

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 4, Cluster 6, Module 1: If You Have to Decide, Declare the Why

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 learns to shape a writing prompt by circling important nouns, boxing the important verb, and drawing a triangle around the clue word WHY or HOW. Students will find the problem or conflict in a text and write a complete thesis (central idea) that answers the exact prompt.

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 is learning to shape a writing prompt by circling important nouns, boxing the important verb, and drawing a triangle around the clue word WHY or HOW. WHY asks for reasons; HOW asks for a way something happened. Your student will find the problem or conflict in a text and write a complete thesis (central idea) that answers the exact prompt.

We will read the informational passage "A Day That Changed" and the informational passage "Understanding the Texas Regions." Students will use the conflicts in these texts to guide their thinking about regions, fairness, safety, and discovery. Ask your student to show the three prompt shapes, explain WHY or HOW, and share a thesis (central idea).

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

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ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to show you the three prompt 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 shape a prompt, decide whether it asks WHY or HOW, identify the conflict, and write a thesis (central idea) that matches the prompt and connects to reasons, evidence, and explanation.

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to Texas standards. Your student plans a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience. Your student also composes argumentative texts using genre characteristics. In plain words, your student learns to plan before writing and to make a clear claim that answers the prompt.

The color map your student uses



Circle

Important nouns, the topics the question is about



Box

The important verb, the action the question asks for



Triangle

The clue word, 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, 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 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, Explain WHY the Texas regions are important.

clue word

a word that signals WHY or HOW

Example, WHY asks for reasons and HOW asks for a way something happened.

thesis (central idea)

one sentence that answers the exact prompt

Example, the Texas regions are important because each one contributes something unique.

conflict

the problem or challenge in a text

Example, Jayden faced a conflict when the weather changed suddenly.

claim

the position the writer will support

Example, all four Texas regions should be valued.

argument

a claim supported by reasons and evidence

Example, an argumentative ECR uses CREATURES to organize the parts.

because

a word that introduces a reason

Example, the regions are valuable because each contributes distinct features.

regions

areas of land with distinct features

Example, Texas has four regions with different landforms and resources.

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

The three shapes



Circle

Important nouns, the topics the question is about



Box

The important verb, the action the question asks for



Triangle

The clue word, WHY or HOW

WHY and HOW

Clue word	What it asks for	Thesis includes
WHY	Reasons	A reason using because
HOW	A way something happened	A way using by or through

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this question from class, *Why are the Texas regions important?* Have your student circle the important nouns (Texas regions), box the important verb (are), and triangle the clue word (Why). Then ask your student to write a thesis (central idea) using because.

Answer for families. The noun is Texas regions, the verb is are, the clue word is Why, and the thesis is that the Texas regions are important because each one contributes distinct natural features, resources, and communities.

TRACKS While reading, students also look for evidence in the passage using TRACKS, which stands for **Time, Reactions, Actions, Character or Concept, Key Knowledge, and Scenery or Setting**. Ask your student what TRACKS they found in this week's passages.

5 Conversation Starters and a Simple Family Activity

- How do you circle important nouns, box the important verb, and triangle the clue word? Show me with one prompt.
- What does a WHY prompt ask you to explain?
- What does a HOW prompt ask you to explain?
- Choose one passage. What problem did people need to solve, and how did it help you write your thesis (central idea)?
- Read one of your theses to me. Which clue word helped you write it?

Clue-Word Hunt

Ask a family member to say an everyday question with WHY or HOW, such as "Explain WHY we need a rule for taking turns." Have your student shape the prompt with hand motions and say, "WHY asks for reasons" or "HOW asks for a way something happened."

Shape and Say a Thesis (central idea)

Use one prompt such as "Explain HOW taking turns solved a problem at home." Have your student circle the important nouns, box the important verb, and triangle HOW with hand motions. Name the problem, then say a complete thesis (central idea) using "Taking turns solved the problem by _____."

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong answer to this week's writing prompt. The thesis (central idea) answers the exact prompt with a reason.

Prompt. Explain whether or not all four Texas regions should be valued as important parts of the state.

Thesis (central idea)

The Texas regions are important because each one contributes distinct natural features, resources, economic activities, and communities to the state.

Reason 1

The regions provide different natural features, such as coastal plains, mountains, and deserts.

Reason 2

Each region offers distinct resources that support different industries and jobs.

Reason 3

The regions are home to diverse communities with unique cultures and traditions.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ All three shapes appear on the prompt, and each mark sits on the correct word.
- ☐ The student names WHY or HOW and gives the clue word as the reason.
- ☐ The thesis (central idea) answers the exact prompt with a reason or way.
- ☐ The thesis uses because for WHY or by for HOW.
- ☐ The answer connects to the conflict in the text.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ find the important nouns in a prompt
- ☐ find the important verb in a prompt
- ☐ find the clue word and name WHY or HOW
- ☐ write a thesis (central idea) that answers the exact prompt
- ☐ use because to declare the WHY

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.