



Connections Books and Themes – Some Ideas for Your Connections Series

Many of the long-time traditional *Connections* books read in classrooms are listed in the Book Database. In the Database you'll find books that explore various traditions of American life, periods in U.S. history, American holidays, food, family, work, and other general themes.

In addition to the data base, we are adding book lists with ideas for new books you can chose from for your *Connections* programs. Here are some themes:

The Right to Be

Explores questions of rights: rights to make choices in our lives, rights granted by the United States Constitution, rights society grants or withholds, and ways people have advocated for rights. Some examples of books to read in this series are below. [To read a review, click on the book title.](#)

[If I Only Had a Horn](#), by Roxanne Orgill, illustrated by Leonard Jenkins. An illustrated biography of Louis Armstrong (picture book)

[Georgia in Hawaii](#) by Amy Novesky, illustrated by Yuyi Morales, an illustrated biography of Georgia O'Keeffe (picture book)

[Brown Girl Dreaming](#), by Jacqueline Woodson, a biography of growing up Black with dreams of being a writer. (Accessible narrative poems)

[Persepolis](#) by Marjane Satrapi, a graphic memoir of growing up in Iran during the revolution

[Salt to the Sea](#) by Ruta Sepetys, A World War II story of refugees on a trek to find freedom. (Advanced readers.)

U.S. Civics – Immigration in Four Picture Books

[I Was Dreaming to Come to America](#), Memories from the Ellis Island Oral History Project, illus. by Veronica Lawler

[The Boy Who Drew Birds](#) by Jacqueline Davies, illus. by Melissa Sweet

[The Keeping Quilt](#) by Patricia Pollacco

[A Different Pond](#) by Thi Bui

The Power of Words – Nobel Peace Prize Winners in Three Picture Book Biographies

[Malala Yousafzai, Warrior with Words](#) by Karen Leggett Abouraya, illus. by L.C. Wheatley

[Martin's Big Words](#) by Doreen Rappaport, illus. by Bryan Collier

[Nelson Mandela](#) by Kadir Nelson

Cultures Side by Side, a series for beginning readers

[Mirror](#) by Jeannie Baker

[Houses and Homes](#) by Ann Morris, photos by Ken Heyman

[Everybody Cooks Rice](#) by Norah Dooley

Literature Studies with a focus on One Book read throughout the four Connections sessions.

Examples of books include

[Seedfolks](#) by Paul Fleishman

[Wonder](#) by Raelin Jaramilo

[Brown Girl Dreaming](#) by Jacqueline Woodson

[The Watch that Ends the Night](#) by Allan Wolf

[The White Heron](#) by Sarah Orne Jewett with a field trip to the Sarah Orne Jewett house in South Berwick, Maine

Themes Offered in the Book Data Base

One easy way to use the Book Date Base:

- Click on Themes. Scroll to find one that is interesting to you. Select one, e.g. “Stories of Art as Power”
- Click on Search Books. A list of books on that theme appears. These are titles you can use in your series. (With the *Connections* Coordinator and your facilitator, you can explore others as well.)

Under the theme of “Stories of Art as Power” you’ll see a varied list of books on ways that art empowers, from Leo Lionni’s *Frederick* on the power of his imagination, to the picture book biography of *Celia Cruz*, queen of salsa, to *Wabi Sabi*, a story about the Japanese idea that beauty is in that which is natural and imperfect.