**Gaston**

**AUTHOR:** Kelly DiPucchio  
**ILLUSTRATOR:** Christian Robinson  
**PUBLISHER:** Antheneum Books for Young Readers  
**COPYRIGHT:** 2014  
**ART MEDIUM:** acrylic paint  
**GENRE:** fantasy, humor  
**LIFE SKILLS:** friendship, caring

**SYNOPSIS:**  
Two puppies get put in the wrong litter and don’t fit in with their siblings.

**BOOKTALK:**  
Have you ever felt like you didn’t belong, or like you had to try much harder at some things than other people? Gaston feels that way until one day he discovers that maybe he really DOES belong in another family! Will he finally feel like he belongs with his new family, or is he one of the perfect poodle puppies at heart after all?

**AUTHOR:** Kelly DiPucchio  
Kelly DiPucchio’s website: [http://www.kellydipucchio.com](http://www.kellydipucchio.com)

Kelly is a *New York Times* best-selling author. She attended Michigan State University. *Gaston* has received several accolades, including Junior Library Guild selection, Best Children’s Books in *Horn Book*, *Kirkus* Reviews, and Amazon.

**Other books written by the author:**  
*Grace for President*  
*Zombie in Love*  
*Crafty Chloe*  
*Gilbert Goldfish Wants a Pet*  
*The Sandwich Swap*  
*Clink*  
*Dog Days of School*  
*Liberty’s Journey*  
*How to Potty Train Your Dinosaur*

**ILLUSTRATOR:** Christian Robinson  

Christian is an illustrator and animator from San Francisco. He’s worked with Pixar Animation and The Sesame Street Workshop. Several of his children’s books have received awards, including the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor and Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal Honor.
Other books illustrated by the illustrator:
Leo, A Ghost Story
Last Stop on Market Street
The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade
Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker
Rain
Harlem’s Little Blackbird
School’s First Day of School

CHALLENGING WORDS
● precious
● pooches
● daffodils
● brutish
● brawny
● adjusting
● burly
● admired
● precious
● kibble
● taught
● awkward
● silence
● brood
● tough

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. What is one way Gaston is different from his siblings?
2. Which puppy family do you think you’d belong to?
3. Why do you think the poodles speak French?
4. Do you think the ending is good? Why or why not?
5. How is Gaston different from the other poodle puppies?
6. How is Antoinette different from the other bulldog puppies?
7. Are Gaston and Antoinette happy when they switch families?
8. Why do Mrs. Poodle and Mrs. Bulldog say they’ve made a mistake after they switch Gaston and Antoinette to be with the family that looks right?
9. How does this story make you feel? What is the lesson the author is trying to teach us?
10. Why did Gaston not fit in with the bulldog family even though he was a bulldog?
11. Do you think Gaston made the right choice to return to the poodle family? Why or why not?
12. Why do you think Gaston and Antoinette fell in love even though they are so different?
13. What is the theme or lesson of this story? Why do you think that?

**ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:**

**Language Arts:**

- Write a letter as Gaston or Antoinette to their puppies. Describe the experience they had when they were puppies.

  **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.3** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

  **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

  **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

**Research:**

- Research poodles and bulldogs. Make a Venn Diagram showing how they are alike and different.

  **2.W.5** With support, conduct short research on a topic.

  **2.W.5.a** Find information on a topic of interest (e.g., cardinals).

  **2.W.5.b** Identify various visual and text reference sources.
2.W.5.c Organize, summarize, and present the information, choosing from a variety of formats.