

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

Penny Finds the Heart of Her Essay

A story about essay purpose, with a Say It, Show It, Make It
Clear overview

***Book Nine · The Every Great Essay Has Something to
Say Song***

Mrs. Ray wrote five words on the board:
Explain why recess is important. Penny
looked at the blank page on her desk. Her
pencil felt heavy. Champ rested his chin on
her shoe and gave a soft sigh.

Penny raised her hand. “I like recess,” she said. “How do I write a whole essay about it? There are so many parts. I do not know where to start.” Mrs. Ray smiled. “That is a good place to begin.”

Mrs. Ray pulled a chart from the wall. It had a bright path with five stepping stones.

“Every great essay has something to say,” she said. “That something is your purpose. It is the reason your words show up on the page.”

Penny frowned. “My purpose is to finish before lunch?” Mrs. Ray laughed. “Not quite. Your purpose is to help your reader understand your idea. You start with a thesis. That is your big point, said in one clear sentence.”

“Then you give reasons,” Mrs. Ray said.

“Reasons hold your point up like strong legs under a table. Next comes evidence.

Evidence is the proof that makes your reasons real.” Penny nodded slowly.

“After evidence, you explain,” said Mrs. Ray.
“You tell your reader what the proof means
and why it matters. Say it. Show it. Make it
clear. Each piece has a job.” Champ wagged
his tail.

Mrs. Ray tapped the chart. “Think of it as one journey. You will learn how to build a thesis. You will learn how to choose reasons. You will learn how to find strong evidence and explain it well. This book is the map.”

Penny looked at the prompt again. “So my essay has something to say about recess.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Ray. “What do you want your reader to know?” Penny thought about the playground, her friends, and how her brain felt after fresh air.

Penny whispered, “Recess is important because students need time to move, think, and be with friends.” Mrs. Ray wrote it down. “That is a thesis,” she said. “You just gave your essay a heart.”

Penny sat taller. “I have reasons too. Recess helps bodies stay healthy. Recess helps brains take a break. Recess helps students practice sharing and kindness.” Mrs. Ray smiled. “Those reasons will need evidence later.”

“Then I explain what the evidence means,” Penny said. “So my reader sees why recess matters.” “Exactly,” said Mrs. Ray. “You have the whole picture now. The pieces are not a pile. They are a path.”

Penny picked up her pencil. The blank page did not look so scary. It looked like a place for her big idea to grow. She wrote one sentence at the top and felt ready for the steps ahead.

Say it! Show it! Make it clear! Give your
reader something to hear! Think it! Link it!
Make it strong! Every little piece belongs!
Thesis! Evidence! Explain away! Great
essays have something to say! From the first
big thought to the final line, Make it matter
every time!

Mrs. Ray closed the chart. “Soon you will fill each part,” she said. “You will choose reasons and hunt for proof. You will explain and link and polish. For today, you have found your purpose.” Penny grinned. Champ gave a happy bark.

Every big essay begins with a voice that has something to say. Yours can start with one true thought, one brave sentence, and one small step. Your ideas are ready to lead the way.