

# NEO LEO

## GRADES 2-4

Written and Illustrated by Gene Barretta

Published by Christy Ottaviano Books  
Henry Holt and Company

### *Story Summary*

Leonardo, born in 1452, is primarily renowned as a painter. In this book, you will become acquainted with the Leonardo da Vinci who was also an inventor, engineer and scientist. Leonardo wrote and drew detailed descriptions of what would later become hang gliders, cooking rotisseries, automobiles, robots and much more. Gene Barretta cleverly shows how Leonardo's ideas---many inspired by his study of nature---foreshadowed modern inventions, offering a window into the future. Several inventors are highlighted, all of whom can credit Leonardo's original thinking with the ultimate success of their inventions.

### *Objectives*

1. To develop an appreciation for the impact that Leonardo da Vinci's ideas had upon modern day inventors.
2. To develop an appreciation for some of these inventions and an understanding of their relevance today.
3. To develop library and research skills.

### *Before viewing the video*

Tell the class that in this video they will meet the author, Gene Barretta, at the beginning, and they will hear him again at the end to talk about his book. You will see the story of Leonardo da Vinci. He was born in 1452 and was a famous painter. Many people do not know that he was also a scientist and inventor. In this video you will learn about Leonardo and many other inventors who have made our lives more interesting and helpful. Pay special attention to the way Leonardo took his notes, because we are going to try and write "the Leonardo way."

### *Questions to ask after viewing the video*

1. Why weren't Leonardo's ideas developed into inventions during his lifetime?
2. Leonardo left many notes behind when he died. What was special about his notes?
3. Why did Leonardo design an aircraft that would help people fly?
4. Which inventions were developed to help people fly?
5. Leonardo experimented with different kinds of lenses. How were these ideas developed?
6. Besides inventions that help us fly, how did Leonardo contribute to other means of transportation?
7. What did Leonardo do that helps doctors learn about our bodies now?
8. Why did Leonardo decide to experiment building a parachute?
9. Of all of the inventions you learned about in this video, which do you think is most important?

### ***Activities***

1. Just for fun...have the children experiment with mirror writing. Place their samples on display with a mirror nearby for all to read.
2. To learn more about Leonardo, see Barretta's bibliography. In addition, the library is a good resource for the class to enjoy some of his artistic masterpieces.
3. Have a class project called "Inventor Day." Break the class into small groups so that each group may use the library to find out about and report on one of the modern inventors mentioned in the video.
4. Develop a project called "My Own Invention." Have the students think about something that would make daily living easier, more fun, or more interesting. What would you need to make this work? What kind of help would you need from others? Why do you think people would buy your invention?
5. Have the children look around the classroom and identify the "inventions" they see in their surroundings.
6. "Who is the inventor?" Have an internet or library experience to determine the origin of everyday things.