

PUBLISHED TEXTS

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

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

“compose literary texts such as personal narratives and poetry using genre characteristics and craft”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Published texts are real stories, poems, and books 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 text teaches or shows.

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

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

A Comeback That Teaches the Lesson

from “The Fir-Tree and the Bramble” (Aesop, 1867)

Some fables end with one character delivering a comeback so sharp it carries the entire lesson. The Fir-Tree boasts about being useful, and the Bramble replies with a warning about axes. The Bramble’s answer IS the message. This week we study how a well-crafted comeback can teach more than a long speech.

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. Listen for the Bramble’s comeback.

The Fir–Tree and the Bramble

A FIR-TREE said boastingly to the Bramble, “You are useful for nothing at all; while I am everywhere used for roofs and houses.” The Bramble answered: “You poor creature, if you would only call to mind the axes and saws which are about to hew you down, you would have reason to wish that you had grown up a Bramble, not a Fir-Tree.”

Better poverty without care, than riches with.

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 the comeback that carries the lesson."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

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Notice the comeback.

Find the Bramble's reply. How does one sentence turn the Fir-Tree's boast upside down?

Boast: "I am everywhere used for **roofs and houses."**

Comeback: "Call to mind the **axes and saws which are about to hew you down."**

I CAN | I can notice the comeback that flips the boast into a warning.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the real message.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

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Choose the message.

What does the Bramble’s comeback really teach?

A Being useful makes you a target; being overlooked keeps you safe.

B “A Fir-Tree said boastingly to the Bramble.”

C “You are useful for nothing at all.”

I CAN | I can choose the message the comeback delivers.



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how the comeback reverses the boast.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

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Show how the reversal works.

The Fir-Tree sees usefulness as a strength. The Bramble sees it as a danger. How does the comeback reverse the meaning?

Fir-Tree: used for roofs = strength

Bramble: axes how you down = the same usefulness is the danger

I CAN | I can show how the comeback turns a strength into a weakness.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a comeback that teaches a lesson.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

“compose literary texts such as personal narratives and poetry using genre characteristics and craft”

Own it. Try the craft move.

Write the comeback that turns the boast upside down.

**A shiny new car boasted to a rusty bicycle, “Everyone wants to ride in me.”
The bicycle replied:**

I CAN | I can write a comeback that flips a boast into a lesson.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend why a comeback is stronger than a lecture."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Defend the author's choice.

The Bramble could have given a long speech. Why does one sharp sentence work better?

"You would have reason to wish that you had grown up a Bramble."

One sentence. No argument needed. Why does brevity make the comeback land harder?

I CAN

I can defend why a single sharp comeback teaches more than a long speech.



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Write your own comeback fable.

Choose a character who boasts about a strength. Let another character point out the hidden danger in that strength with one sharp sentence.

Choose a character who boasts about a strength.
Let another character deliver one sharp comeback.
The comeback turns the strength into a warning.

I CAN | I can write my own fable where a comeback teaches the lesson.



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Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The Bramble says “**call to mind the axes and saws which are about to hew you down.**” One sentence turns the boast into a warning.

CHOOSE **A.** Being useful makes you a target. B and C are the boast, not the lesson.

SHOW The Fir-Tree’s usefulness is exactly what attracts the axes. The same quality that makes it proud is what will bring it down. The reversal proves the message.

OWN Answers vary. One example: The bicycle said, “**Everyone wants to ride in you, but everyone also wants to steal you. I rust in peace while you worry in your garage.**”

DEFEND A lecture gives the listener time to argue. A single comeback hits before the listener can react. Brevity is the blade.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. One example: A popular app boasted to a notebook, “Everyone uses me.” The notebook said, “**And when the battery runs out, everyone opens me.**”



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READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT · FROM “THE OXEN AND THE AXLE-TREES” (AESOP, TRANS. TOWNSEND, 1867)

“A heavy Wagon was being dragged along a country lane by a team of Oxen. The Axle-trees groaned and creaked terribly; whereupon the Oxen, turning round, thus addressed the wheels: ‘Hullo there! why do you make so much noise? We bear all the labor, and we, not you, ought to cry out.’”

What message does the author want the reader to learn?

- A** Wheels should be better oiled.
- B** Oxen are stronger than wheels.
- C** Heavy wagons should not be used on country lanes.
- D** Those who do the least work often complain the most.



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The answer is D.

A **Wheels should be better oiled.**

Oiling is a practical fix, not the message. The story is about who has the right to complain.

B **Oxen are stronger than wheels.**

The story is not comparing strength. It is comparing effort and complaining.

C **Heavy wagons should not be used on country lanes.**

The lane is the setting. The message is about the gap between effort and complaint.

D **Those who do the least work often complain the most.**

Correct.

The Axle-trees groan while the Oxen do all the pulling. The Oxen point out the injustice. The author teaches that complaining belongs to those who earn it, not to those who do nothing.

