

Junior Great Books® and the Colorado Standards for Reading and Writing

Junior Great Books is a strong, inquiry-based language arts program that improves students' achievement in reading, thinking, and communicating. Junior Great Books combines classroom materials and the Shared Inquiry method to provide the essential elements your students need to meet and surpass the Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing.

Colorado Standards

Introduction

The Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing state:

The ability to communicate clearly—to read, write, speak, and listen—forms the core of human culture. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are essential tools for learning, for success in the workplace, for enriching and expanding our lives, and for responsible citizenship. . . . Success in learning is grounded in students acquiring solid knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

These language skills should guide students to

- Become fluent readers, writers, and speakers
- Communicate effectively, concisely, coherently, and imaginatively
- Recognize the power of language and use that power ethically and creatively
- Be at ease communicating in an increasingly technological world

Junior Great Books

The Junior Great Books program incorporates reading, writing, and discussion activities using the Shared Inquiry method.

- Junior Great Books interpretive activities provide a structure for thoughtful, active reading. The activities sustain students' contact with the text and are designed to connect students' own experiences to the story.
- Shared Inquiry Discussion establishes a lively sense of audience and develops individual perspective.
- Junior Great Books postdiscussion writing activities help students learn how to organize their knowledge and support an argument with reasoning and evidence.

Standard 1

Students read and understand a variety of materials.

To meet this standard, students will

- Use comprehension skills such as previewing, inferring, comparing and contrasting, re-reading, summarizing, identifying the author's purpose, determining the main idea, and applying knowledge of foreshadowing, metaphor, simile, symbolism, and other figures of speech
- Make connections between their reading and what they already know, and identify what they need to know about a topic before reading about it
- Adjust reading strategies for different purposes
- Use information from their reading to increase vocabulary and enhance language usage

In Junior Great Books, students read literature that has been carefully selected to challenge the reader and to spark rigorous discussion. Junior Great Books interpretive activities provide multiple opportunities for thoughtful, active reading.

- Before reading—students discuss issues they will encounter in the text
- During reading—students take notes, raise questions, and build on personal reactions in order to analyze characters and incidents
- After reading—students interpret significant words and respond in a text-based interpretive discussion and in creative, personal, and persuasive writing

Standard 2

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

To meet this standard, students will

- Write and speak for a variety of purposes, such as telling stories, presenting analytical responses to literature, explaining concepts, and persuading
- Write and speak for audiences such as peers, teachers, and the community
- Plan, draft, revise, proofread, and edit written communications
- Use a variety of devices such as figurative language, symbolism, dialect, and precise vocabulary to convey meaning
- Organize written and oral presentations using strategies such as lists, outlining, cause/effect relationships, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and narration

In Junior Great Books, writing is integrated into the dynamic development of ideas through selected interpretive activities. Strategies include:

- Writing notes, responses, and questions
- Developing a personal response to literature through guided note taking
- Writing before and after discussion
- Stating, explaining, and defending ideas
- Responding to divergent ideas in writing to promote a genuine sense of audience

Junior Great Books students approach writing with a wealth of ideas. The creative, personal, and persuasive writing projects guide students in shaping well-organized, satisfying compositions. Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry Discussion gives students a model for writing. Because the process, from short notes to full essays, is integrated with reading activities, writing becomes a familiar thinking tool.

Standard 4

Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, [and] listening.

To meet this standard, students will

- Analyze, draw conclusions, and discriminate between fact and opinion in writing, reading, speaking, and listening
- Use reading, writing, speaking, and listening to define and solve problems
- Recognize, express, and defend points of view orally and in writing
- Evaluate the reliability, accuracy, and relevancy of information

The Junior Great Books program of interpretive activities and literature builds strong critical-thinking skills that reach across all disciplines. Students learn to

- Generate and support ideas
- Identify a problem
- Present and clarify an argument
- Support an argument with reasoning and evidence
- Use inference
- Evaluate and revise ideas
- Consider more than one side; weigh evidence
- Question and test an argument
- Draw conclusions
- Revise and improve an argument

Standard 6

Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.

To meet this standard, students will

- Read literature to investigate common issues and interests
- Read literature to understand places, people, events, and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar
- Read literature that reflects the uniqueness and integrity of the American experience
- Read classic and contemporary literature, representing various cultural and ethnic traditions from throughout the world
- Read classic and contemporary literature of the United States about the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups

Junior Great Books publishes the finest children's literature from cultures around the world. Students read classic and modern literature from Africa, Asia, Europe, India, Latin America, the Middle East, and the United States. Students encounter the voices of such diverse authors as Maya Angelou, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Andrea Lee, Tomás Rivera, Carl Sandburg, Amy Tan, and Mark Twain. In Junior Great Books, all students benefit not only from the *kind* of literature they read in the program, but also by what they *do* with their reading.

Staff Development

The Shared Inquiry Leader Workshop—Level I offers concrete, step-by-step instruction in how to use the Shared Inquiry method with Junior Great Books materials. In the workshop, teachers learn practical strategies to help students

- Focus on interpreting what they read
- Develop personal insights into a story's meaning with evidence from the text
- Challenge and contribute to one another's ideas
- Become a cooperative community of learners and thinkers

This two-day workshop enables you to begin leading Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry Discussion and other interpretive activities and to support children of all ability levels.

For more information about the Junior Great Books program or how to implement Junior Great Books in your school or district, call the Great Books Foundation at 1-800-222-5870 to speak with our sales representative for Colorado.



The Great Books Foundation

A nonprofit educational organization

35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2300, Chicago, Illinois 60601-2298

Telephone: 1-800-222-5870 • Fax: (312) 407-0334

E-mail: jgb@greatbooks.org

Web site: www.greatbooks.org