

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 5, Cluster 2, Module 1: Understanding the Structure of an ECR

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 is learning the structure of an informative Extended Constructed Response, or ECR. An ECR grows like a TREE. The roots are the passage and the prompt, the trunk is the thesis (central idea), and the branches are the reason or way, the evidence, and the explanation. Before writing, students shape the prompt by marking the Noun of Importance, the Verb of Importance, and the WHY or HOW clue word. 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.

1 Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student is learning the structure of an informative ECR. The roots are the passage and the prompt, the trunk is the thesis (central idea), and the branches are the reason or way, the evidence, and the explanation. Your student will shape the prompt before writing by marking the Noun of Importance, Verb of Importance, and WHY or HOW clue word.

We will read the informational texts "A Harvest to Remember" and "Spanish Rule in Early Texas." Ask your student to explain how Squanto and the Wampanoag people helped the Pilgrims, or how missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control. Ask your student to show how one prompt grows into a complete ECR TREE.

With appreciation,

Your student's teacher

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to show you the three shapes on any prompt, 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, 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, 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 missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control.

noun

a person, place, or thing

Example, in the prompt above, the noun to circle is missions and presidios.

verb

an action word

Example, in the prompt above, the verb to box is helped maintain control.

clue word

a word that signals WHY or HOW

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

thesis (central idea)

one sentence that answers the exact prompt

Example, missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control because missions spread customs and presidios protected settlements.

evidence

a fact from the passage that supports an answer

Example, missions transferred Spanish customs and skills is a piece of evidence.

explanation

one sentence that explains how the evidence answers the prompt

Example, these actions helped Spain keep influence over the region.

conflict

a problem or struggle in a text

Example, the Pilgrims lacked food and needed to learn how to use the land.

missions

Spanish settlements led by missionaries

Example, missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism.

presidios

forts built by Spanish soldiers

Example, presidios protected missions and nearby settlements.

Wampanoag

the Native American tribe that helped the Pilgrims

Example, the Wampanoag taught the Pilgrims to grow crops.

Squanto

the man who taught the Pilgrims to grow food

Example, Squanto taught the Pilgrims to grow corn and catch fish.

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, the ECR TREE. It has two parts, the three shapes that read the question and the TREE 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 WHY or HOW

The two question types

Thinking type	Clue words	What the writer explains
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 ECR TREE

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

R Reason/Way, tells why or how the thesis (central idea) is true.

E Evidence, gives text proof.

E Explanation, connects the proof to the thesis (central idea).

S Significance, states why the idea matters.

The roots are the passage and prompt. The trunk is the thesis (central idea). The branches are the reason or way, evidence, and explanation.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this question from class, *Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest*. Have your student circle the noun in red (Squanto), box the verb in yellow (helped prepare), and triangle the clue word in green (how). Then ask your student to name the question type.

Answer for families. The noun is Squanto, the verb is helped prepare, the clue word is how, and the question type is HOW, because it asks for a way something happened.

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.

- 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

Use one of the module prompts, "Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas" or "Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest." Have your student circle the important noun, box the important verb, triangle WHY or HOW, and say whether the answer needs a reason or a way.

Shape and Say a Thesis (central idea)

Use the prompt "Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest." Have your student shape it, name the problem of surviving in a new land, and say a complete thesis (central idea), "Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest by teaching them to grow crops, catch fish, and find food in the area."

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

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

Prompt. Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

Thesis (central idea)

Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas because missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism while presidios protected missions and settlements.

Evidence

The passage says that missions transferred Spanish customs and skills and that presidios protected missions and nearby settlements.

Explanation

These actions helped Spain keep influence over the region and maintain control of Texas.

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 answer has 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 WHY or HOW
- ☐ explain what a question is asking in my own words
- ☐ choose one piece of evidence from the passage
- ☐ write a thesis (central idea) that answers the exact prompt

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.