

The Trait Crate®

TEACHING IDEAS

USING *Tulip Sees America*

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New York • Toronto • London • Auckland • Sydney
Mexico City • New Delhi • Hong Kong • Buenos Aires

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The Trait Crate® Teaching Ideas: Grade 2 © Ruth Culham, Scholastic Teaching Resources

Teaching Ideas Using *Tulip Sees America*



Tulip Sees America

Cynthia Rylant, Author

Lisa Desimini, Illustrator

Three Lessons on the Ideas Trait

Finding the Right Topic,
page 3

Using Good, Descriptive
Details, page 8

Making the Content Clear,
page 12

As a young man and his dog drive across the West, they experience the beauty and unique qualities of states along the way. The farms of Iowa, the skies of Nebraska, the deserts of Nevada, and other natural wonders that captivate the characters as they stop to savor each one. Finally, they discover the shoreline of Oregon—the end of the continent—where they decide to stay.

In this series of lessons, second-grade students write their own descriptive passages about places they have been or would like to go. Following the format of Rylant and Desimini’s book, they use details that make their chosen places feel real to the reader.

Ideas: A Definition for Primary Students

The ideas trait is about the writing’s overall message and meaning. It is about the content of the writing. Ideas are strong when they are clear and focused, and move from the general to the specific. Though their texts may not be lengthy, young writers convey ideas by doing the following:

- drawing pictures with bold lines and lots of color
- experimenting with letters and words
- captioning pictures they create themselves and gather from sources
- talking about what happened to them or their characters
- asking questions and making lists about things that interest them
- noticing the significance of little things and events

Sing-Along Trait Songs

Use the “Ideas Song” from the Trait Crate’s poster pack and CD to help students understand the trait. Display the ideas poster for the whole class to see and, as you play the song, consider:

- singing along to the vocal or instrumental track, following the lyrics on the poster as you go.
- adding hand motions to accompany the lyrics and reinforce key concepts.
- writing a new stanza to the song, posting it on a chart, and singing along to the instrumental track.



LESSON #1: Finding the Right Topic

Materials:

- a copy of *Tulip Sees America*
- U.S. and world maps
- removable stickers
- overhead transparency of “Key Qualities of the Ideas Trait” (page 5)
- clipboards
- “_____ Sees _____” printable (page 6)
- overhead transparency of “Think About: Finding the Right Topic” (page 7)
- paper, pencils, pens

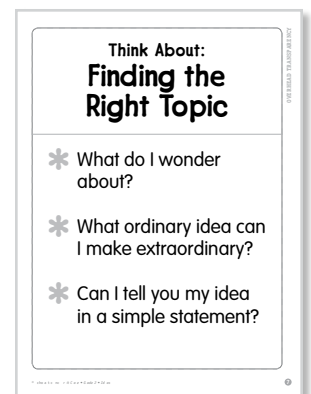
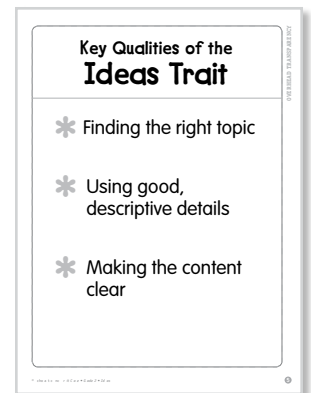
What to Do:

1. Explain to students that they will be listening to a book and then writing their own pieces, using some of the ideas from the book.
2. Display the overhead “Key Qualities of the Ideas Trait” and discuss how books such as the one you will be reading can inspire ideas for writing.
3. Read *Tulip Sees America* to students, showing the pictures as you go.
4. Ask students to explain the idea of the book in a sentence, such as “A man and his dog travel by car across the country and find something new and special in every state.”
5. Compose a list of the places students have visited. On the U.S. and the world maps, put a removable sticker on each place that students mention. If students have not traveled, put a sticker on your hometown. Tell students they can write about their hometown, a place they have visited, or a place they would like to visit.
6. Display the overhead “Think About: Finding the Right Topic.” Ask students to pick a favorite place to which they have traveled and talk about it with a partner, emphasizing what they liked about it. Ask them to recall aloud what the place looked like and what they might see if they traveled there again.
7. Reread *Tulip Sees America*, pausing to show how Rylant highlights one important fact—or main idea—about each state: the weather, the terrain, or the location. Point out how she clarifies these ideas by using good, descriptive details.
8. Put students into pairs and ask them to help each other pick one fact about their chosen places, which will be the main idea for their writing. Tell them they will be writing details about those places. At the board or on the overhead, model what they will be doing along these lines:

Desert (place)

- *stiflingly hot (detail)*
- *prickly cactus (detail)*
- *hundreds of blowing tumbleweeds (detail)*

Using the clipboards and working with their partners, ask students to brainstorm as many details as possible about their places.



Key Qualities of the Ideas Trait

- * Finding the right topic
- * Using good,
descriptive details
- * Making the content
clear

Name _____ Date _____

Sees

Fact #1: _____

Detail about fact #1: _____

Fact #2: _____

Detail about fact #2: _____

Second detail about fact #2: _____

Return to fact #1: _____

Share this scoring guide with students to establish a common language about writing and to help them look at their work for strengths and weaknesses.

My First Scoring Guide

Ideas



<p>Strong</p>	<p>I've Got It!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* I know A LOT about this topic.* My writing is bursting with fascinating details.* I've picked a topic small enough to handle.
<p>Developing</p>	<p>On My Way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* I know enough to get a good start.* Some of my details are too general.* My topic might be a little too big.
<p>Beginning</p>	<p>Just Beginning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* I haven't figured out what to say.* The details aren't clear.* I'm still thinking and looking for a topic.