



THE WRITING ACADEMY, LLC®



Module 2

Writing the Thesis (The Trunk of the Tree)



Grade 3 • Cluster 2



Tackling TEKS 3.11B(i) & 3.12B(i) — Reading & Writing

★ Meet Our Week!

Module Slide 1 • Module 2

★ Daily Deck

I Will...

- Find the noun and verb of importance in the prompt.
- Add my own answer to make a thesis (central idea).
- Use a subordinator such as *because* when the prompt asks why.
- Use a preposition such as *through* when the prompt asks how.

I Can...

- Name the three parts of a thesis (central idea).
- Write a thesis (central idea) that answers a WHY prompt.
- Write a thesis (central idea) that answers a HOW prompt.
- **Tell whether** a thesis really answers its prompt.

★ The Trunkless Tree!

Day 1 • Gather



Stand up. You are trees!

Arms out as branches. Freeze. Sway with the wind. Now I take away your trunk—sit down instantly! That is what happens to writing without a thesis (central idea). Today we grow the trunk of our tree.

Without a trunk, a tree cannot stand tall. Without a thesis (central idea), an essay cannot stand strong.

★ Three Parts of a Thesis

Day 1 • Reveal

1. Noun of Importance

Comes from the prompt.

2. Verb of Importance

Comes from the prompt.

3. Student Answer

Comes from MY thinking.

The noun and verb come from the prompt—but the answer can only come from ME!



Watch Me Build It: WHY

Day 1 • Reveal (cont.)

NOI Laura Ingalls Wilder's stories

VOI help readers understand history

ANSWER because they describe daily life on the prairie

Prompt: Explain why Laura Ingalls Wilder's stories help readers understand history.

This is a WHY prompt, so I write a complex sentence with a subordinator: "Laura Ingalls Wilder's stories help readers understand history **because** they describe daily life on the prairie."



Watch Me Build It: HOW

Day 1 • Reveal (cont.)

NOI Carmen Lomas Garza's artwork

VOI tells stories about family life

ANSWER through colorful paintings of everyday moments

Prompt: Explain how Carmen Lomas Garza's artwork tells stories about family life.

This is a HOW prompt, so I do not reach for *because*—I reach for a preposition: "Carmen Lomas Garza's artwork tells stories about family life **through** colorful paintings of everyday moments."

★ Thesis/Prompt Memory Match

Day 2 • Attempt

How to Play

1. Shuffle 8 prompt cards + 8 thesis cards, lay all 16 face down.
2. Turn over two cards.
3. A match is a prompt and the thesis (central idea) that answers it.
4. Say aloud which part is the student answer before you keep the pair.

With Your Partner...

Player with more matched pairs wins!
Check every pair against the answer key: **because** for WHY, **through/by** for HOW.

★ Let's Talk About It!

Day 3 • Discuss

How did you know when to write a complex sentence?

What helped you write the student answer?

"We thought about what the passage said." — the student answer must come from your thinking about the text.

WHY prompt → **subordinator**

HOW prompt → **preposition**



Is It a Thesis? Defend Your Answer!

Day 3 • Discuss (cont.)

"Laura Ingalls Wilder's stories help readers understand history." Is that a thesis (central idea)?

No — it has two of the three parts. Without part three it is restatement, not an answer.

≡ Write Your Own Thesis!

Day 3 • Use Again (Independent) — Interactive Notebook

1

Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza's artwork is important to culture.

2

Explain how Laura Ingalls Wilder helps readers imagine life on the prairie.

Write the three parts, then write the whole sentence. Remember: *because* for WHY,
through or *by* for HOW.

© I Built the Trunk of My Tree!

Day 4 • Award & Target

My thesis (central idea) gives the answer! I underlined my student-answer part in green — it came from the passage, not from imagination.

Curiosity Questions

Why do strong essays always begin with a clear thesis (central idea)? How does it help writers stay focused?

My target: Next time I will...

check if the prompt says why or how before I choose my connecting word.

Exit Ticket

Day 5 • Explain to Others

**Explain why Laura Ingalls Wilder's books
continue to inspire readers.**

Write the noun, the verb, your own answer, and the complete thesis
(central idea) — then circle your connecting word and label it WHY or
HOW.



Thesis Builder

Intervention • Small-Group Support

Sentence Frame

Laura Ingalls Wilder's stories help readers understand history because _____.

Sentence Frame

Carmen Lomas Garza tells stories about family life through _____.

Say the answer aloud first, then write exactly what you said. Underline your own part in green.

② Double Thesis Challenge

Enrichment • Write in your notebook

Explain how Laura Ingalls Wilder AND Carmen Lomas Garza both tell stories about everyday life.

Write one thesis (central idea) true of both authors, matching the clue word how.

Rewrite it using a stronger preposition from the HOW writing rigor chart.

✓ My Progress Tracker

Directions

This tracker is for YOU! As you practice building a thesis (central idea), look at each skill. If you can do it all by yourself, color in or check the box that matches how you feel.

Be honest with yourself — this helps you see how much you are growing!

Let's Look at an Answer!

Prompt: Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments.

LOW

"Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments."

What's working: The noun and verb of importance are kept exactly as the prompt gave them.

What's missing: No student answer, so the sentence restates the prompt. No subordinator, so it does not match a WHY prompt.

Let's Look at Another Answer!

Prompt: Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments.

MEDIUM

"Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments because she liked them."

What's working: All three parts are present and the subordinator matches the WHY prompt.

What's missing: The answer is a guess, not from the passage — paragraph 2 says she believed traditions should be remembered and celebrated.

Our Strongest Answer!

Prompt: Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments.

HIGH

"Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments because she believed cultural traditions should be remembered and celebrated."

What's working: All three parts are present, the structure matches the WHY prompt, and the answer is drawn from the passage rather than invented. This is our Module 2 target!