

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 5, Cluster 1, Module 4: Writing the Explanation Sentence

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 completes the Short Constructed Response. Students learn that an explanation sentence tells what the evidence means, explains why it matters, and connects back to a thesis (central idea). An explanation is the writer's thinking, not another quote. 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 completes the Short Constructed Response. Students learn that an explanation sentence tells what the evidence means, explains why it matters, and connects back to a thesis (central idea). An explanation is the writer's thinking, not another quote.

Students will use two kinds of explanation bookends. Definition bookends begin with "this means" or "this shows." Story bookends begin with "this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of." The word "this" points back to nearby evidence.

Ask your student to explain a fact or quote from something you read together. Ask, "What does that mean, and why does it matter?"

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to show you the difference between evidence and explanation. If your student can teach it, the skill is sticking.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is learning to explain evidence. An explanation tells what the evidence means, why it matters, and how it supports the thesis (central idea). Students use Definition bookends, "this means" or "this shows," and Story bookends, "this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of."

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to Texas standards. Your student revises drafts to improve sentence structure and word choice. Your student also composes informational texts with a clear central idea. In plain words, your student learns to make their thinking clear and precise.

The explanation bookends your student uses



Definition

"this means" or "this shows"



Story

"this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of"



The word "this"

Points back to nearby evidence

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to teach you the difference between evidence and explanation.
- Ask your student to show you a Definition bookend and a Story bookend.
- Ask what the evidence means and why it matters. Let your student explain.
- If your student is stuck, ask about the word "this." Ask what it points back to.
- Let your student write the explanation. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the answer.

evidence

proof from the text

Example, my evidence comes from the passage.

explanation

what the proof means and why it matters

Example, my explanation tells the reader what the quote means.

Definition

an explanation bookend beginning with "this means" or "this shows"

Example, this shows that the colonists wanted their rights respected.

Story

an explanation bookend beginning with "this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of"

Example, this reminds me of a younger student learning from an older classmate.

this

a word that points back to nearby evidence

Example, the word this points back to the quote.

thesis (central idea)

the sentence that gives the writer's direct answer

Example, my thesis answers the prompt.

meaning

what something tells us

Example, the meaning of the quote is clear.

connection

how ideas belong together

Example, the connection between evidence and thesis is strong.

importance

why something matters

Example, the importance of the evidence is clear.

bookend

a starter frame for an explanation

Example, a Definition bookend begins with "this means."

capitalization

using a capital letter at the start of a sentence

Example, every explanation begins with a capital letter.

punctuation

marks that organize written language

Example, every explanation ends with a period.

Tip for reading together. When your student shares a fact, ask what it means and why it matters. This builds the explanation habit.

4 Our Thinking Tool

This week your student uses explanation bookends to turn evidence into meaning. An explanation has three jobs: it tells what the evidence means, it connects the meaning to the thesis (central idea), and it shows why the evidence matters.

The two kinds of bookends



Definition

"this means" or "this shows"



Story

"this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of"



The word "this"

Points back to nearby evidence

How the parts work together

Part	Job	Question to Ask
Evidence	Proof from the text	What does the text say?
Explanation	What the proof means	What does the evidence mean and why does it matter?
The word "this"	Points back to evidence	What does "this" refer to?

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this evidence from class, "*They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice...*" Have your student explain what the evidence means using a Definition or Story bookend.

Answer for families. This shows that the colonists believed British rule was unfair and wanted their rights respected.

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

- Ask your student to explain the difference between repeating a fact and explaining what it means.
- Ask why a strong explanation says why the evidence matters.
- Talk together about what "taxation without representation" means and why it mattered.
- Talk together about what it means that orcas learn from older members of their group.
- Ask how the word "this" helps a reader connect an explanation to nearby evidence.

This Means...

Say a simple fact aloud. Take turns explaining it with "this means" or "this shows," and then add why it matters.

This Reminds Me Of...

Share a short story or memory that a fact reminds you of. Use "this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of," and explain how the story helps make the idea clearer.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong explanation using a Definition bookend. The explanation tells what the evidence means and why it matters.

Prompt. Why did colonists protest British laws?

Thesis (central idea)

The colonists protested British laws because they were treated unfairly.

Evidence

The text states, "They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice..."

Explanation

This shows that the colonists believed they should have a voice in decisions that affected them, which is why unfair taxation pushed them to protest.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The explanation tells what the evidence means, not just what it says.
- ☐ The explanation uses a Definition or Story bookend.
- ☐ The word "this" points back to nearby evidence.
- ☐ The explanation connects to the thesis (central idea).
- ☐ The explanation says why the evidence matters.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ tell the difference between evidence and explanation
- ☐ use a Definition bookend, "this means" or "this shows"
- ☐ use a Story bookend, "this reminds me of" or "this makes me think of"
- ☐ connect an explanation back to the thesis (central idea)
- ☐ explain why evidence 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.