wears to school every day. Create a homemade superhero costume of your own inspired by Leon's and have a class home-made-hero fashion parade.
- Leon uses flowcharts to help him make sensible decisions and decide what to do. What areas of your life do you think could benefit from flowcharts like Leon's? As a class discuss the possibilities of useful flowcharts in your daily lives, and make several that can help you make some everyday decisions. Your choices can be as ordinary and obvious as whether to have a healthy breakfast, or eat lollies instead; or they can be as complicated as deciding what topic to research for an assignment, or how to deal with a difficult social situation.
- Leon discovers that his superpower is common sense. What are some other ordinary traits that people have that could be considered as superpowers if you think about them in the right way?
- What is your favourite scene in the book and why?