HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Educator Materials for this Young Reader edition of LeBron James: In His Own Words are organized according to the main parts of the book (Part I, Part II, Part III, and Part IV). For each part, you will find:

This is information you may wish to share with students to help them better BACKGROUND understand the context of or references in a guotation. INFORMATION These prompts are connected to specific quotations but allow students RESEARCH AND to conduct research and engage in discussion beyond the information **DISCUSSION TOPICS** provided in the text. These prompts are connected to specific quotations and allow students SOCIAL AND to consider questions related to one or more SEL topics such as: identity, EMOTIONAL LEARNING identifying or managing emotions, relationship building, empathy, or CONNECTIONS decision-making. This is a page that can be given directly to students and asks readers to STUDENT ACTIVITY

consider multiple quotations from one part of the text. Students may work on this page individually, with a partner, or in small groups.

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I wouldn't be here today without my mom; she's like my best friend. Just knowing the sacrifices she, you know, had and did and everything was like for me. My mom was sixteen years old when she had me, and as a kid you don't really understand that. When you get older and you have kids of your own you're like, "Oh my god, you was a high school sophomore?!" Just knowing the commitment that she had for me and the sacrifice: there's nothing in this world I wouldn't do for her. I am who I am because of her.

-NBA on TNT, February 19, 2023

NOTE: Gloria James was only sixteen when she gave birth to LeBron and left high school. Her mother, LeBron's grandmother, passed away when LeBron was only three years old, leaving Gloria to raise LeBron by herself. They had to move several times within the first nine years of his childhood. His father was never in the picture.

My games got moved from our high school to the university, and our games started being televised. People would be out on the streets selling T-shirts with my likeness on it. I'm a pretty smart guy. And I wasn't getting none of it, and my mom wasn't getting none of it.

-Shut Up and Dribble, November 3, 2018

NOTE: By his senior year at St. Vincent–St. Mary's, over 15,000 people were attending James's games, some of the largest crowds to ever watch high school basketball. For context, the average NBA stadium can hold just under 19,000 fans. James's televised games also granted ESPN significant ratings boosts, with over 1.6 million households tuning in to watch him play.

When I was five, some financial things happened, and I moved seven times in a year. We moved from apartment to apartment, sometimes living with friends. My mom would always say, "Don't get comfortable, because we may not be here long."

-ESPN, December 23, 2002

NOTE: Gloria did her best to provide for LeBron, but as a young single mother without a high school diploma, she had access mostly to minimum-wage retail and service jobs. Without outside help, the James family struggled financially and Gloria found it difficult to qualify for most apartments, let alone afford them. Without a stable income, the James family was forced to move between a series of less-than-ideal shortterm housing.

Being a first-generation money-maker in the household is a scary thing. For an 18-year-old, I go from sitting in classrooms in May . . . to being a multimillionaire a month later in June, which is insane. It's hard to kind of process that. It's a scary thing.

-Kneading Dough: The Podcast, March 5, 2019

TOPIC: Ask students to research the various ways that athletes make money. Discuss athletes in different sports and of different genders, and compare and contrast how athletes like LeBron James and Patrick Mahomes have made money to how athletes like Megan Rapinoe and Serena Williams have made money. What differences do they notice? Invite students to discuss if they think athletes are paid fairly.

What helped me in school was sports. When I was 8, 9, that was the first time I started playing organized sports and I had coaches around me that stressed education and not being allowed to play if we weren't doing our schoolwork or being at school on time, things like that.

-ESPN, July 6, 2011

TOPIC: Several schools set GPA minimums or attendance minimums for athletes, barring athletes who fail to meet these requirements from playing. Ask students to discuss what they think should be the academic requirements for student athletes at both the high school and college levels.

I was on the cover of Sports Illustrated when I was in the eleventh grade, and I just thought I was doing another cover of another sports magazine. I didn't know how big it was at the time. I didn't know till I was like twenty-one years old how big Sports Illustrated was, and then I was like, Wow! I was pretty big in high school!

-Esquire, October 2008

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss how reaching the level of fame LeBron did at such a young age could have impacted him. Should minors or students who have not yet graduated high school be featured in the media to the extent that James was? Why or why not?

I never complained. Never. We were already going through tough times. It doesn't make it any better if I'm complaining. My mother said it was time to go, I packed my little book bag and it was time to roll.

I remember my mother sitting me down and basically telling me because of certain situations, that she may be gone for a little while, that I was going to be living with one of my coaches. It was a challenge. That's all I cared about when I was growing up—if I was gonna be able to wake up and my mother was still alive or still by my side. That was—because I was already without a father, you know, and I didn't want to be without both of my parents so it was definitely scary and tough.

-More Than a Game, September 6, 2008

The thing that I had on the court that I didn't have off the court was security. Because every day we went to the gym, I knew I was gonna get picked, we were gonna win basketball games or we were gonna win pickup games. I've always said it's home away from home for me.

-More Than a Game, September 6, 2008

They said, "You are an inner-city kid, you are underprivileged, you live in poverty, you are not going to make it out." I mean, I would have lost a long time ago if I would have listened to what the narration of it all is.

-Kneading Dough: The Podcast, March 5, 2019

I go from \$10 in my pocket to \$100 million. In high school. Yup.

-GQ, February 18, 2014

CONNECTION: Invite students to think about a time when they were faced with a challenging situation. What challenges did they face? Did they complain about it? In what ways might complaining make a situation more difficult? In what ways might it serve a purpose?

CONNECTION: Invite students to think of an activity that feels like a "home away from home" for them. What about that activity makes them feel safe and welcomed? How can people find or create "home away from home" spaces?

CONNECTION: Ask students to think about what kinds of narratives people have created about them based on where they come from, what they look like, or where they live. How accurate are these narratives? How might these narratives affect the choices they make?

CONNECTION: Invite students to imagine the impact of this kind of abrupt change in financial situation. What challenges might arise from suddenly having much more money than before? How might a person's age at the time they received the money impact how this would affect them?

Find quotations in *Part I: Early Life* that illustrate a challenge or an opportunity that LeBron James experienced as a younger person. Explain if the quotation describes a challenge, opportunity, or both and why you think so.

QUOTATION	CHALLENGE, OPPORTUNITY, OR BOTH?	EXPLANATION



I wanted to be the Rookie of the Year my rookie year, I wanted to be an All-Star, I wanted to win championships, I wanted to be the MVP of the league, I wanted to be Defensive Player of the Year.... I never, ever was like, "I wanna break the all-time scoring record." It's never ever been a thought of mine and the fact that I'm like literally right here, it's mind-blowing.

-ABC News, February 8, 2023

NOTE: The Rookie of the Year award is given to the best new player in their first official regular season. MVP stands for the Most Valuable Player and is awarded to the player deemed to have contributed the most to their team. All-Stars in the NBA are the top 24 players each season who are selected to participate in an exhibition game. LeBron James currently holds the record for the most All-Star game appearances in NBA history.

This is a historic franchise and, to be a part of this, is something that I'll be able to talk about, and my grandkids and kids will be able to talk about that their "paw paw" or their "dad" played for the Los Angeles Lakers.

-postgame press conference, October 11, 2020

NOTE: The Los Angeles Lakers actually began in Detroit, Michigan, in 1946 before being moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where the franchise name was changed from the Detroit Gems to the Minneapolis Lakers because of the many lakes found in Minnesota. The franchise relocated to Los Angeles in 1960. The Los Angeles Lakers are currently tied with the Boston Celtics for the most NBA Championship wins.

The only thing that bothers me is when I'm not able to play because of an injury. That bothers me when I'm not able to be on the floor. Because I never know if it was that game or that city that a kid was coming to come see me and I'm not playing in that game. That's the only thing that kinda bothers me.

-The Shop UNINTERRUPTED podcast, March 2022

NOTE: James has had few serious injuries during his career in the NBA. His three reported major injuries have all occurred during his tenure with the Los Angeles Lakers. He first suffered a groin injury, causing him to miss seventeen games in the 2018–2019 season, followed by twenty missed games in the 2020–2021 season due to an ankle injury. He missed additional games in the 2021–2022 season due to the injury of his other ankle.

Being a leader of my household, a leader of Miami, a leader of Team USA. It's the same exact thing. You can sense when a guy is frustrated—maybe doesn't feel involved enough in the offense. As leader you go over to him, you know, "How can I help?" Because at the end of the day, we all have one common goal—and that's to be great.

-GQ, February 18, 2014

When I played for Miami, I rooted for the Marlins and I rooted for the Dolphins. Not saying they were my favorite teams, but at the end of the day I root for them and I want them to be as great as they can be. When I was in Cleveland, I rooted for the Browns.... We root for our respective clubs, because when we win, and we all win, it brings so much more joy to our communities, just a positive influence. Now that I'm here playing for the Lakers, besides the Clippers, I root for everybody.

-Road Trippin' podcast, December 2020

Sometimes I wake up and I'm like, "Oh, I ain't gonna make it tonight, I just feel it. These twenty years have got to me tonight. It ain't gonna be good tonight." And then I get out on the floor and I'm running past, you know, twenty-one-year-olds, jumping higher than twenty-three-year-olds, and I feel real good on how I'm playing the game, not only physically but more importantly just, like, mentally.

-ESPN, February 7, 2023

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss what traits they think make someone a good leader. Does being a good leader change depending on if you are leading a family, a team, or even a country? If so, in what way?

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss if they root for sports teams, and if so, which teams they root for. How did they become fans of those teams? What is the impact on the community when those teams win or lose?

TOPIC: Ask students to research the average age of players across multiple sports. Which players hold the records for oldest and youngest in their respective leagues? Which players have played the longest or well past the usual age, and what do students believe has contributed to them being able to play for so long?

I play the game fun, joyful. . . . That's what I lost last year. Going through my first seven years in the NBA I was always the "liked one" and to be on the other side—they call it the dark side or the villain or whatever they call it—it was definitely challenging for myself.

-on being viewed as the "villian" post- The Decision, ESPN, December 6, 2011 **CONNECTION:** Invite students to respond to the following questions: Have you ever found yourself cast as the villain in a situation? How did that feel? Did being perceived as the villain change how you saw yourself? Would you have made a different decision if you knew that you would be seen as a villain in that situation?

I think personally thinking I have something to prove fuels me.... It fueled me over this last year-and-a-half since the injury. It fueled me because no matter what I've done in my career to this point, there's still rumblings of doubt.

-Sports Illustrated, October 26, 2020

CONNECTION: Ask students to think of a time when they had an injury or setback. In what ways might it have fueled or motivated them? Did this setback or injury change their desire to prove themselves? Why or why not?

I'm a team-first guy when it comes to understanding that you can't be great in this league without great teammates, great coaches, that prepare [you] every single day to be great.

-ESPN, February 8, 2023

CONNECTION: Invite students to respond to the following questions: Who in your life has helped to "prepare you to be great"? How can you help others "prepare to be great"?

The best thing that happened to me last year was us losing the finals. And me playing the way I played, it was the best thing to ever happen to me in my career, because . . . I got back to the basics. It humbled me. I knew what it was going to have to take, and I was going to have to change as a basketball player and I was going to have to change as a person to get what I wanted.

– Ottowa Citizen, July 23, 2012

CONNECTION: Ask students to think of a time in their lives when something seemed negative initially and then turned out okay, or was even beneficial. What role, if any, did their attitude have in changing the impact of the initially negative situation?

Find quotations from *Part II: On the Court* that show how LeBron James has changed or stayed steady as an athlete over time. Explain the change, or lack of change, that is illustrated by the comments you chose.

If you wish, you may use a quotation from a different section of the book for either Quotation 1 or Quotation 2, but at least one of the quotations should come from Part II of the book.

QUOTATION 1	QUOTATION 2	HOW DO THE QUOTATIONS SHOW A CHANGE OR LACK OF CHANGE IN JAMES AS AN ATHLETE?



These kids are doing an unbelievable job, better than we all expected.... When we first started, people knew I was opening a school for kids. Now people are going to really understand the lack of education they had before they came to our school. People are going to finally understand what goes on behind our doors.

-New York Times, April 12, 2019

Yes, we want you to go out and vote, but we're also going to give you the tutorial.... We're going to give you the background of how to vote and what they're trying to do, the other side, to stop you from voting.

-New York Times, July 30, 2020

NOTE: The I Promise school started by the LeBron James Family Foundation aims to keep students who have struggled in school from failing or dropping out. Through longer school days, STEM-focused classes, and an emphasis on socialemotional learning, the I Promise school reported in 2019 that 90 percent of students showed significant individual growth.

NOTE: The United States has a long history of voter suppression. In the period beginning immediately after the Civil War, poll taxes and literacy tests became popular methods used to prevent immigrants and African American men from voting, especially within the formerly slaveholding South. Modern voter suppression tactics have included requiring IDs at the polls, refusing to open voting centers in majority Black or Hispanic communities, and restricting voting hours.

One of my biggest goals was like, how . . . can I create voice and power for us: as Black creators, as Black people?

-The Shop UNINTERRUPTED podcast, October 2022

NOTE: In 2020 James combined three media companies he'd previously founded—SpringHill Entertainment, Uninterrupted, and the Robot Company—into SpringHill Company, a media and entertainment platform that primarily serves Black athletes, artists, and content creators. Productions under SpringHill Company include Space Jam: A New Legacy, in which James starred.

Black voters came through...again. Be proud as hell but do not stop! We must stay organized and keep working. We just tipping off.

-Instagram, June 23, 2020

NOTE: An unprecedented number of people voted in the 2020 United States presidential elections, including higher turnout rates for voters across gender, race, and age group. Several politicians and celebrities worked to increase voter registration and encourage people to send in their ballots in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts included campaigns targeted at Black voters, who have been historically underrepresented in the polls after decades of voter suppression. These efforts were later regarded as key factors in Biden's 2020 win, as Biden was able to win the electoral votes of historically conservative states like Georgia.

My last year will be played with my son. Wherever Bronny is at, that's where I'll be. I would do whatever it takes to play with my son for one year. It's not about the money at that point.

-The Athletic, February 19, 2022

NOTE: Bronny James is currently entered into the 2024 NBA draft after a rather tumultuous season on the USC team. Bronny had to be hospitalized before the first game of the 2023–2024 season due to cardiac arrest and has since been playing below his personal average in rebounds, assists, and scores. Speculations of Bronny entering the NBA include rumors that LeBron plans to retire after playing one year on the same team as his son. They would be the first father-son pair to play at the same time.

When we started this work in education with my foundation, we never dreamed we'd be owning buildings and developing new properties. . . . As we dug deeper into the work, we learned what it takes to create real, visible change. And that's listening to what our community needs and then rolling up our sleeves and getting to work.

-New York Times, April 12, 2019

I know a lot comes with being a professional athlete. That's also being a role model to a lot of kids that look up to me. This automatically comes with it. And I have nothing but time for kids. I could easily be at home and just relaxing. . . . But the opportunity to be here and giving back to these kids, I'm happy to do it.

 on donating to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and spending time with children who benefited from the donation, ESPN, March 2, 2011

Without those guys [athletes such as Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Oscar Robertson] standing for something that was more than dribbling a basketball . . . I'm not sitting here talking to you.

-Shut Up and Dribble, November 3, 2018

TOPIC: LeBron has advocated for education as one of the first steps to making change within a community. Invite students to discuss what they believe communities need to create change. Who is responsible for leading these changes?

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss if they believe that professional athletes have a responsibility to act as role models. Do they feel differently about other types of celebrities like actors or musicians? Why or why not?

TOPIC: Ask students to research the athletes mentioned here and their roles as activists. Are there other athletes (or celebrities in general) who are known for their activism? This could be an opportunity for students to present their favorite athlete or celebrity with a focus on their work as activists and not athletes/singers/actors, etc. How did they use their platform to promote or advance their activism? What criticism or backlash, if any, did they face for doing so? In what ways, if any, did their activism help their career or image?

I believe in order for us to ultimately be as great as we can be as a nation that all of us have to go back into our communities and lend our hand. It starts brick by brick. It starts person by person. Family by family. Kid by kid.

> -on the LeBron James Family Foundation, ESPN, August 17, 2016

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss the importance of collaboration in our society. When are people actively encouraged to work together? In what situations might working together get better results than working alone?

We all have moments in our lives where we know who we are and we know what we're about. And it's about growth. I've grown over the course of my career. I've grown over the course of being an 18-year-old kid that came into the league in 2003, to a 35-yearold man that's a husband and a father of three kids. I've grown to know who I am and what I stand for. And it's not just about me, it's about my people. That's why I'm leading the charge.

-on his More Than a Vote initiative, New York Times, October 21, 2020

I've always looked at parenthood, business, and basketball as kind of being the same thing when you are a leader. You have all these different personalities; you have to figure out how to put these personalities in the right place to maximize the team. . . . As a parent, yes, I have three kids and you give them the same structure, but you can't coach them all the same because they are all different people.

-Kneading Dough: The Podcast, March 5, 2019

You're not a criminal because you put a hood over the top of your head. It's a uniform for us. That's what we do. That's what we wear. We don't have the luxury of wearing suits or having button-downs. We don't have the means to get sweaters and things of that nature. Our uniform is T-shirts, hoodies, and shorts. That's our uniform growing up as Black kids in the inner city.

-on the killing of Trayvon Martin, ESPN, February 25, 2022

CONNECTION: Ask students if there are any issues they've "grown" into as they've gotten older and believe are worth standing up for. What made them start to advocate for those issues?

CONNECTION: Invite students to respond to the following questions: Have you ever had a parent, teacher, or coach personalize their care or instruction to your unique needs and personality? Do you feel that helped you to better succeed? Have you ever had the opposite experience, and felt like your needs as an individual were ignored? How did that change your experience? Do you think it is necessary to tailor care and teaching methods to individuals? Why or why not?

CONNECTION: Invite students to respond to the following questions: Have you ever had someone make an assumption about you based on the way you were dressed? Have you ever made an assumption about someone else based on the way they were dressed? Do you think it is fair to judge someone based on their clothing? Why or why not?

I try to set an example of how I treat their mother on a day-to-day basis, how I treat their grandmothers, you know, how I treat their little sister. How I treat others with kind[ness] and patience, so hopefully I can instill life skills in them, so when they walk out in the real world they'll be able to behave themselves like men.

> –on the example he sets for his sons, ESPN, February 8, 2023

CONNECTION: Invite students to think of someone they see as a mentor or someone they look up to because of how that person treats others. Ask students: What about their treatment of other people makes you admire them? How can you set a positive example for the people in your life?

Find quotations in Part III: Off the Court that illustrate priorities that are important to LeBron James. Write out the quote, what priority you think it illustrates, and a reflection about how you share or do not share that priority.

QUOTATION	PRIORITY	REFLECTION



My career is totally different than Michael Jordan's. What I've gone through is totally different than what he went through. What he did was unbelievable, and I watched it unfold. I looked up to him so much. I think it's cool to put myself in position to be one of those great players, but if I can ever put myself in position to be the greatest player, that would be something extraordinary.

-Sports Illustrated, August 2, 2016

NOTE: While James and Jordan both boast high overall stats, Jordan has won more NBA championships and individual awards than James. Jordan averaged 30.1 points per game in the regular season and was Scoring Leader ten times during his tenure with the Chicago Bulls. Meanwhile, James averages a slightly lower 27.1 points per game, but averages a higher number of assists and rebounds per game and is the leading all-time scorer in NBA history.

[Reading] just slows my mind down. It just gives me another outlet. Throughout the playoffs all you think about is basketball. All you want to do is play basketball. But at the same time it can become a lot.

-NBC Sports, June 21, 2012

NOTE: James has been spotted several times reading books before games and has discussed reading in the locker room as part of his pre-playoff game ritual on Oprah's Next Chapter.

It's always pretty cool to see, the guys that come into our league and they said their favorite player growing up was LeBron James. That means something to me because I feel like I have so much more to do than just playing the game of basketball.

-postgame press conference, February 20, 2022

NOTE: James has played in the NBA for twenty-one consecutive years. Several of the players currently entering the NBA, including James's son, Bronny, grew up watching LeBron play. The only NBA player who has played more seasons than James is Vince Carter, who played twenty-two seasons before retiring in 2020.

Love me or hate me but at the end of the day you will RESPECT me!

-Twitter, April 14, 2016

I don't want to say it ever becomes too much, but there are times when I wish I could do normal things. . . . I wish I could just walk outside. . . . I wish I could just, like, walk into a movie theater and sit down and go to the concession stand and get popcorn. I wish I could just go to an amusement park just like regular people. I wish I could go to Target sometimes and walk into Starbucks and have my name on the cup just like regular people. . . . I'm not sitting here complaining about it, of course not. But it can be challenging at times.

-New York Times, February 4, 2023

Being in the conversation so much about being a part of the alltime greats, it's always humbling to me. I really don't get caught up in the comparison.

-Road Trippin' podcast, June 2017

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss what it means to respect someone they do not like. Are there examples of celebrities they don't particularly like but still respect? Is it necessary to like someone to respect them? Students may discuss what it means to respect someone, and if respecting someone as a human being is different from respecting someone as an authority figure or celebrity personality.

TOPIC: Invite students to discuss the pros and cons of the level of fame that James has reached. Is giving up some privacy worth it to become famous? What do they think would be the most difficult part of being as recognizable as LeBron James?

TOPIC: Ask students to research James's reactions to being part of the all-time greats and to the G.O.A.T. debate. Based on previous quotes and outside evidence, does James's statement seem accurate? What evidence can they find to support or disprove the idea that LeBron James is humble about his career achievements?

You can debate who's the greatest of all time individually, things of that nature, and what they've done. But as far as the teams that's won two of the hardest championship in Lakers history, I've been a part of that.

-Road Trippin' podcast, December 2020

TOPIC: Ask students to look up a sport and see who has been suggested as the "greatest of all time" within that sport. What factors are considered when giving athletes this title? Invite students to discuss what factors they think are the most important in determining whether someone can be considered "great."

Everyone likes to have their me time. And, of course, I'm one of those guys. But for the most part, with my energy, I don't like being alone. I like being around people and having fun and laughing and being able to give my energy to other people also.

-Miami Herald, February 20, 2011

I put a lot of pressure on myself not to let my teammates down. At the end of the day, that's what it's all about for me. Maybe to a fault at times, I put so much pressure on myself.

-ESPN, June 15, 2011

CONNECTION: Invite students to respond to the following questions: Do you get your energy from being around other people or from being alone? Do you identify as an introvert or an extrovert? Do you think your friends and family are mostly introverts, extroverts, or a mix of both?

CONNECTION: Invite students to list some of the benefits and drawbacks of putting pressure on themselves to succeed. Ask students to think about a situation where they put pressure on themselves and how that impacted them. How did they respond to that situation?

If life wasn't a struggle, there would be nothing to accomplish or overcome. The struggles in your life are positive.

-Twitter, October 25, 2010

CONNECTION: Invite students to think about the ways they may have struggled in life. What kinds of challenges have they had to overcome? What lessons did they learn from those struggles? In the end, do they think those struggles had positive or negative outcomes?

I don't [care] what nobody says. Our quest and our journey is not predicated on what everybody said. You going to have five people that love you out of 10. Then you have five people that hate you out of 10. That's just the way of the land. No matter what you do.

-Sports Illustrated, August 30, 2022

CONNECTION: Invite students to respond to the following questions: Do you think it is possible to be liked by everybody? Think about a time when you felt you were unliked or unwanted. How did this change how you approached that person or situation? How might accepting that not everyone will like you benefit you?

Find quotations from *Part IV*: Legacy that you think reveal LeBron James's personality traits. Record the quotation, the trait you think it reveals, and in what ways you think that trait may have impacted LeBron James's personal or professional journey.

QUOTATION	REVEALED TRAIT	ІМРАСТ

