

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

Penny Stirs the Hidden Meaning

A story about inference, stirring evidence and thinking from
ME to WE

Book Eleven • The Stir It Up (Inference Recipe) Song

Penny stared at her recess essay. Her thesis sat at the top. Her three reasons waited below. Evidence and explanations filled the page. Something still felt missing. “I have facts,” Penny told Champ. “I do not know what they mean.” Champ tilted his head.

At school, Mrs. Ray found Penny tapping her pencil. “Your essay is growing,” she said.

“Now we stir the evidence.” Penny frowned.

“Stir it? Like soup?” Mrs. Ray smiled. “Like a recipe for thinking.”

Mrs. Ray drew a big bowl on the board.
“Evidence goes in first,” she said. “Then your
thinking. Together they make something
new.” Penny wrote the words in her
notebook. Evidence plus thinking equals
inference.

“First is ME,” Mrs. Ray said. “That means independent. Your own thinking about the evidence. What do you notice? What does it make you guess?” Penny looked at her recess notes. Students run, play, talk, and solve games. What did that mean to her?

Penny thought about the noisy playground.

“When students run and play, they come back calmer,” she said. “Maybe recess helps them focus later.” Mrs. Ray nodded. “That is a ME inference. You stirred evidence with your own thinking.”

Penny smiled. She had made something new. Champ wagged his tail from his spot by the door. “Now push the spoon deeper,” Mrs. Ray said. “From ME to WE.” Penny blinked. “WE means significant?”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Ray. “WE thinking matters beyond you. It connects evidence to experience and to everyone. What does recess mean for our class, our school, our day?” Penny studied her evidence again. She did not want to rush.

She remembered how friendships start at recess. She remembered how sharing a ball can turn strangers into teammates. She remembered how fresh air helps a tired brain wake up. Her small inference grew bigger.

“Recess is not just a break,” Penny wrote. “It helps students build friendships, solve problems, and return ready to learn.” Mrs. Ray read it slowly. “That is significance,” she said. “You moved from ME to WE.”

Penny added a new sentence to her essay.

“Recess matters because it teaches us how to be together.” The words felt strong. Her evidence was no longer a pile of facts. It was a recipe with a purpose.

Mrs. Ray tapped the board. “Say the steps with me.” Penny stood tall. “Evidence plus thinking equals inference. Evidence plus experience equals significance. ME means independent. WE means significant.” Champ barked once, as if he agreed.

Stir it up! Stir it up! Mix it all around!
Evidence and thinking, look what I found!
ME means INDEPENDENT! WE means
SIGNIFICANT!

Penny read her recess essay aloud. Her thesis, reasons, evidence, and explanations all fit together. She had inferred what recess meant for her and why it mattered for everyone. Mrs. Ray clapped. Champ wagged his tail.

“You stirred facts into meaning,” Mrs. Ray said. Penny hugged her notebook. She knew good writers do not just list what they see. They think about it, connect it, and discover what it can show. That is how a small idea grows into something important.

Every reader can stir evidence with thinking, too. Start with what you notice. Add what you know. Then ask what it means for ME and for WE. Keep stirring, little thinker. Your next big idea is already bubbling up.