

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 Talking Object Teaches the Lesson

from “The Travelers and the Plane-Tree” (Aesop, 1867)

Some fables give a voice to an object that cannot really speak. The Plane-Tree talks back to two travelers who call it useless. When a tree speaks, the reader listens. This week we notice how personification delivers the message.

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 author’s craft move.

The Travelers and the Plane-Tree

TWO TRAVELERS, worn out by the heat of the summer’s sun, laid themselves down at noon under the widespreading branches of a Plane-Tree. As they rested under its shade, one of the Travelers said to the other, “What a singularly useless tree is the Plane! It bears no fruit, and is not of the least service to man.” The Plane-Tree, interrupting him, said, “You ungrateful fellows! Do you, while receiving benefits from me and resting under my shade, dare to describe me as useless, and unprofitable?”

SOURCE · PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

I CAN | I can read a published text and notice the author’s craft move.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice where a non-human object speaks the message."

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"

Notice the talking object.

Find the sentence where the tree speaks. What does the tree say?

"The Plane-Tree, interrupting him, said,"

"Do you, while receiving benefits from me and resting under my shade, dare to describe me as useless?"

I CAN | I can notice the craft move the author uses.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the real message the talking object delivers.”

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”

Choose the message.

Which sentence best states the author’s message?

A “Two Travelers, worn out by the heat of the summer’s sun, laid themselves down at noon.”

B Do not call something useless while you are using it.

C “What a singularly useless tree is the Plane!”

I CAN | I can choose the best example of the craft move.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how the tree’s words prove the author’s message.”

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”

Show how the tree’s words prove the message.

The travelers call the tree useless while sitting under its shade. How does that prove the message?

“While receiving benefits from me and **resting under my shade”**

“Dare to describe me as **useless?”**

I CAN | I can explain how the craft move works in the story.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write words spoken by an object that teach the lesson.”

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 what this object says to teach the lesson. Let the object speak, the way the tree did.

**Two students leaned against the school wall to get out of the rain. One said,
“This old wall is so ugly.” The wall said:**

I CAN | I can try the craft move in my own writing.

PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can defend why giving a voice to a non-human object makes the message land.”

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”

Defend the author’s choice.

The author could have just had the travelers realize their mistake. Why is it stronger when the tree speaks?

“You ungrateful fellows!”

The tree is the one being used. Why does the message feel more powerful from the one who is being taken for granted?

I CAN | I can defend why the author chose this craft move.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

Write your own fable with a talking object.

Choose an object that helps people but is never thanked. Let the object speak the lesson when someone says it is useless.

Choose an object people use but never thank.
Show someone calling it useless.
Let the object speak the lesson in its own voice.

I CAN | I can write my own story where a talking object delivers the message.



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Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The tree says, “You ungrateful fellows! Do you, while receiving benefits from me and resting under my shade, dare to describe me as useless?” The tree speaks the message by pointing out what it gives.

CHOOSE B. The other choices are details from the story. The message is about calling something useless while you are benefiting from it.

SHOW The travelers are sitting under the tree’s shade at the very moment they call it useless. The contradiction between their words and their actions is what proves the message.

OWN Answers vary. One example: The wall said, “**You call me ugly, but you are leaning on me to stay dry.**”

DEFEND The tree is the one being used and insulted. When the victim speaks, the reader feels the unfairness. A narrator saying it would not be as powerful.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. One example: A sidewalk heard a man say, “This concrete is so boring.” The sidewalk said, “**You stand on me every single day, and you have never once tripped.**”



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READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT • FROM “THE GNAT AND THE BULL” (AESOP, TRANS. TOWNSEND, 1867)

“A Gnat settled on the horn of a Bull, and sat there a long time. Just as he was about to fly off, he made a buzzing noise, and inquired of the Bull if he would like him to go. The Bull replied, ‘I did not know you had come, and I shall not miss you when you go away.’”

What message does the author want the reader to learn?

A Some people think they matter more than they really do.

B Bulls do not like insects on their horns.

C It is polite to say goodbye before you leave.

D Gnats are the loudest insects in the field.



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The answer is A.

Some people think they matter more than they really do.

Correct.

A

The Gnat thought the Bull noticed him and would miss him. The Bull did not even know the Gnat was there. The author teaches that some people overestimate their own importance.

B

Bulls do not like insects on their horns.

The Bull did not even notice the Gnat. The story is about self-importance, not about what bulls like.

C

It is polite to say goodbye before you leave.

The Gnat's goodbye is the point of the joke, not a lesson in politeness. The Bull's answer shows the Gnat's goodbye was unnecessary.

D

Gnats are the loudest insects in the field.

The buzzing is a detail. The message is about thinking you matter more than you do.

