



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC



Module 2

Writing the Thesis (central idea) (The Trunk of the Tree)

Grade 3 · Cluster 2

Tackling TEKS · Reading & Writing

3.11B(i) · 3.12B · 3.12B(i) · 3.12B(ii) · 3.12B(iii)



★ Meet Our Week!

Medium stamina

★ Daily Deck

I Will...

- Teach students to locate the noun of importance.
- Teach students to locate the verb of importance.
- Teach students to add their own answer from the passage.
- Teach students to use a subordinator such as because for WHY.
- Teach students to use a preposition such as through for HOW.

I Can...

- Check that students can name all three thesis (central idea) parts.
- Check that students can write a WHY thesis (central idea).
- Check that students can write a HOW thesis (central idea).
- Check that students can judge whether a thesis (central idea) answers its prompt.

★ Writing the Thesis (central idea) (The Trunk of the Tree)

★ Daily Deck

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

Wilder describes frontier life; Garza depicts Mexican-American traditions and family celebrations.

informational text

How does a writer turn a prompt into a sentence that gives the reader the answer?

Stand tall like a tree and spread your arms as branches. Sway gently, then sit when your trunk disappears.

Without a trunk, your tree cannot stand.

★ Dot the Tricky Words

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

★ Daily Deck

D

Dot

Place a small dot above any word you are not sure about yet.

O

Discover

Discover the meaning as we learn together through our lessons.

T

Drop

Erase the dot once you know what the word means.

A little dot above a word means:
“I’m not sure about this word yet.”

Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot, then celebrate when you own it!



Three Parts

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

1

Noun

Noun of importance: topic from the prompt

2

Verb

Verb of importance: action from the prompt

3

Answer

Student answer: new meaning from the passage

green triangle still identifies the prompt's clue word

A complete answer to the prompt: noun, verb, and original answer.

★ Wilder WHY Model

Day 1 · Reveal (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

WHY Needs a Subordinator

because, since, when, so that

Model a reason joined in a complex sentence.

Watch Me!

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

Model: Laura Ingalls Wilder's stories help readers understand history because they describe daily life on the prairie.

Show that the prompt alone does not supply this third part.

★ Memory Match

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Wilder describes frontier life; Garza depicts Mexican-American traditions and family celebrations.

How to Play

- 1 Partners shuffle eight prompt cards and eight thesis (central idea) cards face down in four rows of four.
- 2 Player 1 turns over two cards.
- 3 A correct prompt/thesis (central idea) pair is kept; the player takes another turn.
- 4 Return both cards to the same places face down, then switch players.
- 5 Check pairs against slides 15-23; more matched pairs wins.

Success Check: *Name the original answer before keeping the pair.*

With Your Partner

Task Card

Explain how Carmen Lomas Garza preserves cultural traditions through art.

Answer

Carmen Lomas Garza preserves cultural traditions through paintings that show family celebrations and traditions.

Which two parts can you take from the prompt?

Compare your WHY and HOW matches.

How does the clue word help you choose a connecting word?

If your sentence only repeats the noun and verb, what answer do you still need to add?

Invite students to describe a family memory that a story or picture could preserve.

Student Directions: “Return to the passages before choosing an answer.”



Strong Trunk Award

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

Think about what you just did. You built the trunk of an entire response.

underline the answer

point to the passage detail

choose one goal

You built the trunk of an entire response.



Try It On Your Own!

Day 3 · Use (Independent Practice) · Interactive Notebook

1

have students shape both prompts and list the noun, verb, and clue word.

2

students find a supporting paragraph and write their own answer.

3

students choose because for WHY or through/by for HOW and write one complete sentence per prompt.

students underline part three and reread to check that it adds information beyond the prompt.

★ Award & Target!

Day 4 · Award & Target

★ Daily Deck

Award 🏆

students identify the words that add an answer and the passage detail that supports them.

- underline their original answer in green
- identify the passage detail that supports it
- record one evidence-based next step

Target 🎯

Next time I will

Curiosity Questions

discuss why a clear thesis (central idea) guides the reader and keeps writing focused



Exit Ticket

Day 5 · Educate & Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck

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

Have students complete the five components independently, then circle their connecting word and mark WHY or HOW.

You grew the trunk of your writing. You kept the prompt's noun and verb and added your own answer.



Name the Thinking

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

give each student a frame strip and read it aloud while the student tracks with a finger.

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

Carmen Lomas Garza tells stories about family life through _____.

Your frame gives you the beginning. Your job is the last part, the answer the prompt did not tell you.

Find what the passage shows, say your answer, then write it and underline your own answer in green.

★ Connect Across Texts

Enrichment · Write in your notebook

Double Thesis (central idea) Challenge: synthesize both passages, draft one HOW thesis (central idea), then rewrite the same idea using a stronger preposition.

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

Have students reread both passages and identify a shared idea.

Require a thesis (central idea) that is true of both sources.

partners hear both versions, choose the clearer sentence, and explain how the connecting phrase works.

★ My Progress Tracker

This tracker is for **YOU!** As you read and write this week, look at each skill. If you can do it all by yourself, color in the box that matches how you feel. Be honest, this helps you see how much you are growing!

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Names the three parts of a thesis (central idea).	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Retains the noun of importance from the prompt.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Retains the verb of importance from the prompt.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Adds an original answer supported by the passage.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Uses a subordinator such as because for WHY.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Uses a preposition such as through or by for HOW.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Distinguishes restatement from a complete answer.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Identifies the paragraph that supports the answer.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently
Revises a thesis (central idea) and explains the improvement.	Not Yet	Getting It	Demonstrated Independently

Citizenship Connection

Good Citizens · Our Community & Country

Respect for cultural heritage

Use the passages to connect literacy with respect for family histories, shared culture, and community memory.

Reflect & Discuss

Ask how stories and artwork help a community remember its history.

Which detail helps you understand how families lived or celebrated?

Let's Look at an Answer!

Prompt: Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza believed everyday family moments were important enough to paint.

LOW

Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments.

What Is Working: Retains the noun and verb of importance from the prompt.

What Needs Improvement: The original answer and subordinator are missing.

Let's Look at Another Answer!

Prompt: Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza believed everyday family moments were important enough to paint.

MEDIUM

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

What Is Working: All three parts appear and because matches WHY.

What Needs Improvement: The answer is a guess instead of the belief stated in the passage.

Our Strongest Answer!

Prompt: Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza believed everyday family moments were important enough to paint.

HIGH

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

What Is Working: The noun, verb, and answer are present; because joins a reason grounded in the passage.

★ **This is our target!**