

PUBLISHED TEXTS

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

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

“compose literary texts such as personal narratives, fiction, 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

The Lesson Learned Too Late

from “The Trees and the Axe” (Aesop, trans. George Fyler Townsend, 1867)

The Trees gave the man what he needed to cut them down. The old oak sees the mistake, but only after it is too late. The author places the lesson in a character who understands the error after the damage is done. This week we notice how a too-late realization delivers the message.

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

NOTICE • CHOOSE • SHOW • OWN • DEFEND



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Read the published text.

Read it aloud slowly. Watch for the craft move the author uses.

The Trees and the Axe

A Man came into a forest and asked the Trees to provide him a handle for his axe. The Trees consented to his request and gave him a young ash-tree. No sooner had the man fitted a new handle to his axe from it, than he began to use it and quickly felled with his strokes the noblest giants of the forest. An old oak, lamenting when too late the loss of his companions, said to a neighboring cedar, “The first step has lost us all. If we had not given up the rights of the ash, we might yet have retained our own privileges and have stood for ages.”

SOURCE

Aesop, trans. George Fyler Townsend, 1867 (Project Gutenberg #21, public domain)



PUBLISHED TEXTS

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice the moment a character realizes the mistake too late.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Notice the realization.

Read the fable. Find the sentence where the oak realizes the mistake.

“The first step has lost us all. If we had not given up the rights of the ash, we might yet have retained our own privileges and have stood for ages.”

I CAN | I can notice the moment a character realizes the mistake too late.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose the sentence that best states the author's message."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

"compose literary texts such as personal narratives, fiction, and poetry using genre characteristics and craft"

Choose the message.

Which sentence best states the author's message?

A "A Man came into a forest and asked the Trees."

B "The Trees consented to his request."

C "The first step has lost us all."

I CAN | I can choose the sentence that best states the author's message.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how the story proves the message.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

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Show how the story proves the message.

How does the Trees’ generosity lead to their downfall?

The Trees freely gave the ash. The man used it to cut them all down. Their own generosity armed the one who would use it against them.

I CAN | I can explain how the story’s details lead to the author’s message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a too-late realization.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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

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

Own it. Try the craft move.

Read the practice story. Write the sentence where a character realizes the mistake too late.

A team shared their strategy with a new member. The new member joined the other team and used the strategy against them.

I CAN | I can write a too-late realization.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can defend why a too-late realization is a stronger craft move than a warning at the start.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Defend the author’s choice.

Why is the oak’s “too late” realization more powerful than a warning at the beginning?

The narrator could have warned the Trees at the start. Why does the too-late realization hit harder?

I CAN

I can defend why a too-late realization is more powerful than an early warning.



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Write your own fable where a character realizes the mistake too late.

Show a character making a small concession. Then show how it leads to a bigger loss. End with the realization.

Show a small concession.
Show how it leads to a bigger loss.
End with the too-late realization.

I CAN | I can write my own story and use the craft move we studied all week.



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Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE “The first step has lost us all.” The oak realizes the mistake after the damage is done.

CHOOSE C. The oak names the lesson: a small concession to the wrong person can cost everything.

SHOW The Trees gave the ash freely. The man used it to cut them down. Their gift became the weapon.

OWN Answers vary. One example: **"We gave away our best idea. Now we have to face it from the other side."**

DEFEND The too-late realization lets the reader feel the loss. A warning at the start would prevent the story.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. One example: The bees let the bear taste one drop of honey. The bear came back the next day and took the whole hive. The oldest bee said, **"One taste was all he needed to know what we had."**



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

“A Fox entered the house of an actor and, rummaging through all his properties, came upon a Mask, an admirable imitation of a human head. He placed his paws on it and said, ‘What a beautiful head! Yet it is of no value, as it entirely lacks brains.’”

What message does the author want the reader to learn?

A Foxes should not enter houses.

B Actors use masks that look real.

C A beautiful outside is worthless without substance inside.

D Foxes are smarter than humans.



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The answer is C.

A **Foxes should not enter houses.**

The story is not about where foxes go. It is about valuing substance over appearance.

B **Actors use masks that look real.**

The mask is realistic, but the lesson is about what is inside, not about acting.

A beautiful outside is worthless without substance inside.

C **Correct.**

The Fox sees a beautiful mask but notes it has no brains. The author teaches that outward beauty without inner value is empty.

D **Foxes are smarter than humans.**

The Fox makes a wise observation, but the message is about appearance versus substance, not about fox intelligence.

