The Power of Themes

To help you make the most of your students’ learning experience, Junior Great Books Series K–5 stories include thematic options. Series K and 1 offer suggestions for both subject themes and social-emotional themes, while Series 2–5 stories are organized around social-emotional themes. Working with themes provides a number of benefits for both teachers and students.

Meaningful Connections

Themes emphasize meaningful connections between stories and across subject areas. Using themes benefits both students and teachers in several ways:

• Unifies and strengthens lesson content
• Highlights authentic connections between texts and ideas
• Builds robust knowledge about curricular topics
• Fosters an atmosphere of inquiry
• Increases engagement and curiosity

Series K and 1 Themes

Subject Themes

Each selection in Series K and 1 features one or more subject themes related to either science or social studies. These themes reflect topics that are commonly taught at these grade levels.

Social-Emotional Themes

Each selection in Series K and 1 is connected to one or more social-emotional themes. After discussing a story, young students are well prepared to consider how qualities of character are exhibited and affect others.

Junior Great Books® Series K
Volume 1

Junior Great Books® Series 1
Volume 1

Junior Great Books® Series 1
Volume 2

Junior Great Books® Series K
Volume 1

Junior Great Books® Series 1
Volume 3

Junior Great Books® Series 1
Volume 3

Subject Themes

Seeds and plants
Native American culture
Weather
The five senses
Visual perspective

Social-Emotional Themes

Generosity
Imagination
Community
Homes
Growing up
Series 2–5: In-Depth Inquiry with Themes

Social and Emotional Development
Reading about complex characters who grapple with challenging decisions helps your students reflect on their own character development. Discussing theme-related questions develops students’ self-awareness and empathy, which are both important for positive conflict resolution.

Deeper Learning and Critical Thinking
You can use our theme activities to prompt students to compare and connect texts and ideas, deepening their learning and critical thinking. Each unit’s theme question sets the stage for thinking about a big idea across texts. Our Theme Wrap-Up activities help your students evaluate and synthesize their thinking about the theme question. The Story-to-Story Connection activities encourage your students to consider how the theme plays out in at least two stories, helping them learn to connect ideas from different texts.

Junior Great Books Series 2–5 Themes

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<th>Series 2, Book Two</th>
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<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td>Bravery</td>
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<td>Family</td>
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<td>Self-Respect</td>
<td>Humility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitting In</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
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For more information, contact your Great Books educational consultant at 800.222.5870 or gbfconsultant@greatbooks.org.