

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 4, Cluster 3, Module 1: Your First Full TREES Response

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 writes a first full informative response using TREES, the thinking tool with five parts, Thesis (central idea), Reasons or Ways, Evidence, Explanation, and Significant Inferencing, or why the idea matters. Students read a poem and a drama and connect both texts in one clear response. 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.

Ask your student to teach you what they learned. Teaching it out loud is part of how the learning sticks.

Inside this packet

1 Family Letter

A note from the classroom about the week's learning.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill and standard in plain words, plus how to help.

3 Key Words

This week's words with student friendly meanings and examples.

4 Our Thinking Tool

The organizer students use, with a mini version for home.

5 Conversation Starters and a Family Activity

Easy ways to talk about the week's learning.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

A short model and a checklist to see progress.

7 Progress at Home

A my student can checklist to sign and send back.

En español

Todo este paquete también está disponible en español.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student is beginning Grade 4 Cluster 3, the informative extended response across poetry and drama. Your student will write a first full informative response using TREES, Thesis (central idea), Reasons or Ways, Evidence from the text, Explanation, and Significant Inferencing, or why the idea matters.

We will read the poem A Lone Star Choice, about Texas's decision to join the United States, and the drama Making It Happen, about how ideas gain the support they need to become real. Your student will connect both texts in one clear response.

Ask your student, What decision was made, or what support was needed, and what happened because of it? I am excited to see your student's first full TREES response.

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR THE FIVE PARTS

Ask your student to name the five TREES parts and show where each one appears in a response. If your student can teach TREES, the skill is sticking.

Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is writing a first full informative response using TREES. TREES stands for Thesis (central idea), Reasons or Ways, Evidence, Explanation, and Significant Inferencing. Students learn that conflict is not always fighting, it can be a decision or a need for support. In the poem, Texas faces a decision about joining the United States. In the drama, people need support to turn ideas into real outcomes.

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to Texas standards for writing. Your student develops an engaging idea with relevant details and composes an informational text with a clear central idea, genre characteristics, and craft. In plain words, your student connects evidence from a poem and a drama around one clear main idea and explains why the idea matters.

The TREES thinking tool

Part	What it does
T, Thesis (central idea)	The main idea that connects both texts
R, Reasons or Ways	The ideas that tell WHY or HOW the thesis (central idea) is true
E, Evidence	Exact proof from the text
E, Explanation	The writer's thinking about what the evidence means
S, Significant Inferencing	Why the idea matters

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to name the five TREES parts.
- Ask how the thesis (central idea) connects both texts.
- Ask which exact words from the text prove a reason.
- Ask why the idea matters beyond the response.
- Let your student do the explaining. Teaching it out loud is part of how the skill sticks.

Key Words

TREES

the thinking tool with five parts, Thesis (central idea), Reasons or Ways, Evidence, Explanation, and Significant Inferencing

Example, TREES helps the writer build a full informative response.

thesis (central idea)

the clear central idea a response will prove

Example, both the poem and the drama show that decisions and support shape outcomes.

reasons or ways

the ideas that tell WHY or HOW the thesis (central idea) is true

Example, decisions can change the future.

evidence

proof from the text

Example, Texas joined the U.S., a choice that stayed.

explanation

the writer's thinking about what the evidence means

Example, this shows cause and effect because the decision led to war and change.

significant inferencing

figuring out why an idea matters

Example, decisions and support can turn ideas into real outcomes.

conflict

a problem, a decision, or a need for support

Example, in the poem the conflict is a big decision.

decision

a choice that leads to a result

Example, Texas made a decision about joining the United States.

support

help that makes growth possible

Example, banks help people turn ideas into businesses.

outcome

the result of a decision or event

Example, the outcome changed Texas's future.

patron

a wealthy person who supports an artist or an idea

Example, patrons once supported artists.

DEEP FACTS

ways to explain evidence, such as definition, example, process, analogy, and story

Example, an example explains what the evidence means.

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.

Our Thinking Tool

This week your student uses TREES to build a full informative response from two genres, a poem and a drama. TREES has five parts, and every part has its own job.

The five parts of TREES

Part	What it does
T, Thesis (central idea)	The main idea that connects both texts
R, Reasons or Ways	The ideas that tell WHY or HOW the thesis (central idea) is true
E, Evidence	Exact proof from the text
E, Explanation	The writer's thinking about what the evidence means
S, Significant Inferencing	Why the idea matters

Explaining evidence with DEEP FACTS

Definition, tell what an idea means. **Example and illustration**, show what the idea looks like. **Expert testimony**, share what someone with knowledge says. **Process or step-by-step**, explain how something works. **Analogy**, compare the idea to something familiar.
A strong response explains evidence with at least two DEEP FACTS types.

Students also test their evidence with CSI, which stands for Cite, Say what it means, and Illustrate or Impact. Ask your student to say what a piece of evidence means and to illustrate its impact.

Building a TREES response in steps

Step 1 Write a thesis (central idea) that connects both texts. **Step 2** Grow two reasons or ways. **Step 3** Choose exact evidence for each reason. **Step 4** Explain the evidence with DEEP FACTS. **Step 5** End with significant inferencing, why the idea matters.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Talk about a decision your family made, such as where to go on a trip. Have your student name the decision, one reason for it, one thing that changed because of it, and why the outcome mattered. That is a mini TREES in conversation.

Answer for families. The decision is the topic, the reason tells WHY it was made, the detail is the evidence, the sentence about what changed is the explanation, and the why it mattered sentence is the significant inferencing.

TRACKS While reading, students use TRACKS, which stands for **Time, Reactions, Actions, Character or Concept, Key Knowledge, and Scenery or Setting**, to find details from both texts. Ask your student what TRACKS they found in the poem and the drama.

- What are the five parts of TREES, and why does a full response need each one?
- What is the difference between evidence and explanation?
- What does it mean to ask, Why does this matter?
- Which text did you find more interesting, the poem or the drama, and why?
- What decision or need for support shaped an outcome in one of the texts?

A Big Decision

Talk about a decision your family once made. Name the decision, one reason for it, and one thing that changed because of it. Ask what the outcome was and why it mattered.

Who Helped?

Think of a time someone needed help to start something. Ask who gave the support and what became possible because of it. Connect the answer to the drama's idea that support helps ideas grow.

What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong response to this week's writing prompt. Each part has its own job.

Prompt. Explain how decisions and support shape outcomes in both texts.

Thesis (central idea)

Both the poem and the drama show that decisions and support shape outcomes.

Reasons or Ways

Decisions can change the future. Support helps ideas grow.

Evidence

Texas joined the U.S., a choice that stayed, shows cause and effect because the decision led to war and change. Banks help people turn ideas into businesses, shows that support makes a new outcome possible.

Explanation

Support is like giving someone tools to build something new.

Significant inferencing

Decisions and support can turn ideas into real outcomes that affect people's lives.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The thesis (central idea) connects both the poem and the drama.
- ☐ Two reasons or ways support the thesis (central idea).
- ☐ Evidence is exact words from the texts.
- ☐ The explanation uses at least two DEEP FACTS types.
- ☐ Significant inferencing states why the idea matters.

Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ name all five TREES parts
- ☐ write a thesis (central idea) that connects both texts
- ☐ give two reasons or ways
- ☐ choose exact evidence from the text
- ☐ explain evidence with DEEP FACTS
- ☐ write significant inferencing that states why the idea matters

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.