THE WEEK Junior EDUCATION

October 16, 2026
Issue 339



Page	Title	Summary and Discussion Points	Content Area
2	US withdraws all troops from Iraq	The US military withdrew all of its troops from Iraq on September 30 after having a presence in the country for more than 20 years. Why did troops first go to Iraq? What could the withdrawal of American troops mean for the people of Iraq?	Social Studies
4	US observes Banned Books Week	The nation is observing Banned Books Week, from October 4 to 10. Book bans reached an all-time high in public schools last year, according to a new report released by PEN America, Why are some books banned from school libraries? What books are banned in your school library?	ELA
4	Supreme Court starts new term	On October 5, the US Supreme Court began its new term. The nine justices will hear arguments in about 60 cases from now until the end of April, and rulings on major cases are expected to be announced in June or July. How many Supreme Court justices can you name? What arguments will they be hearing?	Social Studies
5	Olympic torch to visit all 50 states	Plans for the Olympic torch relay that will take place in the US ahead of the start of the 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles, California, have been announced. What do you know about the Olympic torch relay?	Social Studies
20	The Lucas Museum is open	After nearly two decades of planning, the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art opened on September 22 in Los Angeles, California. It is the first museum dedicated entirely to narrative art—the use of images to tell stories. Why did George Lucas push for this museum? Why is storytelling so important?	Visual Arts

FEATURE OF THE WEEK JUNIOR: Amazing invention (p. 15)	
Invite students to look at this week's feature and answer the questions.	1. What would you consider an amazing invention during your lifetime? 2. Many amazing inventions start with a problem that needs to be solved. What problem does the invention in the article solve? 3. Would you consider it an amazing invention? Why or why not? 4. What big or small problem would you like to solve? How might you create an invention to solve it?

	DEBATE	CONNECT
ARTICLE	“Write an opinion piece” (page 24)	“Olympic torch to visit all 50 states ” (page 5)
VOCABULARY	persuade, op-ed, proposal, inclusion	transport, cauldron, torchbearer, landmarks
ACTIVITY	Direct students to read the article's "Topics to Consider" box and turn each topic into a debatable claim (e.g., *Letter grades should no longer be used*). Invite students to partner up, share their claims, and identify where they agree and disagree. Encourage them to use evidence and reasoning to defend their opinions and see whether they can persuade one another. Then, ask students to choose the claim they feel most strongly about and follow the steps in the article to write a short opinion piece to persuade others. Direct them to state their position, provide two or three supporting reasons, consider another viewpoint, and end with a call to action. Finally, have students share their writing with a classmate who disagrees and see whether their argument changes their partner's mind.	Challenge students to identify symbols, traditions, events, and ceremonies from the modern Olympic Games that originated in Ancient Greece nearly 3,000 years ago. Examples include lighting the Olympic flame in Greece, the Olympic torch relay, opening and closing ceremonies, the pentathlon, track and field events, boxing, and the Olympic oath. Have pairs select one Olympic tradition and investigate the tradition's origins in the Ancient Greek Games, what it looked like then, how it has evolved over time, and why it has remained an important part of the Olympics. As a final challenge, ask students to become Olympic historians and futurists by predicting how their selected tradition might change over the next 100 years. Will new technology, changing cultural values, or advances in sports transform the tradition, or will its core purpose remain the same? Students should use evidence from their research to support their predictions.
EXTEND	Read Teen Vogue’s Op-Ed page.	Learn about the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic torch relays.

	CREATE	ACT
ARTICLE	“US observes Banned Books Week” (page 4)	“US observes Banned Books Week” (page 4)
VOCABULARY	advocates, campaigns, political, bans	targeted, fiction, administrator, offensive
ACTIVITY	Invite students to examine the theme of a banned book. Discuss how a book cover can influence readers' expectations and whether a cover can accurately represent a story. Students should then create a new cover that captures the book's important ideas through images, symbols, and design elements. Encourage them to consider what they would want potential readers to notice first about the book. Invite them to write a reflection explaining their design choices and how they connect to the text. Students can also explain why they believe the book remains meaningful or relevant. Conclude with a gallery walk where students display their redesigned covers and reflections. As a class, discuss the similarities and differences among the designs and how individual interpretations can shape a reader's understanding of a book.	Ask: Who should decide what books are available in a school library? Invite students to share their thoughts and discuss the concept of intellectual freedom. Introduce a challenged or banned book and ask students to research why some individuals wanted it removed and why others supported keeping it available. Invite groups to consider the impact of limiting access to books and discuss who should be responsible for making decisions about what’s read in schools. Encourage them to think about the roles of students, parents, educators, librarians, and community members in that process. After the discussion, ask students to write a short response explaining whether they believe restricting access to books is the best way to address concerns about content. Conclude with a class conversation about the importance of intellectual freedom, informed decision-making, and the value of having access to a variety of perspectives and experiences through literature.
EXTEND	Review this year’s list of banned books.	Ask your school’s media specialist which books are banned from your library.