

P E N N Y L E A R N I N G L I T E R A T U R E

Penny Grows the Right Words

A story about word choice, academic vocabulary, and the
Word Garden

Book Thirteen • The Academic Word Garden Song

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Penny sat at her desk with her recess essay spread out before her. Champ rested his chin on her shoe. The essay was almost finished, but Penny felt a small tug of worry. She knew what she wanted to say. She just did not know the names for all the parts.

Mrs. Ray knelt beside her. She saw Penny's pencil tapping. "You have been growing this essay for days," Mrs. Ray said. "Today we plant a word garden." Penny blinked. A garden for words?

“Yes,” Mrs. Ray said. “Every writer needs the right words to talk about writing. When you know their names, you can choose them on purpose.” She pulled out a sheet of paper and wrote the first word at the top.

“A sentence is a complete thought,” Mrs. Ray said. “It has a naming part and an action part.” Penny looked at her essay. Recess gives students a break. That was a sentence. She had been writing them all along. Now she knew what to call them.

Mrs. Ray added another word. “Paragraph. A paragraph is a group of sentences that belong together.” Penny saw one on her page, three sentences about movement, all growing the same idea. They belonged together like flowers in a row.

Then came essay. An essay is a longer piece of writing that shares one big idea. Penny's big idea was simple. Recess is important. Her whole page was trying to show that.

Mrs. Ray wrote the next word. “Introduction.
The beginning that welcomes the reader in.”
Penny read her first lines. They invited a
reader to sit down and listen. That was her
introduction.

“Main Body” came next. “The middle, where ideas grow and prove the point.” Penny’s middle held two strong reasons. Recess helps bodies stay healthy, and recess helps brains take a break. Those reasons grew in her main body.

“Evidence is the proof from the text that shows an idea is true.” Mrs. Ray tapped the article they had read. Penny had added facts from it. Those facts were her evidence. She felt proud to name them.

Transition is a bridge that carries the reader from one idea to the next. Penny found the word also in her draft. It linked her reasons together. Explanation tells what the evidence means and why it matters. She had done that too.

“Global Statement is the big picture that reaches beyond the page,” Mrs. Ray said. “It helps readers see why the idea matters to the world.” Penny thought about recess helping every student everywhere. That was bigger than her own classroom.

Conclusion is the ending that ties it all together and lets it settle. Penny's final lines brought her essay home. She looked at her work with new eyes. Every part had a name. Every name made her writing feel more clear.

Sentence, paragraph, essay, evidence,
conclusion, let the words settle in. Good
writing today.

Penny sang the words with Mrs. Ray. The words felt calm and steady. She picked up her pencil. She revised one sentence, added an explanation, and checked her transition. Each word she said out loud felt like a tool she had been holding all along.

Mrs. Ray smiled. “Writers use these words every day,” she said. “Now you can name the tools in your hands.” Penny nodded. She looked at her essay, full of sentences and paragraphs, evidence and explanations, reaching from introduction to conclusion. Keep naming your ideas, and your writing will bloom in every season.