

PRESIDENT'S COLLECTION

2025

Building a Strong Theme

OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze how national award-winning books introduce, build and carry a theme throughout the book, then evaluate the strength of their own publication's theme.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- President's Collection Theme video
- Access to [President's Collection Gallery](#)
- Current or previous yearbook
- Sticky notes
- Chart paper and writing utensils

PART 1

INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Play the theme video in full.

While watching, students will take notes for each school using these prompts:

- How is the theme introduced?
- How is the theme shown visually?
- How is the theme shown in writing?

Immediately after the video, ask:

- What made this theme feel intentional, not random?
- How did the theme look different as the book moved forward?

Keep responses specific to examples from the video.

PART 2

JIGSAW ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one featured yearbook from the video.

Groups must:

1. Rewatch their assigned portion of the video.
2. Use the President's Collection Gallery to study high-resolution spreads from that same book.
3. Identify:
 - a. The main theme idea
 - b. How the theme appears in different sections
 - c. Repeated visual elements
 - d. How the theme changes or grows across pages

Each group will record their findings on chart paper.

Break apart the original groups and create new groups with one student from each book.

Each student teaches:

How that book carried its theme throughout
One effective strategy the staff used to keep the theme consistent

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PART 3

CURRENT BOOK THEME AUDIT (10 MINUTES)

Groups evaluate your current book using the following prompts:

- Is the theme clearly introduced?
- Does it extend beyond opening?
- Are section tie-ins meaningful?
- Does the concept evolve or stall?

Groups must identify:

- One specific strength with evidence
- Two precise improvements with page references

PART 4

CONCLUSION (5 MINUTES)

Whole-class reflection:

If our book was placed beside the President's Collection examples, would the theme be competitive?