

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 3, Cluster 2, Module 2: Writing the Thesis (central idea) (The Trunk of the Tree)

A warm, plain language guide to what your student is learning this week, with easy ways to talk and work together at home. **Every page is in English and Spanish.**

Welcome, families. This week your student grows the trunk of the tree, the thesis (central idea) sentence that answers the prompt. A strong thesis has three parts, the important noun, the important verb, and an original answer. This packet shows you what is happening in class, the words your student is learning, the thinking tool your student uses, and simple ways to help from home. You and your student can work through it together in about ten minutes.

Ask your student to teach you the three parts of a thesis (central idea). Teaching it out loud is part of how the learning sticks.

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En español

Todo este paquete también está disponible en español.

1 Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student is learning to turn a prompt into a thesis (central idea), the trunk of the tree. The sentence includes the important noun, the important verb, and an original answer. A WHY prompt needs a reason joined with because. A HOW prompt needs a way expressed with through or by.

Our class will read "Laura Ingalls Wilder" and "Carmen Lomas Garza" at Medium stamina. Students match prompts and theses, then write their own sentences about history, culture, and everyday family life. Invite your student to name the three parts and explain which words add an answer from the passage.

With appreciation,

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR THE THREE PARTS

Ask your student to name the three parts of a thesis (central idea) and explain which words add an answer from the passage.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is learning to write a thesis (central idea), the trunk of the ECR tree. The thesis has three parts, the important noun, the important verb, and an original answer from the passage. A WHY prompt needs a reason joined with because. A HOW prompt needs a way expressed with through or by.

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to two Texas standards. Your student organizes writing with a purposeful introduction and composes an informational text with a clear central idea. In plain words, your student learns to write one clear opening sentence that answers the exact prompt and gives a reason or way.

The three parts of a thesis (central idea)



Important noun

The topic, the person, place, or thing the prompt is about



Important verb

The charge, the action the topic does



Original answer

The new idea from the passage that answers the prompt

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to name the three parts of a thesis (central idea).
- Ask which two parts can come from the prompt and which part must come from the passage.
- Ask what the original answer adds that the prompt does not say.
- Ask whether the prompt needs because or through, and why.
- Let your student write the sentence. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the answer.

3 Key Words

thesis (central idea)

the trunk of the tree, the sentence that answers the prompt

Example, Wilder's stories help readers understand history.

important noun

the topic, what the prompt is about

Example, in the thesis above, the important noun is stories.

important verb

the action the topic does

Example, in the thesis above, the important verb is help.

original answer

a new idea from the passage that answers the prompt

Example, the answer adds that the stories describe daily life.

subordinator

a joining word that begins a dependent clause, such as because

Example, because introduces the reason in a WHY thesis.

preposition

a relationship word such as through, by, or with

Example, through explains a way in a HOW thesis.

restate

to say the same thing again without adding an answer

Example, restating the prompt is not a complete thesis.

evidence

proof taken straight from the passage

Example, paragraph 4 gives proof about prairie life.

reason

why something happened or why something is true

Example, one reason is that her stories describe real life.

way

how something happens

Example, a way is through colorful paintings of family life.

tradition

a way of doing things passed down in a family or group

Example, making tamales is a family tradition.

celebration

a special event held to honor something

Example, Garza painted celebrations with her family.

Tip for writing together. When your student writes a thesis (central idea), ask what the reader still needs to learn after reading the prompt. The answer to that question is the original answer.

This week your student grows the trunk of the TREE, the thesis (central idea) sentence. The trunk holds up the whole tree, so the thesis must answer the exact prompt with three parts.

The three parts



Important noun

The topic, what the prompt is about



Important verb

The charge, what the topic does



Original answer

A new idea from the passage that answers the prompt

Which connecting word fits

Prompt type	Connecting word	What the writer adds
WHY	because	A reason that answers why
HOW	through or by	A way that answers how

The trunk holds the tree

Trunk Thesis (central idea), the sentence that answers the exact prompt.

Branches Reasons or ways grow from the thesis in the next modules.

Rule A thesis that repeats the prompt without an answer is not finished.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Ask an everyday WHY question, such as why the family reads together at night. Have your student name the important noun, the important verb, and an original answer, then write one sentence using because. Read it aloud and underline the original answer.

Answer for families. A strong sentence adds a new idea, for example, our family reads together at night because stories help us talk about our day. The original answer is that stories help the family talk.

TRACKS While reading, students also look for evidence in the passage using TRACKS, which stands for **T**ime, **R**eactions, **A**ctions, **C**haracter or **C**oncept, **K**ey **K**nowledge, and **S**cenery or **S**etting. Ask your student what TRACKS they found in this week's passages.

- Ask your student to name the three parts of a thesis (central idea).
- Ask which two parts can come from the prompt.
- Ask how the original answer adds passage information.
- Ask when because fits and when through or by fits.
- Ask your student to share a thesis (central idea) about a family memory and identify the answer it adds.

Teach the Three Parts

Invite your student to teach topic, action, and original answer. A family member asks a WHY question, the student answers with because, writes the sentence, and underlines the original answer.

Because and Through

Have your student write two family sentences, one using because and one using through. Listen as the student checks present tense and capital letters in names and explains which sentence is easier to believe.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong thesis (central idea) for this week's writing prompt. Notice the three parts working together.

Prompt. Explain why Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments.

Thesis (central idea)

Carmen Lomas Garza painted everyday family moments because she believed cultural traditions should be remembered and celebrated.

The three parts

The important noun is Carmen Lomas Garza, the important verb is painted, and the original answer is that traditions should be remembered and celebrated.

Why it works

Because joins a reason that is grounded in the passage, so the thesis answers the exact prompt with a new idea.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The thesis (central idea) has all three parts, noun, verb, and original answer.
- ☐ The sentence answers the exact prompt, not a restatement of it.
- ☐ A WHY thesis uses because, and a HOW thesis uses through or by.
- ☐ The original answer is supported by the passage.
- ☐ The sentence is complete, with a capital letter and end punctuation.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ name the three parts of a thesis (central idea)
- ☐ tell which two parts come from the prompt
- ☐ add an original answer from the passage
- ☐ choose because for WHY and through or by for HOW
- ☐ write one complete thesis (central idea) sentence

Student name

Family signature

Date

Please sign and send this page back to school with your student. The teacher will celebrate the progress together with your student.