

PUBLISHED TEXTS

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“explain the author’s purpose and message within a text”

“compose literary texts, including personal narratives and poetry, using genre characteristics and craft”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Published texts are real stories written by real authors and published for the world to read.

An author writes with a purpose, and the author’s message is the idea the story teaches.

When I study what an author did, I can try that same craft in my own writing.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

A Character Who Makes Excuses

from “The Fox and the Grapes” (Aesop, 1867)

Sometimes the author’s message is hidden inside what a character says. The Fox pretends the grapes are sour instead of admitting the truth. This week we read a published fable, notice the excuse the Fox makes, and try writing a character who makes excuses.

This deck teaches **author craft and composition** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

Read the published fable.

This is the whole fable. Read it, then read it again. Watch for the sentence where the Fox makes an excuse.

The Fox and the Grapes

A FAMISHED FOX saw some clusters of ripe black grapes hanging from a trellised vine. She resorted to all her tricks to get at them, but wearied herself in vain, for she could not reach them. At last she turned away, hiding her disappointment and saying:

“The Grapes are sour, and not ripe as I thought.”

SOURCE · PUBLIC DOMAIN

From Aesop's Fables, translated by George Fyler Townsend, published 1867 (public domain)

I CAN | I can read a published fable and find the sentence that hides the author's message.

PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice the excuse the character makes at the end."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"explain the author's purpose and message within a text"

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Notice the excuse.

Read the ending. Find the sentence where the Fox makes an excuse instead of telling the truth.

"At last she turned away, hiding her disappointment and saying:"

"The Grapes are sour, and not ripe as I thought."

I CAN | I can notice the excuse the character makes at the end of the fable.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the real message behind the excuse.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Choose the real message.

The Fox says the grapes are sour. What is the author really teaching the reader?

A “She resorted to all her tricks to get at them.”

B “A famished Fox saw some clusters of ripe black grapes.”

C People sometimes pretend they did not want what they could not get.

I CAN | I can choose the real message the author hides behind a character’s excuse.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how the story proves the Fox is making an excuse.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“explain the author’s purpose and message within a text”

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Show how the story proves it is an excuse.

What word tells us the Fox knows the grapes are not really sour?

“At last she turned away, **hiding her disappointment and saying:”**
“The Grapes are sour, and not ripe as I thought.”

I CAN | I can explain how a specific word proves the character is making an excuse.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write an excuse a character makes to hide the truth.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“explain the author’s purpose and message within a text”

“compose literary texts, including personal narratives and poetry, using genre characteristics and craft”

Own it. Try the craft move.

Write the excuse the character makes. Show that the character is hiding disappointment, the way the Fox did.

A cat jumped again and again but could not reach the bird feeder. She walked away and said:

I CAN | I can write an excuse that hides a character’s real feelings.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can defend why the author hides the message inside an excuse.”

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Defend the author’s choice.

The author could have just written the lesson. Why is it stronger when the reader has to figure out the real message?

“The Grapes are sour, and not ripe as I thought.”

The reader has to notice that the Fox is lying. Why does that make the message stick?

I CAN

I can defend why hiding the message inside an excuse makes the reader think harder.



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Write your own fable with a hidden message.

Choose an animal who cannot reach something it wants. End with the animal making an excuse.

**Choose an animal that wants something it cannot reach.
Show the animal trying and failing.
End with an excuse that hides the truth.**

I CAN | I can write my own story where the character's excuse hides the real message.



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Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE “**The Grapes are sour, and not ripe as I thought.**” The Fox makes an excuse instead of admitting she failed.

CHOOSE C. The other choices tell what happens, not the lesson. The real message is that people pretend they did not want what they could not get.

SHOW The word “hiding” proves the Fox knows she is disappointed. She lies to herself. The author plants that clue so the reader sees through the excuse.

OWN Answers vary. One example: The cat said, “**I did not want that food anyway. It probably tastes terrible.**”

DEFEND When the reader figures out the lie, the message stays longer. The reader does the thinking, and that makes the lesson feel earned.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. One example: A raccoon stretched and stretched but could not open the trash can. He walked away and said, “**That food smelled rotten anyway.**”



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READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT · FROM “THE NORTH WIND AND THE SUN” (AESOP, TRANS. TOWNSEND, 1867)

“The North Wind first tried his power and blew with all his might, but the keener his blasts, the closer the Traveler wrapped his cloak around him. The Sun suddenly shone out with all his warmth. The Traveler no sooner felt his genial rays than he took off one garment after another.”

What message does the author want the reader to learn?

- A** The sun is always stronger than the wind.
- B** Travelers should carry extra clothes.
- C** Winning a contest is the most important thing.
- D** Gentle persuasion works better than force.



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The answer is D.

The sun is always stronger than the wind.

- A** The story is not about weather power. It is about how you treat people. The Sun won by being gentle, not by being stronger.

Travelers should carry extra clothes.

- B** The cloak is a detail in the story, not the lesson. The message is about gentleness, not about clothing.

Winning a contest is the most important thing.

- C** The story is about how you win, not whether you win. The method matters more than the victory.

Gentle persuasion works better than force.

Correct.

- D** The Wind used force, and the Traveler held on tighter. The Sun used warmth, and the Traveler took off his cloak. The author teaches that kindness works when force fails.

