

THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC  
COURSE OVERVIEW • TEACHER RESOURCES

# Grade 3 Prepare, Text Complexity and Reading Stamina Report

*Part of the ECR Supplemental Support System.*

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GRADE 3  
PREPARE CLUSTER  
UNNUMBERED INSTRUCTIONAL RUNWAY

Text Complexity and Reading Stamina

EVIDENTIARY REPORT PACKAGE

|           |                     |                 |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| PASSAGE A | THE RECESS QUESTION | TWO-WEEK ANCHOR |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|

|           |                                    |              |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| PASSAGE B | THE MYSTERY OF THE TRAVELING SHELL | LOW + MEDIUM |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|

|                  |                                                                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DOCUMENT CONTROL | RECORD                                                                          |
| Intended Use     | Supplemental Support Lesson Guide                                               |
| Document Type    | Official Teacher-Facing Instructional Planning Report                           |
| Version / Date   | Version 1.0   August 2026                                                       |
| Texts Analyzed   | Three prose selections: one two-week anchor and two historical-mystery versions |

Package Contents

Scope, organization, and intended instructional use

|             |                                                                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SECTION     | CONTENTS                                                                        |
| Section I   | Overall purpose, PREPARE architecture, research basis, and interpretation rules |
| Section II  | Master quantitative comparison and cross-text findings                          |
| Section III | Passage A: The Recess Question - separate anchor report                         |
| Section IV  | Passage B: The Mystery of the Traveling Shell - Low and Medium separate reports |
| Section V   | Cross-text implementation guidance, verification record, and references         |

Report Use

This package is designed for direct placement in the Grade 3 Supplemental Support Lesson Guide of The Writing Academy®, LLC. It documents every supplied PREPARE selection separately while also explaining how the cluster functions across four weeks. The report distinguishes linguistic readability from stamina, genre transfer, evidence distance, background-knowledge demand, and writing-task complexity.

## Source Set Overview

| PASSAGE SET                                          | STABLE CONTENT                                                                                                                         | PRIMARY INSTRUCTIONAL EXPANSION                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Passage A: The Recess Question</b>                | Beth, classmates, playground inclusion, a question about recess, multiple viewpoints, respectful discussion, alternatives, and voting. | A familiar school context becomes a civic decision-making laboratory and a common source for multiple writing genres.                                                                             |
| <b>Passage B: The Mystery of the Traveling Shell</b> | Emsy, a museum shell, Poverty Point, maps, rivers, distant materials, scarcity, trade, a claim, and supporting evidence.               | The Low version establishes the mystery and claim; the Medium version doubles the reading volume and adds map scale, transportation, communication, exchange, and explicit evidence organization. |

### Source-Fidelity Note

PREPARE does not contain four stamina versions of both titles. The supplied architecture is one 1,058-word two-week anchor plus Low and Medium versions of the companion historical mystery. This report preserves that design and does not invent High or Very High versions.

## Overall Purpose Statement

*Using familiar content to establish routines, transfer evidence habits, and increase complexity*

### Official PREPARE Purpose Statement

The PREPARE cluster is the instructional runway for the Grade 3 program. During Weeks 1-2, students work from one familiar school-based anchor so they can learn how to notice evidence, compare perspectives, discuss respectfully, consider alternatives, and choose a writing genre that matches purpose. During Weeks 3-4, a historical mystery is added and then expanded, requiring students to transfer those same habits to artifacts, maps, distance, scarcity, trade, claims, and evidence. Complexity therefore increases through transfer, knowledge, vocabulary, evidence organization, and stamina while the underlying reasoning routines remain stable.

PREPARE is not repeated reading of an identical passage and it is not a conventional four-level staircase. It is a deliberate two-phase ramp: first build the habits in a familiar context, then apply them to a less familiar historical and geographic problem.

## What Remains Stable and What Intentionally Increases

| STABLE ACROSS WEEKS                                             | INTENTIONALLY INCREASES ACROSS WEEKS                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use of questions, reasons, evidence, discussion, and reflection | Topic novelty: familiar school decision to historical inquiry                 |
| Expectation that students listen, explain, and justify          | Vocabulary: community language to artifact, geography, and economics language |
| Visible claim-and-evidence relationships                        | Evidence distance, number of clues, and need to organize sources              |
| Writing choice based on purpose and audience                    | Reading volume: 300-word companion to 700-word expanded version               |
| Teacher modeling followed by increasingly independent use       | Inference, synthesis, and cross-text transfer                                 |

## Four-Week Instructional Progression

| WEEK                             | PRIMARY READING GOAL                                                           | EVIDENCE / WRITING GOAL                                                                        | RECOMMENDED TEACHER MOVE                                                             |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 1 - Anchor</b>           | Establish the Recess setting, characters, question, and reasons.               | Identify explicit reasons and distinguish narrative events from informational or opinion uses. | Model close reading, genre purpose, and local evidence selection.                    |
| <b>Week 2 - Anchor Deepening</b> | Reread the same anchor for perspectives, alternatives, voting, and reflection. | Compare positions and use the same evidence for different response genres.                     | Color-code viewpoint, reason, evidence, alternative, and decision-making language.   |
| <b>Week 3 - Low Companion</b>    | Transfer the evidence routine to a 300-word historical mystery.                | Build a claim from shell, map, rivers, distant materials, and scarcity clues.                  | Use a clue-evidence-claim organizer and preview key historical vocabulary.           |
| <b>Week 4 - Medium Companion</b> | Sustain comprehension across 700 words and 44 narrative beats.                 | Organize five evidence categories and explain how they fit logically.                          | Chunk the mystery, revisit the map scale, and rehearse the final explanation orally. |

## Research Basis and Measurement Protocol

*How the PREPARE evidentiary profile is calculated and interpreted*

## APPLICATION TO THIS PACKAGE

Each selection is evaluated through quantitative statistics, qualitative dimensions, and reader/task demands rather than one score alone [1].

The planning estimate emphasizes mean sentence length and lexical demand; it does not measure total stamina, quality, content, or task complexity [1].

Meaning, narrative structure, language, knowledge demands, perspective, and evidence organization are evaluated with passage-specific proof[2].

The same text can be more or less demanding depending on rereading, scaffolds, the required response, and students' prior knowledge[3].

PREPARE preserves reasoning routines while shifting from a familiar civic question to a historical artifact investigation.

## Corroborating Quantitative Measure

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is included as a second readability formula. It is sensitive to average sentence length and syllables per word. Dialogue can lower the result, while proper nouns and specialized civic, geographic, archaeological, and economic vocabulary can raise it. The value is used for triangulation only, not as a grade-placement decision.

## Counting Conventions

- Word counts include student-facing passage language and exclude titles, stamina labels, TEKS labels, and report metadata.
- Contractions, possessives, and hyphenated compounds are counted as one word; numerals are counted as one word.
- Sentence counts use terminal punctuation. The Recess Question also contains board headings and list entries; those words remain in the word count but are identified separately as embedded text features.
- Paragraph / narrative-beat counts follow the separated source blocks. Short dialogue, reflection, and list blocks are retained because they affect pacing and retrieval.
- Syllable counts use a pronunciation dictionary when available and a consistent fallback method for names and uncommon terms.
- Estimated reading time assumes one silent or oral pass at 100-120 words per minute and excludes annotation, rereading, discussion, and writing.

## Grade 3 Placement Note

The Recess Question estimate falls within the commonly referenced Grade 2-3 quantitative band. The Shell Low estimate is near the upper end, and the Shell Medium estimate is slightly above it. All three should be treated as supported instructional texts, with placement decisions based on the full quantitative-qualitative-reader/task profile.

## Master Quantitative Comparison

*Calculated statistics and professional planning estimates across all PREPARE selections*

| SELECTION                          | LEVEL / ROLE    | WORDS | SENT. | BEATS | AVG. SENT. | 3+ SYL. | F-K |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|------------|---------|-----|
| The Recess Question                | Two-Week Anchor | 1,058 | 148   | 111   | 7.1        | 6.5%    | 3.6 |
| The Mystery of the Traveling Shell | Low             | 300   | 29    | 17    | 10.3       | 9.7%    | 5.4 |
| The Mystery of the Traveling Shell | Medium          | 700   | 75    | 44    | 9.3        | 16.7%   | 7.6 |

**Beat:** a single story moment, one unit of action, such as a new event, a line of dialogue, or a shift in what a character is doing. Beats show how much happens in a passage.

## What the Numbers Demonstrate

- The Recess Question contains 1,058 words, but 148 punctuation-defined sentences and extensive dialogue keep its mean sentence length near 7.1 words.
- The Shell companion increases from 300 to 700 words, a 2.33-fold increase in reading volume and a 2.59-fold increase in separated narrative beats.
- Three-or-more-syllable density increases from 9.7% in the Low Shell version to 16.7% in the Medium version.
- The Medium Shell passage adds map scale, transportation, communication, exchanges, explicit clue organization, and a fuller inference about how artifacts reveal history.
- The Recess anchor has the greatest stamina load, while the Medium Shell version has the greatest lexical, knowledge, and evidence-integration demand.

| MEASURE                  | THE RECESS QUESTION                            | SHELL - LOW                    | SHELL - MEDIUM                            |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Single-Pass Reading Time | 8.8-10.6 minutes                               | 2.5-3.0 minutes                | 5.8-7.0 minutes                           |
| Primary Demand           | Stamina, perspective, dialogue, genre transfer | Claim from local clues         | Vocabulary, knowledge, evidence synthesis |
| Recommended Mode         | Teacher-supported multi-session rereading      | Guided / partner close reading | Chunked supported reading with organizer  |

## PREPARE Instructional Architecture

*Why the unnumbered cluster uses one anchor followed by an expanding companion*

| PHASE            | TEXT STRUCTURE                                                        | PRIMARY INSTRUCTIONAL FUNCTION                                                                                               | TEACHER INTERPRETATION                                                                                     |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Weeks 1-2</b> | One 1,058-word realistic-fiction anchor used repeatedly.              | Build shared routines for genre recognition, reasons, evidence, perspectives, respectful dialogue, alternatives, and voting. | Do not treat Week 2 as mere repetition. Change the reading purpose and require new evidence use.           |
| <b>Weeks 3-4</b> | The 300-word historical mystery is added, then expanded to 700 words. | Transfer the same reasoning habits to artifacts, maps, distance, scarcity, trade, claims, and evidence.                      | Use the Low version to establish the clue chain; use the Medium version to increase stamina and synthesis. |

## Genre Laboratory Value

| WRITING GENRE        | HOW THE RECESS QUESTION CAN SUPPORT IT                                                     | HOW THE TRAVELING SHELL CAN SUPPORT IT                                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Narrative</b>     | Develop Beth's inclusion choice, changing thinking, and participation in a class decision. | Develop Emsy's investigation, discoveries, and final understanding.                   |
| <b>Poetry</b>        | Capture playground sounds, motion, friendship, choice, or community.                       | Capture the shell as a silent clue, its imagined journey, or the mystery of the past. |
| <b>Informative</b>   | Explain benefits, tradeoffs, or the steps of group decision making.                        | Explain how maps, rivers, artifacts, scarcity, and trade support the conclusion.      |
| <b>Opinion</b>       | State and support a view about recess length or movement breaks.                           | State which clue is strongest and explain why.                                        |
| <b>Argumentative</b> | Compare positions and respond to a competing concern about instructional time.             | Defend the long-distance-trade claim while addressing another possible explanation.   |

## PREPARE Evidence Progression

| LEVEL                     | EVIDENCE LOCATION                                               | EXPECTED REASONING                                                                             | APPROPRIATE PRODUCT                                    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Anchor - First Use</b> | Local playground and early classroom sections                   | Identify a clear reason, action, or perspective.                                               | Short constructed response or genre identification     |
| <b>Anchor - Deepening</b> | Across playground, board list, discussion, vote, and reflection | Compare perspectives and explain how new information changes thinking.                         | Evidence paragraph, opinion, or argumentative response |
| <b>Shell - Low</b>        | Across 17 clue-based narrative beats                            | Connect several explicit clues to one historical claim.                                        | Claim-evidence explanation                             |
| <b>Shell - Medium</b>     | Across 44 beats and five organized evidence categories          | Synthesize clues, explain logical fit, and make a larger inference about trade and connection. | Multi-reason or extended response                      |

### Challenge Without Overwhelming

Teachers may retain the Low Shell version for students who need a shorter transfer text while using the Medium version for students ready for greater vocabulary and evidence integration. The conceptual core remains stable, so access can vary without changing the lesson purpose.

## The Recess Question - Two-Week Anchor Report

*Grade 3 realistic fiction | Teacher-facing text complexity evidentiary profile*

| Passage A | The Recess Question | Two-Week Anchor |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|

Establishes a familiar school-based narrative that grows into a civic decision-making inquiry involving inclusion, competing needs, alternatives, respectful listening, multiple perspectives, voting, and reflection.

## A. Official Passage Profile

### DOCUMENTED RESULT

Grade 3 supplemental support; teacher-supported or partner reading

Literary realistic fiction / civic decision-making and genre-transfer anchor

1,058 total words; 390 unique words

148 punctuation-defined sentences; 111 separated paragraphs / narrative beats

7.1 words average; 20 words longest conventional sentence

11 sentences of 15+ words; 1 of 20+ words; 0 of 25+ words

1 syllable: 731 (69.1%); 2 syllables: 258 (24.4%); 3+ syllables: 69 (6.5%)

69 occurrences; 41 unique forms; 6.5% of passage words

3.6 - corroborating formula only; not a placement decision

8.8-10.6 minutes at 100-120 wpm; Weeks 1-2 anchor; teacher-supported multi-session reading and purposeful rereading

## B. Qualitative and Reader/Task Complexity

| DIMENSION                      | RATING          | PASSAGE-SPECIFIC INTERPRETATION                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaning / Theme                | Moderately High | The narrative develops inclusion, balanced decision making, civic participation, and the idea that thoughtful choices require more than personal preference.                 |
| Narrative Structure / Cohesion | High            | The text moves from playground action to a question, classroom evidence chart, alternative proposal, historical connection, discussion, vote, and open reflection.           |
| Language / Craft Demand        | Moderate        | Short dialogue supports access, while civic and analytical vocabulary includes community, perspectives, advantages, disadvantages, respectfully, and democratic governments. |
| Knowledge Demand               | Moderately High | Students connect school routines with good citizenship, group decision making, voting, ballots, and a brief reference to ancient Greece.                                     |
| Reader / Task Demand           | High            | The 1,058-word text requires sustained attention, tracking several viewpoints, interpreting embedded lists, and retrieving evidence from distant narrative phases.           |

### The Recess Question - Linguistic and Instructional Evidence

*Passage A / Two-Week Anchor*

## C. Word-Level, Spelling, Vocabulary, and Morphology Evidence

| WORD-LEVEL DIMENSION                    | PASSAGE EVIDENCE                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier 2 Academic Vocabulary</b>       | thoughtful, community, consider, information, advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, respectfully, perspectives, influence                                |
| <b>Civic / Domain Vocabulary</b>        | citizens, vote, voting, ballot, democratic governments, group decision, point of view                                                                        |
| <b>Three-or-More-Syllable Examples</b>  | basketballs, favorite, together, community, mathematics, important, decisions, respectfully, opportunities, democratic, perspectives                         |
| <b>Morphology</b>                       | decide -> decision / decisions; solve -> solution; participate -> participating; respect -> respectfully; advantage -> disadvantage                          |
| <b>Spelling / Orthographic Patterns</b> | contractions such as what's and that; proper nouns Beth, Ava, Max, Lily, Mrs. Green; suffixes -tion, -ly, -ment, -ity; vowel teams and r-controlled patterns |

## D. Sentence, Cohesion, Narrative, and Embedded-Text Demands

| FEATURE                       | ANALYSIS                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Dialogue and Pacing</b>    | Frequent short dialogue turns lower sentence length but require speaker tracking, punctuation interpretation, and shifts between action and discussion. |
| <b>Two-Part Narrative Arc</b> | Playground events establish the lived issue; classroom deliberation transforms it into a civic question.                                                |
| <b>Embedded Board Text</b>    | Three headings and seven list entries require students to integrate noncontinuous text with the narrative.                                              |
| <b>Cohesion</b>               | Repeated words such as recess, reasons, choices, solution, listen, and decision bind the text across more than one hundred beats.                       |
| <b>Perspective Tracking</b>   | Students follow Max, Ava, Lily, Beth, Mrs. Green, and an unnamed student while Beth's certainty becomes more qualified.                                 |
| <b>Open Ending</b>            | The vote result is withheld, shifting attention from winning to the quality of the decision-making process.                                             |

## E. Evidence Density and Writing Value

| EVIDENCE FEATURE                       | DOCUMENTED OPPORTUNITY                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Explicit Evidence Opportunities</b> | Reasons for longer recess, reasons for keeping the schedule, an alternative movement break, and stated decision-making steps.                      |
| <b>Inferential Opportunities</b>       | Why Beth becomes less certain; why Lily's experience matters; why the teacher withholds the result; how inclusion connects to citizenship.         |
| <b>Cross-Section Evidence</b>          | Students can connect playground inclusion, competing school needs, the board list, ancient Greece, class discussion, voting, and final reflection. |
| <b>Author's Craft Opportunities</b>    | Onomatopoeia, dialogue, sensory details, repeated questions, embedded lists, perspective shift, and an open ending.                                |
| <b>Genre-Transfer Value</b>            | Exceptional: the same source supports narrative, poetry, informative, opinion, and argumentative responses.                                        |

### The Recess Question - Passage Evidence Ledger

*Direct textual proof for complexity, instruction, and writing use*

| DIMENSION                   | FEATURE                | PASSAGE EVIDENCE                                                               | LOCATION | WHY IT MATTERS                                                                |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Character / Theme</b>    | Inclusion              | "Sometimes recess gives us time to get to know someone new."                   | Beat 46  | Beth turns a personal activity into evidence about belonging and community.   |
| <b>Knowledge / Meaning</b>  | Competing Needs        | "Because a school community has many needs..."                                 | Beat 54  | The text moves beyond preference and introduces tradeoffs.                    |
| <b>Reasoning</b>            | Decision Criteria      | "We should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each choice."          | Beat 69  | Students must compare options rather than select the first preferred answer.  |
| <b>Background Knowledge</b> | Historical Connection  | "Thousands of years ago, some citizens in Athens, a city in ancient Greece..." | Beat 80  | The passage links a classroom vote with an early civic idea.                  |
| <b>Perspective</b>          | Evidence Before Choice | "Now you have heard several perspectives..."                                   | Beat 93  | The vote follows listening and evidence, not impulse.                         |
| <b>Theme / Closure</b>      | Civic Reflection       | "...choices, communities, and how people make decisions together."             | Beat 109 | The ending states the larger significance without revealing a winning option. |

## F. Teacher-Facing Instructional Guidance

- Teach the anchor across multiple purposeful readings rather than assigning all 1,058 words as one unsupported first read.
- Use a narrative map for playground event, question, evidence chart, discussion, vote, and reflection.

- Color-code viewpoints and require students to distinguish a reason, an example, an alternative, and a counterconcern.
- Reread the embedded board list as a noncontinuous text and connect each item to the speaker or viewpoint it supports.
- Use the same evidence bank for several genres so students learn that purpose changes the response, not the source facts.
- Do not center the lesson on which option won; center it on how the class gathered information and made a respectful decision.

## G. Formal Placement Rationale

### The Mystery of the Traveling Shell - Low Stamina Report

*Grade 3 historical mystery / Teacher-facing text complexity evidentiary profile*

| Passage B1 | The Mystery of the Traveling Shell | Low Stamina |
|------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
|------------|------------------------------------|-------------|

Establishes the complete clue chain: a coastal shell found inland, map distance, major rivers, distant copper, scarcity, trade, and a final evidence-supported claim.

## A. Official Passage Profile

### DOCUMENTED RESULT

Grade 3 supplemental support; teacher-supported or partner reading

Literary fiction / historical mystery, archaeology, geography, scarcity, and trade

300 total words; 154 unique words

29 punctuation-defined sentences; 17 separated paragraphs / narrative beats

10.3 words average; 30 words longest conventional sentence

6 sentences of 15+ words; 1 of 20+ words; 1 of 25+ words

1 syllable: 202 (67.3%); 2 syllables: 69 (23.0%); 3+ syllables: 29 (9.7%)

29 occurrences; 20 unique forms; 9.7% of passage words

5.4 - corroborating formula only; not a placement decision

2.5-3.0 minutes at 100-120 wpm; Week 3 companion; guided or partner close reading with a clue-evidence-claim organizer

## B. Qualitative and Reader/Task Complexity

| DIMENSION                      | RATING          | PASSAGE-SPECIFIC INTERPRETATION                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaning / Theme                | Moderate        | The explicit mystery is paired with a larger idea: a small artifact can reveal trade, movement, and connection among communities.                         |
| Narrative Structure / Cohesion | Moderate        | Seventeen beats follow a clear inquiry sequence: notice, question, gather four clues, explain scarcity, state a claim, list evidence, reflect.            |
| Language / Craft Demand        | Moderately High | Direct narration is combined with specialized terms such as Poverty Point, coastal, inland, archaeologists, materials, scarcity, and long-distance trade. |
| Knowledge Demand               | High            | Students need or must build knowledge of maps, coast and inland locations, rivers as routes, archaeology, resources, scarcity, and trade.                 |
| Reader / Task Demand           | Moderate        | The text is brief, but students must connect nonadjacent clues and explain why the clues collectively support one claim.                                  |

### Traveling Shell - Low Stamina Linguistic Evidence

*Passage B1 | Historical mystery and claim-evidence transfer*

## C. Word-Level, Spelling, Vocabulary, and Morphology Evidence

| WORD-LEVEL DIMENSION               | PASSAGE EVIDENCE                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tier 2 Academic Vocabulary         | clue, distance, pattern, resource, valuable, evidence, final claim, probably                                                  |
| Historical / Geographic Vocabulary | Poverty Point, coastal, inland, Mississippi River, Ohio River, archaeologists, copper, scarcity, trade                        |
| Three-or-More-Syllable Examples    | museum, Poverty, mystery, interesting, Mississippi, Ohio, archaeologists, discovered, materials, scarcity, valuable, evidence |
| Morphology                         | archaeology -> archaeologists; discover -> discovered; travel -> traveled / traveling; distance -> distant; value -> valuable |
| Spelling / Orthographic Patterns   | proper nouns; -ology / -ologist family; suffixes -ity, -able, -ence, -ing, -ed; hyphenated long-distance                      |

## D. Sentence, Cohesion, and Historical-Inquiry Demands

| FEATURE                     | ANALYSIS                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inquiry Sequence</b>     | Ordinal clue language gives the story a visible investigation structure and supports note taking.                               |
| <b>Cause and Inference</b>  | The text does not merely list facts; students must explain why rivers, distance, materials, and scarcity make trade plausible.  |
| <b>Sentence Demand</b>      | The longest 30-word sentence gathers four evidence categories in one colon-led synthesis and should be unpacked before writing. |
| <b>Referential Cohesion</b> | The shell, clue, map, rivers, materials, and evidence are repeated clearly, supporting cohesion despite specialized content.    |
| <b>Figurative Closure</b>   | The shell becomes “a story waiting to speak,” requiring a nonliteral interpretation of artifacts as historical evidence.        |

## E. Evidence Density and Writing Value

| EVIDENCE FEATURE                       | DOCUMENTED OPPORTUNITY                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Explicit Evidence Opportunities</b> | Coastal origin, inland location, map distance, river travel, distant copper, and scarcity.                                                         |
| <b>Inferential Opportunities</b>       | Why one distant object might be accidental but several create a pattern; how objects could move without one traveler completing the whole journey. |
| <b>Cross-Paragraph Evidence</b>        | The claim requires evidence from paragraphs / beats 5, 7, 8, 11, and 13 rather than one local sentence.                                            |
| <b>Author's Craft Opportunities</b>    | Mystery framing, numbered clues, dialogue, pattern language, colon-led evidence list, personification, and final claim.                            |
| <b>Writing Value</b>                   | Rich evidence for a short claim-evidence explanation or an informational paragraph about how the shell reached Poverty Point.                      |

### Traveling Shell - Low Stamina Passage Evidence Ledger

*Direct textual proof for complexity, instruction, and writing use*

| DIMENSION      | FEATURE           | PASSAGE EVIDENCE                                                           | LOCATION | WHY IT MATTERS                                                                   |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Geography      | Location Contrast | "It came from a coastal area, but Poverty Point was inland."               | Beat 5   | The first contradiction creates the historical mystery.                          |
| Transportation | River Routes      | "People at Poverty Point traveled along rivers..."                         | Beat 7   | Rivers provide a plausible mechanism for movement.                               |
| Pattern        | Distant Materials | "Archaeologists had discovered other materials..."                         | Beat 8   | More than one distant object strengthens the inference.                          |
| Economics      | Scarcity          | "The answer was scarcity."                                                 | Beat 11  | Scarcity supplies the reason communities would exchange resources.               |
| Claim          | Trade Conclusion  | "The seashell probably reached Poverty Point through long-distance trade." | Beat 13  | The modal word probably models an evidence-based, appropriately qualified claim. |
| Craft / Theme  | Artifact Voice    | "...a clue from the past and a story waiting to speak."                    | Beat 17  | The metaphor connects an object with historical interpretation.                  |

## F. Teacher-Facing Instructional Guidance

- Preview Poverty Point, coastal, inland, archaeologists, scarcity, and trade with a map and artifact image.
- Use a five-box organizer: location, distance, transportation, other materials, and reason for exchange.
- Distinguish observation from inference: the shell and map are observed; long-distance trade is the conclusion.
- Unpack the 30-word evidence-list sentence and model how a colon introduces supporting details.
- Require students to explain how at least three clues work together rather than copying the final claim alone.

## G. Formal Placement Rationale

### The Mystery of the Traveling Shell - Medium Stamina Report

*Grade 3 historical mystery / Teacher-facing text complexity evidentiary profile*

| Passage B2 | The Mystery of the Traveling Shell | Medium Stamina |
|------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
|------------|------------------------------------|----------------|

Expands the full inquiry by adding map scale, natural formation, waterways as transportation routes, repeated exchanges, communication, explicit clue organization, qualified inference, and a larger understanding of how artifacts reveal history.

## A. Official Passage Profile

### DOCUMENTED RESULT

Grade 3 supplemental support; teacher-supported or partner reading

Literary fiction / extended historical mystery, archaeology, geography, scarcity, exchange, and evidence synthesis

700 total words; 329 unique words

75 punctuation-defined sentences; 44 separated paragraphs / narrative beats

9.3 words average; 26 words longest conventional sentence

11 sentences of 15+ words; 2 of 20+ words; 1 of 25+ words

1 syllable: 401 (57.3%); 2 syllables: 182 (26.0%); 3+ syllables: 117 (16.7%)

117 occurrences; 75 unique forms; 16.7% of passage words

7.6 - corroborating formula only; not a placement decision

5.8-7.0 minutes at 100-120 wpm; Week 4 expanded companion; chunked supported reading with map and evidence matrix

## B. Qualitative and Reader/Task Complexity

| DIMENSION                      | RATING          | PASSAGE-SPECIFIC INTERPRETATION                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaning / Theme                | Moderately High | The mystery supports a broader interpretation: material objects, distance, waterways, and scarcity can reveal connections among communities long ago.                          |
| Narrative Structure / Cohesion | High            | Forty-four beats move through observation, mapping, pattern recognition, economic explanation, clue organization, final claim, imagined journey, and historical reflection.    |
| Language / Craft Demand        | High            | The text has 117 three-or-more-syllable words and sustained terms such as coastal environment, map scale, transportation, communication, exchanges, artifacts, and conclusion. |
| Knowledge Demand               | High            | Students coordinate archaeology, geographic location, scale and distance, waterways, resource distribution, scarcity, exchange, and uncertainty in historical interpretation.  |
| Reader / Task Demand           | High            | Readers sustain 700 words, track clue categories, distinguish observation from inference, and explain how evidence fits together logically.                                    |

### Traveling Shell - Medium Stamina Linguistic Evidence

*Passage B2 | Expanded historical inquiry and evidence synthesis*

## C. Word-Level, Spelling, Vocabulary, and Morphology Evidence

| WORD-LEVEL DIMENSION                      | PASSAGE EVIDENCE                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier 2 Academic Vocabulary</b>         | observation, evidence, pattern, conclusion, logically, considerable, communication, connection, originated, represented                                                                               |
| <b>Historical / Geographic Vocabulary</b> | Poverty Point, coastal environment, inland, coastline, map scale, Mississippi River, Ohio River, waterways, artifacts, scarcity, exchange, trade                                                      |
| <b>Three-or-More-Syllable Examples</b>    | ordinary, Louisiana, miniature, observation, environment, naturally, represented, transportation, valuable, archaeologists, enormous, communication, illustration, unlimited, considerable, logically |
| <b>Morphology</b>                         | observe -> observation; communicate -> communication; transport -> transportation; conclude -> conclusion; logic -> logically; archaeology -> archaeologists; exchange -> exchanged / exchanges       |
| <b>Spelling / Orthographic Patterns</b>   | suffixes -tion, -ity, -ly, -able, -ous; prefixes and bases in unlimited and misplaced; proper nouns; hyphenated long-distance; contractions and possessives                                           |

## D. Sentence, Cohesion, and Historical-Inquiry Demands

| FEATURE                           | ANALYSIS                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Expanded Inquiry Structure</b> | The text repeats the original clues, then makes the reasoning process visible by organizing and evaluating them.                         |
| <b>Map and Scale Reasoning</b>    | Students must connect location, coastline, map scale, and natural formation to the conclusion that the shell moved through human action. |
| <b>Alternative Possibilities</b>  | The text allows direct travel or repeated exchanges, modeling uncertainty without abandoning the supported trade claim.                  |
| <b>Cohesive Signal Words</b>      | First, second, third, fourth, finally, perhaps, either way, and later organize evidence and qualify inference.                           |
| <b>Conceptual Density</b>         | Shorter average sentences do not reduce complexity because each section adds specialized concepts and evidence relationships.            |
| <b>Reflective Closure</b>         | The ending generalizes from one shell to artifacts, maps, rivers, distance, trade, problem solving, and community connection.            |

## E. Evidence Density and Writing Value

| EVIDENCE FEATURE                       | DOCUMENTED OPPORTUNITY                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Explicit Evidence Opportunities</b> | Origin, inland location, map distance, scale, waterways, distant copper, scarcity, exchange, and organized clue list.                       |
| <b>Inferential Opportunities</b>       | Direct travel versus repeated exchange; why patterns are stronger than single objects; how artifacts communicate without written testimony. |
| <b>Cross-Paragraph Evidence</b>        | Students draw from early observation, middle geographic and economic explanation, and late organized synthesis.                             |
| <b>Author's Craft Opportunities</b>    | Mystery framing, bold label, internal questions, dialogue, enumeration, conditional reasoning, imagined journey, repetition, and metaphor.  |
| <b>Writing Value</b>                   | Excellent evidence for a multi-reason response explaining the claim and the larger significance of artifacts and trade.                     |

### Traveling Shell - Medium Stamina Passage Evidence Ledger

*Direct textual proof for complexity, instruction, and writing use*

| DIMENSION                    | FEATURE                      | PASSAGE EVIDENCE                                                                                    | LOCATION | WHY IT MATTERS                                                                      |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inquiry</b>               | Observation<br>Over Guessing | "...mysteries, especially those that required observation instead of guessing."                     | Beat 5   | The narrative establishes a disciplinary habit for evidence-based reasoning.        |
| <b>Geography</b>             | Map Scale                    | "Then she checked the map scale."                                                                   | Beat 10  | The Medium version adds an explicit measurement tool not named in the Low version.  |
| <b>Transportation</b>        | Waterway<br>Function         | "Rivers were transportation routes long before highways or airplanes existed."                      | Beat 12  | The text explains how distant movement could occur.                                 |
| <b>Inference</b>             | Multiple<br>Pathways         | "Perhaps people...traveled enormous distances...or perhaps objects had moved..."                    | Beat 21  | Students consider more than one mechanism while retaining the supported conclusion. |
| <b>Reasoning</b>             | Logical Fit                  | "A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically." | Beat 34  | The passage explicitly teaches evidence integration.                                |
| <b>Theme /<br/>Synthesis</b> | Evidence<br>Categories       | "Artifacts were clues. Maps were clues. Rivers were clues."                                         | Beat 42  | Repetition converts separate details into a larger historical method.               |

## F. Teacher-Facing Instructional Guidance

- Chunk the passage into four sections: surprising object, map and waterways, scarcity and exchange, organized conclusion and significance.
- Preview map scale, coastal environment, transportation, communication, archaeologists, artifacts, scarcity, considerable, and logically.
- Use a two-column chart labeled Observation / Inference before moving to the final claim.
- Compare direct travel with repeated exchange and ask why both possibilities remain consistent with long-distance trade.
- Require evidence from at least three sections and one sentence explaining how the evidence works together.
- Use oral rehearsal before the extended response so vocabulary and causal relationships are secure.

## G. Formal Placement Rationale

### Cross-Text Teacher Guidance

*Using PREPARE as a coherent four-week reading, reasoning, and writing ramp*

## Key Instructional Findings

### TEACHER IMPLICATION

Use one anchor for two purposes, then add and expand the companion. Do not invent or imply four versions of each text.

The 1,058-word anchor has the lowest estimate because of dialogue; the shorter historical mystery has greater lexical and knowledge demand.

Change the question, evidence category, genre, or written product each time the anchor is revisited.

Reuse question-reason-evidence-alternative-conclusion language in both the recess decision and shell investigation.

Preview Poverty Point, maps, rivers, artifacts, scarcity, and trade so decoding does not substitute for understanding.

Move from local evidence and genre recognition to viewpoint comparison, claim building, and whole-text synthesis.

## Recommended Repeated Routine

| STEP        | TEACHER AND STUDENT ACTION                                                                               |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Activate | Recall the prior question, stable reasoning routine, and evidence categories.                            |
| 2. Preview  | Identify the new reading purpose, new text span, and only the vocabulary essential for access.           |
| 3. Read     | Use teacher read-aloud, partner, chunked, or multi-session reading appropriate to the selection.         |
| 4. Track    | Mark observation, reason, viewpoint, clue, evidence, alternative, and conclusion with a consistent code. |
| 5. Connect  | Explain how evidence changes thinking or supports a claim.                                               |
| 6. Organize | Sort evidence into recurring categories before drafting.                                                 |
| 7. Write    | Match the written product to the number and distance of evidence sources required.                       |

## Text Selection Decision Rules

| OBSERVED STUDENT NEED                                   | RECOMMENDED TEXT / SUPPORT                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Needs the familiar context but can sustain length       | Use The Recess Question across sections with oral discussion and genre-specific rereading.                  |
| Understands the routine but needs a short transfer text | Use Shell Low with map preview and five-clue organizer.                                                     |
| Ready for denser vocabulary and more evidence           | Use Shell Medium with chunking and observation-inference matrix.                                            |
| Needs enrichment without a new topic                    | Compare Shell Low and Medium to identify what was added and how the added evidence changes the explanation. |

## PREPARE Weekly Progression Summary

*How one anchor and one expanding companion establish yearlong habits*

| WEEK / SELECTION              | KNOWLEDGE AND STAMINA EMPHASIS                                                                | EVIDENCE EXPECTATION                                                             | WRITING EXPECTATION                                                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 1 - Recess Anchor</b> | Sustain the opening narrative and identify inclusion, reasons, and the central question.      | Use local evidence from playground and early classroom sections.                 | Genre recognition, short narrative response, or one-reason SCR.                 |
| <b>Week 2 - Recess Anchor</b> | Reread for tradeoffs, alternatives, ancient Greece, perspectives, voting, and reflection.     | Connect evidence from nonadjacent sections and compare positions.                | Opinion or argumentative paragraph; informative explanation of decision making. |
| <b>Week 3 - Shell Low</b>     | Transfer to a 300-word historical mystery with five major clue categories.                    | Use at least three clues to support the trade claim.                             | Claim-evidence paragraph or informative explanation.                            |
| <b>Week 4 - Shell Medium</b>  | Sustain 700 words and organize map, artifact, scarcity, exchange, and communication evidence. | Synthesize evidence from the beginning, middle, and end and explain logical fit. | Multi-reason response or extended constructed response.                         |

## Continuity Tools for Teachers

- Maintain one visible Question -> Information -> Perspectives / Possibilities -> Evidence -> Decision / Claim organizer across all four weeks.
- Use the same colors or annotation codes for reasons, evidence, alternatives, and conclusions in both passage families.
- Record what is repeated, what is new, and how the new information changes the student's interpretation.
- Increase written-product complexity only after students can orally connect evidence with the claim or viewpoint.

## Evidence and Writing Progression

| STAGE             | EVIDENCE LOCATION                       | EXPECTED REASONING                                              | TEACHER-FACING PRODUCT                |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Establish</b>  | One event or adjacent beats             | Identify and explain one reason, action, or clue.               | Short constructed response            |
| <b>Compare</b>    | Two or more nonadjacent anchor sections | Connect a position with support and acknowledge another option. | Evidence paragraph / opinion response |
| <b>Transfer</b>   | Several clue beats in Shell Low         | Combine observations into a qualified claim.                    | Claim-evidence explanation            |
| <b>Synthesize</b> | Whole Shell Medium text                 | Categorize evidence, evaluate fit, and explain significance.    | Extended constructed response         |

## References and Method Notes

[2] Achieve the Core. Qualitative Measures Rubrics for Literary and Informational Texts.

[3] Institute of Education Sciences / What Works Clearinghouse. Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.

[4] Source passages and PREPARE architecture supplied by The Writing Academy®, LLC; exact word-count inventory verified in the Grade 3 Passage Alignment and Program Coherence Report.