The Week Junior
Teacher’s Guide

In this issue we will learn shocking statistics about how much food is wasted in the United States and other countries and ways people can help reduce waste. Students will have the opportunity to discuss whether or not students deserve mental health days. Finally, discover how people around the world celebrate spring.

This week at a glance

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THIS WEEK’S BIG DEBATE:
DO STUDENTS DESERVE MENTAL HEALTH DAYS?

YES — students need the break  | NO — kids would take advantage

ACTIVITY:
1. Invite students to watch the TEDx Talk on why students should have mental health days.
2. In small groups or online breakout rooms, invite students to discuss the following questions: A) Do you ever feel stressed or overworked at school? Why? B) What do you do when you feel stressed or overworked at school? C) Do you think mental health days would be helpful for students? Why?
3. Have student groups share responses and thoughts about the TEDx Talk.
4. Ask student groups to create a poster that argues whether or not students should have mental health days. Each poster must include a title, reasons, examples, peer quotes, and visuals.

Have your students visit theweekjunior.com/polls to vote. We’ll publish the results next week.

What you need to know

- In 2018, Utah passed a bill allowing students to take a mental health day as an excused absence from school. Oregon enacted a similar law in 2019.
- Students in other states, including Colorado, Florida, and Washington, are attempting to get mental health day laws passed.
- In 2019, the Pew Research Center reported that 70% of teens surveyed identified anxiety and depression as major problems among their peers.
Let's Discuss
1. What is the United Nations and why does it exist? Explain the new information that was revealed in 2021. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.
2. Explain in detail the effects of food waste. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.
3. How can families help to reduce food waste? Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.

Vocabulary
- United Nations
- Paris Agreement
- Carbon dioxide

TWJ Kids Take Action
In school or remote
Invite students to create a poster that tells how much food is wasted in the United States and what people can do to reduce waste. Encourage students to conduct further research on food waste.

Education leader for nation is confirmed
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Let’s Discuss
1. Who is the newly confirmed US secretary of education? Explain their career journey. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.
2. What are the responsibilities of the US secretary of education? Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.
3. How did people react to Dr. Cardona’s confirmation? What is his first task? Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.

Vocabulary
- US secretary of education
- Senate
- Superintendent

TWJ Kids Take Action
In school or remote
Dr. Miguel Cardona is the new US secretary of education. Write a letter to Dr. Cardona telling him about your school and what new programs or activities you would like to see in American schools. Be sure to include all parts of a friendly letter.