THE WEEK Junior EDUCATION

November 13, 2026
Issue 343



Page	Title	Summary and Discussion Points	Content Area
2	Nation votes in midterm elections	The midterm election results showed Democrats gaining control of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the two parts of Congress that make laws. How, if at all, could the midterm results affect President Trump's last two years in office? Why do you think voter turnout was higher than normal?	Social Studies
5	Native American Heritage Month begins	The U.S. observes National Native American Heritage Month to honor the accomplishments and contributions of Native and Indigenous peoples, whose ancestors first inhabited what is now the US. Why does the article use "Native" and "Indigenous"? Which Nations lived or still live in your community?	Social Studies
11	Map features US rivers to conserve	Conservationists led by the Nature Conservancy have released a map of rivers and streams in the US that are particularly worth preserving. What criteria was used in their evaluation? How do healthy rivers and streams impact the ecosystems around them?	Science
15	Humanoid robots could help in space	NASA, the US space agency, wants to keep astronauts safe by developing humanoid robots that can withstand extreme conditions and do dangerous jobs in space. Why might NASA build robots shaped like humans instead of a different shape, like a box with arms? What "extreme conditions" in space or on Mars might be dangerous for astronauts but not for robots?	Science/Tech
19	Valkyries are WNBA champs	The 2026 WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) Finals ended on October 31 with the Golden State Valkyries as the league's new champions. Where do the Valkyries play? How has the popularity of women's sports evolved?	Social Studies

FEATURE OF THE WEEK JUNIOR: How to … (pages 24 and 25)	
Invite students to look at this week's feature and answer the questions.	1. What does it mean to be an informed reader? 2. Why is it particularly important to evaluate the news for accuracy? 3. Select articles about the same topic from three different news sources. Follow the steps outlined in the article and evaluate accuracy, bias, and credibility.

	DEBATE	CREATE
ARTICLE	“Should school cafeterias ban sweets?” (page 8)	“Native American Heritage Month begins” (page 5)
VOCABULARY	processing, policies, consumed, packaged	heritage, indigenous, ancestor, culture
ACTIVITY	Share an imaginary headline that your school has removed desserts from its cafeteria lunch menu this week. Invite students to brainstorm a list of neutral facts to work from, such as the principal’s reason for the change and a few student and parent reactions. Split the class in half. Have one group write a short news story that makes the change sound positive, and the other write one that makes it sound unfair. Make sure students know they can’t invent facts. They may only change word choice, which details come first, whose quotes appear, and the headline. Pair up opposing versions and direct students to read them aloud side by side. Lead a discussion about which words did the most persuasive work, which facts were strongest, and how readers can spot a slanted story. To finish, guide the class in writing a balanced version together to ensure fair, balanced reporting.	The article says Native Americans have made contributions to art, music, food, science, and agriculture. Assign each small group one of these five areas and have them research one specific contribution, using reliable sources such as this Challenge each group to create a mini museum exhibit that reflects the contribution they have selected. Each exhibit should include an object, model, or image representing the contribution, along with a museum-style label that names the contribution, identifies the nation or people connected to it, and explains why it matters today. Encourage groups to write labels the way real museums do: short, clear, and engaging for visitors. Set up the exhibits around the room and have students tour the “museum,” leaving a visitor comment card at each one with a question or something new they learned. Wrap up with a discussion about which contributions surprised students, and consider inviting another class or families to visit the class museum.
EXTEND	Meet with your school’s cafeteria staff to learn how menus are chosen.	Make an indigenous dish during Native American Heritage Month.

	ANALYZE	CREATE
ARTICLE	“Nation votes in midterm elections” (page 2)	“Nation votes in midterm elections” (page 2)
VOCABULARY	legislation, political party, midterm, vacant	ballot, majority, groundbreaking, federal
ACTIVITY	Ask students what they think a “wave” election is. Explain that it is where one party wins many seats, often in places it doesn’t usually win. Have pairs find evidence from the article that this year was a wave. Each pair should write a one-sentence claim supported by two pieces of evidence. Next, explain that the president’s party usually loses seats in midterm elections, often because voters want a check on the president’s power. Share the factors news outlets and exit polls pointed to this year for the “blue wave”. Have small groups rank the factors from most to least important and explain their reasoning, emphasizing that experts disagree and elections rarely have a single cause. Close by explaining that exit polls survey voters as they leave the polls to understand why they voted, but they don’t decide who wins. For an exit ticket, have students answer: What is one reason elections can change so much from one cycle to the next?	Ask students why they think voter turnout is usually lower in midterm elections than presidential elections. Ask students to highlight facts from the article about voter turnout in this year’s midterm election. Have groups brainstorm two lists: possible reasons more people voted early this year, and possible reasons people in general might choose not to vote. Encourage them to think broadly, including access, convenience, work schedules, interest in particular races, and whether people feel their vote matters. Have each group share its strongest idea from each list, and record them on the board. Discuss which barriers communities could help reduce, such as providing more information or making voting locations easier to reach. To wrap up, have groups design a nonpartisan poster encouraging eligible adults to vote in future elections. Make clear the poster can’t support any party or candidate, only the act of voting itself. Encourage students to use one fact from the article or their discussion on their poster, and display the finished work around the school.
EXTEND	Learn about the “firsts” from this year’s midterm election.	Review exit polling from this year’s midterms.