

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 5, Cluster 1, Module 1: Thinking Level Upgrades

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 begins a four week writing unit on upgrading responses. Students learn to identify the thinking level of a written response and rewrite it one level higher. They use a Thinking Levels Chart with five levels, from "says or shows" to "synthesizes." This packet shows you what is happening in class 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.

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En español

Todo este paquete también está disponible en español.

1 Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student begins a four week writing unit about reading and thinking. The class is reading a short passage about the colonists and the taxes that led to protest. Students learn that a written response can be at a low or high thinking level, and a strong writer can upgrade the level.

Students will use a Thinking Levels Chart with five levels. Level 1 is "says or shows." Level 2 is "suggests." Level 3 is "indicates or demonstrates." Level 4 is "establishes." Level 5 is "synthesizes." Each level uses a different citation stem, and a stronger explanation moves the response up.

Ask your student to identify the thinking level of a WHY response and a HOW response. Then ask them to rewrite each one level higher with accurate evidence, a clearer citation stem, and a more precise explanation.

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to read the two sample responses at the back of this packet. Ask which level each one is at and which exact word shows the level. Then ask your student to upgrade the weaker one.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is learning to identify the thinking level of a written response and upgrade it one level higher. A strong response names the level, points to the evidence, and uses a citation stem that matches. The explanation is precise, not just longer.

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to Texas standards 5.11(A)(i), 5.12(B)(i), 5.11(C)(i), and 5.11(C)(ii). Your student learns to ask literal and inferential questions, locate credible evidence, and explain what the evidence proves. In plain words, your student learns to read closely, choose stronger words, and explain thinking clearly.

The five thinking levels



Level 1

Says or shows



Level 2

Suggests



Level 3

Indicates or demonstrates

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to teach you the five levels and a citation stem for each one. Explaining it out loud is part of how the skill sticks.
- Ask which exact word reveals the level of a response. Let your student point to it before you say anything.
- If your student is stuck, ask about the citation stem. Ask which verb matches the level.
- Let your student rewrite the response. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the upgrade.
- Remind your student that a longer response is not always a higher level. The reasoning has to grow too.

3 Key Words

thinking level

the depth of reasoning shown in a written response, from Level 1 to Level 5

Example, this response is at Level 2 because it only suggests the idea.

citation stem

the verb that opens a credit phrase and shows the level of thinking

Example, "The text indicates..." is a Level 3 stem.

thesis (central idea)

the main claim a writer explains and proves

Example, my thesis answers the prompt with one clear idea.

evidence

a quoted or paraphrased detail from the text that supports a claim

Example, my evidence comes from paragraph four.

explanation

the part that tells what the evidence proves and why it matters

Example, my explanation connects the evidence to the thesis.

infer

to read between the lines and name an idea the text only hints at

Example, I can infer a feeling from the character's actions.

suggests

points toward an idea without proving it directly

Example, the details suggest the colonists felt unheard.

demonstrates

shows an idea clearly through several connected details

Example, the examples demonstrate a pattern.

indicates

points to a meaning that is supported but not stated outright

Example, the tone indicates a growing tension.

establishes

builds a clear and lasting connection between idea and evidence

Example, the quote establishes the speaker's point of view.

synthesizes

combines several details into one stronger idea

Example, the writer synthesizes setting and character.

upgrade

to rewrite a response so the reasoning reaches a higher level

Example, I upgrade my explanation with a stronger verb.

reason

the why or how a claim is true

Example, my reason tells why the thesis holds.

supports

to back up a claim with evidence that fits

Example, this detail supports my thesis.

choose

to pick the verb or evidence that best matches the level you want

Example, I choose "indicates" because my reasoning is stronger than "shows."

clear

easy for the reader to follow and trust

Example, a clear citation stem names the source and the level.

Tip for reading together. When a citation stem shows up in class, pause and ask which level it matches. Let your student explain the choice before you do. Naming the level out loud builds confidence.

4 Our Thinking Tool

This week your student uses one main thinking tool, called the Thinking Levels Chart. It has five levels. Each level uses a different citation stem, and the explanation has to grow to match.

The Thinking Levels Chart

Level	Citation Stem	What the Reasoning Does
Level 1	says or shows	Restates a detail that is right on the page.
Level 2	suggests	Points toward an idea the text only hints at.
Level 3	indicates or demonstrates	Uses a few connected details to support a stronger idea.
Level 4	establishes	Builds a clear and lasting connection between the claim and the text.
Level 5	synthesizes	Combines several details into one stronger overall idea.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this question from class, *Why did the colonists protest the taxes?* Have your student name the level they want to reach, choose the citation stem that matches, and write a stronger explanation.

Answer for families. The student can aim for Level 3 by writing, "The text indicates that colonists protested because taxes were imposed without their voice. This demonstrates a deeper concern about fairness and representation." The verb, the evidence, and the explanation all grow together.

Levels When reading together, students also think about TRACKS, which stands for **Time, Reactions, Actions, Character or Concept, Key Knowledge, and Scenery or Setting**. Setting often shapes the ideas a student explains, so ask what TRACKS show up in this week's passage.

5 Conversation Starters and a Simple Family Activity

- What is the difference between a citation stem and an explanation?
- Why does adding length not always raise the level?
- How do you know which thinking level a response is at?
- What is the difference between evidence and explanation?
- How does setting shape the ideas we explain?

Level Up

Read a response. Name its level. Point to the exact words that reveal it. Upgrade it one level higher. Explain what changed in the reasoning.

60 Second Retrieval

Tell your partner one word that reveals a thinking level and one word that could upgrade a response. Keep it short and specific.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

Here are two responses to the same WHY prompt. The first stays at a low level. The second is upgraded.

Prompt. Why did the colonists protest the taxes?

Response A (Level 1)

The colonists protested because they were taxed. The text says, "It required colonists to pay taxes on printed materials..." This shows they were upset.

Response B (Level 2 to 3)

According to the text, "They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice..." This suggests the colonists were upset about the taxes.

What changed

Response A uses "shows," which only restates the text. Response B uses "suggests" with a clearer quotation and adds a reason about fairness. The verb moved up, the citation stem grew clearer, and the explanation became more precise.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The student names the thinking level of a response.
- ☐ The student points to the exact word that reveals the level.
- ☐ The citation stem matches the level claimed.
- ☐ The explanation grows with the verb, not just the length.
- ☐ The upgraded response uses accurate evidence from the text.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ name the five thinking levels
- ☐ point to the exact word that reveals a level
- ☐ choose a citation stem that matches the level
- ☐ tell the difference between evidence and explanation
- ☐ upgrade a response one level higher with stronger reasoning

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.