

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 3, Cluster 1, Module 1: Shaping the Prompt

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 becomes a question detective. Before writing a single word, students learn to read a question like a detective and figure out exactly what it is asking. 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 what they learned. 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 becomes a question detective. We are learning a skill called Shaping the Prompt, or Cracking the SCR Question Code. Students read a question and look for three parts. They circle the main noun in red, box the verb in yellow, and triangle the clue word in green. That tells them whether the question asks WHAT, WHY, or HOW. While reading, students also place a small dot above any word they are not sure about, so they can learn that word as they go.

This week we read two passages, "The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth" and "Life Along the Nile River." Students use these passages to plan a first draft and write exactly three sentences, a thesis (central idea), one piece of text evidence, and an explanation.

I am excited about your student's growth as a writer. Please ask your student for a demonstration of the three shapes, a red circle, a yellow box, and a green triangle. Understanding WHAT, WHY, or HOW also helps students answer questions in every subject, not just writing.

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to show you the three shapes on any question, then explain what each shape means. If your student can teach it, the skill is sticking.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is learning to understand a question before answering it. A question has three parts to find, the main noun, the action verb, and the clue word. The clue word tells the thinking the question needs, WHAT, WHY, or HOW. When students can name the question type, they know exactly what kind of answer to write.

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to two Texas standards. Your student plans a first draft by choosing a genre for the topic, purpose, and audience. Your student also composes a short informational text with a clear central idea. In plain words, your student learns to plan before writing and to keep one clear main idea through a short answer.

The three shapes your student uses



Red circle

The main noun, the topic the question is about



Yellow box

The verb, the action the question asks for



Green triangle

The clue word, WHAT, WHY, or HOW

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to teach you the three shapes. Explaining it out loud is part of how the skill sticks.
- Ask your student to show you a marked prompt and explain why each shape sits where it does.
- Ask what the question is really asking, WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Let your student name it and give the reason.
- If your student is stuck, ask about the clue word first. Ask which word signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
- Let your student write the answer. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the answer.

prompt

the question or task to answer

Example, Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth as their settlement?

noun

a person, place, or thing

Example, in the prompt above, the noun to circle is Pilgrims.

verb

an action word

Example, in the prompt above, the verb to box is choose.

clue word

a word that signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW

Example, in the prompt above, the clue word to triangle is Why.

question type

whether a question asks WHAT, WHY, or HOW

Example, Why asks for a reason, so the type is WHY.

evidence

a fact from the passage that supports an answer

Example, winter was coming is a piece of evidence from the passage.

thesis (central idea)

one sentence that answers the exact prompt

Example, the Pilgrims needed to build shelters quickly because winter was coming.

explanation

one sentence that explains how the evidence answers the prompt

Example, without shelter, the Pilgrims could not survive the cold.

shelter

something built to protect people from the weather

Example, the Pilgrims built shelters before winter.

harbor

a safe place near land where ships can anchor

Example, the harbor let their ship anchor safely.

soil

the top layer of earth where plants grow

Example, rich soil helped farmers grow crops.

floodwaters

water that spills over a river's banks when it rises

Example, floodwaters left rich soil behind.

Tip for reading together. When a new word appears in a passage, pause and let your student use the sentence around it to figure out the meaning before you explain. Naming the guess out loud builds confidence.

4 Our Thinking Tool

This week your student uses one main thinking tool, called Cracking the SCR Question Code. It has two parts, the three shapes that read the question and the SCR ladder that builds the answer.

The three shapes



Red circle

The noun (topic), the who or what the question is about



Yellow box

The verb (action), what the question asks the writer to do



Green triangle

The clue word, which signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW

The three question types

Thinking type	Clue words	What the writer explains
WHAT	What, identify, describe	Names or describes information from the passage
WHY	Why, reason, cause	Gives a reason or cause, often using because
HOW	How, process, method	Explains a process or the way something happened

The SCR ladder

Step 1 Thesis (central idea), one sentence that answers the exact prompt.

Step 2 Evidence, one sentence that gives text evidence supporting the answer.

Step 3 Explanation, one sentence that explains how the evidence answers the prompt.

The full answer is exactly three sentences, with no introduction or conclusion added.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this question from class, *How does the Nile River help farmers grow their crops?* Have your student circle the noun in red (Nile River), box the verb in yellow (help), and triangle the clue word in green (How). Then ask your student to name the question type and give the reason.

Answer for families. The noun is Nile River, the verb is help, the clue word is How, and the question type is HOW, because it asks for a process.

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 show you a marked prompt and explain each shape.
- Ask your student to teach you the difference between WHY and HOW.
- Talk together about why the Pilgrims chose Plymouth.
- Talk together about how the Nile River helped farmers grow crops.
- Ask which part of understanding a question feels hardest.

Mark the Question

Ask an everyday question, such as why the family went to the store that morning. Have your student name the noun, verb, clue word, and question type aloud. Two minutes and no paper are needed.

Question Detective at Dinner

At dinner, take turns asking WHAT, WHY, and HOW questions about the day. Have your student identify the clue word each time.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong answer to this week's writing prompt. Each of the three sentences has its own job.

Prompt. Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly?

Thesis (central idea)

The Pilgrims needed to build shelters quickly because winter was coming.

Evidence

The passage says winter was coming and they needed to begin building shelters.

Explanation

Without shelter, the Pilgrims could not survive the cold, so building quickly kept them safe.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ All three shapes appear on the prompt, and each mark sits on the correct word.
- ☐ The student names WHAT, WHY, or HOW and gives the clue word as the reason.
- ☐ The answer has exactly three sentences, a thesis (central idea), evidence, and an explanation.
- ☐ The first sentence answers the exact prompt.
- ☐ The evidence supports the answer, and the explanation shows how the evidence connects.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ find the main noun a question is about
- ☐ find the action verb the question asks for
- ☐ find the clue word and name WHAT, WHY, or HOW
- ☐ explain what a question is asking in my own words
- ☐ choose one piece of evidence from the passage
- ☐ write exactly three sentences, a thesis (central idea), evidence, and an explanation

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.