

Because of an Acorn - Tracing Cause and Effect

TEACHES - COMPLETE STANDARD MATCH

RI.2.3

Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

Why this is a full match

Students build and explain a continuous causal chain of connected scientific ideas, verifying each connection in the book.

Source

Maryland State Department of Education - 2025 Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts [https://](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/ELA/index.aspx)

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Regional standards page 1

ELA SKILL LESSON • GRADE 2

Because of an Acorn

Tracing Cause and Effect

TIME	30 minutes full · 15 minutes short
PRIMARY SKILL	Trace cause and effect across a sequence
OBJECTIVE	Build an accurate causal chain and explain how the repeated words “Because of...” signal a causal connection.

STUDENT	A continuous cause-and-effect chain with at least six supported arrows and one explained link.
EVIDENCE	
ESSENTIAL	How does the repeated “Because of...” language connect the parts of nature?
QUESTION	

Before teaching

Read or play the complete book before the timed lesson. Keep the book available so every arrow can be checked against the text rather than general science knowledge.

Materials:	The book; chain cards or Student Evidence page; pencil.
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Mark these moments: acorn -> tree -> bird -> seed · seed -> flower -> fruit · fruit -> chipmunk -> snake -> hawk · later return to the acorn

Lesson sequence

TIME	TEACHING MOVE
4 min	Name the relationship Define cause and effect. Explain that order alone is not enough; an arrow means one part helps make the next possible.
5 min	Model one link Use acorn -> tree. Read the repeated phrase and explain why this is a causal link rather than just the next item.
8 min	Build the middle Place bird, seed, flower, fruit and continue the chain. Require students to verify each transition in the book.
8 min	Complete a continuous chain Continue through chipmunk, snake and hawk. Do not restart the chain at a new row; every box connects to the next.
5 min	Explain one arrow Choose one link and explain it in a complete “Because of...” sentence.

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Access routes

SOLO	Reread the marked sequence, build the full continuous chain, and explain one selected arrow.
SUPPORTED	Follow narration/highlighting. Pause at each “Because of...” signal; place the named item and restate the linked pair.
LISTENING	Listen and watch the illustrations. Choose from teacher-read card options at each pause; replay uncertain transitions and state each pair orally.
EXTEND	Identify where a merely chronological arrow would be tempting and explain why the book supports a causal link instead.

Teacher guidance

Do not let students substitute a plausible food chain for the book’s actual chain. The repeated phrase is evidence, but each relationship still has to be verified on the page.

Accuracy note: The later acorn reference reinforces the connected pattern; do not overstate its exact page position or call it the final page unless verified.

Assessment

- Builds at least six consecutive, connected arrows.
- Keeps the book order accurate.
- Explains that “Because of...” signals a reason or causal connection.
- Explains one arrow with evidence from the book.
- Does not confuse sequence alone with causation.

Short route · 15 minutes 3 min - model acorn -> tree. 8 min - build at least six continuous arrows. 4 min - explain one arrow and verify it in the book.

STUDENT EVIDENCE · GRADE 2 Because of an Acorn One Continuous Chain			
Name _____ _____ _____ Date _____ _____ Follow the arrows: 1 -> 2 -> 3 -> 4 -> 5, then down to 6 and back across to 9. Every box connects to the next.			
1 2 3 4 -> -> ->	->	5	
			v
9 8 7 <- <-	<-	6	
EXPLAIN ONE ARROW			
Because of the _____, the _____. This shows _____ _____ _____.			
EXIT CHECK Order is not enough for cause and effect because ____ _____ _____ _____.			

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Strong response

A supported chain follows the book: acorn -> tree -> bird -> seed -> flower -> fruit -> chipmunk -> snake -> hawk, followed later by another acorn reference. The exact student chain may stop after six or more links, but it must remain continuous and every transition must be supported by the book.

Expected evidence

- “Because of...” signals a reason or causal relationship.
- A causal arrow means more than “this came next.”
- Any six-or-more continuous links from the reviewed sequence can demonstrate success if they are accurate.

Watch for

- Three separate mini-chains instead of one continuous chain.
- A scientifically plausible relationship that the book does not actually state or show.

Independent success

The student builds six or more continuous, supported links and can explain at least one causal relationship in a complete sentence.