Why Choose Junior Great Books Nonfiction Inquiry?

Our Junior Great Books Nonfiction Inquiry program for grades 3–5 helps teachers and students extend inquiry-based learning to informational texts. Nonfiction Inquiry can be used as a companion to our fiction materials for grades 3–5 but can also be used alone.

• Students follow our inquiry-based sequence of activities for each text.
• Students read for understanding, ask questions, reread and take notes, form ideas about an issue in the text, and support those ideas with evidence.
• Each text is aligned with a specific Junior Great Books story, and extension prompts allow students to compare and contrast the stories and nonfiction texts in writing or discussion.

Nonfiction units are aligned with national benchmarks in science, social studies, and English language arts.

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Welcome! The Junior Great Books Nonfiction Inquiry program brings high-quality nonfiction and student-centered discussion to your classroom while providing a superb framework for practicing reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing. Teaching tips, support for differentiating instruction, and tools for building language arts skills make Junior Great Books readings and discussions as engaging and rewarding for you as they are for your students.

The Shared Inquiry™ Method of Learning

Junior Great Books programs use a method of reading and discussion known as Shared Inquiry. This distinctive approach to learning fosters a vibrant environment in which children learn the habits and strategies of good readers, thinkers, and learners. Through your own curiosity and attentive questioning, you serve as a partner in inquiry with your students. The process reaches its fullest expression in Shared Inquiry discussion. In the Nonfiction Inquiry program, you and your students think about and discuss a question about the text that has more than one reasonable answer. Those answers can be supported with evidence from the text as well as personal knowledge.

Nonfiction Inquiry Features

High-Quality Nonfiction

The Nonfiction Inquiry program features thought-provoking nonfiction texts that yield rich questions. Texts explore historical and contemporary issues and align with national social studies and science standards. They also connect to concepts in Junior Great Books literature, so that students can meaningfully compare texts across genres and curricular areas.

In-Depth Reading, Critical Thinking, and Writing Activities

The sequence of Shared Inquiry activities encourages students to develop the habits of effective readers and thinkers: to read closely, to think deeply and write thoughtfully about what they have read, and to listen and respond to their classmates.

Students read the text independently, ask questions about it, and then reread while taking notes—all fundamental reading comprehension strategies. In Shared Inquiry discussion, the heart of the program, students practice three essential elements of critical thinking:

- **Idea**—Students develop and clarify ideas about the text.
- **Evidence**—Students support these ideas with evidence.
- **Response**—Students listen to and consider the ideas of others.
After the discussion, students continue their investigation of the text’s issues through written response and extension activities. Throughout the process, the reading-writing connection is reinforced as students read, mark, and respond to the texts in the Student Log.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Instructions for core activities are accompanied by a student learning spectrum, which presents the range of behaviors you might expect to see in your students during the activity. Linked to each student learning spectrum are modifications to aid you in tailoring the activity to suit the learning needs of all students—those who need support as well as those who are ready for a challenge.

**Standards Alignment**

Each unit presents an engaging sequence of activities that clearly and consistently develops students’ reading comprehension, critical thinking, language, and writing skills. Visit the downloadable resources section of [greatbooks.org](http://greatbooks.org) for:

- Skill alignments to national standards for English language arts
- Unit topic alignments to national science and social studies standards

**Research-Based Learning**

Great Books programs have been recognized as effective by the U.S. Department of Education, by Learning Forward, and by other studies of curricula. Independent research has shown that regular, sustained use of Shared Inquiry and Great Books programs improves reading comprehension and critical thinking for students from a wide range of demographic backgrounds and achievement levels. Research supporting Shared Inquiry practices can be found at [greatbooks.org](http://greatbooks.org).

**Accountability Measures**

The student learning spectrums show a range of common student behaviors during activities, providing a simple framework for ongoing informal assessment.

For more formal assessments, the Student Logs contain brief quizzes to gauge reading comprehension of each text. The Assessment and Reflection section of the Teacher’s Guide (pp. 53–61) contains quiz answer keys, rubrics for critical thinking and writing, and a group discussion reflection form.

**Professional Learning and Teacher Support**

Great Books has over 60 years of experience imparting key principles and practices of inquiry-based teaching. Our method, known as Shared Inquiry, has been used in thousands of classrooms across the country. No other organization or company has more history or expertise at making inquiry-based teaching and learning succeed than Great Books does.

For more information, please contact us at 800.222.5870 or visit [greatbooks.org](http://greatbooks.org).
Nonfiction Inquiry Materials

**Student Log**
Includes:
- A student introduction explaining what to expect from the program
- The full nonfiction text for each unit
- Unit-specific activity prompts to help students practice close reading, critical thinking, and writing skills
- Check Your Understanding quizzes to gauge reading comprehension
- A writer’s checklist to help students prepare essay drafts

**Teacher’s Guide**
Includes:
- Step-by-step instructions for each activity with point-of-need teacher support
- Unit overviews that summarize activities and show all activity prompts
- Differentiation options and suggestions for pair/group learning
- A Teacher Resources section including vocabulary activities, assessment tools, and a student reflection form

For downloadable resources, including standards alignment, further differentiation suggestions, and more, go to greatbooks.org.

**Why We Do What We Do**

Without citizens who can read and think critically, democracy is threatened, and our freedoms—personal, social, and political—are subject to dissolution.

An independent, nonprofit educational organization, the Great Books Foundation fosters an inquiry-based approach to reading and discussion for students and adults in all walks of life. We believe that literacy and critical thinking help develop reflective and well-informed citizens. Our goal is to inspire people of all ages to become more knowledgeable, reflective, and engaged citizens.
Prereading (10–15 minutes)

Activity Instructions

1. **Have** students answer the two prompts on the prereading page of the Student Log (see example on facing page).

2. **Optional:** Check for general understanding of the unit topic by having volunteers briefly share what they wrote. If students struggle to complete the “What Do You Know?” prompt, see the box below for suggestions.

**ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

- Students activate prior knowledge and explore personal connections to the topic.

**ASSIGNMENT PROFILE**

- Independent work
- In class or at home

**Building Background Knowledge**

Having students share responses to the “What Do You Know?” prompt can help you quickly gauge how much knowledge of the topic they possess. Students do not need to be experts on a topic, but some background knowledge will certainly help with comprehension. If you find that students need support, you can share some background information before the first reading, such as an encyclopedia entry or a few photos. You can also help them define key vocabulary words. Target words for each unit appear in the unit overviews (pp. 29–47), and suggested vocabulary activities appear on page 52.
In this unit, you’ll read about how smart crows are, and some of the clever and annoying things they do when they live among humans. Before you read, answer the questions below.

**What Do You Know?**

What do you already know about crows?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**What Do You Think?**

Do you have a good or bad opinion of crows? Why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Each time you read the text, return to what you wrote here to see if new information changes or adds to your answers.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

After you finish this page, check the box above and go to the next page.
Activity Instructions

1. **Prompt** students to complete the first reading according to the instructions in the Student Log (see below).

   ![First Reading Instructions]

   - As you read, mark a ? wherever you are **confused or curious** about something.
   - After reading, look at the places you marked. Write your questions in the margins.
   - Circle two questions to bring to the sharing questions activity:
     - A question about a part that **confuses you the most**.
     - A question about a part that **interests you the most**.

2. **Regroup** and have students share their circled questions aloud while you record them for everyone to see.

3. **Identify** any comprehension questions that need to be addressed right away (see A Guide to Question Types, pp. 50–51). Help students answer them using the text, their own knowledge, and other appropriate resources.

4. **Point out** some remaining questions that could be saved for another activity, such as the discussion or an extension project. Tell students you may return to them later.

5. **Ask** students to return to the “What Do You Know?” prompt to see if their initial responses were confirmed or changed as a result of completing the activity.

6. **Have** students complete the Check Your Understanding quiz (see below). Use it to gauge their general understanding before moving on to the second reading activity.

---

**Check Your Understanding**

- Read each question and the answer choices carefully.
- Look back at the text to answer the question.
- Fill in the circle next to the answer you choose.
- After you finish the quiz, turn to the next page.

1. Which of these is a way that crows cause problems for humans?
   - They avoid enemies.
   - They collect trinkets.
   - They dislike cages.
   - They eat crops.

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**ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

- Students read the text and share questions they have about it, answering some and setting others aside for later exploration.

**ASSIGNMENT PROFILE**

- **First Reading:** Independent work
  - In class or at home
- **Sharing Questions:** Whole-class or group work
  - In class (quiz in class or at home)
Student Learning Spectrum

Look for students to:

- Have difficulty following or asking questions about the text
- Follow the text and ask some questions about it
- Follow the text and ask a variety of questions about it

Differentiated Instruction

**SUPPORT**

- **For students struggling to mark the text:** Model marking the text by projecting a section, reading it aloud, and explaining your questions (e.g., “I don’t know what [phrase] means. I’m going to mark it.”).
- **For students struggling to formulate questions:** Have students share places they marked. Help them shape reactions into questions by asking follow-up questions such as *How would you say that as a question?* or *What do you want to know about this confusing part?*

**CHALLENGE**

- **Discuss** with students some other reactions they might have to a text, such as surprise or disagreement/agreement. Have them mark these other reactions in addition to questions.
- **Have** students assist you in identifying questions to be addressed right away and questions to be addressed later. If you wish, use the Guide to Question Types chart (pp. 50–51) to review question types with students.

Helping Students Answer Comprehension Questions

Depending on learning goals, available time, and complexity of questions, you may differentiate how you clear up comprehension questions. The suggestions below are listed in order of increasing student responsibility:

- **Supply an answer.** For example, you might give a brief definition in response to a vocabulary question.
- **Work toward an answer in a guided exploration.** Ask if anyone knows the answer, then ask follow-up questions focused on thinking processes, like *How did you know that?* or *How could we find the answer?*
- **Have pairs or groups find an answer to an assigned question.** Then have them report back to the class.
- **Have an individual find an answer to an assigned question.** Then have the student report back to the class.
**Second Reading**

*(35–45 minutes)*

**Activity Instructions**

1. **Ask** students to reread and mark the text according to the note prompt in the Student Log (see sample on facing page).

2. **Introduce** the discussion focus question. (Focus questions are located on the second reading page of the Student Log and in the unit overviews in this guide, pp. 29–47.)

3. **Have** students review their notes in order to formulate and record an answer to the focus question.

**Student Learning Spectrum**

Look for students to:

- Have difficulty making notes while reading
- Have difficulty using notes to write a supported response to the focus question
- Make notes while reading
- Use notes to write a simple supported response to the focus question
- Make notes while reading, with specific intent to gather evidence
- Use notes to write a developed, supported response to the focus question

**Differentiated Instruction**

**SUPPORT**

For students struggling to answer the question or use notes for evidence, try one of the following:

- **Project** a page of text you have marked. Model reviewing your notes to help you generate an answer to the focus question.
- **Have** pairs of students share their thoughts and evidence before writing an answer to the focus question.

**CHALLENGE**

- **Have** students rank the evidence they marked from strongest to weakest before choosing evidence to include in the log.
- **Pair** students together who have divergent answers to the focus question. Have them briefly discuss their answers and evidence. Then ask: *After talking with your partner, do you think you need to strengthen your answer or evidence before the discussion?*
CROWS: FRIEND OR FOE?

1. Go back and reread “Crows: Friend or Foe?” on pages 22–28. As you read, mark an A in places where you admire crows. Mark an N in places where you think crows are a nuisance.

2. After you finish reading, look at the places you marked with an A and an N. Use what you marked to help you write an answer to this focus question:
   After reading about crows, what is your opinion of them?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. Give two pieces of evidence to support your answer above.
   One piece of evidence that supports your answer:
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

   Another piece of evidence that supports your answer:
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS
After you reread, make notes, and complete this page, check the box above. When it’s time for the discussion, go to the next page.
Shared Inquiry Discussion  (25–35 minutes)

**Activity Instructions**

NOTE: If your class is large, you may wish to divide it for discussion. Have one half actively observe the other half by writing down ideas they find interesting or examples of good discussion behavior. Then have the two groups trade places.

1. **Seat** everyone in a circle. If needed, review the five discussion guidelines on pages 4–5 of the Student Log.

2. **Give** students a few minutes to review their answer to the focus question and the evidence they recorded in the Student Log (see sample on facing page).

3. **Begin** the discussion by asking volunteers to share their answers and evidence. Remind students that during the discussion they can also support their ideas with their own knowledge and experiences.

4. **Aim** for the discussion to last at least 15 minutes. Throughout the discussion ask:
   - **Follow-up questions** (see below) to help students practice critical thinking skills
   - **Cluster questions** (see the unit overviews, pages 29–47) when you want students to investigate particular passages or issues

5. **Close** the discussion by asking students to complete the Student Log. If time allows, have volunteers share responses aloud.

---

**Example Follow-Up Questions**

The follow-up questions you ask during the discussion will help to advance students’ critical thinking skills. Try using these questions when you want students to:

**CLARIFY IDEAS**
- What do you mean when you say that?
- Can you say a little more about that?
- Is there another way you can explain that?

**FIND EVIDENCE**
- Where does that happen in the text?
- What part of the text makes you think that?
- Where did you get that evidence from?

**RESPOND TO OTHERS**
- Have you heard an answer you agree with?
- Do you agree or disagree with [name]?
- Will you tell [name] what you think of her idea?
1. Use the answer and evidence you wrote on the previous page to participate in the Shared Inquiry discussion.

2. After discussion, think about whether your answer changed or stayed the same. Write it below. Then write a piece of evidence that changed or strengthened your answer.

Your answer to the focus question after discussion:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Evidence you found or that someone else used that helped you (circle one) change your answer / make your first answer stronger:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS
After you finish this page, check the box above and go to the next page.

Unit 2 31
## Student Learning Spectrum

This student learning spectrum reflects student behavior in three key areas of critical thinking: **idea**, **evidence**, and **response**.

Look for students to:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEA</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Offer no answers or repeat others’ answers to the focus question</td>
<td>Have difficulty supporting ideas with evidence</td>
<td>Have difficulty listening to other students’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer simple answers to the focus question</td>
<td>Refer in general to the text or knowledge to support ideas</td>
<td>Agree or disagree with other students’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer developed answers to the focus question</td>
<td>Refer to specific parts of the text or knowledge to support ideas</td>
<td>Explain agreement or disagreement with other students’ ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Differentiated Instruction

#### SUPPORT

If **students are struggling in one or more of the key critical thinking areas** in the student learning spectrum, concentrate your follow-up questions in those areas in the next discussion. Make a copy of the suggested follow-up questions on page 20 and jot students’ names next to them as a reminder to ask them those questions during the discussion. You might also:

- Lead a discussion reflection with students, identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement. (See pp. 60–61 for reflection suggestions.)
- Consult Troubleshooting Shared Inquiry Discussion (p. 23) for support tips.

#### CHALLENGE

If your students show proficiency in one or more of the key critical thinking areas, try asking some of the advanced questions below to encourage them to:

**Explain ideas in more detail**
- Can you explain what you mean by [word or phrase]?
- How does that idea help answer our focus question?

**Explain how evidence supports an idea**
- How does this part of the text support your answer?
- What happens in this part of the text to make you think that?

**Consider other responses**
- Why do you agree with [name]’s answer?
- How is your idea different from [name]’s answer?
# Troubleshooting Shared Inquiry Discussion

Below you will find common teacher questions about student behaviors in Shared Inquiry discussion and strategies for addressing these behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Questions</th>
<th>Strategies to Try</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **How can I encourage quiet students to talk and talkative students to listen?** | • Track participation on a seating chart. Call on quieter students to read the answers they wrote before the discussion.  
• In advance, give quiet students opening phrases to try (e.g., “I have an idea about . . . ” or “I agree/disagree with . . .”).  
• Gently guide talkative students by giving them tickets representing the number of times they may speak in discussion. |
| **How can I help my students see that there can be multiple answers to a question?** | • Brainstorm possible answers as a class, finding evidence for each answer. Post answers and evidence where everyone can see them.  
• Ask for evidence for students’ answers. Students may have similar answers for different reasons.  
• Avoid signaling a “best” answer through your words or body language. |
| **How can I keep the discussion focused and on topic?**                          | • Always ask students to support their ideas with evidence from the text or their own (substantiated) knowledge.  
• Have students read a relevant passage and ask what ideas it gives them about the focus question.  
• Ask a student to explain how his or her comment relates to the focus question. Something seemingly unrelated may, in the student’s mind, be connected to the question. |
Writing (45–60 minutes)

ACTIVITY SUMMARY
- Students explain and develop a written argument.

ASSIGNMENT PROFILE
- Independent work
- In class or at home

Activity Instructions

1. Decide on a writing prompt to give to students. You might use:
   - The focus question from the discussion, to help students further develop their ideas and evidence in writing. Have them use their completed Student Log pages as a starting point.
   - A prompt of your own, using students’ questions or areas of interest that arose during the sharing questions activity.

2. Ask students to complete the essay organizer in the Student Log, writing their answer to the question and gathering supporting evidence (see sample organizer on facing page).

3. Have students draft their essays, using the organizer notes to help them.

4. Tell students to use the writer’s checklist on page 131 of the Student Log to edit and revise their drafts as needed (see sample checklist on facing page). Collect the revised drafts.

5. Use the writing rubric on pages 58–59 to inform your feedback on students’ essays. Have students revise further based on your feedback.

6. Share students’ essays by publishing them, posting them to a class website, or otherwise making them available to the class or other groups.

Helping Students Explain How Evidence Supports A Claim

Even after students become proficient at finding and giving evidence, they may need to practice explaining how the evidence backs up what they are saying. Help students with this vital skill by trying the following:

- Remind students of instances in the discussion where the same piece of evidence was used by different people to make different points. Emphasize that students should explain how the evidence supports their ideas.
- Give students sentence starters, such as “To me, this means . . .” or “This shows that . . .”
- During the discussion, point out times when a student explains evidence. Take notes so you can use these as examples later.
- In your comments on student writing, include evidence-focused questions such as How does this part show that? or What happened in this part that made you think that?
CROWS: FRIEND OR FOE?

Write your answer to the assigned essay question, and write three pieces of evidence that support your answer.

Essay question: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Your answer: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Evidence #1:

How this evidence supports your answer:

Your evidence can be:
• A detail from the text, like a fact or a quote
• A detail from a photo, chart, or other text feature
• A fact about the topic (and where you learned it)

For support, give students time to talk about possible answers in pairs or small groups before writing.

If students are writing a response to the focus question, they can use what they wrote on the second reading and Shared Inquiry discussion pages as a starting point.

Point out to students that the introduction should include the question and their answer to it.

Give students a few specifics to look for based on skills they've been learning (such as the use of quotation marks or irregular plurals).

Nonfiction Inquiry 4

WRITER’S CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to see if you have completed the important parts of your essay draft. If anything is missing, go back and revise your draft before you turn it in.

Does your draft include . . .

✓ a title?
✓ an introduction?
✓ transitions from paragraph to paragraph?
✓ a conclusion?

Did you . . .

✓ state the question?
✓ state your answer to the question?
✓ give three pieces of evidence that support your answer?
✓ explain how your evidence supports your answer?

Did you proofread your draft for . . .

✓ spelling?
✓ grammar?
✓ punctuation?

Writer's Checklist 131

Nonfiction Inquiry 4
Extension Activities *(times vary)*

**Activity Instructions**

The following optional activities help students apply their learning about the unit topic or extend their learning into related topics.

**Further Investigation**

1. **Remind** students that they may still have questions that did not get answered during the unit. Ask them to record some of these questions on the Further Investigation page of the Student Log, along with ideas about how they might find answers to those questions (see sample on facing page).

2. **Choose** one of the following ways (or a method of your own) for students to share questions and pursue answers:
   - **We Wonder:** Ask students to write questions on index cards or sticky notes and post them in the classroom. Students can post answers as they learn more about the topic or discuss the question in pairs or groups.
   - **Ask an Expert:** Work with students to identify a knowledgeable person who could help them answer one of their questions (e.g., a local meteorologist could answer a question about weather). Then have students submit questions to the expert via letters, emails, or video clips. Have them share the answers they receive with the rest of the class.
   - **Independent Reading:** Encourage students to read books, magazines, or articles from reputable websites to explore a topic more deeply. Students can share their findings in reports or brief presentations.

**Text-to-Text Connection**

1. **Choose** a prompt from the unit overview to connect students’ nonfiction unit work to a specific Junior Great Books story. (The chart on page 31 shows the alignment between the fiction and nonfiction units.)

2. **Have** students answer the prompt in writing, in discussion, or in another medium of your choosing. Remind them to use evidence from both texts to support their answers.
**CROWS: FRIEND OR FOE?**

1. Look at the questions you wrote in the margins and the class list of questions. Think about questions that came up during your discussion, too. Are there any you still want to know more about?

2. Write your questions below, along with some ideas about how you might get started if you wanted to answer them. (For instance, you might look for an answer online, read a book on the topic, or ask an expert.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions you still want answered:</th>
<th>How you might find an answer:</th>
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Before students complete this section, you may wish to review what makes a question suitable for research. Ask students to identify good research questions on the class list.

If pairs or groups of students choose to research the same question, you may wish to have them compare their findings and explain any differences when they present their work to the class.
UNIT 2: Crows: Friend or Foe?

Life Science: Animal Intelligence

Describes the clever, and sometimes annoying, ways that crows use their intelligence to survive and adapt to the presence of humans.

Activity Prompts

PREREADING PAGE 21

Students activate prior knowledge and explore personal connections to the text topic.

**What Do You Know?:** What do you already know about crows?

**What Do You Think?:** Do you have a good or bad opinion of crows? Why?

FIRST READING WITH SHARING QUESTIONS PAGES 22–29

Students read the text and share questions they have about it, answering some and setting others aside for later exploration. Students then complete the Check Your Understanding quiz to gauge comprehension of the text.

Target Vocabulary

Use the highlighted words (or your own) to work with vocabulary in context any time after the sharing questions activity (see page 52 of this guide for activity suggestions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>social (p. 23)</th>
<th>scavengers (p. 23)</th>
<th>survive (p. 26)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adapted (p. 23)</td>
<td>migrate (p. 24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECOND READING PAGE 30

Students reread the text, making notes that will prepare them for the Shared Inquiry discussion.

**Second reading note:** Mark an A in places where you **admire** crows.

Mark an N in places where you think crows are a **nuisance**.

Students review their notes to formulate an answer to the focus question.

**Focus question:** After reading about crows, what is your opinion of them?
Students discuss the focus question while the teacher asks follow-up and cluster questions to help them further develop ideas.

**Focus question:** After reading about crows, what is your opinion of them?

**Cluster questions:**
- Which of these do you think is the biggest problem crows create for humans—eating crops, opening trash cans, or causing blackouts?
- Do you think crows’ intelligence should be admired?
- Does crows’ ability to communicate mean that people should see them as friends?

**Writing**

Students plan and develop a written argument in response to a writing prompt.

**Extension Activities**

**Further Investigation**
Students pursue answers to questions they still have about the text or the topics within it.

**Text-to-Text Connection**
Students connect “Crows: Friend or Foe?” with “Crow Call” through writing or discussion.

**Text-to-Text Connection prompts:**
- Do you think Liz’s father would be more likely to keep hunting crows or to stop if he read this text about them?
- Use information from both texts to write a poem about why you appreciate crows or why you find them annoying.
To some people, crows are loud, scary, and even a nuisance. But Aesop’s fable “The Crow and the Pitcher” presents a more positive opinion of crows. In this tale, a thirsty crow comes to a narrow pitcher partly filled with water. It can’t reach the water with its beak, so it carefully drops pebbles into the pitcher until the water rises high enough to drink! Clever crows are not just characters in ancient stories though. Scientists now know that crows are among the smartest creatures on the planet.

nuisance: a bother; an annoyance
Crows and humans have a lot in common. Like humans, crows are great problem solvers. They can count, figure out complicated puzzles, and even make and use tools. And like humans, crows are social animals. They use language to communicate with one another and may even have different dialects. This means that crows in one family group would sound different from crows in other family groups. Crows can learn from one another, teach one another, and even pass down the information they learn to their young.

Crows can live in just about any habitat. But they often choose to live near people. In fact, crows and humans have a long history together. Like other smart, social animals, crows have adapted to life with people, finding clever ways to take advantage of human activity. In cities, crows have been spotted dropping nuts near crosswalks for passing cars to run over and crack open. When traffic stops, the crows simply hop into the street and snap up their meal. They are also clever scavengers. Crows will eat just about anything. In the city, garbage is often on the menu. Crows have even been known to memorize garbage truck routes. The birds use this information to grab a snack on garbage day.

**social**: liking to be with others; friendly  
**dialects**: different forms of a language spoken by different groups  
**habitat**: the place where an animal or plant normally lives and grows  
**adapted**: adjusted  
**scavengers**: animals who eat garbage or dead plants and animals
Crafty Crows

Although we live side by side with crows, our relationship with them is often anything but peaceful. They steal our food, eat our crops, open trash cans, and make nests in places that cause problems for people. In Tokyo, crows build nests on top of utility poles. Sometimes those nests accidentally cause blackouts in the city. Workers remove the nests when they find them. But does this stop the crows? Nope. The crows build decoy nests on the poles to fool the workers.

Their intelligence is what makes crows so tricky. Every year, thousands of crows migrate through Chatham, Ontario. The huge number of crows becomes a nuisance for local farmers, who must chase them from their crops. One year, a farmer got fed up and shot at one. After that, the crows figured out exactly how low they could fly to avoid being shot. Guess how many crows were shot after that? Not a single one.

Crows learn from their mistakes. This makes them hard to outwit. For example, city workers patrolled the streets of Chatham every night to chase away the crows. The crows eventually learned that the workers left at 11:00 p.m. So the birds simply waited until after 11:00 p.m. to head into town.

decoyn: a fake thing used to draw attention away from the real thing
migrate: move from one area to another for feeding or breeding

A crow’s nest is mostly made of twigs. The inside is lined with soft things like weeds and animal hair.
Crows Never Forget a Face

Clearly, crows keep a careful eye on human activity. But what about individual people? Wildlife researcher John Marzluff has been studying crows for years. Marzluff began to notice that he had a harder time catching the same crow more than once. He became curious. Do crows recognize individual faces? He decided to conduct an experiment to find out.

Marzluff and his team captured a bunch of crows while wearing identical masks. The researchers put bands on the legs of the crows they caught. This way, they could recognize the crows later. Then the team released the birds back into the wild.

Months later, the crows had not forgotten them. Whenever the researchers walked by wearing the mask, the crows scolded them. They even followed the masked people, swooping down at them from the treetops. The crows did

**identical**: exactly the same
this even if a stranger wore the mask. They did it even if the person wore a hat with the mask! This proved to Marzluff that the crows were not paying attention to a person’s size, movement, or other qualities. Crows spotted their human enemies by looking at their faces.

Marzluff and his team began to notice that the banded crows were not the only ones scolding and following them. Other crows in the area were doing it, too. The banded crows were somehow sharing what they had learned about the “dangerous” humans with other crows. This is called social learning. As far as we know, only humans and a few other animals have this ability.

Marzluff believes that the ability to recognize individuals helps crows survive alongside humans. “If you can learn who to avoid and who to seek out, that’s a lot easier than getting continually hurt,” he says.

There was one more shocking discovery that came from this experiment. As the years passed, crows in other areas began attacking the masked people, too. Year after year, crows were teaching other crows and their own young to fear the masks. So if you cross a crow, watch out! You might be making enemies with future generations of crows.

Crow Companions

Learning to avoid dangerous people is one thing. But crows also remember people who are kind to them, and they have even been known to return the favor. Eight-year-old Gabi Mann lives in Seattle, Washington. She began feeding crows in her yard when she was four. In return, the crows began leaving gifts for Gabi. They would bring her buttons,
shells, pebbles, beads, and other unusual trinkets they found. Once they even returned a camera lens cap that Gabi had lost.

People have even kept crows as pets. Because crows are smart and social, many people think they make great companions. Even the writer Charles Dickens had a pet

trinkets: small things with little value
raven, which is a kind of crow. Crows form strong bonds with their human friends. Pet crows even give their owners “names.” The birds make special sounds around their people that they would not usually make.

But crows are still wild animals. These days, it is illegal in the United States to keep a crow as a pet. Many people also think it is cruel. Crows need lots of space and the freedom to fly. Crows have been known to become very unhappy when kept in cages. It looks like crow lovers will just have to appreciate them in the wild.

The relationship between crows and people will probably always be complicated. Some people have learned to admire crows for their intelligence. For others, the crow’s cleverness is what makes them a nuisance. Whether you love them or hate them, it’s clear that they’re fascinating creatures.

appreciate: admire; see the worth of
1. Which of these is a way that crows cause problems for humans?
   A. They avoid enemies.
   B. They collect trinkets.
   C. They dislike cages.
   D. They eat crops.

2. Which of the following is an example of a crow being a scavenger?
   A. a crow bothering humans
   B. a crow solving problems
   C. a crow eating garbage
   D. a crow recognizing faces

3. Which of these is a main idea in the text?
   A. Crows do not like to live close to people.
   B. Crows do not like people wearing masks.
   C. Pet crows make special sounds around their owners.
   D. Crows are very intelligent.

4. Which detail from the text supports your answer to question 3?
   A. “In Tokyo, crows build nests on top of utility poles.” (p. 24)
   B. “Scientists now know that crows are among the smartest creatures on the planet.” (p. 22)
   C. “These days, it is illegal in the United States to keep a crow as a pet.” (p. 28)
   D. “Marzluff and his team captured a bunch of crows while wearing identical masks.” (p. 25)
## Critical Thinking Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEA</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coming up with an interpretation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supporting an idea</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening and responding to other students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFERS A WELL-DEVELOPED ANSWER TO THE FOCUS QUESTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAINS HOW EVIDENCE SUPPORTS IDEAS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONSIDERS OTHER STUDENTS’ IDEAS WHEN DEVELOPING OWN ANSWER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes inferences about motives and causes</td>
<td>• Habitually uses text and knowledge for evidence</td>
<td>• Understands that classmates’ ideas are valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To clarify, specifies meaning of words or phrases</td>
<td>• Explains how specific words or phrases support an idea</td>
<td>• Responds directly to other students without prompting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explores implications of an idea</td>
<td>• Sees when evidence works against own idea</td>
<td>• Agrees or disagrees with specific parts of other students’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFERS A DETAILED ANSWER TO THE FOCUS QUESTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>USES SPECIFIC EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT IDEAS</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAINS AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH OTHER STUDENTS’ IDEAS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thinks carefully before answering</td>
<td>• Often supports answer without prompting</td>
<td>• Acknowledges differing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To clarify, tells more about answer</td>
<td>• Recalls or locates relevant facts</td>
<td>• Builds on or offers counterarguments to other students’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFERS A SIMPLE ANSWER TO THE FOCUS QUESTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>REFERS TO EVIDENCE IN GENERAL TO SUPPORT IDEAS</strong></td>
<td><strong>AGREES OR DISAGREES SIMPLY WITH OTHER STUDENTS’ IDEAS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not elaborate on answer, or offers a snap judgment</td>
<td>• Supports answer when asked to do so</td>
<td>• Allows classmates to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To clarify, repeats or paraphrases answer</td>
<td>• Refers generally to relevant facts</td>
<td>• Reacts to other students’ ideas but does not give reasons for reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRUGGLES TO ANSWER THE FOCUS QUESTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>HAS DIFFICULTY SUPPORTING ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>HAS DIFFICULTY LISTENING TO OTHER STUDENTS’ IDEAS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not answer when called on</td>
<td>• Considers answer self-explanatory</td>
<td>• Ignores or interrupts other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repeats other students’ answers</td>
<td>• Struggles to recall relevant facts</td>
<td>• Struggles to understand that classmates have differing ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PERFORMANCE LEVEL**

- **4**
- **3**
- **2**
- **1**
Connecting to Your Classroom Curriculum

The chart below helps you integrate the Nonfiction Inquiry program across your classroom curriculum.

You may also refer to the chart to connect the Nonfiction Inquiry units to stories in the Junior Great Books program, 2014 edition. Use the Text-to-Text Connection prompts in the unit overviews (pp. 29–47) to allow students to compare and contrast the texts. Junior Great Books fiction materials can be ordered at greatbooks.org.

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<tr>
<th>NONFICTION INQUIRY UNIT</th>
<th>CONTENT AREA AND FOCUS</th>
<th>JUNIOR GREAT BOOKS FICTION UNIT CORRELATION</th>
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<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Economics: Wants vs. Needs</td>
<td>Thank You, M’am</td>
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<td>Life Science: Animal Intelligence</td>
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<td>Crows: Friend or Foe?</td>
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<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>STEM: Engineering to Solve a Problem</td>
<td>On Sand Island</td>
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<td>Young Inventors Making the Future Brighter</td>
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<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Social Studies: The Oral Tradition</td>
<td>The Green Man</td>
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<td>The Life and Legend of Johnny Appleseed</td>
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<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>American History: Westward Expansion</td>
<td>Doesn’t Fall Off His Horse</td>
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<td>Zitkala-Sa at Boarding School</td>
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<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>Social Studies: Social Responsibility</td>
<td>The Cello of Mr. O</td>
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<td>“We Show Up for Each Other”</td>
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<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>Social Studies: Justice and Fairness</td>
<td>Ooka and the Honest Thief</td>
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<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Physical Science: Weather and Climate</td>
<td>Letting Swift River Go</td>
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<td>Leave It to Beavers?</td>
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<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>Social Studies: Personal Growth and Identity</td>
<td>The Apple and The Envelope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bystanders Who Stand Together</td>
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</table>
Extend Inquiry with Junior Great Books Series 3–5

Our Junior Great Books Series 3–5 materials feature high-quality literature to support an inquiry-based approach to learning. The stories are selected for their ability to support multiple interpretations and to encourage thought-provoking discussions.

Students learn to:

- Find deeper connections and meanings in texts while identifying new ways of exploring issues and solving problems
- Understand the importance of respectful, civil discussion and the value of listening to other people’s ideas and opinions

Teachers increase their proficiency in:

- Posing thought-provoking questions
- Helping students communicate complex ideas orally and in writing
- Embracing the role of discussion facilitator

For more information, visit greatbooks.org.