Junior Great Books®
Sample Lesson Plans
Grades 2–5
Welcome to Junior Great Books!

The Junior Great Books program combines high-quality literature, student-centered discussion, and activities that support **reading comprehension**, **critical thinking**, **speaking and listening**, and **writing**.

**Inside this booklet, you will find:**

- The features and benefits of Junior Great Books programs (pp. 2–5)
- A unit overview with excerpts from the Series 3 Teacher's Edition for “The Gold Coin,” including assessment and reflection resources (pp. 6–19)
- “The Gold Coin” complete story, as annotated in the Teacher’s Edition (pp. 20–35)
- How Junior Great Books fiction and Nonfiction Inquiry complement each other (pp. 36–37)
- Information about our digital platform, Great Books Plus (pp. 38-39)

**The Shared Inquiry™ Method of Learning**

Foster a vibrant classroom environment in which students develop the habits of effective learners while meeting key standards. The Shared Inquiry method of learning lets students’ curiosity and insights drive the exploration of rich texts.

**Teachers:**

- Meet key learning standards through an inquiry-based, collaborative approach
- Engage all students in higher-level reading, thinking, and discussion
- Integrate critical thinking and social/ Emotional learning into the curriculum
- Differentiate instruction to address a wide range of students’ learning needs and strengths

**Students:**

- Use reading comprehension strategies purposefully
- Develop their own opinions and claims about a text
- Support ideas with textual evidence, and weigh evidence for divergent ideas
- Go beyond initial responses to deeper thinking about issues
- Develop social and emotional intelligence through respectful dialogue and collaboration
## Junior Great Books® Series 2–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-quality texts from a range of cultures, time periods, and genres</td>
<td>Support close reading and in-depth questioning; introduce students to a variety of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Questions activity</td>
<td>Stimulates curiosity while building metacognitive and collaborative skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-reading activities during Second Reading</td>
<td>Make textual analysis fun and accessible through a variety of learning modalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Inquiry discussion</td>
<td>Builds students’ abilities to develop ideas, use textual evidence, and listen and respond to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and “Word Work” activities</td>
<td>Allow students to learn new words and practice foundational skills (e.g., spelling or phonics) in a meaningful context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Response activities</td>
<td>Enable students to build on ideas developed in discussion; provide an authentic context for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Connection activities</td>
<td>Deepen understanding by extending thinking about textual concepts to other subject areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Response activities</td>
<td>Allow students to respond imaginatively to texts using visual art, drama, music, and other forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated instruction</td>
<td>Engages all students in higher-level reading, thinking, and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic organization</td>
<td>Spurs personal connections and inquiry into concepts such as trust, friendship, and resourcefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and reflection</td>
<td>Formative and summative options build a complete picture of students’ progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher resources and annotated units</td>
<td>Simplify finding and using appropriate techniques; enrich use of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and implementation recommendations</td>
<td>Make getting started with the program and customizing its use easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Additional Features

Social-Emotional Learning

Junior Great Books programs incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL), using comprehensive K–12 SEL standards that address the following competencies, identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning:

- Self-awareness and self-management
- Social-awareness and relationships
- Responsible decision-making

Great Books programs and SEL share the goal of helping students develop the skills they need to think critically, appreciate diverse perspectives, communicate, solve problems, and collaborate with others through respectful civil discourse.

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 shows that sustained use of Shared Inquiry improves reading comprehension and critical thinking for students from a wide range of backgrounds and achievement levels. Visit greatbooks.org for more about research on Junior Great Books.

Professional Development for Teachers

Face-to-face courses, blended courses, webinars, virtual coaching, and on-site consultation days are available to support and enrich your use of Junior Great Books. Learning Forward cites the Great Books Foundation’s courses for teachers as effective in improving students’ learning.

In Great Books courses, teachers learn how to prepare a text for inquiry-based learning, how to use an inquiry stance to conduct classroom activities, and how to manage student responses. They also have the opportunity to practice using the Shared Inquiry method and get practical feedback on it. Visit greatbooks.org for more information about Great Books professional development, along with free downloadable materials and videos of classroom activities.

About the Great Books Foundation

Founded in 1947, the Great Books Foundation is an independent, nonprofit educational organization that creates reading and discussion programs for students and adults with the conviction that literacy and critical thinking help form reflective and well-informed citizens. For more about us, visit greatbooks.org.
Junior Great Books Series 2–5 Materials

Student Books
- 9 stories per book, grouped by theme (e.g., trust, honesty, strength)
- Each series has a Book 1 and Book 2
- Series 2 books are three slender volumes of three stories each
- Student-friendly introduction and guidelines for discussion
- Glossary

Reader’s Journals
Written response pages for:
- Shared Inquiry sequence of activities
- Theme introduction and closing activities
- Series 2 activity pages included with Teacher’s Edition as downloadable resources; Series 3–5 Reader’s Journals are bound workbooks

Teacher’s Editions
- Big-picture overview of each story unit
- Instructions for each Shared Inquiry activity
- Annotated stories
- Theme introduction and wrap-up activities for school and home
- A resource section with additional support materials
- Planning and implementation guide

Audio recordings
- Add flexibility to your reading routine and provide support for struggling readers
- Included with the Teacher’s Edition
Unit Overview

Activity Sessions

SESSION 1  PAGES 133–135
Prereading  5 MINUTES
Students explore a concept relevant to the story they will be reading.
First Reading with Sharing Questions  30–40 MINUTES
Students read along as the story is read aloud and share their questions about it.

SESSION 2  PAGES 136–137
Second Reading  30–40 MINUTES
Students read along as the story is reread, engaging in activities that help them explore the story more deeply.

SESSION 3  PAGES 138–141
Shared Inquiry Discussion  30–40 MINUTES
Students explore the story’s meaning by discussing an interpretive question.

SESSION 4 OPTIONS  PAGE 142
Written and Creative Response  TIMES VARY
Students write a brief expository essay or a piece of creative writing based on the story, or explore the story through another creative form.

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS
Curriculum Connections  TIMES VARY
Students engage in suggested activities that connect “The Gold Coin” to the rest of your curriculum (p. 143).
Unit Wrap-Up  TIMES VARY
Students complete the unit with a theme connection activity (pp. 222–223), multiple choice test (p. 354), portfolio assessment (p. 375), or reflection on discussion (pp. 378–380).

FLEXIBLE-USE ACTIVITIES
Use these additional resources at your discretion, depending on your classroom schedule and learning goals.

Working with Words
These vocabulary, spelling, and reading with expression activities can be done any time during the unit (p. 132).

Head in the Clouds
This Reader’s Journal activity (p. 34), which asks students to draw or write in response to imaginative prompts about the story, can be done at any time after the first session.

Interpretive Drawing Suggestions
Only in Series 2, these flexible use activities encourage students to practice visualizing and illustrating key scenes from stories. Interpretive drawing strengthens students’ reading comprehension and helps them see that ideas about stories and characters will vary.
About the Story
When Juan, a long-time thief, sees that the healer Doña Josefa has a bright gold coin in her possession, he decides to steal it. Juan tracks her through the countryside, helping a number of people in exchange for their assistance in finding the old healer. When he finally encounters Doña Josefa, Juan no longer looks or feels like the same thief.

About the Author
Alma Flor Ada was born in 1938 in the outskirts of Camagüey, Cuba. She lived in Spain and Peru before settling in the United States. Her encounters with various cultures have influenced many of her children's books, including The Lizard and the Sun and Where the Flame Trees Bloom. Alma Flor Ada wrote The Gold Coin (1991) after spending time with migrant workers in California.

Author website: almaflorada.com

Suggestions for vocabulary, spelling, and reading with expression can be implemented at any time during the unit to customize the approach to your classroom learning goals. (Page numbers refer to the student book, unless otherwise noted.)

Spelling
Use these suggested words (or your own words) for spelling practice.

/ə/ spelled a, e, oa
- close (p. 61)
- groaned (p. 66)
- alone (p. 72)
- cloak (p. 73)

Digraphs ch, tch
- watch (p. 60)
- thatch (p. 61)
- fetch (p. 62)
- richest (p. 65)

Sight Words
Choose some of these words to use with your usual sight word resources.

/ɜ/ spelled air, are
- hair (p. 51)
- square (p. 56)
- chair (p. 58)

/ɪ/ spelled a, e, and are
- afraid (p. 55)

Long a spelled a,
- braids (p. 51)
- waist (p. 51)

Phonics Practice
Use these suggested words on a word wall or with other phonics resources.

why (p. 52)
pulled (p. 59)
cold (p. 60)

Fluency Practice
Students learn how italics can sometimes signal a character's unspoken thoughts, and practice reading those thoughts expressively (p. 57).
First Reading with Sharing Questions

Activity Instructions

1. **Prepare** students to ask questions by telling them to listen for anything that is confusing or that they wonder about while you read.

2. **Read** the story aloud. Have students read along in their books and mark a ? anywhere they have a question (on a sticky note or in the text).

3. **Ask** students to share their questions. Record them on chart paper.

4. **Answer**, with students’ help, any questions that signal a serious comprehension problem. Leave the rest unanswered for now.

5. **Post** the list of questions in the classroom and let students know that they will revisit many of the questions during their work on the story.

6. **Reader’s Journal**: Ask students to record something from the story that they understand better now that they have shared their questions. Note with the question comments also asked that interested.

**Materials**
- Student books
- Sticky notes
- Chart paper
- Reader’s Journal: Sharing questions page (p. 32)

**Posting Student Questions**

Questions that arise from your students’ (and your own) genuine curiosity about the story drive the Shared Inquiry process. Recording your students’ questions, and leaving them posted throughout work on the story, shows students that you value their curiosity and that they can learn from each other as well as from you. During the sharing questions activity, record students’ questions on chart paper or another medium that allows the questions to remain posted. Write students’ names next to their questions to give them ownership of the process and to help students talk to each other about the questions.

**SPOTLIGHT on Evaluative and Interpretive Questions**

During the sharing questions activity, your students will likely ask different types of questions that are important to recognize.

An **evaluative question** asks for the reader’s opinion. Evaluative questions sometimes include judgment words such as “fair”/“unfair” or “wrong”/“right.”

An **interpretive question** asks about the story’s meaning. Answers come from the text, rather than personal opinion. Interpretive questions often focus on character motivations or actions.

**Student Learning Spectrum**

Look for students to:

**APPROACHING OBJECTIVES**
- Have difficulty following or asking questions about the story.
- Follow the story and ask a variety of questions, some of them relevant to the story’s meaning.

**MEETING OBJECTIVES**
- Follow the story and ask a variety of questions, most of them relevant to the story’s meaning.

**EXCEEDING OBJECTIVES**
- MATTER: If students follow the story and readily ask questions, you might:
  - Have students mark other reactions to the story, such as ! where they are surprised or smiling/frowning faces where they have positive/negative reactions.
  - After sharing questions, review the definition of an interpretive question (p. 331). Ask students to identify an interpretive question on the class list and explain why they chose it.

**Differentiated Instruction**

**SUPPORT**
- If students are struggling to follow or ask questions about the story, ask what part(s) of the story confused them or what they liked or did not like about the story. Help students shape their reactions into questions if necessary. If students are struggling with comprehension, consider having them listen to the story once more before session 2.

**CHALLENGE**
- Have students mark other reactions to the story, such as ! where they are surprised or smiling/frowning faces where they have positive/negative reactions.
- After sharing questions, review the definition of an interpretive question (p. 331). Ask students to identify an interpretive question on the class list and explain why they chose it.
Support questioning skills as students write about aspects of the story they wondered about or that interested them the most. This Reader’s Journal page corresponds to the Sharing Questions activity in the Teacher’s Edition.

Write about a part of the story that you understand better after the sharing questions activity.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Write the question someone else asked that interests you the most.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Second Reading

SESSION 2

Second Reading (30–40 minutes)

Activity Instructions

1. **Choose** one or more of the Move! Note! Share! options (see box below) to conduct during the second reading.

2. **Prepare** students to reread with a purpose by telling them that this time they will be doing activities that help them think more deeply about the story.

3. **Read** the story aloud or play the audio CD as students read along. During the reading have students do one of the following:

   - **NOTE!** Take notes throughout the entire story.
   - **MOVE!** or **SHARE!** Pause at the appropriate passage to engage in the activity.

   Then ask students the follow-up question corresponding to that activity.

4. **Review** with the class the list of questions you posted from the sharing questions activity. See if any have been answered while rereading and add any new questions.

5. **Reader’s Journal**: Ask students to record something new they learned from rereading as well as a question they would like to talk about more.

6. **Collect** the Reader’s Journals and note which questions students have recorded. This will help you choose a focus question for Shared Inquiry discussion.

**ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

- Students read along as the story is reread, engaging in activities that help them explore the story more deeply.

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- To reread a story purposefully in order to gain a deeper understanding of it

**KEY SHARED INQUIRY CONCEPT**

- Rereading helps us discover new things about a story.

**Materials**

- Student books
- Audio CD
- Sticky notes
- Class question list
- Reader’s Journal: Second reading page (p. 33)

**Second Reading Activity Options**

- **MOVE!** Students act out Juan slowly shaking hands with the young man (p. 153).

  **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:**
  Why does Juan feel “suddenly warmed” when he and the young man shake hands?

- **NOTE!** Students mark an H where Juan is trying to help himself and an S where he is trying to help someone else (see p. 151 for sample student responses).

  **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:**
  Why did you mark that Juan is trying to help himself (or someone else) there?

- **SHARE!** Pairs of students construct summaries of what happens from when Juan helps pick squash to when he rides in the wagon (p. 155).

  **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:**
  Why can Juan “only sigh” when the woman tells him about Doña Josefina?
Second Reading Activity Options

Students participating in the MOVE!, NOTE!, and SAY! second reading activities.

**MOVE!** Students act out the barber calling to Mamá and as they leave the shop, and Mamá whirling around (p. 59).

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** How do you think Mamá is feeling when she whirls around to say Erandi’s hair is not for sale?

**SAY!** Volunteers read aloud with expression Erandi asking the barber if her hair will grow back (p. 60).

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** Why is Erandi willing to sell her hair even though she doesn’t know if it will grow back?

**SHARE!** Pairs of students share their visualizations of Erandi and Mamá walking home after Erandi sells her braids (p. 61).

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** Why is Erandi afraid that her mother is angry with her for selling her hair?

Series 2 second reading options include the SAY! activity instead of the NOTE! activity to be more accessible for younger students.
Shared Inquiry Discussion

**ACTIVITY SUMMARY**
- Students explore the story's meaning by discussing an interpretive question.

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE**
- To engage in a discussion by sharing ideas about a story, supporting those ideas with evidence, and listening and responding to other students' ideas.

**KEY SHARED INQUIRY CONCEPT**
- Discussing a story helps us form our own ideas about its meaning while thoughtfully considering the ideas of others.

**Materials**
- Student books
- Class question list and completed Reader's Journal pages (for teacher review)
- Reader's Journal: Shared Inquiry discussion page (p. 35)
- Discussion Planner (p. 338)
- Seating chart (optional)

**Activity Instructions**

**NOTE:** If your class is large, you may wish to divide it for discussion. For instructions on the fishbowl technique, where half your class observes the other half in discussion, see page 335.

1. **Review** students’ Reader's Journal pages and the class question list and compare them to the questions in the box on the facing page.

2. **Choose** the interpretive focus question and cluster questions that best align with your students’ areas of interest. Write those questions on your Discussion Planner (reproducible master on p. 338).

3. **Seat** everyone in a circle. If needed, review the dos and don'ts of discussion and the five discussion guidelines on pages 6–9 of the student book.

4. **Reader's Journal:** Post the focus question and have students copy it on the Shared Inquiry discussion page of the Reader's Journal. Give students time to think, look back at the story, and write their answers.

5. **Begin** the discussion by asking students to share their answers to the focus question.

6. **Ask** follow-up questions such as those on the facing page or on your Discussion Planner. Aim for the discussion to last at least 25 minutes.

7. **Reader's Journal:** As the discussion winds down, have students complete the Shared Inquiry discussion page of the Reader's Journal. If time allows, have volunteers share what they wrote.

**Engage higher-level thinking** with tested interpretive questions that:
- Sustain spirited open discussion
- Send students to the text for evidence
- Address multiple aspects of the text

**SESSION 3**

**Activity Instructions**

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE**
- To engage in a discussion by sharing ideas about a story, supporting those ideas with evidence, and listening and responding to other students’ ideas.

**KEY SHARED INQUIRY CONCEPT**
- Discussing a story helps us form our own ideas about its meaning while thoughtfully considering the ideas of others.

Materials
- Student books
- Class question list and completed Reader's Journal pages (for teacher review)
- Reader's Journal: Shared Inquiry discussion page (p. 35)
- Discussion Planner (p. 338)
- Seating chart (optional)

Activity Instructions

**NOTE:** If your class is large, you may wish to divide it for discussion. For instructions on the fishbowl technique, where half your class observes the other half in discussion, see page 335.

1. **Review** students’ Reader's Journal pages and the class question list and compare them to the questions in the box on the facing page.

2. **Choose** the interpretive focus question and cluster questions that best align with your students’ areas of interest. Write those questions on your Discussion Planner (reproducible master on p. 338).

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5. **Begin** the discussion by asking students to share their answers to the focus question.

6. **Ask** follow-up questions such as those on the facing page or on your Discussion Planner. Aim for the discussion to last at least 25 minutes.

7. **Reader's Journal:** As the discussion winds down, have students complete the Shared Inquiry discussion page of the Reader’s Journal. If time allows, have volunteers share what they wrote.

**For more tips on conducting a successful Shared Inquiry discussion, see pages 334–338 of the Teacher Resources section.**
Focus and cluster questions help you lead a great discussion. Use the interpretive focus questions that come with each unit. With experience, you will learn to choose questions of your own or ones that students generate.

Deepen students’ thinking with follow-up questions. Sample questions make it easy to respond to students’ comments in the moment.

Suggested Focus and Cluster Questions

Choose one of the options below for your discussion. Start with the focus question. Ask the related cluster questions when they fit naturally into the conversation—they will help students develop their ideas by looking closely at specific parts of the story. (Page numbers refer to the student book.)

**OPTION 1**

**FOCUS QUESTION**
Why does Doña Josefa give the gold coin to Juan?

**CLUSTER QUESTIONS**
- Why does Doña Josefa think she must be “the richest person in the world” even though she has only one gold coin? (p. 60)
- Why does Doña Josefa offer the gold coin to everyone she helps?
- Why does Doña Josefa look at Juan “intently” when she asks if he’s come for the coin? (p. 72)
- Why does Doña Josefa say, “You must be the one who needs it” to Juan when she gives him the gold coin? (p. 72)

**OPTION 2**

**FOCUS QUESTION**
Why does Juan give the gold coin back to Doña Josefa?

**CLUSTER QUESTIONS**
- Why does Juan begin to think of the gold as “his gold coins”? (p. 64)
- Why does Juan start wondering why Doña Josefa travels around helping people and offering them gold?
- Why is Juan speechless when Doña Josefa gives him the coin?
- When he gives the gold coin back, why does Juan say he is sure the newborn baby needs the gold coin more than he does?

Asking Follow-Up Questions During the Discussion

The follow-up questions you ask during the discussion will help 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 to us?

**FIND EVIDENCE**
- Where does that happen in the story?
- What part of the story makes you think that?
- Can you find that part and read it aloud to us?

**RESPOND TO OTHERS**
- Have you heard an answer you agree with?
- Do you agree or disagree with Jason?
- Will you tell Marisol what you think of her idea?
Written and Creative Response

SESSION 4

Written and Creative Response (times vary)

Choose from among the following suggested activities to help students deepen their understanding of the story while honing other language arts skills and concepts.

Written Response

Essay Practice

Use your students’ questions and areas of interest as topics for essays. Alternatively, try one of the questions below. Students can use the essay organizer in the Reader’s Journal (pp. 36–37) to plan the structure of their essays.

Interpretive question: Have students turn their answer to the focus question into an essay, using the completed Shared Inquiry page of the Reader’s Journal as a starting point.

Evaluative question: Should Juan have told Doña Josefa that he is the one who damaged her house?

Creative Writing

Have students turn their speculative questions into short stories, using the story organizer in the Reader’s Journal. Alternatively, try one of the questions below. Students can use the essay organizer in the Reader’s Journal (p. 38) to plan the structure of their essays.

Juan’s New Job: Ask students to imagine that Juan is going to try to get a job at the end of the story. Have the class brainstorm a list of possible jobs for Juan based on the kinds of work he does in the story. Then have each student choose a job from the list and write a diary entry from Juan’s point of view, describing the work he does at his new job and how he feels about it.

Creative Response

A Traveling Map: Help students make a list of the places Doña Josefa and Juan go in the story and what they do at each location. Have groups or pairs of students draw a map that illustrates the two characters’ different routes, creating symbols and a key that helps explain what Doña Josefa and Juan do at each place they visit. (If you wish, show students examples of route maps for inspiration.)

Writing about a story through essays or creative writing helps readers extend, explain, and share their ideas about the story.

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

Your answer to the assigned essay question:

Evidence #1 from page ______:

How this evidence supports your answer:

Your evidence can be a quote from the story or a summary of what happens in your own words.

How this piece of evidence supports your answer to the essay question:

Your evidence can be a quote from the story or a summary of what happens in your own words.
Curriculum Connections

Choose from among the following activities and readings to connect “The Gold Coin” to the rest of your curriculum.

Related Projects

Use students' background questions as topics for extension projects. Alternatively, try one of the projects below.

Growing Crops Help students investigate one or all of the crops in the story: potatoes, corn, squash, beans, and coffee. Have students use print or online resources to find out what each plant's seeds look like, where the plant likes to grow, what the mature plant looks like, and how it is harvested.

Kindness Counts Introduce to students the idea of “random acts of kindness”—when people do good things without expecting anything in return. Help students use online resources to find true examples of random acts of kindness. After students share stories, discuss doing a class project modeled on one or more of them.

Related Readings

Shulevitz, Uri. The Treasure. 1978. When Isaac's dreams tell him to travel to the royal palace in search of a treasure, his long journey leads him to find that treasure in an unexpected place.

Fine, Edith Hope. Under the Lemon Moon. 1999. A stranger steals fruit from Rosalinda’s lemon tree, so the girl seeks help from La Anciana, a wise old woman who offers some creative advice.


Assessment and Reflection

See the Assessment and Reflection section (pp. 344–382) for resources to track student learning and for teacher and student reflection forms.

Related Readings Key

S Appropriate for struggling readers who need support
O Appropriate for on-level readers
C Appropriate for readers who are ready for a challenge or for classroom read-alouds

Small Acts Make a Big Difference

Amanda Gebhardt

Think about all the people who live in your community. How many of them do you know? How many are strangers? Even if you don’t know everyone in your community, they are connected to you in some way. You live in the same place. You share the same surroundings. And sometimes things happen in your community that affect everyone.

This is why communities work together. Communities may hire crossing guards to keep students safe or set up gardens where people can grow vegetables and flowers. Communities may have people pick up litter along roads or have after-school sports programs for everyone.

connected: joined together

Nonfiction Inquiry is available as a companion to our fiction materials for grades 3–5. See more on pages 36–37.
Theme Introduction and Theme Connections

Theme: Kindness

This group of stories encourages students to think about what it means to be kind. The stories offer students the chance to talk about and reflect on different ways to give and receive kindness, and the reasons that people are kind to one another.

The Gold Coin
Realistic fiction by Alma Flor Ada
Juan, a thief, travels across the countryside in hot pursuit of Doña Josefa, a healer who possesses a gold coin he desperately wants.

The Magic Listening Cap
Japanese folktale as told by Yoshiko Uchida
When an old man is given the gift of a magic cap that allows him to hear all of nature speaking to him, he uses it to help others.

The Mushroom Man
Fantasy fiction by Ethel Pochocki
A solitary mushroom farmer finds that he has many things in common with a mole who has lost his family.

Theme Introduction

In this section of the book, you will read about characters who do kind things for others and characters who receive kindness from someone else. Thinking about these stories, and about your own experiences giving and receiving kindness, will give you new ideas about what it means to be kind.

Important Questions to Think About

Before starting this section, think about your own experiences with kindness:

• Can you remember a time when you were kind? When someone was kind to you?
• What kinds of things do people do to show kindness?

Once you have thought about your own experiences with kindness, think about this theme question and write down your answers or share them aloud:

What are some reasons that people do kind things?

After reading each story in this section, ask yourself the theme question again. You may have some new ideas you want to add.
**Theme Wrap-Up: Reminder—Be Kinder**  
(30–40 minutes)

1. **Review** with the class their responses to the theme question: *What are some reasons people do kind things?* Add new responses that students have generated as a result of completing all three stories.

2. **Ask** each student to choose a favorite response from the list. Have volunteers explain why they chose the response they did.

3. **Distribute** pieces of poster board and tell students that they will be creating posters to display around the school, reminding people to be kind to one another. Ask them to incorporate the responses they chose from the list in the form of persuasive statements, drawings, or other convincing visuals. (See example at right.)

4. **Have** students create and illustrate their posters. Allow time for students to show their posters to the class, explaining their illustration choices.

5. **Display** students’ posters around the school. If you wish, ask other teachers to follow up by asking their students how the posters affected their behavior.

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**Theme Connections**

The Theme Connections section that follows each grouping of stories in the Teacher’s Edition presents ideas for comparing and contrasting those stories and for integrating the theme into the classroom culture, as well as students’ everyday lives.

**Story-to-Story Connection** (25–35 minutes)

1. **Post** the titles of stories your students have read in the Kindness theme, along with the names of the main characters from each story.

2. **Tell** students that they will be hosting the Kindness Awards and that story characters will receive awards for kind behavior. Ask each student to choose a character to receive an award (or assign characters).

3. **Have** students complete page 55 of the Reader’s Journal. Encourage them to return to the story for details that prove the character should receive the award.

4. **Ask** volunteers to present their awards and read what they wrote.

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**At-Home Theme Connections**  
(times vary)

These activities can be completed at home with a parent or guardian’s help.

**Thank-You Cards**

1. **Ask** students: *What is the kindest thing a friend or relative has ever done for you?* Solicit answers from several volunteers. Tell students that for homework, they should each choose a friend or relative who did something nice for them and create thank-you cards for those people.

2. **Have** students create their cards at home with the help of a parent or guardian. Each card should include an explanation of what the student is thanking the person for doing. Encourage parents or guardians to create their own cards while students make theirs.

3. **Ask** volunteers to show their completed cards to the class before sending them.

4. **Follow up** by asking students what they learned about kindness from seeing one another’s cards and from sending their own.

**Donation Drive**

1. **Present** the class with a short list of local charities (such as shelters or food pantries) and have each student decide which charity he or she would like to donate to. If you wish, ask volunteers to explain which charity he or she chose and why.

2. **Research** with the class some examples of non-perishable, reasonably priced items that they might donate to each charity (such as toiletries or canned goods). Have each student create a donation list using the examples as a guide.

3. **Send** the lists home with students and have them arrange, with a parent or guardian, a time to shop (or to collect items already in their homes) and a time to drop off donations.

4. **Follow up** by asking volunteers to tell the class about where they donated their items and what the experience helped them learn about kindness.
Assessment and Reflection

Assessment materials provide tools for evaluating progress in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and listening and speaking (participation).

Use the critical thinking rubric with the sharing questions activity, Shared Inquiry discussion, or students’ written work to assess their higher-order thinking skills.

Multiple-choice questions help students practice with the type of questions they encounter at their grade level.

APPENDIX

Activity Score Guidelines

Instructions

Activity scores, which can be used with any activity, are a simple way to track your students’ participation.

1. **Choose** an activity you wish to score. Allow a few minutes during or after the activity to record scores.*

2. **Track** participation by asking yourself the following questions and marking your grade book accordingly:

   - **Was the student . . .**
     - Actively participating or especially helpful to the class? Mark a plus (+).
     - Participating, but not in a way that stands out? Mark a check (✓).
     - Distracting the class or not participating? Mark a minus (−).

3. **Assign** your own values to the scores later on when you calculate grades.

* NOTE: For the sharing questions and second reading activities, it may be easiest to record scores during the activity. For Shared Inquiry discussion, you might wish to wait until after class, when you can use your seating chart to remind yourself of students’ participation.
Reflection materials help you and your students determine strengths and areas for growth through self-assessment.

**Individual and whole class reflections** emphasize the value of personal responsibility and collaboration.

**Simple response scales** help students think about their efforts during the discussion and set goals for next time.

**Numbered response scales** about various elements of Shared Inquiry help you reflect on the entire process. **Tips** associated with each item allow you to easily convert your insights into practice.
Junior Great Books Series 2–5

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Teacher’s Notes and Questions

◆ What was that shining in the old woman’s hand?◆

The Gold Coin
Alma Flor Ada

Juan had been a thief for many years. Because he did his stealing by night, his skin had become pale and sickly. Because he spent his time either hiding or sneaking about, his body had become shriveled and bent. And because he had neither friend nor relative to make him smile, his face was always twisted into an angry frown.

One night, drawn by a light shining through the trees, Juan came upon a hut. He crept up to the door and through a crack saw an old woman sitting at a plain wooden table.

What was that shining in the old woman’s hand?
THE GOLD COIN

Alma Flor Ada

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shriveled: shrunken or wrinkled up
What was that shining in her hand? Juan wondered. He could not believe his eyes: it was a gold coin. Then he heard the woman say to herself, “I must be the richest person in the world.”

Juan decided instantly that all the woman’s gold must be his. He thought that the easiest thing to do was to watch until the woman left. Juan hid in the bushes and huddled under his poncho, waiting for the right moment to enter the hut.

Juan was half asleep when he heard knocking at the door and the sound of insistent voices. A few minutes later, he saw the woman, wrapped in a black cloak, leave the hut with two men at her side.

Here’s my chance! Juan thought. And, forcing open a window, he climbed into the empty hut.

insistent: repeated and hard to ignore
He looked about eagerly for the gold. He looked under the bed. It wasn’t there. He looked in the cupboard. It wasn’t there, either. Where could it be? Close to despair, Juan tore away some beams supporting the thatch roof.

Finally, he gave up. There was simply no gold in the hut.

All I can do, he thought, is find the old woman and make her tell me where she’s hidden it.

So he set out along the path that she and her two companions had taken.

It was daylight by the time Juan reached the river. The countryside had been deserted, but here, along the riverbank, were two huts. Nearby, a man and his son were hard at work, hoeing potatoes.
The Gold Coin
Alma Flor Ada

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One night, drawn by a light shining through the trees, Juan came upon a hut. He crept up to the door and through a crack saw an old woman sitting at a plain wooden table.

It had been a long, long time since Juan had spoken to another human being. Yet his desire to find the woman was so strong that he went up to the farmers and asked, in a hoarse, raspy voice, “Have you seen a short, gray-haired woman, wearing a black cloak?”

“Oh, you must be looking for Doña Josefa,” the young boy said. “Yes, we’ve seen her. We went to fetch her this morning, because my grandfather had another attack of—”

“Where is she now?” Juan broke in.

“She is long gone,” said the father with a smile. “Some people from across the river came looking for her, because someone in their family is sick.”

“How can I get across the river?” Juan asked anxiously.

“Only by boat,” the boy answered. “We’ll row you across later, if you’d like.” Then turning back to his work, he added, “But first we must finish digging up the potatoes.”

Doña: a Spanish word used with an older woman’s first name to show respect

anxiously: nervously; with worry about what might happen
The thief muttered, “Thanks.” But he quickly grew impatient. He grabbed a hoe and began to help the pair of farmers. The sooner we finish, the sooner we’ll get across the river, he thought. And the sooner I’ll get to my gold!

It was dusk when they finally laid down their hoes. The soil had been turned, and the wicker baskets were brimming with potatoes.

“Now can you row me across?” Juan asked the father anxiously.

“Certainly,” the man said. “But let’s eat supper first.”

Juan had forgotten the taste of a home-cooked meal and the pleasure that comes from sharing it with others. As he sopped up the last of the stew with a chunk of dark bread, memories of other meals came back to him from far away and long ago.
By the light of the moon, father and son guided their boat across the river.

“What a wonderful healer Doña Josefa is!” the boy told Juan. “All she had to do to make Abuelo better was give him a cup of her special tea.”

“Yes, and not only that,” his father added, “she brought him a gold coin.”

Juan was stunned. It was one thing for Doña Josefa to go around helping people, but how could she go around handing out gold coins—his gold coins?

When the threesome finally reached the other side of the river, they saw a young man sitting outside his hut.

“This fellow is looking for Doña Josefa,” the father said, pointing to Juan.

“Oh, she left some time ago,” the young man said.

“Where to?” Juan asked tensely.

“Over to the other side of the mountain,” the young man replied, pointing to the vague outline of mountains in the night sky.

“How did she get there?” Juan asked, trying to hide his impatience.

---

**abuelo:** Spanish for “grandfather”
“By horse,” the young man answered.
“They came on horseback to get her because someone had broken his leg.”
“Well, then I need a horse, too,” Juan said urgently.

“Tomorrow,” the young man replied softly. “Perhaps I can take you tomorrow, maybe the next day. First I must finish harvesting the corn.”

So Juan spent the next day in the fields, bathed in sweat from sunup to sundown.

Yet each ear of corn that he picked seemed to bring him closer to his treasure. And later that evening, when he helped the young man husk several ears so they could boil them for supper, the yellow kernels glittered like gold coins.

While they were eating, Juan thought about Doña Josefa. Why, he wondered, would someone who said she was the world’s richest woman spend her time taking care of every sick person for miles around?

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“Tomorrow,” the young man replied softly. “Perhaps I can take you tomorrow, maybe the next day. First I must finish harvesting the corn.”
The following day, the two set off at dawn. Juan could not recall when he last had noticed the beauty of the sunrise. He felt strangely moved by the sight of the mountains, barely lit by the faint rays of the morning sun.

As they neared the foothills, the young man said, “I’m not surprised you’re looking for Doña Josefa. The whole countryside needs her. I went for her because my wife had been running a high fever. In no time at all, Doña Josefa had her on the road to recovery. And what’s more, my friend, she brought her a gold coin!”

Juan groaned inwardly. To think that someone could hand out gold so freely! What a strange woman Doña Josefa is, Juan thought. Not only is she willing to help one person after another, but she doesn’t mind traveling all over the countryside to do it!
“Well, my friend,” said the young man finally, “this is where I must leave you. But you don’t have far to walk. See that house over there? It belongs to the man who broke his leg.”

The young man stretched out his hand to say goodbye. Juan stared at it for a moment. It had been a long, long time since the thief had shaken hands with anyone. Slowly, he pulled out a hand from under his poncho. When his companion grasped it firmly in his own, Juan felt suddenly warmed, as if by the rays of the sun.

But after he thanked the young man, Juan ran down the road. He was still eager to catch up with Doña Josefa. When he reached the house, a woman and a child were stepping down from a wagon.

SECOND READING

MOVE!

Have pairs of students act out Juan slowly shaking hands with the young man. Afterward, ask the class: Why does Juan feel “suddenly warmed” when he and the young man shake hands?

Sample student responses to this question:

- Juan feels how nice it is to share a friendly moment with someone after not having one for so long.
- Juan is surprised that the young man is friendly and helpful to him.
“Have you seen Doña Josefa?” Juan asked.
“We’ve just taken her to Don Teodosio’s,” the woman said. “His wife is sick, you know—”
“How do I get there?” Juan broke in. “I’ve got to see her.”
“It’s too far to walk,” the woman said amiably. “If you’d like, I’ll take you there tomorrow. But first I must gather my squash and beans.”

So Juan spent yet another long day in the fields. Working beneath the summer sun, Juan noticed that his skin had begun to tan. And although he had to stoop down to pick the squash, he found that he could now stretch his body. His back had begun to straighten, too.

Later, when the little girl took him by the hand to show him a family of rabbits burrowed under a fallen tree, Juan’s face broke into a smile. It had been a long, long time since Juan had smiled.

Don: a Spanish word used with an older man’s first name to show respect
Yet his thoughts kept coming back to the gold.

The following day, the wagon carrying Juan and the woman lumbered along a road lined with coffee fields.

The woman said, “I don’t know what we would have done without Doña Josefa. I sent my daughter to our neighbor’s house, who then brought Doña Josefa on horseback. She set my husband’s leg and then showed me how to brew a special tea to lessen the pain.”

Getting no reply, she went on. “And, as if that weren’t enough, she brought him a gold coin. Can you imagine such a thing?”

Juan could only sigh. No doubt about it, he thought, Doña Josefa is someone special. But Juan didn’t know whether to be happy that Doña Josefa had so much gold she could freely hand it out, or angry for her having already given so much of it away.

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When they finally reached Don Teodosio’s house, Doña Josefa was already gone. But here, too, there was work that needed to be done. . . .

Juan stayed to help with the coffee harvest. As he picked the red berries, he gazed up from time to time at the trees that grew, row upon row, along the hillsides. What a calm, peaceful place this is! he thought.

The next morning, Juan was up at daybreak. Bathed in the soft dawn light, the mountains seemed to smile at him. When Don Teodosio offered him a lift on horseback, Juan found it difficult to have to say goodbye.

“What a good woman Doña Josefa is!” Don Teodosio said, as they rode down the hill toward the sugar cane fields. “The minute she heard about my wife being sick, she came with her special herbs. And as if that weren’t enough, she brought my wife a gold coin!”
In the stifling heat, the kind that often signals the approach of a storm, Juan simply sighed and mopped his brow. The pair continued riding for several hours in silence.

Juan then realized he was back in familiar territory, for they were now on the stretch of road he had traveled only a week ago—though he had traveled only a week ago—though how much longer it now seemed to him. He jumped off Don Teodosio’s horse and broke into a run.

This time the gold would not escape him! But he had to move quickly, so he could find shelter before the storm broke.

Out of breath, Juan finally reached Doña Josefa’s hut. She was standing by the door, shaking her head slowly as she surveyed the ransacked house.
“So I’ve caught up with you at last!” Juan shouted, startling the old woman. “Where’s the gold?”

“The gold coin?” Doña Josefa said, surprised and looking at Juan \textit{intently}. “Have you come for the gold coin? I’ve been trying hard to give it to someone who might need it,” Doña Josefa said. “First to an old man who had just gotten over a bad attack. Then to a young woman who had been running a fever. Then to a man with a broken leg. And finally to Don Teodosio’s wife. But none of them would take it. They all said, ‘Keep it. There must be someone who needs it more.’”

Juan did not say a word.

“You must be the one who needs it,” Doña Josefa said.

She took the coin out of her pocket and handed it to him. Juan stared at the coin, speechless.

At that moment a young girl appeared, her long braid bouncing as she ran. “Hurry, Doña Josefa,
please!” she said breathlessly. “My mother is all alone, and the baby is due any minute.”

“Of course, dear,” Doña Josefa replied. But as she glanced up at the sky, she saw nothing but black clouds. The storm was nearly upon them. Doña Josefa sighed deeply.

“But how can I leave now? Look at my house! I don’t know what has happened to the roof. The storm will wash the whole place away!”

And there was a deep sadness in her voice.

Juan took in the child’s frightened eyes, Doña Josefa’s sad, distressed face, and the ransacked hut.

“Go ahead, Doña Josefa,” he said. “Don’t worry about your house. I’ll see that the roof is back in shape, good as new.”

The woman nodded gratefully, drew her cloak about her shoulders, and took the child by the hand. As she turned to leave, Juan held out his hand.

“Here, take this,” he said, giving her the gold coin. “I’m sure the newborn will need it more than I.”
Junior Great Books Fiction & Nonfiction Inquiry

Combining Junior Great Books Series 3–5 with our Junior Great Books Nonfiction Inquiry program is a powerful way to build cross-genre units that enable students to compare and contrast texts and concepts. Each Nonfiction Inquiry volume includes nine informational texts and accompanying Shared Inquiry activities. The charts below show how the nonfiction and fiction series align.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNIOR GREAT BOOKS NONFICTION INQUIRY 3 UNIT</th>
<th>CONTENT AREA AND FOCUS</th>
<th>JUNIOR GREAT BOOKS SERIES 3 FICTION UNIT CORRELATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1 Can Robots Be People Too?</td>
<td>STEM: Engineering to Solve a Problem</td>
<td>The Scarebird Series 3, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2 Small Acts Make a Big Difference</td>
<td>Social Studies: Social Responsibility</td>
<td>The Gold Coin Series 3, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3 Becoming Francisco X. Alarcón</td>
<td>Social Studies: Personal Growth and Identity</td>
<td>The Upside-Down Boy Series 3, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4 Egg-cellent Bird Parents</td>
<td>Life Science: Animal Growth and Development</td>
<td>The Ugly Duckling Series 3, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5 Weather Watchers</td>
<td>Physical Science: Weather and Climate</td>
<td>Luba and the Wren Series 3, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6 Don’t Swallow That Spider!</td>
<td>Social Studies: The Oral Tradition</td>
<td>The Monster Who Grew Small Series 3, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7 Children of the Oregon Trail</td>
<td>American History: Westward Expansion</td>
<td>The Buffalo Storm Series 3, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8 Grunts, Flops, and Dives!</td>
<td>Social Studies: Justice and Fairness</td>
<td>The Man Whose Trade Was Tricks Series 3, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9 Burger with a Side of Shoe Polish</td>
<td>Economics: Economic Decision-Making</td>
<td>The Emperor’s New Clothes Series 3, Book Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Junior Great Books Series 4: Fiction Unit Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Air Jordans: Demanding the Brand</th>
<th>Economics: Wants vs. Needs</th>
<th>Thank You, M’am Series 4, Book One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Crows: Friend or Foe?</td>
<td>Life Science: Animal Intelligence</td>
<td>Crow Call Series 4, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Young Inventors Making the Future Brighter</td>
<td>STEM: Engineering to Solve a Problem</td>
<td>On Sand Island Series 4, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>The Life and Legend of Johnny Appleseed</td>
<td>Social Studies: The Oral Tradition</td>
<td>The Green Man Series 4, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Zitkala-Sa at Boarding School</td>
<td>American History: Westward Expansion</td>
<td>Doesn’t Fall Off His Horse Series 4, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>“We Show Up for Each Other”</td>
<td>Social Studies: Social Responsibility</td>
<td>The Cello of Mr. O Series 4, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>Peer Solutions: Better Than Punishment?</td>
<td>Social Studies: Justice and Fairness</td>
<td>Ooka and the Honest Thief Series 4, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Leave It to Beavers?</td>
<td>Physical Science: Weather and Climate</td>
<td>Letting Swift River Go Series 4, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>Bystanders Who Stand Together</td>
<td>Social Studies: Personal Growth and Identity</td>
<td>The Apple and The Envelope Series 4, Book Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Junior Great Books Series 5: Fiction Unit Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Home Sweet Homestead</th>
<th>American History: Westward Expansion</th>
<th>The Special Powers of Blossom Culp Series 5, Book One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Give It Up for Happiness</td>
<td>Economics: Wants vs. Needs</td>
<td>The Peddler’s Gift Series 5, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Storytelling in the Time of Slavery</td>
<td>Social Studies: The Oral Tradition</td>
<td>In the Time of the Drums Series 5, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Out-of-This-World Weather</td>
<td>Physical Science: Weather and Climate</td>
<td>All Summer in a Day Series 5, Book One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>Thomas Heatherwick: Making Things Happen</td>
<td>STEM: Engineering to Solve a Problem</td>
<td>The Hemulen Who Loved Silence Series 5, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>The Richest Man in the World</td>
<td>Social Studies: Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Kaddo’s Wall Series 5, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Plain, Ordinary Mrs. Roosevelt</td>
<td>Social Studies: Leadership</td>
<td>The Prince and the Goose Girl Series 5, Book Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>Roads Take a Toll on Wildlife</td>
<td>Life Science: Habitat Destruction</td>
<td>A Bad Road for Cats Series 5, Book Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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- The Ugly Duckling  Hans Christian Andersen

**Series 3, Book Two**

**THEME: GRATITUDE**
- White Wave  Chinese folktale as told by Diane Wolkstein
- Luba and the Wren  Ukrainian folktale as told by Patricia Polacco
- Basho and the River Stones  Tim Myers

**THEME: CLEVERNESS**
- The Dream Weaver  Concha Castroviejo
- The Man Whose Trade Was Tricks  Georgian folktale as told by George and Helen Papashvily
- The Emperor’s New Clothes  Hans Christian Andersen

**THEME: RESOURCEFULNESS**
- Shrewd Todie and Lyzer the Miser  Ukrainian folktale as told by Isaac Bashevis Singer
- On Sand Island  Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- The Green Man  Gail E. Haley

**THEME: COMMUNICATION**
- Song of Hope  Peggy Duffy
- Jean Labadie’s Big Black Dog  French-Canadian folktale as told by Natalie Savage Carlson
- Thunder, Elephant, and Dorobo  African folktale as told by Humphrey Harman

**THEME: TRUST**
- Thank You, M’am  Langston Hughes
- Crow Call  Lois Lowry
- Fresh  Philippa Pearce

**THEME: COMMUNITY**
- Thank You, M’am  Langston Hughes
- Crow Call  Lois Lowry
- Fresh  Philippa Pearce

**THEME: BEING YOURSELF**
- The Wise Little Toad  Rosario Ferré
- Doodle Flute  Daniel Pinkwater
- The Velveteen Rabbit  Margery Williams

**THEME: SELF-RESPECT**
- In the Time of the Drums  Gullah folktale as told by Kim L. Siegelson
- Learning the Game  Francisco Jiménez
- The Invisible Child  Tove Jansson

**THEME: FAMIL Y**
- Kamau’s Finish  Muthoni Mucumi
- Ghost Cat  Donna Hill
- The Hemulen Who Loved Silence  Tove Jansson

**THEME: HONESTY**
- Charles  Shirley Jackson
- The Special Powers of Blossom Culp  Richard Peck
- The Peddler’s Gift  Maxine Rose Schur

**THEME: TRUST**
- Thank You, M’am  Langston Hughes
- Crow Call  Lois Lowry
- Fresh  Philippa Pearce

**THEME: INTEGRITY**
- The No-Guitar Blues  Gary Soto
- The Fire on the Mountain  Ethiopian folktale as told by Harold Courlander and Wolf Leslau
- Ooka and the Honest Thief  Japanese folktale as told by I. G. Edmonds

**THEME: PERSPECTIVE**
- The Old Woman and the Wave  Shelley Jackson
- Letting Swift River Go  Jane Yolen
- The Apple and the Envelope  Herbert Montgomery

**Series 5, Book One**

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**THEME: STRENGTH**
- Tuesday of the Other June  Norma Fox Mazer
- Doesn’t Fall Off His Horse  Virginia A. Stroud
- The Cello of Mr. O  Jane Cutler

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- The No-Guitar Blues  Gary Soto
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**THEME: COMPASSION**
- A Bad Road for Cats  Cynthia Rylant
- Lenny’s Red-Letter Day  Bernard Ashley
- Through the Mickle Woods  Valiska Gregory