

TEACH BIG · LEARNING LITERATURE



Penny's Big Idea

*(All about writing your thesis —
your essay's one big idea)*

Enjoy the companion song:
"Three Pieces to a Thesis"

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PENNY'S BIG IDEA — MANUSCRIPT (≈600 WORDS)

PAGE 1

Penny was a pencil with a bright yellow coat,
a shiny pink eraser, and big dreams to note.
She loved to make marks. She loved to make art.
But today she had *writing* — and didn't know where to start.

PAGE 2

"An essay?" gulped Penny. "A whole, entire page?
About my best topic — the zoo?" She felt caged.
So many fun facts! So much she could say —
the lions, the llamas, the long summer day!

PAGE 3

She scribbled a fact. Then a fact. Then some more.
Soon facts filled the page from the ceiling to floor.
But something felt wrong. It was jumbled and wide.
"My facts have no home," Penny worried inside.

PAGE 4

Then Marker strolled by with a confident grin.
"Penny," said Marker, "here's how you begin.
Before all your facts, before all the rest —
you need **one big idea**. Just one, and your best."

PAGE 5

"One big idea?" asked Penny. "But how?
There's so much to say — where do I start now?"
"Your big idea," Marker said with a wink,
"is the *one thing* you want every reader to think."

PAGE 6

"It isn't a fact. It's the point of them all.
It's the roof and the walls where your facts come to call.
It tells where you're going. It says what you'll prove.
It's the heart of your paper — the reason to move!"

So Penny sat still, and she thought, and she thought.
What did she believe? What idea had she caught?
Not "the zoo has some animals" — no, that's too small.
Her big idea had to stand up proud and tall.

And then — like a sunrise — it lit up her mind:
"The zoo is the *best* place for kids to unwind!"
That was it! That was HERS! One clear, shining claim —
and suddenly, Penny's whole paper had aim.

Now every fun fact had a job and a place.
The lions? They proved it. The picnic? Same case!
Each fact leaned right in, like a friend giving proof,
all holding up Penny's big idea for a roof.

"My big idea leads, and my facts follow through!"
Penny beamed like a star. "So *that's* what they do!"
Her page wasn't jumbled. Her page had a spine —
one powerful thought, running right down the line.

So here's what to do when *you're* starting to write,
when facts fill your head and you're ready to fight:
don't scribble them all in a great, tangled heap —
find your one big idea. That's the promise you'll keep.

Ask, "What do I believe? What's my point? What's my claim?"
Then say it out loud — put your name on that name.
Your big idea's the boss. Let it lead the parade.
And watch how your whole, entire essay is made!

So grab your own pencil. Sit tall. Take a breath.
Find the one thing you'll prove with your very best.
Because every great essay, from the start to the end,
begins with a big idea — Penny's brand-new best friend.

THE END

♪ *Now sing it together: "Three Pieces to a Thesis"*

SAMPLE — Book 1 of the Penny's Learning Literature series. Companion to the song "Three Pieces to a Thesis." Rhythmic anapestic meter for read-aloud. If you love Penny's voice here, I'll write the remaining twelve in this style, one per album song.