THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC

WRITING • READING • LANGUAGE ARTS

THE STANDARDS SWEEP SERIES • A TRIPLET SET

Explanation

Third Grade

Teaching students to turn a quote into proof. The DEEP FACTS habits that make evidence mean something, one week at a time.

TEKS 11B • 12B The writing process and composition, with reading TEKS 6F for every checkpoint.

36
WEEKS PER GRADE

3
THE TRIPLET: DECK, SCRIPT, TRACKING

9
DEEP FACTS HABITS

$29
FULL TRIPLET, ALL 36 WEEKS

Where this fits: the TREES writing journey

The heart of a written response is **TREES**, and Explanation is the second E, where a student shows exactly how the evidence they chose proves the point.

T	R	E	**E**	S
Thesis	Reason or Way	Evidence	**Explanation**	Significance

You are here in the writing journey

Writing · Thesis · Introductions · Reason or Way · Evidence · **Explanation (you are here)** · Revising · Transitions · Editing · Significance · Conclusions · Argumentative

OUR PURPOSE

To make the hardest step of a written response, explaining the evidence, teachable, repeatable, and doable for every student, and to give teachers a ready path to get them there.

What it is, and why it matters

Students can often find a quote, but they freeze when it is time to say what it means. That explaining step is where the essay earns its points, and the Explanation triplet teaches it directly through Randi Whitney's **DEEP FACTS** habits.

Taught in 3rd grade · Added in 4th grade · Added in 5th grade

D Definition	**E** Example	**S** Story
F Facts & Statistics	**C** Comparison	**T** Cause & Effect
P Process	**A** Analogy	**E** Expert Testimony

The big question

OVERARCHING QUESTION

How does a student turn a quote into proof?

THE ANSWER

A student turns a quote into proof by explaining what the evidence **means** and **why it matters**, starting with the signal word THIS and growing as the year goes on.

Benefits

For teachers

- A ready to teach five minute bell ringer for every week, no prep.
- Scripted teacher versions, so you never have to be the writing expert.
- Built on the exact skill the state writing rubric rewards.
- A tracking sheet that shows growth across the thinking levels.
- Fits any curriculum, it slots beside whatever your district adopted.

For students

- A clear, repeatable way to explain, not a mystery.
- The THIS signal word gives every writer a place to start.
- Nine real tools, so there is always a way to explain any evidence.
- Practice that climbs from noticing to defending their own thinking.
- Confidence on the hardest part of the written response.

The triplet, and what it costs

Student Slide Deck
A 10 slide bell ringer that teaches one habit across the thinking levels, with a real cluster passage.

Teacher Script
The same deck with a word for word SAY and DO script, so any teacher can lead it with confidence.

Tracking Sheet
A student record that captures thinking at each level and a short written explanation of their own.

$29
for the full 36 week triplet, all three pieces

About 5 minutes a day
25 minutes a week, a true bell ringer that fits any schedule

"The goal is not to label the learner. The goal is to locate the learning."

RANDI WHITNEY

Meet the Triplets

Three Tools. One Standard. One Powerful Instructional System.

BY RANDI WHITNEY

What happens when instruction, teacher support, and student tracking are all built around the exact same TEKS? You get what we call The Triplets.

The Triplets are three intentionally connected instructional tools: the Student Slide Deck, the Teacher Slide Deck Script, and the Standards Sweep Student Tracking Sheet. Each serves a different purpose, but together they create something much bigger, a complete teaching and learning cycle centered on one specific standard.

Students see it. Teachers teach it. Students track it.

The first Triplet is the Student Slide Deck. This is where the standard comes to life for students. Instead of simply reading the TEKS or completing disconnected practice, students experience the skill through examples, questioning, discussion, modeling, guided practice, and application.

The slide deck answers a critical student question: "What does this standard actually look like when I use it?"

But strong student materials are only part of the equation. That is where the second Triplet enters: the Teacher Slide Deck Script.

Behind every student slide is intentional teacher support. The script helps teachers know what to say, what to ask, what misconceptions to watch for, and how to push student thinking further. It gives teachers instructional language without taking away their own personality or professional judgment.

In other words, the student sees the lesson, but the teacher sees the instructional thinking behind the lesson. The deck shows the learning. The script supports the teaching.

Then comes the third Triplet: the Standards Sweep Tracking Sheet. This is where students begin to see their own thinking.

The Standards Sweep gives students a place to record responses, collect evidence, monitor understanding, and notice growth connected directly to the TEKS being taught. Learning is no longer something that simply happens to students. Students become active participants in noticing what they know, what they are still developing, and where they need to go next.

Why the Triplets Matter. Too often, classroom resources live in separate worlds. The teacher guide says one thing. The student presentation emphasizes another. The tracking sheet measures something slightly different.

The Triplets eliminate that disconnect. Every component points back to the same standard, the same learning intention, and the same student thinking.

THE TRIPLET CONNECTION

Student Slide Deck
What students see, discuss, practice, and experience.

Teacher Slide Deck Script
What teachers say, ask, clarify, model, and reinforce.

Standards Sweep Tracking Sheet
What students record, reflect on, monitor, and demonstrate.

Together, they create alignment from beginning to end. Because when students know what they are learning, teachers know how to guide the learning, and both can see evidence of progress, a TEKS becomes much more than a standard printed on a page. It becomes a shared instructional destination. That is the power of the Triplets. Three connected tools. One clear target. And a classroom where teaching, learning, and evidence finally move together.

Beyond the Score

Discovering a Student's Thinking Level Through RPLDs

BY RANDI WHITNEY

A test score can tell us how many questions a student answered correctly. But it does not always tell us how the student is thinking.

That is where Range Performance Level Descriptors, or RPLDs, become so powerful.

RPLDs help educators look beyond a percentage or performance category and examine the kind of thinking a student is currently demonstrating. When paired with our Five Thinking Levels, they give teachers a much clearer picture of where a learner is, and what kind of support may help that learner move forward.

A score tells us what happened. A thinking level helps us understand why.

Our Five Thinking Levels describe a progression in the sophistication, independence, and depth of student thinking.

The journey begins with Foundational Thinking, represented by the red circle. At this level, students may be beginning to recognize the skill, identify basic information, or depend heavily on support.

Next comes Emergent Thinking, represented by the orange square. Students are developing the skill and beginning to apply it, but their thinking may still be inconsistent or incomplete.

At the Visible Thinking level, the yellow downward pointing triangle, students are beginning to make their thinking observable. They can show evidence of understanding, explain parts of their reasoning, and engage with the skill in increasingly meaningful ways.

Then comes Independent Thinking, represented by the green upward pointing triangle. Here, students can apply the skill successfully with greater consistency and less teacher support.

Finally, Reflective Thinking, represented by the blue diamond, describes students who can move beyond simply completing the task. They analyze, justify, connect, evaluate, and reflect on their own thinking.

So where do RPLDs fit? Think of RPLDs as clues to a student's cognitive address. The language within a performance descriptor can help teachers identify whether a student is beginning, developing, engaging, working independently, or demonstrating highly independent thinking. Rather than treating RPLDs as labels, we can use them as instructional predictors, evidence that helps us estimate the type of thinking a student is currently ready to demonstrate.

The goal is not to label the learner. The goal is to locate the learning.

Once teachers identify a student's current thinking level, instruction becomes more intentional. A Foundational thinker may need clearer models and concrete examples. An Emergent thinker may need guided practice and carefully chosen prompts. A Visible thinker may need opportunities to explain and defend ideas. Independent and Reflective thinkers may need greater complexity, transfer, and opportunities to justify their reasoning.

Suddenly, differentiation becomes less about giving students easier or harder work and more about providing the right cognitive next step. We stop asking only, "What score did this student earn?" and begin asking the far more useful question: "What kind of thinking is this student showing, and what will help that thinking grow?"

The standards it teaches

11(B): develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by developing an engaging idea with relevant details.

12(B): compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea.

6(F), for every checkpoint question: make inferences and use evidence to support understanding, the most heavily tested reading skill.

Student learning objective

Students will explain how a piece of text evidence supports their answer, using a DEEP FACTS habit, so their response is clear and complete.

I will statements

- I will explain what my evidence means, not just repeat it.
- I will start my explanation with the signal word THIS.
- I will choose a DEEP FACTS habit that fits my evidence.
- I will grow my explanation into higher level thinking.

Every week walks the full range (RPLDs)

Each triplet moves students up the Range Performance Level Descriptors across the week, so they are not just practicing, they are climbing from the foundational level all the way to reflective, highly independent thinking.

NOTICE	CHOOSE	SHOW	OWN	DEFEND
Foundational	**Emergent**	**Visible**	**Independent**	**Reflective**
I recognize it.	I can do it with support.	I can show my thinking.	I can do it myself.	I can defend and transfer it.

The same five step climb repeats every week, so students always know where they are and what a stronger answer looks like next.

> *"We should not continually replace the ladder. We should help students climb higher on the same one."*
>
> **RANDI WHITNEY**

Real assessment practice, every week

Comprehension Checkpoint • our own, in the TEKS 6F style

Read this part of a student's draft. (1) The king had to follow the law. (2) This means a law is a rule that everyone must obey, even a king.

Which sentence explains the evidence by telling what it means?

A. Sentence 1

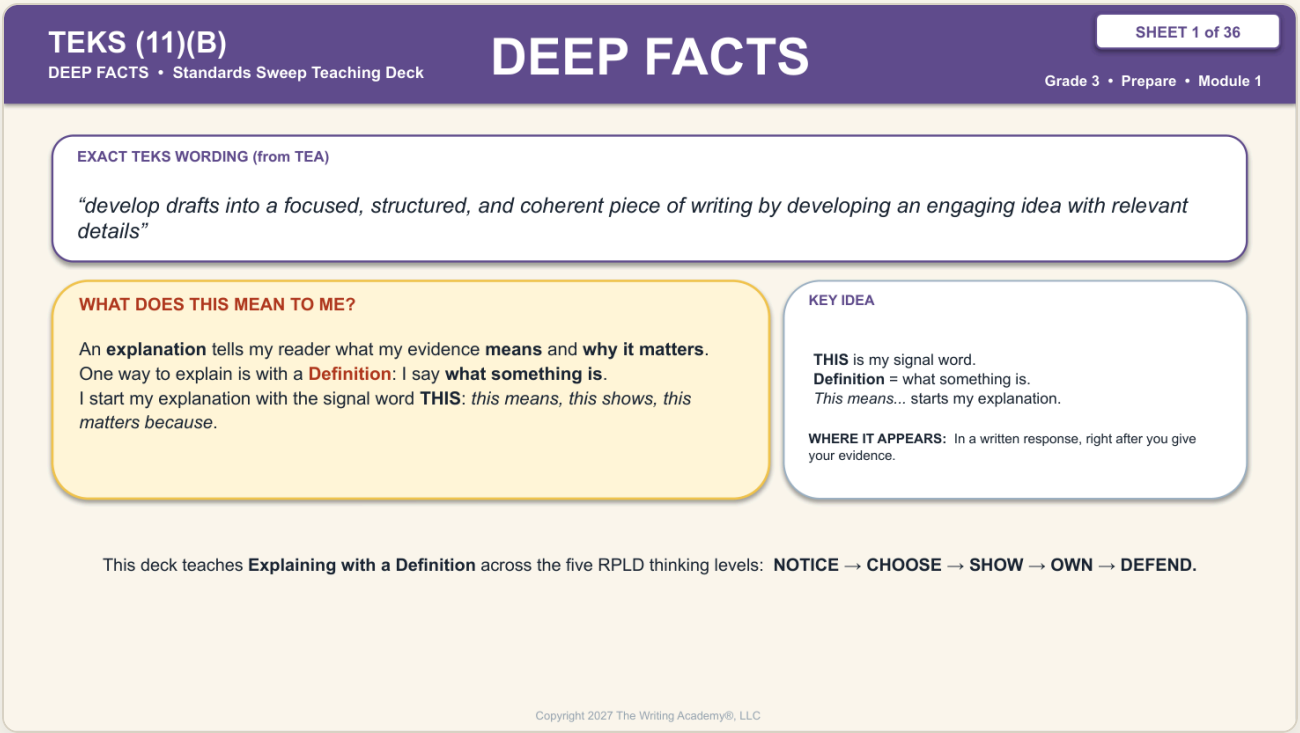
B. Sentence 2 ✓ explains with a definition

C. Both sentences

D. Neither sentence

When a question matches how the state test builds a 6F item we say so; when it is our own practice we label it a comprehension checkpoint, so teachers always know the difference.

A peek at a slide



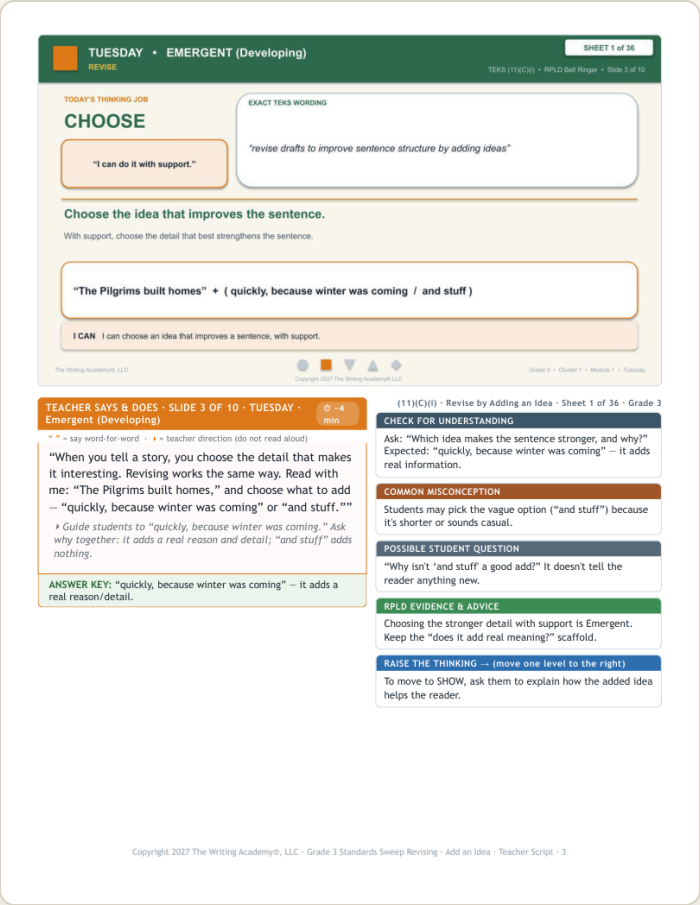
Week 1 for 3rd grade, teaching Explaining with a Definition, with TEKS 11B right on the slide.

Randi Whitney and her expert ECR team train teachers on every part of the ECR.

Ask about professional development from The Writing Academy®, LLC.

See exactly what teachers hold

Every triplet comes fully scripted and ready to track. Here is a real page so you can see the support built into each one.



TUESDAY • EMERGENT (Developing)
REVISE
SHEET 1 of 36
TEKS (11)(C)(i) • RPLD Bell Ringer • Slide 3 of 10

TODAY'S THINKING JOB
CHOOSE

"I can do it with support."

EXACT TEKS WORDING
"revise drafts to improve sentence structure by adding ideas"

Choose the idea that improves the sentence.
With support, choose the detail that best strengthens the sentence.

"The Pilgrims built homes" + (quickly, because winter was coming / and stuff)

I CAN I can choose an idea that improves a sentence, with support.

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Grade 3 • Cluster 1 • Module 1 • Tuesday

TEACHER SAYS & DOES · SLIDE 3 OF 10 · TUESDAY · Emergent (Developing) · ~4 min
" " = say word-for-word · ▸ = teacher direction (do not read aloud)

"When you tell a story, you choose the detail that makes it interesting. Revising works the same way. Read with me: "The Pilgrims built homes," and choose what to add — "quickly, because winter was coming" or "and stuff.""

▸ *Guide students to "quickly, because winter was coming." Ask why together: it adds a real reason and detail; "and stuff" adds nothing.*

ANSWER KEY: "quickly, because winter was coming" — it adds a real reason/detail.

(11)(C)(i) · Revise by Adding an Idea · Sheet 1 of 36 · Grade 3

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING
Ask: "Which idea makes the sentence stronger, and why?" Expected: "quickly, because winter was coming" — it adds real information.

COMMON MISCONCEPTION
Students may pick the vague option ("and stuff") because it's shorter or sounds casual.

POSSIBLE STUDENT QUESTION
"Why isn't 'and stuff' a good add?" It doesn't tell the reader anything new.

RPLD EVIDENCE & ADVICE
Choosing the stronger detail with support is Emergent. Keep the "does it add real meaning?" scaffold.

RAISE THE THINKING → (move one level to the right)
To move to SHOW, ask them to explain how the added idea helps the reader.

Copyright 2027 The Writing Academy®, LLC · Grade 3 Standards Sweep Revising · Add an Idea · Teacher Script · 3

A scripted page: the slide on top, the teacher script and coaching below. Format shown from our Revising triplet; every triplet, including Explanation, is built the same way.

What you are looking at

- **The SAY and DO script (left):** word for word teacher talk in quotes, plus quiet teacher directions and an answer key, timed at about five minutes.
- **The coaching column (right):** a Check for Understanding, the **Common Misconception** to watch for, a likely student question, RPLD advice, and how to raise the thinking one level.
- **The result:** any teacher, new or veteran, can lead a strong lesson with zero prep.

WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

> *"I have never had my kids be this excited about writing all my teaching career!"*
>
> **Third grade teacher, Hays ISD**

> *"It was so much fun being able to look forward to our scores instead of dreading them! The first year we earned an A, I wondered how we would show growth, but now we are in the second year of being an A campus, and those thinking charts made all the difference!"*
>
> **Principal, Mission ISD**

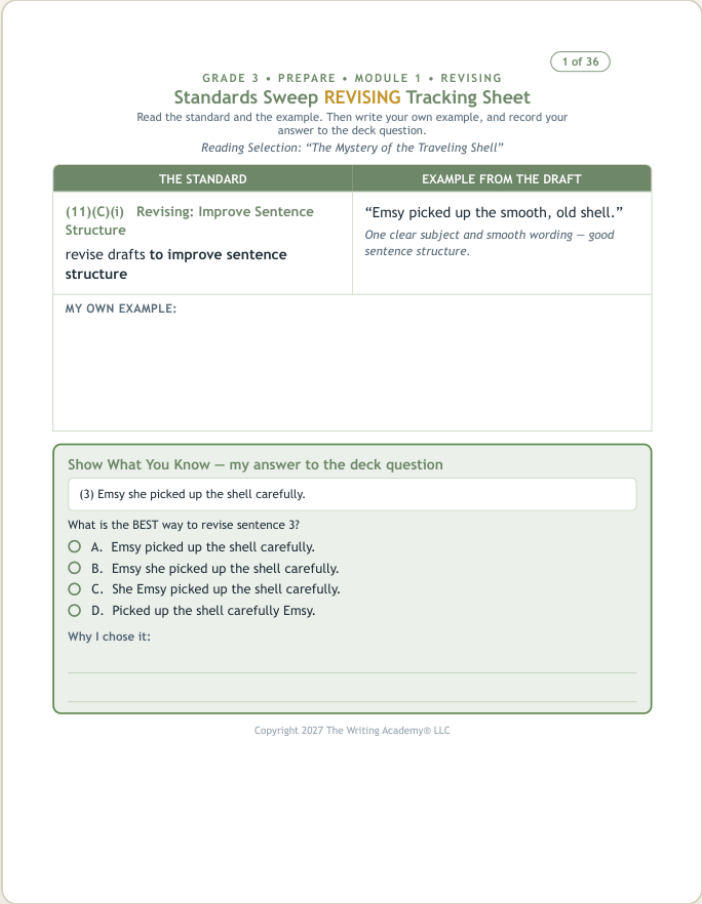
> *"I love how The Writing Academy helped us see the test as a time to Brain Brag!"*
>
> **Fourth grade teacher, Humble ISD**

"The deck shows the learning. The script supports the teaching."

RANDI WHITNEY

The tracking sheet, front and back

Students keep their own record of the thinking they build across the week, then practice defending an explanation in their own words.



1 of 36

GRADE 3 • PREPARE • MODULE 1 • REVISING

Standards Sweep REVISING Tracking Sheet

Read the standard and the example. Then write your own example, and record your answer to the deck question.

Reading Selection: "The Mystery of the Traveling Shell"

THE STANDARD	EXAMPLE FROM THE DRAFT
(11)(C)(i) Revising: Improve Sentence Structure revise drafts **to improve sentence structure**	"Emsy picked up the smooth, old shell." *One clear subject and smooth wording — good sentence structure.*
MY OWN EXAMPLE:	

Show What You Know — my answer to the deck question

(3) Emsy she picked up the shell carefully.

What is the BEST way to revise sentence 3?

- A. Emsy picked up the shell carefully.
- B. Emsy she picked up the shell carefully.
- C. She Emsy picked up the shell carefully.
- D. Picked up the shell carefully Emsy.

Why I chose it:

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Front: the student records their thinking at each level.

Week 1 of 36

GRADE 3 • PREPARE • MODULE 1 • REVISING

Guided Practice — The Five Thinking Levels

Work through all five levels. Read each thinking job, then write your answer in the box.

(11)(C)(i) Revising: Improve Sentence Structure • Reading Selection: "The Mystery of the Traveling Shell"

NOTICE Foundational

Read all three sentences. Find the ONE that does not sound smooth or clear.

(1) The shell was buried in the sand.
(2) Emsy she picked up the shell carefully.
(3) It sparkled in the sunlight.

CHOOSE Emergent

With support, choose the version that reads more smoothly.

(Emsy she picked up the shell. / Emsy picked up the shell.)

SHOW Visible

Underline the awkward part. Tell why the smoother version is better.

"The shell it was very old."

OWN Independent

Revise the awkward sentence so it reads smoothly — no word bank.

"Emsy she studied the shell."

DEFEND Reflective

Defend your revision, then write your own smooth sentence about the shell.

Explain why "Emsy studied the shell" is smoother. Then write your own clear sentence about the mystery shell.

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Back: space to practice and defend their own explanation.

> ***"Learning is no longer something that simply happens to students. They become active participants in noticing what they know."***
>
> **RANDI WHITNEY**

From Passive to Participating

Why Student Tracking Sheets Matter

BY RANDI WHITNEY

Students learn best when they are not simply sitting through instruction, but actively participating in it. That is the purpose behind our Student Tracking Sheets.

Too often, classroom instruction can become a one way street. The teacher explains. The students listen. A few students raise their hands. Everyone else watches.

Even when the lesson is excellent, passive listening makes it easy for students to drift, disconnect, or assume that learning is something the teacher is responsible for doing to them.

Student Tracking Sheets change that dynamic. They give every student a job during instruction.

As the teacher models, questions, explains, and guides the lesson, students are following along, recording their thinking, responding to prompts, collecting evidence, and making decisions about what they understand. When students have something to do with the learning, they have a reason to stay connected to it.

That matters academically, but it also matters for classroom management. Many behavior problems begin during moments when students are unsure what they should be doing. Long stretches of listening can be especially difficult for young learners. Attention wanders. Side conversations begin. Students find their own ways to fill the space.

A Student Tracking Sheet helps replace passive time with purposeful participation. Instead of asking, "Are you listening?" the teacher can ask, "What did you record?" or "Show me where you found the evidence." The conversation immediately shifts from compliance to learning.

Students also begin to develop greater discipline in their own learning. They learn to follow a lesson from beginning to end, listen for important information, record ideas, revisit their thinking, and notice when their understanding changes. Those are habits that extend far beyond one lesson or one TEKS.

Tracking Sheets also create accountability without turning every moment into a grade. Teachers can quickly see who is following the thinking, who may have misunderstood a concept, and who needs another example. Students have a visible record of what they practiced and what they learned.

Perhaps most importantly, the sheet sends students an important message:

"You are not an audience member in this classroom. You are part of the learning."

Teachers still teach. They model, explain, question, encourage, and challenge. But students are no longer expected to simply sit back and receive the information. They track it. They respond to it. They think about it. They interact with it. And over time, they begin to take greater ownership of it. That is why Student Tracking Sheets are much more than pages to complete. They are a simple way to turn a lesson from something students hear into something students actively experience.

Built to Grow

Why Great Acronyms Should Last a Lifetime

BY RANDI WHITNEY

The best instructional tools should not have an expiration date. A student should not learn one writing system at age five, abandon it in fifth grade, and then be handed an entirely different system at age fifteen. That creates unnecessary cognitive clutter.

Instead, powerful instruction gives students a framework they can grow into. That is the thinking behind strong, concept based acronyms such as TREES. The language may become more sophisticated as students grow, but the thinking underneath it should remain familiar.

A great acronym is not simply a list of boxes to check. It should represent big ideas about how thinking works.

Consider TREES. A five year old may use those concepts very simply. A fifth grader may begin developing them with stronger evidence and explanation. A fifteen year old may use the same framework to construct a sophisticated literary analysis, argument, or research response.

The vocabulary grows. The texts become more complex. The expectations become more demanding. But the thinking architecture remains stable.

That stability matters. Every time students encounter the same framework, they are not starting over. They are adding sophistication to something their brains already recognize. We should not continually replace the ladder. We should help students climb higher on the same one.

This is also why an acronym should never become a compliance exercise. If students think, "I finished T, so now I check the box and move to R," we have missed the purpose.

TREES is not a checklist. It is a way of thinking. Writers move back and forth between ideas, evidence, explanation, and significance. They reconsider their thesis. They strengthen a reason. They realize their evidence needs more explanation. They discover a deeper significance after rereading what they wrote. That is real writing.

The goal of a lasting acronym is not to simplify thinking forever. It is to give students a mental structure strong enough to hold increasingly sophisticated thinking.

Imagine the power of a student reaching high school and recognizing the same framework introduced years earlier. They do not have to ask, "What system are we using now?" Instead, they can ask the far more important question: "How deeply can I think within the system I already know?"

That is what makes an acronym powerful. Not that students can remember the letters, but that, years later, the letters still help them remember how to think.

TREES, ONE FRAMEWORK THAT GROWS

T • Thesis or Central Idea
What am I really trying to say?

R • Reasonable Way
What is one logical reason, way, or path that supports that idea?

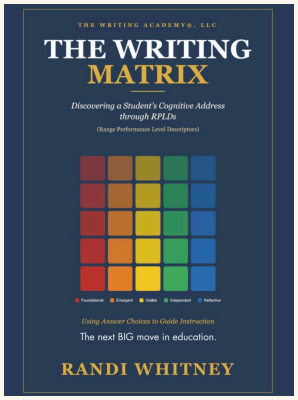
E1 • Evidence
What can I show, cite, describe, or point to that supports my thinking?

E2 • Explanation
How does that evidence connect back to my idea?

S • Significance
Why does this matter, and how does it connect to a larger idea or a lesson learned?

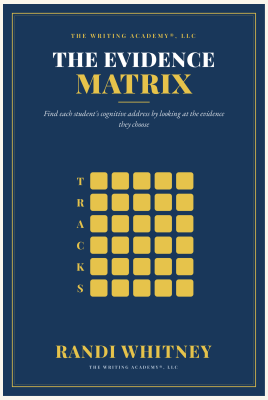
The Teach BIG library of books

Randi Whitney's books put the whole system on your shelf. Each one turns a piece of the writing process into something you can see, teach, and track.



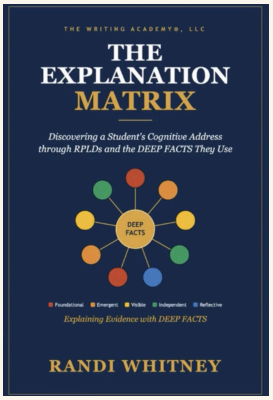
The Writing Matrix

The anchor book. Every student's cognitive address across the writing process.



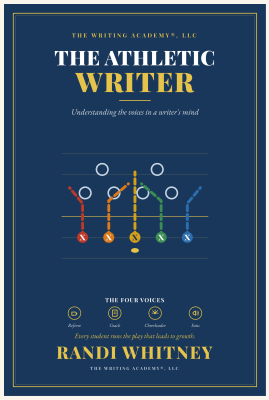
The Evidence Matrix

Find each student's thinking by the evidence they choose, the TRACKS.



The Explanation Matrix

The DEEP FACTS habits that turn a quote into proof.

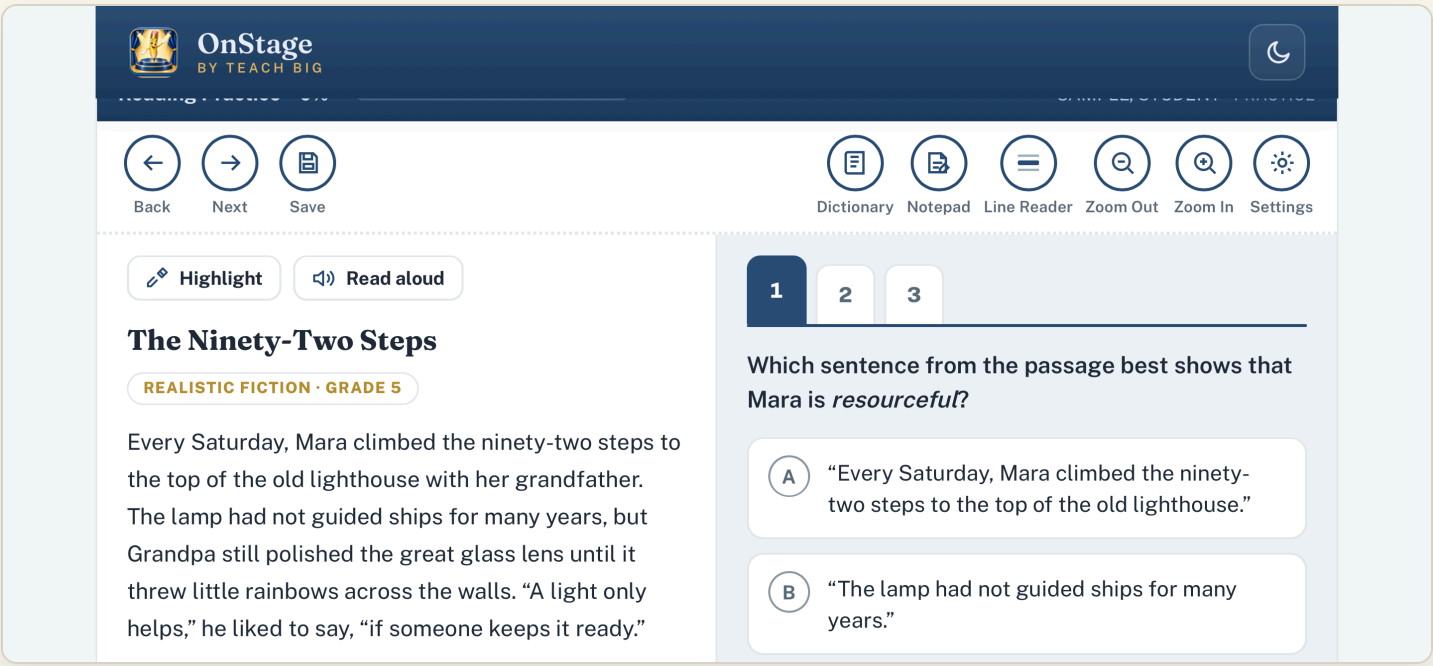


The Athletic Writer

The four voices every writer learns to hear and use.

The OnStage assessment platform

Real assessment practice online, with both a teacher view and a student view, so students rehearse the exact item styles they will meet on the state test.



The student assessment view: a real passage with test style questions, plus read aloud, highlight, and line reader tools built in.

The companion apps

Six apps that put the program in your pocket, from planning a lesson to bringing families into the learning.

Sidekick
Your classroom co-teacher

Internalization Companion
Own the lesson before you teach

TEKS Companion
Standards at your fingertips

Academic Vocabulary Companion
The words that unlock content

Conference Companion
Better writing conferences

Parent Companion
Bring families into the learning

And more from The Writing Academy®, LLC

The daily program that surrounds every triplet, all built on the same cluster passages at each grade.

- Writing Process Song Collection
- Daily Teacher Lesson Plans
- Interactive Student Workbooks

See it all at teachbig.com
Scan to explore the full catalog, samples, and pricing.

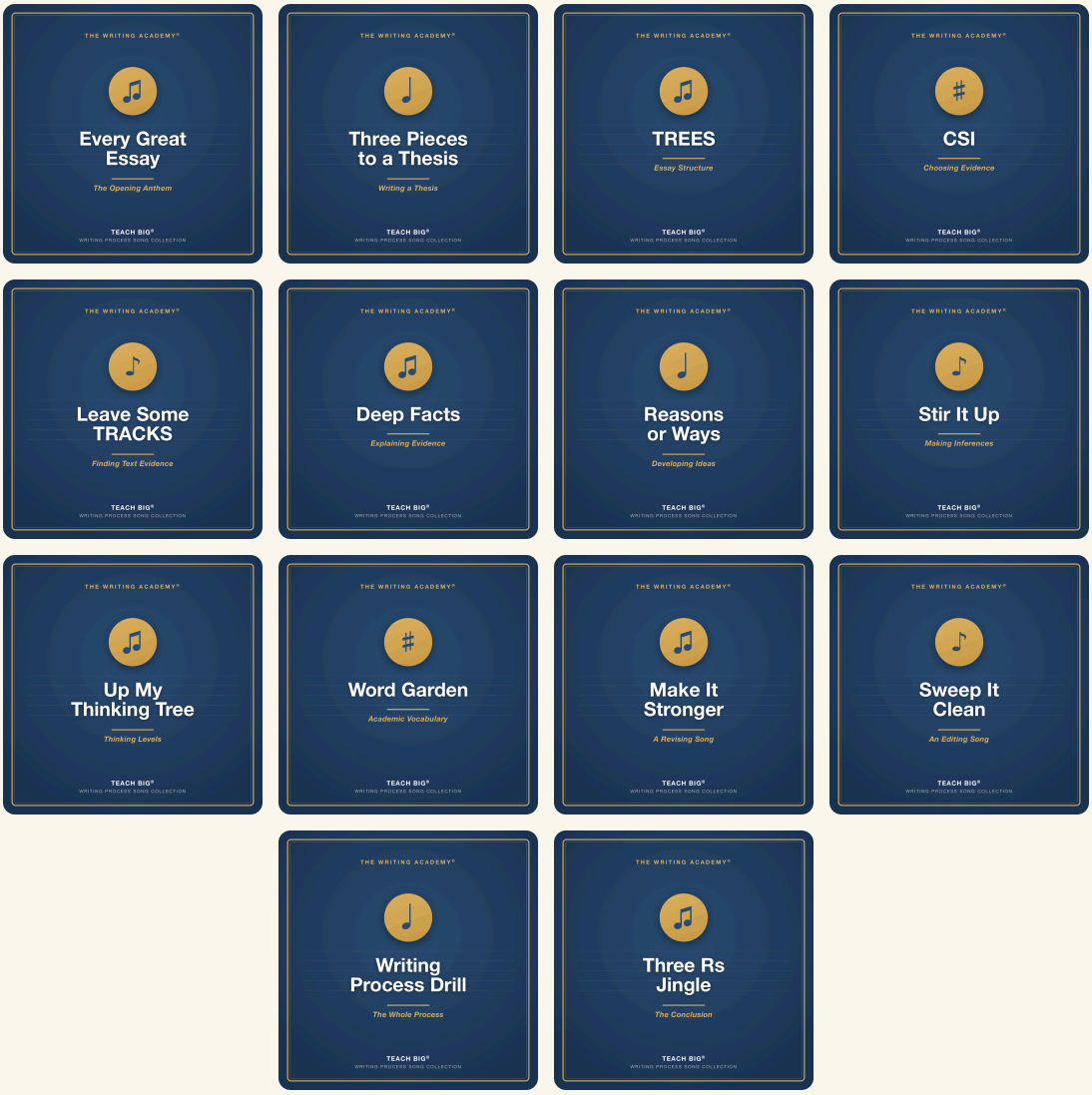
FROM THE ACADEMY

One system, many doors

Whether a teacher starts with a single triplet, a book, or the whole daily program, everything points the same direction. The passages match, the language matches, and the thinking students build in a five minute bell ringer is the very thinking the books, the apps, and the OnStage platform reinforce. Start anywhere, and it all works together.

The Writing Process Song Collection

Fourteen original songs that turn the whole writing process into music students remember. Each one matches a piece of the program, from the opening anthem to the conclusion jingle, and they pair perfectly with the slide decks and lesson plans.



All fourteen covers in the collection.

$1.99

per single song

$19

the whole 14 song collection

Play them, sing them, and watch the writing process stick.

A song for every step, from the first draft to the final proofread.

What is included, and what it costs

The Writing Academy®, LLC is a supplemental support system for writing the ECR. Districts, schools, and teachers can buy everything as a whole or piece by piece. Our materials are threaded together with the same science and social studies passages at each grade, yet they work beautifully on their own or in tandem for a fuller ECR approach.

BUILT TO WORK TOGETHER

Every slide deck, daily lesson plan, and interactive student workbook is built around the same cluster passages at each grade level, and those passages come straight from that grade's social studies and science TEKS content.

A full year, done for you. For 3rd grade alone: **2,716 pages** of daily plans, **2,270 pages** of student workbooks, and **652 teaching slides**. (4th grade: 2,279 plan pages, 2,400 workbook pages. 5th grade: 2,467 and 2,611.)

Everything for one classroom of 25 students

$3,190

The full daily program, all printed, one classroom of 25

$995

The full daily program, all digital, one classroom of 25

Going digital saves about $2,195 for a full classroom.

That is about **22 cents per student each day** for the full digital program, a whole year of daily writing instruction.

What the classroom total covers

- ✓ Teacher Daily Lesson Plans, a full year
- ✓ Daily Classroom Slide Decks
- ✓ The Writing Process Song Collection
- ✓ Interactive Student Workbooks for 25 students
- ✓ All twelve Standards Sweep triplets
- ✓ The same passages threaded through every piece

The Matrix book library, the OnStage platform, and the companion apps are each priced on their own, so a class set never looks inflated. Add them whenever you are ready.

The Writing Academy®, LLC

ORDER FORM

Writing • Reading • Language Arts • teachbig.com

The Matrix Book Library • $29 each, purchased on their own

☐ The Writing Matrix	$29
☐ The Evidence Matrix	$29
☐ The Explanation Matrix	$29
☐ The Athletic Writer	$29

The Daily Program* • choose printed or digital, per grade

Teacher Daily Lesson Plans	☐ Digital $79	☐ Printed, 9 volumes $249
Student Interactive Workbook	☐ Digital $18 per student	☐ Printed, 9 volumes $99 per student
Daily Classroom Slide Decks		☐ $99

My grade: ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th

The Standards Sweep Daily Decks • $29 each triplet, any grade

Triplet	3	4	5	Triplet	3	4	5
Writing	☐	☐	☐	Revising	☐	☐	☐
Thesis	☐	☐	☐	Transitions	☐	☐	☐
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