

THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC
LEARNING LITERATURE



Penny Follows the TRACKS

*(Finding the proof in the passage
to back up every reason)*

Enjoy the companion song:
"Leave Some Tracks"

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Penny's page was really filling up now. She had her thesis, *Recess helps kids learn better*, with three strong reasons underneath it. She sat back, proud, with Champ snoozing at her feet. Then Mrs. Ray leaned over and asked the one question Penny wasn't ready for: "These are wonderful reasons, Penny. Now, how do you **prove** them?"

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"Prove them?" Penny blinked. "I just... *know* they're true." Mrs. Ray smiled gently. "A reason all by itself is only an *opinion*, Penny. To make a reader believe you, each reason needs **evidence**, real proof. Do you know the best place to find it?" Penny shook her head. Mrs. Ray tapped the reading passage on Penny's desk. "Right here. In the passage."

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"Good readers are like detectives," said Mrs. Ray. "Every passage leaves clues behind, little bits of proof called **TRACKS**. There are six kinds, and once you know them, you'll spot evidence everywhere. When you find a clue, you **TAP** it, mark it, so you can use it." Penny sat up. Six kinds of clues? She grabbed her highlighter like a magnifying glass.

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Mrs. Ray counted them out. "**T** is for **TIME**, the ages, days, history, and how things change. **R** is for **REACTIONS**, what happened next, the effects, how it all turned out. **A** is for **ACTIONS**, the problems, the causes, the doing." Penny repeated each one, tapping the desk. T... R... A...

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"**C** is for **CHARACTERS, CONCEPTS, and CREATURES**, the who and the big ideas. **K** is for **KEY KNOWLEDGE**, the important facts that unlock the meaning. Last of all, **S** is for **SETTING**, the scenery, the sights and sounds." Penny grinned. "T, R, A, C, K, S, six kinds of evidence!" she said. "Now I know exactly what to hunt for."

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Penny bent over the recess passage and went hunting for her first reason, *bodies get stronger*. Her eyes landed on a shiny clue: "*students who had recess every day were more active and stayed at a healthier weight.*" "Hey, hey, hey, evidence is on the way!" Penny sang out, the way you announce proof that is coming. "That's KEY KNOWLEDGE!" She TAPPED it with her highlighter. Real proof, not her own opinion, but the passage's very own words.

Next came her second reason, *the brain gets a rest*. Penny read on and found a teacher speaking right in the passage: "*After recess, my class is calm and focused. They are ready to learn again.*" "Hey, hey, hey, evidence is on the way!" she sang. "That's a REACTION, the effect of recess!" TAP. Her reason was not standing alone anymore; it had proof holding it up.

One reason was left, *kids learn to share and make friends*. Penny hunted, and there it was: "*children learn to share, to take turns, and to solve problems together.*" "Hey, hey, hey, evidence is on the way!" she cheered. "That's ACTIONS!" TAP. Three reasons now, and every single one had a track of real evidence leading straight back to the passage.

Penny looked at her page, glowing with highlighter. She was not just *saying* things anymore. She was **proving** them. "Tap the evidence," she said softly, remembering the rule, "then think about what it means." Her essay felt solid as stone, because every word could point to a clue and say: *see? right there.*

Penny hummed the detective song under her breath:

**Leave some TRACKS, leave some TRACKS,
find that evidence, bring it back!
TAP what you find, THINK what it means,
follow those clues through every scene.
TAP it, THINK it, make it connect,
TRACKS lead the way to what comes next!**

From that day on, Penny never read a passage the same way again. She read it with her TRACKS eyes, hunting for Time and Reactions and Actions, for Characters and Key Knowledge and Setting. Whenever a clue mattered, she TAPPED it, ready to use as proof.

Now **you** know the detective's secret too. A reason on its own is just an opinion, but a reason with **evidence** is the truth, proven. That proof is always hiding in the passage, waiting for a good reader to leave some TRACKS and find it.

So the next time someone says, "Prove it," do not worry for a second. Pick up your passage, put on your detective eyes, and go hunting. Time, Reactions, Actions, Characters, Key Knowledge, Setting. TAP the proof, think what it means, and sing it right out: "Hey, hey, hey, evidence is on the way!" Wherever the proof is hiding, you now know exactly how to find it.

THE END

♪ *Now sing it together: "Leave Some Tracks"*

Book 3 of Penny's Learning Literature. One continuous story: Penny is writing her single recess essay part by part (Book 1 thesis, Book 2 reasons; here she backs each reason with evidence she TAPs from the passage). Real girl, dog Champ, teacher Mrs. Ray; warm prose with light rhyme plus the song's chorus woven in (Page 10); teaches the six TRACKS evidence types faithfully (Time · Reactions · Actions · Characters/Concepts/Creatures · Key Knowledge · Setting), with "TAP the evidence, then think what it means." **Rev. 2 (per Randi):** works in the evidence signal-marker phrase "Hey, hey, hey, evidence is on the way!"; all in-sentence dashes removed; no sentence begins with And/But/Because; and a unique closing line. Gold "kids' line" Writing Academy® cover.