

THE EVIDENCE MATRIX:

*Discovering a Student's Cognitive Address
through RPLDs and the TRACKS they Choose*
(Range Performance Level Descriptors)



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PUBLICATION INFORMATION

The Evidence Matrix:

Discovering a Student's Cognitive Address through RPLDs and the TRACKS they Choose

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First edition, 2027.

Published by The Writing Academy®, LLC.

INSTRUCTIONAL LANGUAGE

Foundational, Emergent, Visible, Independent, and Reflective are the instructional level names used in this book. They describe demonstrated thinking on a particular task. They are not labels for students. TRACKS identifies tangible evidence found in a passage. The student examples are fictional or composite examples created for professional learning.

A NOTE TO THE TEACHER

A student can place evidence in a response and still leave the thinking behind. The Evidence Matrix helps us see what the student chose, how the student used it, and what small move will improve the writing that follows.

This book is designed to sit beside The Writing Matrix. The Writing Matrix helps us identify the kind of thinking the prompt requires through TAUGHT, TAP, THINK, and TOGGLE. The Evidence Matrix narrows the lens. It looks closely at the tangible evidence students collect from a passage and the TRACKS they choose to cite.

The evidence choice matters. A student may copy an accurate sentence that does not answer the prompt. Another may choose the right TRACK but stop before explaining what it proves. A third may connect two pieces of evidence and use the relationship to build meaning. Those responses should not lead to the same lesson.

Throughout this book, the evidence progression stays simple: Find it. Name it. Choose it. Explain it. Connect it. Those five moves align with Foundational, Emergent, Visible, Independent, and Reflective thinking. The goal is not to collect more evidence. The goal is to use the most relevant evidence at the highest useful thinking level.

The Cognitive Address remains temporary. It belongs to the thinking demonstrated on the task, not to the child. Use one response as a clue and a pattern of responses as stronger evidence. Then teach one level to the right.

Begin with one passage and one prompt. Ask which TRACKS the student chose, what the choice reveals, and what the writing needs next. The matrix should make evidence instruction clearer, not heavier.

RANDI WHITNEY

THE FIVE-MINUTE OVERVIEW

The Evidence Matrix can be understood through five decisions. A teacher can begin using the process before reading the complete book.

Decision	Teacher question	Action
1. Find the Evidence Address	What TRACKS did the student choose, and what did the student do with them?	Name the evidence pattern and current RPLD level.
2. Name the Next Address	What is the smallest observable evidence move that comes next?	Choose one level to the right.
3. Pack Up	What knowledge, strategy, language, or writing behavior is missing?	Name one precise evidence need.
4. Teach the Move	How will I model, guide, and remove support?	Practice the same evidence move in reading and writing.
5. Check the Writing Result	Can the student use the evidence accurately, independently, and in a fresh task?	Update the address and choose the next move.

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find an obvious TRACK.	Reports a detail.
Emergent	Name the TRACK and what it represents.	Describes relevant information.
Visible	Choose the TRACK that best supports the answer.	Supports an idea with relevant evidence.
Independent	Explain what the TRACK proves and why it matters.	Develops the idea through reasoning.
Reflective	Connect TRACKS, weigh them, and construct meaning.	Builds a larger conclusion or significance.

ONE-SENTENCE SUMMARY

The Evidence Matrix helps teachers see what evidence students choose, how deeply they use it, and which small move will improve the writing that follows.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Read It Once, Then Use It as a Reference

The first five chapters explain the Evidence Matrix. Chapters 6-11 show what each TRACK can reveal. Chapters 12-16 help teachers name an evidence address and read relationships among evidence. Chapters 17-20 show how evidence thinking changes the writing result. Chapters 21-23 turn the analysis into instruction, grouping, conferences, and growth.

Keep the Vocabulary Simple

The main words are TRACKS, Cognitive Address, Next Address, Pack Up, and Move. Students do not need to memorize a long set of labels. They need to know what evidence they found, why they chose it, what it proves, and how it connects.

How This Book Sits Beside The Writing Matrix

Lens	Teacher question
Four Dimensions	What kind of thinking job does the prompt require?
TRACKS	What tangible evidence did the student collect and choose?
RPLD level	How fully, precisely, and independently did the student use it?
Writing result	What did that evidence thinking produce on the page?

The Fixed Language

TRACKS always means Time, Reactions, Actions, Characters / Concepts / Creatures, Key Knowledge, and Settings. The thinking levels always progress from Foundational to Emergent to Visible to Independent to Reflective. The student may have a different level with different TRACKS or different prompt types.

What This Book Does Not Ask You to Do

- Do not assign one permanent TRACK or color to a student.
- Do not require students to use every TRACK in every response.
- Do not count quotations as proof of high-level thinking.
- Do not ask for more evidence when one precise piece is enough.
- Do not confuse polished conventions with deep evidence reasoning.
- Do not lower the thinking job because a student needs access or language support.

Evidence Is Not Enough

Evidence improves writing only when the student chooses a relevant TRACK and uses it to move the idea forward. This chapter separates evidence presence from evidence thinking.

- Recognize why an accurate quotation can still be weak evidence.
- Separate collecting evidence from thinking with evidence.
- Use the five evidence moves to identify what the student needs next.

A piece of evidence does not improve writing simply because it appears in the response. It must earn its place.

When Evidence Is Present but the Writing Is Still Weak

Teachers often tell students to add evidence. Students respond by copying a sentence, adding quotation marks, or beginning with, "The text says." The response may now contain evidence, but the thinking may not have changed at all.

The important question is not only, "Did the student include evidence?" It is, "Did the student choose evidence that answers the prompt, and did the student explain what it proves?" Evidence can be accurate and still be unrelated, too broad, too weak, or left unexplained.

Collection Is Not the Same as Selection

A student may collect several details while reading. That is useful. The writing decision comes next. Which detail should be cited? Which TRACK directly supports the answer? Which evidence is strongest? Which piece can be explained without stretching the passage?

The Evidence Matrix watches that decision. The TRACKS a student chooses show what the student noticed and what the student believes matters. The RPLD level shows how deeply the student can use the choice.

CASE SCENARIO: ONE PASSAGE, THREE EVIDENCE CHOICES

PASSAGE

After a storm flooded the neighborhood library, Ella noticed younger students carrying wet books home in plastic bags. She cleaned an old wagon, added two shelves, and began delivering dry books from the school collection every Saturday.

PROMPT: Why did Ella create the rolling book cart?

Student	Response	What the choice reveals
Luke	Ella cleaned an old wagon and added shelves.	Finds an Action but does not connect it to the reason.
Lane	The library flooded, so Ella needed another way to bring books to children.	Chooses the problem and explains the cause-and-solution relationship.
Jake	Younger students carried books in plastic bags.	Selects a related Reaction, but the connection to Ella's decision is incomplete.

The students read the same passage. The difference is not the amount of text copied. The difference is what each student chose and what each student did with it.

The Five Evidence Moves

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find an obvious TRACK in the passage.	Reports what the passage says.

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Emergent	Name the TRACK and what kind of information it contains.	Describes a detail but may not connect it fully.
Visible	Choose evidence that directly supports the answer.	Supports the idea with relevant proof.
Independent	Explain what the evidence proves and why it supports the answer.	Develops the reasoning.
Reflective	Connect, compare, prioritize, or synthesize TRACKS.	Constructs meaning and significance.

The Evidence-to-Writing Path

The passage contains possibilities. TRACKS helps the student collect them. Relevance helps the student choose among them. The RPLD level determines what the student can do with the choice. The final writing makes that thinking visible.

Passage to TRACKS to Evidence Choice to Thinking Level to Writing Result

KEYS TO KEEP

- Evidence presence and evidence quality are not the same thing.
- An accurate detail may still be the wrong detail for the prompt.
- The TRACKS choice reveals what the student believes matters.
- Teach the first missing evidence move instead of telling the student only to add more.
- The goal is relevant evidence used at the highest useful thinking level.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

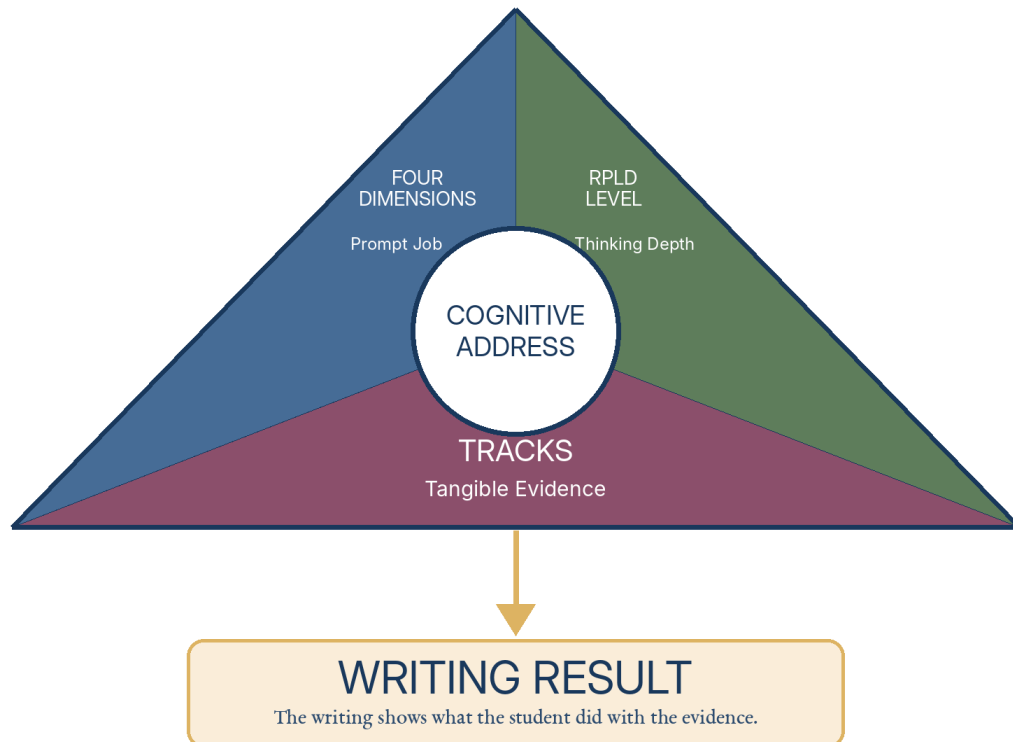
Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

The Evidence Matrix at a Glance

The Evidence Matrix adds a precise evidence lens to The Writing Matrix. It shows what the prompt asked, which TRACKS the student chose, and how deeply the student used them.

- See how the Four Dimensions, TRACKS, and RPLDs work together.
- Use one clear notation to record an evidence pattern.
- Keep the Cognitive Address temporary and tied to the task.



Three Questions, One More Precise Address

Lens	Question
Four Dimensions	What thinking job did the prompt require: TAUGHT, TAP, THINK, or TOGGLE?
TRACKS	What tangible evidence did the student collect and choose?
RPLD level	How fully, precisely, and independently did the student use the evidence?
Writing result	What did the evidence thinking produce in the response?

The Evidence Matrix does not replace the Cognitive Address used in The Writing Matrix. It sharpens it. A teacher may record the original address and place the evidence pattern beside it.

A SIMPLE ADDRESS NOTATION

Notation	Meaning
THINK-Visible TRACKS:	The prompt asked WHY. The student chose an Action and used it as relevant support, but still needed help

TOGGLE-Independent TRACKS: S + A	The prompt asked HOW two things were related. The student independently explained how the Setting influenced an Action.
TAP-Reflective TRACKS: K + R	The student evaluated and connected Key Knowledge with a Reaction to identify the strongest support.

When the prompt dimension is unknown, a teacher may write an evidence-only note such as A-Visible or K+R-Reflective. The note is a planning tool, not a new label for the student.

The Same TRACK Can Live at Any Level

Time is not automatically low-level. Key Knowledge is not automatically high-level. Any TRACK can be found, named, chosen, explained, or connected. The evidence type identifies what the student used. The RPLD level identifies the depth of the use.

Prompt Floor and Prompt Ceiling

Every prompt has a floor and a ceiling. The floor is the minimum thinking needed to answer. The ceiling is the highest thinking the prompt naturally gives the student an opportunity to show. A simple TAUGHT question may allow precise evidence use, but it may not provide enough room to prove Reflective thinking. A TOGGLE prompt may have a high ceiling, yet a student can still answer at a Foundational level.

CASE SCENARIO: A HIGH-CEILING PROMPT, A LOW-LEVEL RESPONSE

PASSAGE

The desert greenhouse used thick walls, shaded windows, and stored rainwater. Even during the hottest weeks, the plants continued to grow.

PROMPT: How did the greenhouse design affect the plants?

Student response	TRACKS chosen	Evidence level
The greenhouse had thick walls.	S - Setting	Foundational: finds one detail but does not explain the relationship.
The design reduced heat and saved water, allowing the plants to keep growing.	S + R	Independent: explains how conditions produced an outcome.

The Five Teacher Decisions

1. Find the Evidence Address. Identify the TRACKS chosen and the level demonstrated.
2. Name the Next Address. Choose one observable evidence move to the right.
3. Decide what the student needs to pack up. Name the missing strategy, knowledge, language, or writing behavior.
4. Teach the move. Model, guide, and remove support.
5. Check the writing result. Use a fresh passage or prompt to see whether the move transfers.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The prompt tells us the thinking job; TRACKS tells us the evidence choice; the RPLD tells us the depth.
- Do not assign a level by the TRACK alone.
- Do not assign a level by the prompt alone.
- Use the full address only when it makes the next teaching decision clearer.
- A Cognitive Address belongs to demonstrated thinking, not to the child.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

The Six TRACKS

TRACKS gives students six dependable places to look for tangible evidence inside a passage. The categories organize evidence without deciding the thinking level for the student.

- Define each TRACK in teacher-friendly and student-friendly language.
- Distinguish evidence categories that are commonly confused.
- Choose the primary job a detail performs in the response.

TRACKS tells us what evidence is available. The prompt tells us which evidence earns a place in the answer.

The Six Evidence Categories

TRACK	What it includes	Student question
T - Time	Historical or cultural era, chronology, sequence, duration, or when something happened.	When did it happen, how long did it last, or what time context matters?
R - Reactions	Responses, effects, solutions, resolutions, outcomes, or what happened because of something else.	How did someone or something respond, and what effect, solution, or resolution followed?
A - Actions	Events, decisions, problems, conflicts, causes, or what someone or something did.	What happened, what caused it, what problem occurred, or what decision was made?
C - Characters / Concepts / Creatures	The person, idea, subject, or living thing that is central to the passage.	Who or what is central, and which traits, features, roles, or ideas matter?
K - Key Knowledge	Important facts, details, definitions, explanations, or information the reader needs.	What fact, definition, detail, or explanation must the reader know?
S - Settings	Place, scenery, surroundings, conditions, and sensory details that shape what happens.	Where did it happen, and what conditions, scenery, or senses shaped it?

TRACKS Is Not a Ranking System

One TRACK is not better than another. The strongest choice depends on the prompt. A Time detail may be the best evidence for a question about historical context. A Reaction may be strongest for a question about an effect. A Setting detail may become essential when the prompt asks how an environment influenced an event.

One Detail May Touch More Than One TRACK

Evidence categories can overlap. The sentence, "After three dry months, the river dropped below the dock," contains Time, Setting, and a Reaction or effect. The teacher should not turn the categories into a guessing game. Ask which job the detail performs in the student's answer.

CASE SCENARIO: SORT BY THE JOB THE EVIDENCE PERFORMS

PASSAGE

For three weeks, the town received no rain. The pond shrank, the fish crowded into deeper water, and volunteers moved young turtles to a shaded holding pool. By Friday, a water truck began filling the pond while residents planted native grasses along the bank.

PROMPT: Sort each detail by the main evidence job it could perform.

Detail	Primary TRACK	Why
For three weeks	T - Time	Shows duration.
The pond shrank	R - Reaction	Shows an effect of the missing rain.
Volunteers moved turtles	A - Actions	Shows a decision and response.
Young turtles	C - Creatures	Names the living things at the center of the action.
Native grasses protect the bank	K - Key Knowledge	Provides important explanatory information.
A shaded holding pool	S - Settings	Names the place and condition used for protection.

Common Confusions

Confusion	Quick distinction
Action or Reaction?	Action is what occurred or caused change. Reaction is the response, effect, solution, resolution, or outcome.
Character or Key Knowledge?	C identifies the central person, concept, or creature. K provides important information about that subject.
Time or Setting?	Time answers when, how long, or in what era. Setting answers where and under what conditions.
Any fact or Key Knowledge?	A fact becomes Key Knowledge when the reader needs it to answer the prompt or understand the idea.

Teacher Language That Keeps the Work Simple

- Which TRACK did you find?
- What job does this detail perform in your answer?
- Is it only related to the topic, or does it prove your idea?
- Would another TRACK make the answer stronger?

KEYS TO KEEP

- TRACKS organizes tangible evidence into six dependable categories.
- The categories are not a difficulty ladder.
- A detail can touch more than one TRACK; name the job it performs in the response.
- The prompt, not the acronym, decides which evidence is most useful.
- Students need the categories as a tool, not as another vocabulary test.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Passage or text I am using:

Prompt or thinking job:

Possible TRACKS in the passage:

Most useful TRACKS for this prompt:

A detail students may confuse and how I will clarify it:

Teacher question I will ask:

The Five Levels of Evidence Thinking

The same piece of evidence can appear at five different thinking levels. The level is determined by what the student does with the evidence, not by how long the response is.

- Use Find it, Name it, Choose it, Explain it, and Connect it.
- Separate support from independence.
- Read one response as a clue and a pattern as stronger placement evidence.

One Progression Across Every TRACK

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find it: locate, point to, copy, or repeat an obvious detail.	Reports information.
Emergent	Name it: identify the TRACK and begin stating what it tells the reader.	Describes information with a partial connection.
Visible	Choose it: select relevant evidence that directly supports the response.	Supports the answer.
Independent	Explain it: state what the evidence proves and why it matters to the answer.	Develops the reasoning.
Reflective	Connect it: compare, prioritize, synthesize, or evaluate TRACKS to create meaning.	Constructs a larger conclusion or significance.

The Same Sentence at Five Levels

CASE SCENARIO: ONE PIECE OF TIME EVIDENCE

PASSAGE

After six months without steady rain, the creek no longer reached the town reservoir.

PROMPT: How did the length of the drought affect the town?

Level	Possible response	What changed
Foundational	The passage says six months without steady rain.	Finds Time.
Emergent	Six months tells how long the dry period lasted.	Names what the Time evidence represents.
Visible	The six-month drought is the detail that best supports the water shortage.	Chooses relevant Time evidence.
Independent	The six-month duration shows the shortage was not temporary, so the reservoir could not recover.	Explains what Time proves.
Reflective	The extended Time works with the shrinking creek and empty reservoir to show how a long environmental problem became a community crisis.	Connects T + R + S to construct meaning.

Response Length Does Not Set the Level

A short sentence may contain Reflective thinking if it makes a precise relationship visible. A long paragraph may remain Foundational if it repeats the passage. Count the thinking, not the words.

Support Changes What We Can Claim

A student who explains evidence after several leading questions can perform the thinking with support. That is valuable information, but it does not yet establish Independent performance. Language supports, oral rehearsal, accessibility tools, and sentence frames can improve access without lowering the cognitive demand. The key question is whether the support opened the door or completed the thinking for the student.

CASE SCENARIO: SIMILAR ANSWERS, DIFFERENT INDEPENDENCE

Student	What happened	Evidence level
Merrick	Explained the Action-Reaction relationship after the teacher asked four guiding questions.	Visible with support.
Emsy	Selected the same two TRACKS and explained the relationship in a fresh passage without prompting.	Independent.

Both responses may be correct. Independence is part of the address.

Look for a Pattern

One response is a clue. Look across oral discussion, selected answers, short responses, and longer writing. If the same evidence behavior appears several times, the address becomes more dependable. Update it as soon as the student grows.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Find it, Name it, Choose it, Explain it, and Connect it describe the evidence progression.
- The same TRACK can appear at every level.
- Writing length is not a thinking level.
- Support and independence must be recorded honestly.
- Use patterns of evidence, not one isolated response, to plan instruction.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

Relevant, Strong, and Precise Evidence

Students often choose a true detail and believe the evidence job is finished. This chapter shows how to move from accurate evidence to the most useful evidence for the prompt.

- Distinguish true, related, relevant, strong, and precise evidence.
- Use a short relevance test before writing.
- Teach students that more evidence is not automatically better evidence.

Right topic, wrong evidence does not answer the prompt.

The Evidence Quality Ladder

Stage	What it means
Available	The detail appears in the passage.
Accurate	The student represents the detail correctly.
Related	The detail is connected to the general topic.
Relevant	The detail directly supports the answer to this prompt.
Strong	The detail provides convincing support with little stretching.
Precise	The student selects the exact part needed and leaves out what does not earn a place.

The Three-Question Relevance Test

1. Does this TRACK answer the thinking job in the prompt?
2. Can I explain exactly what it proves?
3. Is there another detail that proves the idea more directly or precisely?

CASE SCENARIO: FIVE TRUE DETAILS, ONE BEST CHOICE

PASSAGE

Maya had practiced her speech in the empty auditorium for two weeks. On contest day, the room was filled with two hundred people. She paused at the curtain, read the encouraging note her brother had placed in her pocket, and walked to the microphone without asking her teacher to stand beside her.

PROMPT: Which evidence most strongly supports the idea that Maya became more confident?

Possible evidence	TRACK	Quality for this prompt
She practiced for two weeks.	T + A	Relevant, but it shows preparation more directly than confidence.
The room held two hundred people.	S + K	True and related, but it does not prove confidence.
Her brother wrote a note.	C + A	Related support, but the note alone does not show Maya's change.
She walked to the microphone without asking the teacher to	A	Strong and precise. Her independent Action directly shows confidence.

More Evidence Is Not Always Better

Students sometimes stack quotations because they believe quantity raises the score. A paragraph with three copied details and no reasoning may remain Foundational or Emergent. One precise detail, clearly explained, may produce stronger Independent writing.

Evidence density	Likely result
Many details, weak connection	The reader must guess why the evidence matters.
One relevant detail, clear explanation	The reasoning is visible and controlled.
Two connected details, clear relationship	The response can move toward analysis or significance.

Teach Students to Defend the Choice

Ask students to finish one sentence before they write: "I chose this TRACK because it proves ____." A student who cannot finish the sentence may have found a detail but has not yet made the evidence decision.

QUICK CONFERENCE	
Teacher asks	Student thinking made visible
Why this TRACK?	Relevance.
What does it prove?	Explanation.
Why is it stronger than the other detail?	Evaluation and precision.
What other TRACK changes or strengthens its meaning?	Connection and synthesis.

KEYS TO KEEP

- True evidence is not automatically relevant evidence.
- Relevant evidence directly answers the thinking job in the prompt.
- Strong evidence proves the idea with little stretching.
- Precise evidence includes what earns a place and leaves out what does not.
- Ask students to defend the evidence choice before asking them to add more.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt I am examining:

A true but weak detail students may choose:

The most relevant TRACK and evidence:

Why this evidence is stronger:

Sentence students can use to defend the choice:

Fresh prompt I will use to check transfer:

T: Time

Time evidence tells when, how long, in what order, or within what historical or cultural context something happened. Its value depends on what the student uses that context to explain.

- Recognize chronology, duration, era, and timing as Time evidence.
- Move Time from a date on the page to a reason in the response.
- Connect Time with Actions, Reactions, Key Knowledge, and Settings.

A date tells when. Higher-level Time evidence helps explain why the when matters.

What Time Can Include

- a date, year, era, season, or time of day;
- the order in which events occurred;
- how long a condition lasted;
- how quickly or slowly change occurred;
- historical or cultural context that shaped decisions and outcomes.

Time Across the Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find a stated time, date, sequence word, duration, or era.	Reports when or how long.
Emergent	Name what the Time detail establishes.	Describes the sequence or context.
Visible	Choose the Time evidence that directly supports the answer.	Uses time as relevant support.
Independent	Explain how timing, duration, or context affected the event or idea.	Develops cause, change, urgency, or context.
Reflective	Connect Time with other TRACKS to analyze patterns, change, or significance.	Explains how context shapes a larger meaning.

CASE SCENARIO: WHEN DURATION BECOMES EVIDENCE

PASSAGE

For six dry months, the creek dropped lower each week. At first, residents watered their gardens as usual. By midsummer, the town limited outdoor water use and opened a refill station for families whose wells had stopped working.

PROMPT: Why did the town change its water rules?

Student	Response	Evidence reading
Lane	The six-month drought shows the shortage lasted long enough to empty wells and require new rules.	Independent T + R: explains duration and its effect.
Jake	The town changed the rules by midsummer.	Emergent T: identifies timing but not the reason.
Luke	The creek dropped lower each week.	Visible R/T: relevant, but the explanation remains unfinished.

Common Roadblock: Treating Time as Decoration

Students often copy a year or sequence word because it is easy to find. Ask, "What changes because this happened then, lasted that long, or occurred in that era?" If the student cannot answer, the Time evidence may not yet be doing useful work.

Strong Time Partners

Evidence partner	What the relationship can reveal
T + A	How timing or historical context shaped an event, decision, or cause.
T + R	How long conditions produced an effect or response.
T + K	Why a fact matters within a particular era or sequence.
T + S	How time and environmental conditions worked together.

Teacher Move

Move the student one level to the right by adding one question: "Why does the timing matter?" The answer should point back to the prompt, not merely restate the date.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Time includes duration, sequence, and context, not only dates.
- A Time detail becomes stronger when the student explains what changed because of it.
- Do not reward a date that does not answer the prompt.
- Time often gains meaning when paired with an Action, Reaction, fact, or condition.
- Ask why the timing matters.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Time detail in the passage:

What the detail establishes:

How it answers the prompt:

TRACK that could strengthen it:

Current level and Next Address:

Question I will ask to move the thinking:

R: Reactions

Reaction evidence shows a response, effect, solution, resolution, or outcome. It helps students explain what changed after an event, decision, condition, or new piece of knowledge.

- Separate Reactions from the Actions or causes that came first.
- Use effects and outcomes as evidence, not only feelings.
- Connect Reactions to the evidence that produced them.

Reaction evidence answers, "What happened because of it?"

What Reactions Can Include

- a person's emotional, verbal, or physical response;
- an effect on a character, group, environment, or system;
- a solution created in response to a problem;
- a resolution that ends or changes a conflict;
- an outcome or consequence that follows an Action, condition, or idea.

Reactions Across the Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find a stated response, effect, solution, resolution, or outcome.	Reports what happened afterward.
Emergent	Name who or what reacted and what the reaction shows.	Describes a response or effect.
Visible	Choose the Reaction that best supports the answer.	Uses an outcome as relevant proof.
Independent	Explain why the Reaction supports the conclusion and what caused it.	Develops cause and effect.
Reflective	Connect, compare, or evaluate Reactions to reveal change, consequences, or significance.	Constructs a larger understanding of impact.

CASE SCENARIO: AN OUTCOME IS MORE THAN THE LAST EVENT

PASSAGE

A storm flattened the school garden. The next morning, Ms. Chen found three students tying broken stems to wooden stakes. By lunch, other classes brought soil and tools. A week later, the garden was growing again, and students created a weather plan for future storms.

PROMPT: How did the school community respond to the damaged garden?

Student	Response	Evidence reading
Jake	A storm flattened the garden.	Foundational A: identifies the problem, not the response.
Luke	Students tied stems, brought tools, and created a weather plan.	Visible A + R: selects the response evidence.
Lane	The community first repaired the damage and then created a plan, turning a reaction into future prevention.	Reflective R + A: connects immediate and long-term responses.

Common Roadblock: Confusing Cause and Effect

Students may choose the problem when the prompt asks for the response, or choose the response when the prompt asks what caused it. Use a simple test: Action asks, "What happened or caused change?" Reaction asks, "What happened because of it?"

Strong Reaction Partners

Evidence partner	What the relationship can reveal
A + R	Cause and effect, problem and solution, conflict and resolution.
C + R	How a character, concept, or creature changes or responds.
K + R	How new knowledge or information changes a response.
S + R	How conditions or environment produce an effect.

Teacher Move

Ask the student to place one word between the evidence pieces: because, therefore, as a result, so, or which led to. Then remove the frame and ask the student to state the relationship in their own words.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Reactions include effects, solutions, resolutions, and outcomes, not only feelings.
- A problem is not the same as the response to the problem.
- Reaction evidence becomes stronger when the student names what produced it.
- A + R is one of the clearest evidence relationships for cause and effect.
- Ask, "What happened because of it?"

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

A: Actions

Action evidence captures events, decisions, problems, conflicts, and causes. It is concrete and easy to find, but students must learn to choose the Action that actually proves the answer.

- Recognize problems, causes, decisions, and events as Actions.
- Move beyond plot summary or event listing.
- Explain how an Action reveals motive, cause, change, or meaning.

An Action tells what happened. Strong evidence thinking tells why that Action belongs in this answer.

What Actions Can Include

- an event or behavior;
- a choice or decision;
- a problem or conflict;
- a cause that sets something else in motion;
- a step taken to reach a goal or solve a problem.

Actions Across the Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find a stated Action, event, problem, conflict, or cause.	Reports what happened.
Emergent	Name what kind of Action it is and who or what carried it out.	Describes an event or decision.
Visible	Choose the Action that most directly supports the answer.	Uses a relevant event as proof.
Independent	Explain how the Action reveals motive, cause, change, or meaning.	Develops the reasoning behind the event.
Reflective	Connect patterns of Actions with Reactions, context, or significance.	Explains how choices build a larger idea.

CASE SCENARIO: THE MOST DRAMATIC ACTION IS NOT ALWAYS THE BEST EVIDENCE

PASSAGE

Ella stood behind the curtain while the audience filled the gym. She wanted her teacher to introduce the project for her. Then she saw the younger students holding the model they had helped build. Ella took the note cards from her pocket, walked to the microphone, and began the presentation herself.

PROMPT: Which Action best shows that Ella became more confident?

Possible choice	Quality	Why
The audience filled the gym.	Related, not relevant	It raises the pressure but does not show Ella's confidence.
The younger students held the model.	Supporting context	It may help explain motivation, but it is not Ella's Action.

Possible choice	Quality	Why
Ella walked to the microphone and began by herself.	Strong and precise	Her independent Action directly shows confidence.

Common Roadblock: Retelling Instead of Proving

When students list several events in order, the response may sound complete while the evidence job remains unfinished. Ask the student to circle the one Action that best proves the answer. Then ask what that Action shows.

Strong Action Partners

Evidence partner	What the relationship can reveal
C + A	Motivation, traits, perspective, or how a subject behaves.
A + R	Cause and effect, problem and solution, decision and consequence.
T + A	How timing or historical context shaped an event.
S + A	How place or conditions influenced behavior or events.

Teacher Move

Use the frame, "This Action matters because it shows ____." When the student can finish it accurately, ask for the sentence again without the frame. The goal is explanation, not permanent dependence on a formula.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Actions include decisions, problems, conflicts, events, and causes.
- The most dramatic Action may not be the most relevant Action.
- Retelling several events does not automatically prove an answer.
- Ask what the selected Action shows.
- Pair Actions with Characters, Reactions, Time, or Settings when the prompt asks for a relationship.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

C: Characters, Concepts, and Creatures

C evidence identifies the person, idea, subject, or living thing at the center of the passage. It works across literary, informational, historical, and scientific texts.

- Use C evidence beyond traditional character traits.
- Separate the central subject from facts about the subject.
- Connect characteristics, roles, and perspectives to Actions and Reactions.

C tells us who or what is central. Higher-level thinking explains how that central subject shapes the evidence around it.

What C Evidence Can Include

- a literary character, narrator, speaker, or historical figure;
- a concept such as erosion, fairness, migration, or responsibility;
- a creature, organism, species, or living system;
- traits, features, roles, motivations, perspectives, or relationships;
- the central subject the other evidence helps the reader understand.

C Across the Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Identify the central character, concept, or creature and a stated feature.	Reports who or what the passage is about.
Emergent	Name a relevant trait, role, feature, or perspective.	Describes the central subject.
Visible	Choose C evidence that directly supports the answer.	Uses a trait or feature as relevant proof.
Independent	Explain how the characteristic, role, or perspective influences an Action, Reaction, or idea.	Develops meaning around the subject.
Reflective	Connect the central subject with several TRACKS to analyze change, relationships, or significance.	Constructs a deeper interpretation.

CASE SCENARIO: CHARACTER EVIDENCE IS MORE THAN A TRAIT WORD

PASSAGE

Jonas was known for finishing every task alone. During the bridge project, he first refused help. When the model collapsed, he listened as Maya explained a new support design. Jonas rebuilt the base with the group and later asked each student to describe the part they had contributed.

PROMPT: How does Jonas change during the project?

Student	Response	Evidence reading
Luke	Jonas was independent.	Emergent C: names a trait but misses the change.
Lane	Jonas moves from refusing help to asking others to explain their contributions.	Independent C + A: uses Actions to explain the change.
Jake	The bridge model collapsed.	Foundational A: finds the event that triggered change but not the character change itself.

Across Content Areas

Text type	C evidence may focus on
Literary	character, narrator, speaker, motivation, relationship, perspective.
Informational	central person, group, idea, issue, invention, or process.
Science	organism, species, system, structure, or scientific concept.
Social studies	historical figure, community, government concept, culture, or movement.

Common Roadblock: Confusing C and K

C names the central subject and the qualities that matter. K gives the facts and explanations a reader needs about that subject. In a passage about sea turtles, the turtles are C. The fact that hatchlings use moonlight to move toward the water is K. A strong response may need both.

Teacher Move

Ask, "What does this trait, feature, role, or perspective cause the subject to do?" That question moves C toward an Action, Reaction, or relationship instead of leaving it as a label.

KEYS TO KEEP

- C works with characters, concepts, and creatures across every content area.
- A trait word alone may describe without explaining.
- C names the central subject; K supplies important information about it.
- Connect C with Actions and Reactions to show change, motive, or influence.
- Ask what the characteristic causes or helps explain.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

K: Key Knowledge

Key Knowledge includes the facts, details, definitions, and explanations the reader needs. The word *key* matters. Not every fact deserves space in the final response.

- Distinguish important knowledge from interesting information.
- Select facts that directly serve the prompt.
- Use Key Knowledge to explain Actions, Reactions, and significance.

A fact becomes Key Knowledge when the reader needs it to understand or prove the answer.

What Key Knowledge Can Include

- a fact or important detail;
- a definition or explanation;
- a statistic or measurement;
- technical or background information;
- knowledge that unlocks the meaning of another TRACK.

Key Knowledge Across the Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find an explicit fact, definition, detail, or explanation.	Reports information.
Emergent	Name what the information helps the reader know.	Describes a fact with partial purpose.
Visible	Choose the Key Knowledge that directly supports the answer.	Uses a relevant fact as proof.
Independent	Explain what the fact proves and how it supports the conclusion.	Develops an evidence-based explanation.
Reflective	Prioritize, combine, or evaluate knowledge across a passage or sources.	Builds a larger conclusion or significance.

CASE SCENARIO: INTERESTING IS NOT THE SAME AS KEY

PASSAGE

Mangrove trees grow where salt water meets land. Their tangled roots slow moving water and trap soil. Young fish hide among the roots, and shorelines with healthy mangroves often lose less soil during storms. Some mangrove species can also filter or release extra salt.

PROMPT: Why can mangroves protect a shoreline during storms?

Possible fact	Quality for the prompt	Reason
Mangroves grow where salt water meets land.	Related	It gives location but not protection.
Some species release extra salt.	Interesting, not relevant	It does not explain shoreline protection.
Their roots slow water and trap	Key Knowledge	It directly explains how protection occurs.

Possible fact	Quality for the prompt	Reason
Young fish hide among the roots.	Important in another prompt	It supports habitat, not shoreline protection.

Common Roadblock: The Fact Hunt

Students may highlight every number, bold word, or surprising fact. That creates a collection, not a decision. Ask, "Which fact unlocks the answer?" The strongest Key Knowledge usually helps explain how or why another event, condition, or response occurred.

Strong Key Knowledge Partners

Evidence partner	What the relationship can reveal
K + A	How information, knowledge, or a fact led to a decision or event.
K + R	How a fact explains an effect, solution, or response.
K + C	Why a character, concept, or creature has a particular trait or behavior.
K + T	Why information matters within a sequence, era, or duration.
K + S	How environmental or physical conditions work.

Teacher Move

Ask students to place a small key beside only the fact that opens the answer. Then require one explanation sentence: "This is Key Knowledge because the reader needs it to understand ____."

KEYS TO KEEP

- The word key separates useful evidence from extra information.
- Bold print, numbers, and surprising facts are not automatically the best evidence.
- Key Knowledge often explains why another TRACK matters.
- Ask which fact unlocks the answer.
- One precise fact can be stronger than a list of loosely related details.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

S: Settings

Setting evidence includes place, scenery, surroundings, conditions, and senses. It becomes powerful when students explain how the environment shapes a person, event, concept, or outcome.

- Expand Setting beyond the name of a place.
- Use conditions and sensory details as tangible evidence.
- Connect Settings with Actions, Reactions, Characters, and Key Knowledge.

Setting is not only where something happens. It is the set of conditions under which it happens.

What Settings Can Include

- physical place or geographic location;
- scenery, surroundings, weather, or environmental conditions;
- social or cultural surroundings;
- sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and other sensory evidence;
- conditions that limit, support, pressure, or shape what happens.

Settings Across the Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find a stated place, condition, scenery detail, or sensory clue.	Reports where or under what conditions.
Emergent	Name what the Setting detail establishes.	Describes the environment.
Visible	Choose the Setting evidence that directly supports the answer.	Uses conditions as relevant proof.
Independent	Explain how the Setting influences an Action, Reaction, character, concept, or outcome.	Develops a relationship between environment and meaning.
Reflective	Connect Setting with several TRACKS to analyze influence, contrast, or significance.	Explains how conditions shape a larger idea.

CASE SCENARIO: SETTING AS A CAUSE

PASSAGE

The research station stood on a narrow island where fresh water was limited and strong winds arrived without warning. The team stored rainwater under the floor, planted low crops behind wind screens, and used heavy clips to secure every tray.

PROMPT: How did the island setting influence the team's work?

Student	Response	Evidence reading
Jake	The station was on a narrow island.	Emergent S: names the place but not its influence.
Lane	Limited water and strong winds caused the team to store rainwater and protect the crops.	Independent S + A: explains how conditions shaped Actions.
Luke	The team used heavy clips.	Foundational A: finds a response but leaves the Setting relationship unstated.

Common Roadblock: Scenery Without Purpose

Students often select a vivid Setting detail because it sounds descriptive. The detail earns its place only when it answers the prompt. Ask, "What becomes possible, difficult, necessary, or meaningful because of this setting?"

Strong Setting Partners

Evidence partner	What the relationship can reveal
S + A	How conditions influence decisions, behavior, problems, or events.
S + R	How an environment produces an effect or response.
S + C	How place or surroundings shape a character, concept, or creature.
S + K	How scientific, geographic, or technical conditions work.
S + T	How conditions change over time or differ across an era or season.

Teacher Move

Draw a simple arrow from the Setting detail to the Action or Reaction it influenced. Ask the student to turn the arrow into a sentence. This makes the relationship visible before the student writes it independently.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Setting includes conditions, scenery, surroundings, and senses.
- A vivid detail is not useful unless it serves the prompt.
- Setting often acts as a cause, pressure, support, or contrast.
- Connect Setting to what became possible, difficult, necessary, or meaningful.
- Ask how the environment shaped the evidence that followed.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

The Thirty Evidence Addresses

Six TRACKS multiplied by five RPLD levels create thirty observable evidence addresses. The matrix helps teachers name what a student is doing now without turning the address into a permanent label.

- Read each cell as an evidence behavior, not a student identity.
- Use the same progression across all six TRACKS.
- Record the prompt dimension beside the evidence address when it clarifies instruction.

The TRACK names what the student chose. The level names what the student did with the choice.

Quick View: Six TRACKS Across Five Moves

TRACK	Find it	Name it	Choose it	Explain it	Connect it
T	Time	What time shows	Relevant time	Why time matters	Time with other TRACKS
R	Reaction	What followed	Relevant response	Cause and effect	Impact across evidence
A	Action	Role of action	Relevant action	What action proves	Pattern and significance
C	Central subject	Trait or feature	Relevant C evidence	How C influences	Change and relationships
K	Fact or detail	What reader learns	Relevant knowledge	What fact proves	Synthesis and conclusion
S	Place or condition	What setting shows	Relevant setting	How setting influences	Environment and meaning

Detailed Matrix: Foundational Through Visible

TRACK	Foundational - Find it	Emergent - Name it	Visible - Choose it
T Time	Locates a stated time, duration, sequence, or era.	Names what the time detail establishes.	Chooses the time evidence that best supports the answer.
R Reactions	Locates a stated response, effect, solution, resolution, or outcome.	Names who or what reacted and what followed.	Chooses the reaction or effect that best supports the answer.
A Actions	Locates an action, event, problem, conflict, cause, or decision.	Names the action and the role it plays.	Chooses the action that most directly proves the answer.
C Characters / Concepts / Creatures	Identifies the central character, concept, or creature and a stated feature.	Names a relevant trait, role, feature, or perspective.	Chooses C evidence that directly supports the answer.
K Key Knowledge	Locates an explicit fact, definition, detail, or explanation.	Names what the information helps the reader know.	Chooses the Key Knowledge that directly supports the answer.
S Settings	Locates a place, condition, scenery detail, or sensory clue.	Names what the setting detail establishes.	Chooses the setting evidence that directly supports the answer.

Detailed Matrix: Independent and Reflective

TRACK	Independent - Explain it	Reflective - Connect it
T Time	Explains how timing, duration, or context affects the idea.	Connects time with other TRACKS to analyze change or significance.

TRACK	Independent - Explain it	Reflective - Connect it
R Reactions	Explains what caused the reaction and what it proves.	Connects or compares reactions to analyze impact and significance.
A Actions	Explains how the action reveals cause, motive, change, or meaning.	Connects patterns of action with outcomes and significance.
C Characters / Concepts / Creatures	Explains how a characteristic or perspective influences other evidence.	Synthesizes C with other TRACKS to analyze change or relationships.
K Key Knowledge	Explains what the fact proves and why it matters.	Prioritizes or combines knowledge to reach a larger conclusion.
S Settings	Explains how the setting influences actions, reactions, or ideas.	Connects setting with other TRACKS to analyze influence or significance.

How to Read an Evidence Address

1. Read the prompt first. Name the thinking job when it is known.
2. Mark the TRACK or TRACKS the student actually chose, not every detail available in the passage.
3. Name the highest evidence move the student completed accurately and independently.
4. Record the address as a temporary instructional note, such as THINK-Visible | TRACKS: A + R.
5. Name one Next Address and one evidence behavior the student needs to pack up.

CASE SCENARIO: THE SAME TRACK AT THREE ADDRESSES

PASSAGE

When the bridge closed, buses had to travel twelve extra miles each morning. Families began leaving home earlier, and the school moved breakfast service thirty minutes later.

PROMPT: How did the bridge closing affect the school community?

Response	Address	Next move
The buses traveled twelve extra miles.	R-Foundational	Name this as an effect and connect it to the community.
The extra travel made families leave earlier.	R-Visible	Explain how the effect changed the school routine.
The longer route changed both family schedules and school breakfast, showing that one closure affected the whole morning system.	R-Reflective with T + A	Transfer the same synthesis to a fresh passage.

Do Not Average Away the Evidence Profile

A student may be Independent with Actions, Visible with Key Knowledge, and Emergent with Time. Averaging those patterns into one color removes the information the teacher needs. Preserve the pattern long enough to choose the next lesson, then update it when the evidence changes.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The thirty cells describe evidence behaviors, not types of students.
- The same five moves apply to every TRACK.
- Record only the TRACKS the student chose for the response.
- Add the prompt dimension when it makes the evidence address more precise.
- Preserve the pattern instead of averaging it into one permanent level.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

One TRACK, Five Levels

Teachers can see the Evidence Matrix most clearly when the passage and basic evidence stay the same while the student thinking changes. This chapter follows one TRACK from reporting to constructing meaning.

- Compare five responses built from the same basic evidence.
- Notice the exact move that raises the writing result.
- Avoid using length, vocabulary, or polish as a shortcut for thinking level.

ANCHOR PASSAGE: THE COOLING ROOF

PASSAGE

The community center replaced its dark roof with a pale roof made from reflective material. During the next heat wave, the rooms stayed cooler in the afternoon, and the building used less electricity for air conditioning. The center then shared its temperature records with nearby schools.

PROMPT: How did the new roof affect the community center?

The Same Reaction Evidence at Five Levels

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	The rooms stayed cooler.	Reports a Reaction.
Emergent	Staying cooler was an effect of the new roof.	Names the detail as an effect.
Visible	The strongest effect is that the rooms stayed cooler during the heat wave.	Chooses the Reaction that directly answers the prompt.
Independent	The cooler rooms show that the reflective roof reduced heat entering the building, which also lowered electricity use.	Explains what the Reaction proves and connects a second effect.
Reflective	The cooler rooms, reduced electricity use, and shared records show that one design change improved the building and created knowledge the wider community could use.	Synthesizes R + K + A into significance.

What Actually Changes

Move	Change in the thinking
Find to Name	The student stops treating the detail as an isolated sentence and identifies its evidence job.
Name to Choose	The student decides which available detail most directly answers the prompt.
Choose to Explain	The student states what the evidence proves and why it supports the answer.
Explain to Connect	The student relates evidence pieces, weighs their importance, and reaches a larger conclusion.

Do Not Let Surface Features Fool You

A response can use advanced vocabulary and remain literal. A response can contain a spelling error and still show a strong evidence relationship. The Evidence Matrix asks first what the student did with the TRACKS. Composition and conventions still matter, but they are separate lenses.

CASE SCENARIO: WHICH RESPONSE SHOWS MORE EVIDENCE THINKING?

Response A	The extraordinary reflective material was installed upon the community center roof, and the temperature was cooler.
Response B	Because the pale roof reflected heat, the center stayed cooler and needed less air conditioning.
Analysis	Response B demonstrates stronger evidence thinking. It explains an Action-Reaction relationship. Response A sounds polished but mostly reports information.

Do not confuse vocabulary size with evidence depth.

A Practical Scoring Question

Before assigning an evidence level, ask: "What is the strongest accurate evidence move I can point to in this response?" Name that move, then look for the same behavior in another task before treating the address as dependable.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The evidence can stay the same while the thinking level changes.
- Each move adds a new job: name, choose, explain, or connect.
- Advanced words do not guarantee advanced evidence thinking.
- Errors in conventions do not erase a valid cognitive relationship.
- Name the highest accurate and independent move you can point to.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

One TRACK I want to examine:

Foundational version of the response:

Emergent version:

Visible version:

Independent version:

Reflective version:

What the TRACKS Choice Reveals About the Prompt

The thinking job lives in the prompt. The TRACKS choice shows how the student interpreted that job. A mismatch may be an evidence problem, a prompt-reading problem, or both.

- Connect TRACKS evidence to TAUGHT, TAP, THINK, and TOGGLE.
- Recognize that prompt dimension and RPLD level are not the same scale.
- Use the student's evidence choice to diagnose prompt understanding.

Words suggest. The thinking job decides. Do not look only for a word in the prompt. Look for the job.

The Four Dimensions Change the Evidence Job

Dimension	Primary prompt job	What TRACKS must do
TAUGHT	Recall, recognize, identify, describe, or apply what has been taught.	Locate and accurately use the TRACK that contains the explicit information or taught concept.
TAP	Bring the evidence.	Select the strongest or most precise TRACKS support for the answer.
THINK	Answer WHY: reason, cause, motivation, purpose, or meaning.	Use one or more TRACKS to explain why the answer is true.
TOGGLE	Answer HOW: process or relationship.	Move between TRACKS to explain steps, influence, connection, or how meaning is created.

A Lower-Level Prompt Can Still Show Stronger Evidence Use

Yes. A TAUGHT prompt may allow a student to select precise evidence, explain the taught concept clearly, or connect it to another idea. The prompt type does not automatically assign the RPLD level. However, a very simple recall question may have a low ceiling. It may not give the student enough room to demonstrate full Reflective reasoning. We should not claim thinking the task never required the student to show.

The opposite is also true. A TOGGLE prompt may require a relationship, but a student may answer by copying one Setting detail. The prompt has a high ceiling, yet the demonstrated evidence level is Foundational.

ONE PASSAGE ACROSS FOUR DIMENSIONS

PASSAGE

A sudden cold front reached the orchard during the night. Growers turned on large fans to keep warmer air moving around the trees. By morning, blossoms near the fans had less frost than blossoms in the still areas.

Dimension and prompt	Likely TRACKS job	What the response must show
TAUGHT: What did the growers turn on?	A	Locate the stated Action.
TAP: Which detail best supports that the fans helped?	R + S	Choose the strongest outcome and condition.
THINK: Why did the growers use the fans?	K + A	Explain the reason for the Action.
TOGGLE: How did moving air affect the blossoms?	A + R + S	Explain the relationship between the Action, conditions, and outcome.

When the TRACKS Choice Misses the Thinking Job

Pattern	Possible meaning
Prompt asks WHY; student copies a Setting detail.	The student may recognize the topic but not the cause, motivation, or meaning relationship.
Prompt asks for best evidence; student chooses a true but broad fact.	The student may need relevance and precision instruction.
Prompt asks HOW two ideas connect; student gives one Action.	The student may not yet toggle between the required evidence pieces.
Prompt asks for explicit information; student makes an unsupported inference.	The student may be overthinking the task or overlooking the stated evidence.

Teacher Routine: Read the Job Before the TRACK

1. Underline the verb phrase or thinking job in the prompt.
2. Name the dimension when it is useful.
3. Predict which TRACKS could answer that job.
4. Compare the prediction with the TRACKS the student chose.
5. Decide whether the first roadblock is prompt interpretation, evidence selection, or evidence reasoning.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The prompt dimension and the RPLD level are related but not identical.
- A TAUGHT prompt can reveal strong evidence use, but the task ceiling limits what we can claim.
- A high-ceiling prompt can still produce a low-level response.
- The TRACKS choice reveals how the student interpreted the thinking job.
- Right topic, wrong thinking or wrong evidence leads to an incomplete answer.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt:

Verb phrase or thinking job:

Dimension:

TRACKS the prompt most likely requires:

TRACKS the student chose:

First roadblock and Next Address:

Evidence Partners

Some prompts can be answered with one precise TRACK. Others require a relationship between two evidence types. Evidence partners help students explain why or how instead of stacking unrelated details.

- Decide when one TRACK is enough.
- Use common TRACKS pairings to make relationships visible.
- Avoid requiring multiple pieces of evidence only for quantity.

Use a second TRACK because the thinking needs it, not because the paragraph looks too short.

When One TRACK Is Enough

A precise TAP question may ask for the detail that best supports an idea. One Action or one piece of Key Knowledge may answer completely. A short constructed response may also need only one strong detail when the student explains it fully. Do not weaken a clear response by forcing extra evidence into it.

When Evidence Needs a Partner

WHY and HOW prompts often require two evidence jobs. One TRACK provides the idea to be explained. Another shows the cause, effect, context, influence, or relationship. The partner is useful when it completes the reasoning.

Evidence partners	What they often help explain
A + R	cause and effect; problem and solution; decision and consequence.
C + A	motivation; trait and behavior; concept and application.
C + R	character response; change; impact on a living thing or central idea.
T + A	historical context and event; duration and decision; sequence and cause.
T + R	change over time; long condition and resulting effect.
S + A	environment and behavior; conditions and event.
S + R	conditions and effect; place and response.
K + A	knowledge and decision; fact and process.
K + R	fact and effect; information and response.
K + C	important knowledge about a central person, concept, or creature.

CASE SCENARIO: DOES THE ANSWER NEED A PARTNER?

PASSAGE

The class placed one seed tray near a sunny window and another inside a dark cabinet. Both trays received the same soil and water. After ten days, the window plants were green and upright. The cabinet plants were pale and weak.

Prompt	Best evidence plan	Reason
Where was the first tray placed?	S only	One explicit Setting answers the question.
Which detail best shows that light affected growth?	R only, with a precise comparison	The outcomes provide the strongest proof.
Why were the cabinet plants pale?	S + K + R	The response must connect the dark condition, knowledge about light, and the effect.
How did the two settings produce different results?	S + R	The prompt requires a relationship between conditions and outcomes.

The Partner Test

1. Can one TRACK answer the prompt completely?
2. Does a second TRACK explain why or how the first one matters?
3. Can the student state the relationship between them?
4. Does each piece earn its place, or is one only repeating the other?

Common Roadblock: Evidence Stacking

Students may place two quotations side by side and believe they have created a relationship. Two details become evidence partners only when the student explains how they work together. The connection sentence is the thinking.

EVIDENCE STACKING VERSUS EVIDENCE PARTNERSHIP

Stacking	The cabinet was dark. The plants were pale.
Partnership	Because the cabinet blocked light, the plants became pale and weak.
Difference	The second sentence makes the S to R relationship visible.

KEYS TO KEEP

- One precise TRACK may be enough for some prompts.
- Use a second TRACK when the reasoning needs a relationship.
- Two quotations are not partners until the student explains how they work together.
- Choose partners by the prompt job, not by a fixed formula.
- The connection sentence carries the thinking.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt or task I am examining:

TRACKS evidence the student chose:

What the choice and response already show:

Current evidence level and Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Instructional move I will try:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

Evidence Chains

An evidence chain connects three or more TRACKS in a clear order. Chains help students explain how one condition, fact, decision, or event leads to another without turning the response into a list.

- Build a chain only when each link changes the meaning.
- Use arrows to rehearse a relationship before writing it.
- End the chain with a conclusion, not another copied detail.

A chain is not more evidence. It is evidence with a direction.

Common Evidence Chains

Chain	What it can reveal
K to A to R	Knowledge leads to a decision, which produces an outcome.
S to A to R	Conditions shape an Action, which produces a Reaction.
T to A to R	Timing or context shapes an event and its effect.
C to A to R	A trait, role, or motivation shapes behavior and consequence.
K to C to A	Knowledge about a subject explains its trait and behavior.
S to C to R	Environment affects a character, concept, or creature and its response.

Build the Chain in Three Steps

1. Place the evidence pieces in the order that makes sense.
2. Write a short relationship over each arrow: caused, influenced, revealed, led to, or changed.
3. Turn the chain into a conclusion that answers the prompt.

CASE SCENARIO: FROM THREE DETAILS TO ONE EXPLANATION

PASSAGE

The marsh water became unusually warm during a week of high temperatures. Warm water holds less oxygen, so fish gathered near the surface. Volunteers then installed temporary aerators that moved more oxygen into the water.

PROMPT: How did the high temperatures lead to the volunteers' decision?

Chain link	TRACK	Job
A week of high temperatures warmed the marsh.	T + S	Establishes the condition.
Warm water held less oxygen and fish gathered near the surface.	K + R	Explains the effect.
Volunteers installed aerators.	A	Shows the decision made in response.
Complete chain	T/S to K/R to A	The temperatures changed the water, the change affected the

Where Chains Break

Break	What the teacher sees
Missing link	The student jumps from the first detail to a conclusion the passage does not support.
Wrong direction	The student reverses cause and effect.
Repeated link	Two details perform the same job without adding meaning.
No conclusion	The student lists the chain but never answers the prompt.
Overloaded chain	Too many details make the main relationship hard to follow.

Teacher Move

Give the student three evidence cards and two blank arrows. Ask the student to order the cards, label the arrows, and state the conclusion orally. Then remove the cards and ask for the relationship in writing. The goal is transfer, not dependence on the organizer.

QUICK CASE: JAKE, LUKE, AND LANE		
Student	What the student does	Next address
Luke	Lists all three marsh details in passage order.	Explain the arrow between the first and second details.
Lane	Explains the full condition-effect-decision chain.	Evaluate which link is most important and why.
Jake	Chooses only the volunteers' Action.	Add the Reaction that caused the decision.

KEYS TO KEEP

- A chain gives evidence a direction.
- Each link must add a new job or relationship.
- Label the arrows before asking students to write the full explanation.
- A complete chain ends by answering the prompt.
- Remove repeated or unnecessary links so the reasoning stays clear.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Prompt:

First TRACK and evidence:

Relationship or arrow:

Second TRACK and evidence:

Third TRACK, if needed:

Conclusion the chain should support:

From Evidence Drop to Evidence Integration

Evidence does not speak for itself. Students must place it inside the reasoning so the reader can see what the TRACK proves and how it supports the answer.

- Recognize an evidence drop even when the quotation is accurate.
- Integrate evidence into the student's own idea and explanation.
- Use the Evidence and Explanation jobs in TREES without turning them into a rigid formula.

The evidence sentence brings the proof. The explanation sentence tells the reader what to do with it.

What an Evidence Drop Looks Like

An evidence drop occurs when a student inserts a detail or quotation and moves on. The reader is left to infer why the evidence matters. The paragraph may contain the right TRACK, but the evidence thinking is not yet visible.

BEFORE AND AFTER: THE SAME EVIDENCE

PASSAGE

The city planted shade trees along the hottest blocks. Two summers later, sidewalk temperatures beneath the trees were lower, and more residents used the walking route during the afternoon.

PROMPT: How did the trees affect the neighborhood?

Version	Writing
Evidence drop	The text says, "more residents used the walking route during the afternoon."
Integrated evidence	The cooler shade changed how residents used the neighborhood. More people walked in the afternoon because the trees made the route more comfortable.
Reflective connection	The lower temperatures and increased afternoon use show that the trees changed both the physical setting and the community's daily behavior.

The Three Jobs Inside Evidence Writing

Job	What the writer must do
Answer	State the idea the response will prove.
Evidence	Choose the relevant TRACK or TRACKS from the passage.
Reasoning	Explain what the evidence proves, why it matters, or how the pieces connect.

Connection to TREES

In informative writing, TREES keeps two different jobs visible. E1 brings Evidence. E2 provides Explanation. The Evidence Matrix strengthens both. TRACKS helps the student choose the right E1. The RPLD level shows how far the student carries E2 - from naming the evidence to connecting it with meaning and significance.

TREES job	Evidence Matrix question
E1 - Evidence	Which TRACK directly supports this Reason or Way?
E2 - Explanation	What does this TRACK prove, and why does it support the thesis?

TREES job	Evidence Matrix question
S - Significance	What larger understanding appears when the evidence is connected?

Integrate Without Forcing One Sentence Pattern

Sentence frames can help a student begin, but the frame is not the goal. Students should learn several ways to integrate evidence: paraphrase the important detail, embed a short quotation, name the Action or Reaction, compare two facts, or explain a relationship directly. The writing should sound natural and keep the student's idea in control.

TEACHER LANGUAGE FOR INTEGRATION	
Current need	Teacher prompt
Evidence is copied but unexplained.	What does this detail prove about your answer?
Evidence is related but weak.	Which TRACK answers the prompt more directly?
Two details are stacked.	What relationship belongs between them?
Explanation repeats the evidence.	What new understanding should the reader gain from this detail?
Paragraph is overloaded.	Which evidence earns its place, and which detail can leave?

A Simple Revision Test

Cover the evidence sentence. Can the reader still identify the answer? Cover the explanation. Can the reader tell why the evidence matters? If either job disappears, the student knows what must be revised.

KEYS TO KEEP

- An accurate quotation can still be an evidence drop.
- The student's idea should remain in control of the paragraph.
- E1 brings the TRACK; E2 explains what it proves.
- Two details need a stated relationship, not only a shared paragraph.
- Revise for the missing job instead of adding evidence automatically.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Student answer or controlling idea:

TRACKS evidence currently used:

Where the evidence is dropped or weakly connected:

Explanation the reader still needs:

Evidence that can be removed:

Revision move I will teach:

The Same Evidence, Five Writing Results

The clearest way to see the Evidence Matrix is to hold the passage and prompt steady while the writing changes. Each level produces a different result even when every response is about the same evidence.

- Compare writing results without using length as the level marker.
- Identify the exact evidence move visible in each response.
- Connect evidence thinking to reporting, describing, supporting, developing, and constructing meaning.

ANCHOR PASSAGE: THE WETLAND WALKWAY

PASSAGE

Visitors once crossed the marsh on a dirt path that became muddy after rain. The town built a raised boardwalk over the wettest ground and placed viewing spaces away from bird nests. Within one season, fewer people stepped into the reeds, more families visited after storms, and nesting areas showed less disturbance.

PROMPT: How did the boardwalk change the way people and wildlife used the marsh?

Five Responses With Similar Lengths

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	The town built a raised boardwalk over wet ground, and the passage says fewer people stepped into the reeds after it was built.	Finds A and R but mostly reports the passage.
Emergent	The boardwalk gave visitors a different path, and fewer people walked through the reeds. This shows that the path changed where people went.	Names the Action-Reaction pattern but gives limited effect on wildlife.
Visible	The raised boardwalk kept visitors out of the reeds and away from nests. Those details support the idea that people could visit with less disturbance.	Chooses relevant A + R evidence and supports the answer.
Independent	By moving visitors above wet ground and away from nests, the boardwalk allowed families to return after storms while reducing damage to wildlife areas.	Explains how the Setting and Action produced two Reactions.
Reflective	The boardwalk did more than improve access. It redirected human movement so the marsh could serve visitors and protect nesting birds at the same time.	Connects A + R + S to a larger idea about shared use.

The Writing Result Progression

Evidence level	Primary writing result
Foundational - Find it	Reports a detail.
Emergent - Name it	Describes what the detail represents.
Visible - Choose it	Supports an answer with relevant evidence.
Independent - Explain it	Develops the answer through reasoning.
Reflective - Connect it	Constructs meaning, significance, or a larger conclusion.

What Does Not Set the Level

- the number of sentences;

- the size of the vocabulary;
- perfect spelling or punctuation;
- the student's grade level or group name.

What Does Set the Level

- the relevance of the TRACKS selected;
- the accuracy of the connection to the prompt;
- the depth of explanation;
- the independence shown;
- the ability to connect, weigh, or synthesize evidence.

QUICK SCORING PRACTICE

Student sentence	Likely level	Reason
The boardwalk was raised over the wettest ground.	Foundational	Finds Setting and Action.
The raised path kept people from stepping into the reeds.	Visible	Chooses a relevant Action-Reaction connection.
By directing access, the town protected both public use and nesting space.	Reflective	Synthesizes the relationship into significance.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The same passage can produce five different evidence results.
- Keep response lengths similar when training teachers to identify thinking.
- Look for the evidence move, not the most polished sentence.
- Reporting can grow into supporting, developing, and constructing meaning.
- The final writing is the visible result of the evidence thinking that came first.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Passage and prompt:

Response I am analyzing:

TRACKS selected:

Highest evidence move visible:

Writing result produced:

One move that would raise the result:

TRACKS Across Writing Purposes

TRACKS is not tied to one genre. The prompt decides which evidence is useful. The writing framework organizes the response, while TRACKS supplies the tangible proof that belongs inside it.

- Use TRACKS inside TREES, CREATURES, TRAILS, literary response, and research writing.
- Avoid assigning one required TRACK to an entire genre.
- Transfer the same evidence move across writing purposes.

The writing framework organizes the response. TRACKS gives the writer something worth organizing.

Informative Writing Through TREES

Informative writing may use every TRACK. K often supplies facts and explanations. T provides context or sequence. A and R explain causes, processes, effects, problems, solutions, and results. C identifies the central person, concept, or creature. S provides the conditions under which the information matters.

TREES part	TRACKS connection
T - Thesis	Names the answer or controlling idea the evidence must support.
R - Reasons / Ways	Organizes the main categories of explanation.
E1 - Evidence	Selects the relevant TRACK or TRACKS.
E2 - Explanation	Explains what the evidence proves and how it supports the reason.
S - Significance	Connects evidence to the larger importance or understanding.

Argumentative Writing Through CREATURES

In argumentative writing, evidence must do more than match the topic. It must support a Claim and Reason, withstand another viewpoint, and help the writer build a Rebuttal. TRACKS helps students compare possible evidence and choose the proof with the greatest strength and relevance.

CREATURES work	Evidence question
Claim and Reasons	Which TRACKS could prove this position?
Evidence	Which detail is strongest, most relevant, and most precise?
Argument and Thinking	What does the evidence prove, and why should the reader accept the reasoning?
Understanding Others	What evidence supports the other viewpoint?
Rebuttal	Which TRACKS respond to that evidence without ignoring it?
Ending and Significance	What larger result follows from the connected evidence?

Narrative and Literary Work Through TRAILS

When students analyze a narrative or use a source to support literary writing, C, A, R, S, and T often become especially visible. Characters act and react within a setting and sequence. Key Knowledge may explain the context or a symbol. The prompt determines which relationship belongs in the response.

Likely TRACKS	What they may reveal
C + A	motivation, trait, decision, or character development.
A + R	conflict, consequence, resolution, or change.
S + C	how place or conditions shape a character.
T + A	sequence, pacing, change over time, or a turning point.
K + C	important knowledge that changes how the reader understands the character or concept.

Research and Source-Based Writing

Research expands TRACKS across sources. Students should record the source beside each TRACK, notice repeated or conflicting evidence, and decide which facts deserve space in the final writing. Reflective evidence use may compare sources, identify limits, or combine different TRACKS into a supported conclusion.

CASE SCENARIO: ONE PASSAGE, THREE WRITING PURPOSES

PASSAGE

A school replaced disposable lunch trays with washable trays. The cafeteria used less trash space, but workers needed extra time to wash and dry the trays. After students began sorting trays correctly, cleanup time decreased.

Writing purpose	Possible TRACKS emphasis	Evidence job
Informative TREES	A + R + K	Explain the change, effects, and process.
Argumentative CREATURES	R + K	Weigh reduced waste against added labor, then support a claim.
Research extension	K + R across sources	Compare environmental effect, cost, and implementation evidence.

No Required TRACK by Genre

Do not tell students that informative writing always uses K or that literary writing always uses C. Those shortcuts can cause right genre, wrong evidence. Read the thinking job first. Then choose the TRACKS that answer it.

KEYS TO KEEP

- TRACKS works across writing purposes because every source-based response needs tangible evidence.
- The framework organizes the writing; TRACKS supplies the proof.
- No genre owns one required TRACK.
- Argumentative writing requires students to weigh evidence, not only collect it.
- Research writing adds source tracking, comparison, and synthesis.

APPLY THE KEYS: CHAPTER 19

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Writing purpose or framework:

Prompt and thinking job:

TRACKS most likely needed:

Where evidence will appear in the framework:

Explanation or connection students must make:

How I will check transfer to another writing purpose:

Read the Final Writing Through Three Lenses

A final response should be read through cognition, composition, and conventions. Separating the lenses keeps a surface error from hiding deep evidence thinking and keeps polished sentences from hiding weak reasoning.

- Analyze evidence cognition separately from organization and editing.
- Choose the first real roadblock, not the most visible error.
- Plan instruction that protects strengths while addressing the next need.

A polished sentence can remain literal. A sentence with an error can still contain strong thinking.

The Three Lenses

Lens	What the teacher studies
Cognition	Prompt understanding, TRACKS choice, relevance, explanation, relationships, significance, and independence.
Composition	Controlling idea, organization, progression, paragraphing, transitions, development, and revision for meaning.
Conventions	Sentence boundaries, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Two Students, Similar Score, Different Lesson

CASE SCENARIO: EMSY AND MERRICK

PASSAGE

A neighborhood installed rain barrels beside a community center. The barrels collected roof water during storms. Volunteers later used that water on the garden, reducing the amount drawn from the city supply.

PROMPT: How did the rain barrels help the community?

Student	Response pattern	What the three lenses reveal
Emsy	Explains the S/A to R relationship clearly, but uses two fragments and inconsistent punctuation.	Cognition is Independent. Composition is clear. Conventions need a focused sentence-boundary lesson.
Merrick	Writes complete, polished sentences but states only that rain barrels are useful and copies one fact.	Conventions are strong. Cognition is Emergent because the evidence is broad and unexplained.

Do Not Correct the Wrong Problem First

Emsy does not need the reasoning lowered because the punctuation is weak. Merrick does not need only an editing compliment because the sentences are polished. Each student needs instruction matched to the first real roadblock.

What the teacher notices	Most useful next move
Relevant TRACK, weak explanation	Teach what the evidence proves.
Strong reasoning, weak organization	Preserve the reasoning and teach a clearer progression.
Strong cognition, sentence errors	Use the student's own meaningful sentence for focused editing.
Polished writing, weak evidence	Return to prompt job, relevance, and evidence choice.

A Short Response-Reading Routine

1. Read once for the answer and evidence thinking. Do not edit yet.
2. Mark the TRACKS selected and the highest RPLD move demonstrated.
3. Read again for composition and development.
4. Read a third time for conventions.
5. Choose one primary teaching move and protect what is already working.

TEACHER CONFERENCE LANGUAGE

Begin with strength	Your Action-Reaction connection clearly explains how the barrels reduced water use.
Name one next move	Now we are going to combine these two fragments so the reader can follow that strong idea.
Check transfer	Write a new sentence that explains the same relationship and edit it independently.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Read cognition, composition, and conventions as separate lenses.
- Do not let editing errors erase evidence thinking.
- Do not let polished sentences hide literal or weak evidence use.
- Teach the first real roadblock and protect the student's strengths.
- One clear next move is usually more useful than a page of corrections.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Student response:

Cognition strength and need:

Composition strength and need:

Conventions strength and need:

First real roadblock:

One teaching move that protects the strength:

Move One Level to the Right

The purpose of the Evidence Matrix is not to name a level and stop. It is to identify the smallest useful move that helps the student use evidence more independently and more deeply.

- Teach the next evidence behavior rather than the whole matrix at once.
- Model, guide, remove support, and check transfer.
- Use the same TRACK in reading and writing so the move becomes visible.

The best next lesson is usually one level to the right, not five levels away.

The Four Evidence Bridges

Current to next	Teacher focus	Teacher question
Foundational to Emergent	Move from finding a detail to naming its evidence job.	What kind of TRACK is this, and what does it tell us?
Emergent to Visible	Move from a related detail to the detail that best proves the answer.	Which TRACK answers this prompt most directly?
Visible to Independent	Move from support to explanation.	What does this evidence prove, and why does it matter?
Independent to Reflective	Move from one explanation to connection, evaluation, or significance.	How do these TRACKS work together, and what larger idea do they reveal?

A Simple Teaching Cycle

1. Show the difference. Place the current response beside a response one level to the right.
2. Name the move. Use one clear verb: name, choose, explain, or connect.
3. Think aloud. Model why one TRACK is more useful or how two TRACKS relate.
4. Guide practice. Ask the student to perform the move with support.
5. Remove support. Use a fresh detail, prompt, or passage.
6. Check the writing result. Look for the move inside the final response.

CASE SCENARIO: MOVING FROM VISIBLE TO INDEPENDENT

PASSAGE

The museum moved its most fragile artifacts away from the windows. After the change, the colors faded more slowly.

PROMPT: Why did the museum move the artifacts?

Current response	The colors faded more slowly after the artifacts were moved.
Current address	THINK-Visible TRACKS: R. The student chose relevant evidence.
Missing move	Explain what the Reaction proves about light and protection.
Teacher model	The slower fading shows that moving the artifacts away from direct light protected their colors.
Fresh check	Give a new preservation example and ask the student to explain why the Action helped.

Teach the First Missing Move

A response may have several weaknesses. Choose the first roadblock that prevents the evidence from doing its job. If the student selected unrelated evidence, do not begin with elaboration. If the student chose the right TRACK but did not explain it, do not send the student back to collect more.

What the response shows	Teach next
Cannot find a usable detail	Locate and mark one obvious TRACK.
Finds a detail but cannot name its job	Sort and label TRACKS.
Chooses a related but weak detail	Compare evidence for relevance and strength.
Chooses relevant evidence but stops	Explain what the TRACK proves.
Explains one detail independently	Connect, compare, prioritize, or state significance.

Use the Same Move in Reading and Writing

A student may identify the strongest evidence in a multiple-choice task but fail to carry it into writing. Practice the move in both directions. Ask the student to select evidence while reading, defend the choice orally, and then use the same TRACK inside a short written response.

Check for Growth With a Fresh Task

Growth is stronger when the student performs the move accurately, consistently, independently, and in a new context. Reusing the same sentence may show memory. A fresh passage shows transfer.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Teach one evidence move to the right.
- Compare the current response with a model that shows only the next step.
- Teach the first roadblock, not every visible weakness.
- Connect reading selection with written use.
- Check accuracy, consistency, independence, and transfer.

APPLY THE KEYS: CHAPTER 21

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Next Address:

One move the student needs to pack up:

Model I will show:

Guided practice:

Fresh task for checking transfer:

Group, Confer, and Give Feedback by Evidence Need

Students with the same score may need different evidence lessons. Flexible groups and short conferences should be built around the next move, not around a permanent color or general ability label.

- Form temporary groups by shared evidence need.
- Use brief conference questions to make the choice and reasoning visible.
- Give feedback that names one strength and one next move.

Group by the move students need next, then change the group when the need changes.

Goal-Based Groups

Temporary goal	Shared student need	Possible ten-minute lesson
Locate a TRACK	Students overlook explicit evidence or copy from the wrong part of the passage.	Mark the prompt job, scan one paragraph, and identify one usable TRACK.
Name the Evidence Job	Students find details but cannot distinguish Action, Reaction, Key Knowledge, and other TRACKS.	Sort six short details and defend the primary job each performs.
Choose the Strongest	Students select evidence that is true and related but not precise.	Compare three details using the relevance test.
Explain the Proof	Students choose relevant evidence but leave the connection unstated.	Complete "This proves..." orally, then write it without the frame.
Connect the Evidence	Students explain one TRACK but do not synthesize.	Build one partner or chain and state the larger conclusion.

A Five-Minute Evidence Conference

1. Ask the student to read the prompt and state the thinking job.
2. Ask which TRACK was chosen and why.
3. Ask what the evidence proves.
4. Name one evidence strength in the response.
5. Choose one Next Address and rehearse the move once.

CASE SCENARIO: SAME SCORE, DIFFERENT GROUPS

Student	Response pattern	Useful group
Emsy	Consistently chooses relevant Actions but does not explain what they reveal.	Explain the Proof.
Merrick	Explains details clearly after choosing evidence that is only related to the topic.	Choose the Strongest.
Jake	Finds explicit facts but confuses Key Knowledge with Setting details.	Name the Evidence Job.
Lane	Explains evidence independently and is ready to weigh two possible interpretations.	Connect the Evidence.

Feedback That Points Somewhere

Instead of	Say
Add more evidence.	Your Action supports the answer. Now explain what it proves.
Be more specific.	Replace the broad fact with the exact Key Knowledge that answers why.
Explain more.	Connect the Setting to the character's decision.
Good job.	You chose a Reaction that directly supports the claim and explained its cause.
This is a low-level response.	This response is currently naming the evidence. The next move is choosing the strongest detail.

Protect the Student From the Label

Use goal names in public. Keep individual Cognitive Addresses in instructional records and conferences. Say, "We are working on explaining evidence," not, "You are an Emergent student." The level describes the response, not the child.

When to Change the Group

Change the group as soon as the shared need changes. A student who independently explains the evidence in a fresh task no longer needs the Explain the Proof group. The matrix should keep instruction flexible, not create a new tracking burden.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Group by the next evidence move, not by overall score.
- Use goal-based group names instead of colors or ability labels.
- A short conference should reveal the prompt job, TRACKS choice, evidence strength, and next move.
- Feedback should name what worked and point to one observable action.
- Change the group when the evidence changes.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Shared evidence need:

Goal-based group name:

Current response pattern:

Ten-minute lesson move:

Teacher feedback sentence:

Fresh task that will show the group can change:

Put It All Together: Jake, Luke, and Lane

This final case follows three students through the complete Evidence Matrix routine: read the prompt, identify the TRACKS chosen, name the RPLD level, protect the strength, and teach one move to the right.

- Analyze three responses without using length as the level marker.
- Name a more precise Cognitive Address for each student.
- Build a separate Pack-Up Plan and check growth with a fresh response.

ANCHOR PASSAGE: THE EMPTY LOT

PASSAGE

For years, an empty lot beside the apartment buildings collected windblown paper and rainwater. Ella noticed that families walked around it each morning on the way to school. In early March, she drew a simple garden plan and asked the building manager for permission to use one corner. She began with three raised beds and posted a sign inviting neighbors to add one plant or one hour of work. During the next six weeks, families brought tools, a carpenter built a bench from leftover boards, and older students showed younger children how to water the seedlings without washing away the soil. A local gardener explained that native flowers would attract pollinators, so the group planted them along the edges. By May, the lot held vegetables, flowers, a walking path, and a small table where neighbors traded books and seeds. People who had once hurried around the lot began stopping to talk, work, and share what they had grown. The garden did not remove every problem in the neighborhood, but it changed an avoided space into a place the community used together.

PROMPT: How did Ella's decision change the way the community used the empty lot?

Three Student Responses

RESPONSE SET

Student	Response
Lane	Ella's first Action gave other people a way to join. As families added plants, work, and shared spaces, the lot changed from a place they avoided into a place that built community.
Luke	Ella made three raised beds and put up a sign. Families brought tools, someone built a bench, and students watered plants. The empty lot became a garden with vegetables and flowers.
Jake	The best evidence is that people who once hurried around the lot began stopping to talk, work, and trade. This Reaction shows that the garden changed how the community used the space.

The responses are similar in length. The evidence move, not the number of words, determines the level.

Read the Evidence Address

Student	Prompt understanding	TRACKS pattern	Current address	What the response already does
Lane	Understands the TOGGLE relationship between Ella's decision and community use.	A + R + S	TOGGLE-Reflective	Connects individual Action, group Reactions, and change in Setting to a larger community meaning.
Luke	Recognizes the sequence of Actions but does not fully explain how they changed community use.	A + S	TOGGLE-Emergent	Names several accurate events and the final setting.
Jake	Understands the effect and chooses the strongest Reaction evidence.	R	TOGGLE-Independent	Explains what the Reaction proves about changed use.

Three Different Pack-Up Plans

Student	Strength to protect	Next Address	What to pack up	Teacher move
Luke	Accurate Actions and sequence.	TOGGLE-Visible	Choose only the Action and Reaction that directly answer the prompt.	Cross out repeated events. Draw one arrow from Ella's invitation to the community's new use.
Jake	Strong and precise Reaction with clear explanation.	TOGGLE-Reflective	Connect the Reaction to the Action and Setting change, then state significance.	Ask, "What larger change appears when you connect who started it, what others did, and what the lot became?"
Lane	Synthesizes A + R + S into meaning.	Transfer within Reflective	Evaluate which evidence is most important and acknowledge a limit in the passage.	Ask Lane to defend the strongest link and explain why the change did not solve every problem.

After the Teaching Move

GROWTH CHECK		
Student	Fresh response after instruction	What changed
Luke	Ella's invitation caused neighbors to add work and materials, and their response turned the avoided lot into a shared garden.	Moves from listing Actions to choosing and connecting A + R.
Jake	Ella opened one corner, neighbors expanded the work, and the changed space brought people together. The connected evidence shows how one decision created shared ownership.	Moves from explaining one Reaction to synthesizing A + R + S.
Lane	The invitation was the most important Action because it made participation possible, but the passage also shows that lasting change required many neighbors, not Ella alone.	Evaluates evidence, identifies the strongest link, and recognizes a limit.

The Complete Teacher Routine

1. Read the prompt and identify the thinking job.
2. Mark the TRACKS the student actually chose.
3. Name the highest accurate and independent evidence move demonstrated.
4. Protect what the student already does well.
5. Name one Next Address and one thing to pack up.
6. Teach the move in reading, oral reasoning, and writing.
7. Use a fresh task to check accuracy, consistency, independence, and transfer.

The purpose of the Evidence Matrix is not to produce another score. It is to make the next evidence lesson clear enough to teach tomorrow.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Students with similar response lengths may demonstrate very different evidence thinking.
- Name the prompt job, TRACKS pattern, and RPLD level separately.
- Protect the strength before teaching the next move.
- A Reflective student still needs transfer, evaluation, and honest attention to limitations.
- The matrix succeeds when the next lesson becomes clearer and the next writing result becomes stronger.

Reflection and Planning

Use this page to turn the chapter into one practical instructional decision.

Student or response I am analyzing:

Prompt job and dimension:

TRACKS selected:

Current Evidence Address:

Strength to protect and Next Address:

Pack-Up Plan and fresh growth check:

THE TEACHER'S EVIDENCE KIT

Use the Lightest Tool That Works

These tools are designed to make the next evidence decision clearer without creating a second job for the teacher.

Begin with the Quick-Reference Matrix, one Response Analysis page, and one One-Level-to-the-Right Lesson Plan. Add another tool only when it answers a question you actually have. The goal is not to complete every form. The goal is to collect only the information that changes instruction.

Tool	What it helps the teacher do
1. Quick-Reference Evidence Matrix	See all six TRACKS and five levels at a glance.
2. TRACKS Collection Sheet	Collect possible tangible evidence before choosing what belongs in the response.
3. Relevance and Strength Test	Compare evidence that is true, related, relevant, strong, or precise.
4. Evidence Address Analysis	Name the prompt job, TRACKS chosen, RPLD level, writing result, and Next Address.
5. Evidence Partner and Chain Planner	Build a needed relationship without stacking quotations.
6. Evidence-to-Writing Planner	Carry selected TRACKS into answer, evidence, explanation, and significance.
7. One-Level-to-the-Right Lesson Planner	Plan a focused lesson around one evidence move.
8. Conference and Feedback Guide	Use brief questions and precise feedback language.
9. Student Evidence Tracker	Help students name what they can do and what they are practicing next.
10. Keys to Keep	Remember the complete system on one page.

Three Ways to Use the Kit

- Individual response: Use Tools 3, 4, and 8.
- Small group: Use Tools 4, 7, and 9.
- Whole class: Use Tools 1, 2, 5, and 6.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Use only the tool that answers the instructional question in front of you.
- Record evidence patterns, not every student action.
- Stop using a form when the next lesson is already clear.
- Keep individual addresses private and temporary.
- The writing result is the final check on whether the evidence move transferred.

Quick-Reference Evidence Matrix

Use this chart to name the TRACK and the highest accurate, independent evidence move demonstrated.

Universal Evidence Progression

Level	Evidence behavior	What appears in the writing
Foundational	Find it. Locate or report an obvious TRACK.	Reports.
Emergent	Name it. Identify the evidence job and what it tells the reader.	Describes.
Visible	Choose it. Select evidence that directly supports the answer.	Supports.
Independent	Explain it. State what the TRACK proves and why it matters.	Develops.
Reflective	Connect it. Relate, weigh, synthesize, or evaluate TRACKS.	Constructs meaning.

TRACKS Quick View

TRACK	Find it	Name it	Choose it	Explain it	Connect it
T	Time	What time shows	Relevant time	Why time matters	Time with other TRACKS
R	Reaction	What followed	Relevant response	Cause and effect	Impact across evidence
A	Action	Role of action	Relevant action	What action proves	Pattern and significance
C	Central subject	Trait or feature	Relevant C evidence	How C influences	Change and relationships
K	Fact or detail	What reader learns	Relevant knowledge	What fact proves	Synthesis and conclusion
S	Place or condition	What setting shows	Relevant setting	How setting influences	Environment and meaning

Detailed Evidence Matrix

TRACK	Foundational	Emergent	Visible
T - Time	Locates a stated time, duration, sequence, or era.	Names what the time detail establishes.	Chooses the time evidence that best supports the answer.
R - Reactions	Locates a stated response, effect, solution, resolution, or outcome.	Names who or what reacted and what followed.	Chooses the reaction or effect that best supports the answer.
A - Actions	Locates an action, event, problem, conflict, cause, or decision.	Names the action and the role it plays.	Chooses the action that most directly proves the answer.
C - Characters / Concepts / Creatures	Identifies the central character, concept, or creature and a stated feature.	Names a relevant trait, role, feature, or perspective.	Chooses C evidence that directly supports the answer.
K - Key Knowledge	Locates an explicit fact, definition, detail, or explanation.	Names what the information helps the reader know.	Chooses the Key Knowledge that directly supports the answer.
S - Settings	Locates a place, condition, scenery detail, or sensory clue.	Names what the setting detail establishes.	Chooses the setting evidence that directly supports the answer.

TRACK	Independent	Reflective
T - Time	Explains how timing, duration, or context affects the idea.	Connects time with other TRACKS to analyze change or significance.
R - Reactions	Explains what caused the reaction and what it proves.	Connects or compares reactions to analyze impact and significance.
A - Actions	Explains how the action reveals cause, motive, change, or meaning.	Connects patterns of action with outcomes and significance.
C - Characters / Concepts / Creatures	Explains how a characteristic or perspective influences other evidence.	Synthesizes C with other TRACKS to analyze change or relationships.
K - Key Knowledge	Explains what the fact proves and why it matters.	Prioritizes or combines knowledge to reach a larger conclusion.
S - Settings	Explains how the setting influences actions, reactions, or ideas.	Connects setting with other TRACKS to analyze influence or significance.

Address Reminder

Full notation: Dimension-Level | TRACKS pattern. Example: TOGGLE-Independent | TRACKS: S + A. When the dimension is not known, record an evidence-only planning note such as K-Visible or A + R-Reflective.

TRACKS Collection Sheet

Use this page to collect possibilities before deciding which evidence earns a place in the response.

Text or passage: _____

Prompt:

Thinking job or dimension: _____

TRACK	Possible evidence	Paragraph / page	What it may help prove
T - Time			
R - Reactions			
A - Actions			
C - Characters / Concepts / Creatures			
K - Key Knowledge			
S - Settings			

Choose Before You Write

- ☐ I marked the TRACK that directly answers the prompt.
- ☐ I can finish, "I chose this because it proves..."
- ☐ I removed evidence that is only related to the topic.
- ☐ I added a partner only because the reasoning needs it.
- ☐ I know what I will explain after I cite the evidence.

Evidence I Will Use

Primary TRACK and exact evidence:

Partner TRACK, only if needed:

Relevance and Strength Test

Use this tool when a student has found several true details but still needs to choose the evidence that best answers the prompt.

Step 1: Name the Thinking Job

Prompt:

The prompt asks me to: ☐ recall / identify ☐ select evidence ☐ explain WHY ☐ explain HOW / a relationship

Step 2: Compare the Evidence

Evidence candidate	TRACK	Accurate?	Related?	Relevant?	Strong / precise?
Candidate 1					
Candidate 2					
Candidate 3					

Step 3: Use the Three Questions

- ☐ Does this TRACK answer the thinking job in the prompt?
- ☐ Can I explain exactly what it proves?
- ☐ Is there another detail that proves the idea more directly or precisely?

Decision

The evidence that earns a place is:

I chose it because it proves:

Evidence I will leave out and why:

Evidence Address Analysis

Use this page to move from a student response to one clear instructional decision.

A. Read the Task

Prompt:

Thinking job / dimension: ☐ TAUGHT ☐ TAP ☐ THINK ☐ TOGGLE ☐ Not yet known

B. Read the TRACKS Choice

TRACKS selected: ☐ T ☐ R ☐ A ☐ C ☐ K ☐ S

The choice is: ☐ accurate ☐ related ☐ relevant ☐ strong ☐ precise

Evidence quoted or paraphrased:

C. Name the Highest Evidence Move

- ☐ Foundational - Finds or reports an obvious TRACK.
- ☐ Emergent - Names the evidence job or what the detail shows.
- ☐ Visible - Chooses evidence that directly supports the answer.
- ☐ Independent - Explains what the evidence proves and why it matters.
- ☐ Reflective - Connects, weighs, synthesizes, or evaluates TRACKS.

D. Plan the Move

Current Cognitive Address: _____

Strength to protect: _____

Next Address:

What the student needs to pack up:

Fresh evidence I will collect next:

Evidence Partner and Chain Planner

Use this page only when the prompt requires a relationship among two or more TRACKS.

Does the Answer Need a Partner?

- ☐ One precise TRACK can answer completely. Stop with one and explain it well.
- ☐ A second TRACK is needed to explain WHY or HOW.
- ☐ A third TRACK is needed because each link adds new meaning.

Partner Planner

TRACK 1	RELATIONSHIP	TRACK 2
Evidence:	caused / influenced / revealed / led to / changed	Evidence:
What it proves:		What it proves:

Chain Planner

TRACK 1	ARROW	TRACK 2	ARROW	TRACK 3 / CONCLUSION
Evidence		Evidence		Evidence or conclusion
Job		Job		Job

Turn the Relationship Into Writing

The evidence works together because:

The larger conclusion is:

Evidence-to-Writing Planner

Use this page to carry the evidence choice into a complete written response without allowing the evidence to replace the student's thinking.

Prompt and Answer

Prompt:

My answer / thesis / claim:

Reason or Way

The reason, way, or point I am developing:

E1 - Evidence

TRACKS selected: ☐ T ☐ R ☐ A ☐ C ☐ K ☐ S

Exact evidence or accurate paraphrase:

E2 - Explanation

This evidence proves:

It supports my answer because:

Connection or Significance

When I connect the evidence, the larger meaning or significance is:

- ☐ My answer remains in control of the paragraph.
- ☐ The evidence directly answers the prompt.
- ☐ My explanation adds thinking instead of repeating the evidence.
- ☐ Every detail earns its place.

One-Level-to-the-Right Lesson Planner

Use this planner to teach one observable evidence move through modeling, guided practice, writing, and a fresh transfer check.

Student(s) / group: _____

Current Evidence Address: _____

Next Address: _____

What the Student Needs to Pack Up

- ☐ Locate an explicit TRACK.
- ☐ Name the evidence job.
- ☐ Choose relevant or stronger evidence.
- ☐ Explain what the evidence proves.
- ☐ Connect or evaluate multiple TRACKS.
- ☐ Use the move independently in writing.

Lesson Sequence

Step	Plan	Notes
1. Show the difference	Current response beside one-level-right response	
2. Name the move	Find / Name / Choose / Explain / Connect	
3. Think aloud	Why this TRACK or relationship belongs	
4. Guide practice	Prompt, passage, and support I will provide	
5. Remove support	What I will take away	
6. Check transfer	Fresh task and evidence I will collect	

Teacher Script

"You are already _____."

"Your next evidence move is _____."

"I will know you can do it when _____."

Conference and Feedback Guide

Use these questions to make the student's evidence choice visible and give one next move that points somewhere.

Five-Minute Conference

Step	Teacher language
1. Read the job	What is the prompt asking you to do?
2. Name the choice	Which TRACK did you choose?
3. Defend relevance	Why does this evidence answer the prompt?
4. Explain the proof	What does it prove?
5. Connect or revise	What other TRACK strengthens it, or which detail should leave?
6. Name the next move	You are already _____. Next, you will _____.

Feedback Bank

Evidence need	Precise feedback
Find	Return to paragraph _____. Locate the detail that answers _____.
Name	You found a detail. Name whether it is an Action, Reaction, fact, condition, or another TRACK, and tell what it shows.
Choose	Both details are true. Choose the one that proves your answer more directly.
Explain	Your evidence supports the answer. Add what it proves and why that matters.
Connect	You explained each detail separately. Show how the TRACKS work together.
Prioritize	You have more evidence than you need. Keep the strongest piece and explain it fully.
Transfer	Use the same evidence move in this new passage without the frame.

Conference Record

Evidence strength I named:

One next move:

Student restatement of the goal:

Fresh check and date: _____

Student Evidence Tracker

Use student-friendly language to help learners see growth without assigning a permanent color or label.

Name: _____ Text / task: _____

My TRACKS

Today I used: ☐ T - Time ☐ R - Reactions ☐ A - Actions ☐ C - Characters / Concepts / Creatures ☐ K - Key Knowledge ☐ S - Settings

What I Can Do With Evidence

Level	I can statement	My check
● Foundational	I can find a TRACK in the passage.	☐ Not yet ☐ With help ☐ On my own
■ Emergent	I can name the kind of TRACK and what it tells me.	☐ Not yet ☐ With help ☐ On my own
▼ Visible	I can choose the TRACK that best proves my answer.	☐ Not yet ☐ With help ☐ On my own
▲ Independent	I can explain what my TRACK proves and why it matters.	☐ Not yet ☐ With help ☐ On my own
◆ Reflective	I can connect TRACKS to build a bigger meaning.	☐ Not yet ☐ With help ☐ On my own

My Evidence Goal

I am already able to:

My next move is to:

I will know I can do it when:

My Evidence Defense

I chose this TRACK because it proves:

Keys to Keep: One-Page Implementation Guide

Use this page as the shortest route through the complete Evidence Matrix system.

The Core Formula

Prompt Job + TRACKS Choice + RPLD Evidence Move = A More Precise Cognitive Address and a Clearer Next Lesson

The Five Moves

Level	Move	Teacher question
Foundational	Find it.	Where is the evidence?
Emergent	Name it.	What kind of TRACK is it, and what does it tell us?
Visible	Choose it.	Which TRACK best proves the answer?
Independent	Explain it.	What does the TRACK prove, and why does it matter?
Reflective	Connect it.	How do the TRACKS work together, and what larger meaning appears?

The Teacher Routine

1. Read the prompt and name the thinking job.
2. Mark the TRACKS the student actually chose.
3. Name the highest accurate and independent evidence move.
4. Protect the strength and name one Next Address.
5. Teach one level to the right.
6. Check the writing result with a fresh task.

Never Forget

- ☐ The address belongs to the response, not the child.
- ☐ The TRACK does not set the level.
- ☐ The prompt does not set the level by itself.
- ☐ True evidence may still be irrelevant evidence.
- ☐ More evidence is not automatically better evidence.
- ☐ Two details need a stated relationship before they become partners.
- ☐ Cognition, composition, and conventions must be read separately.
- ☐ The best next move is usually one level to the right.

Use the matrix only when it makes the next instructional decision clearer.

The Garden Gate

Read the prompt, mark the TRACKS each student chose, name the evidence level, and plan one next move.

TEXT FOR ANALYSIS

PASSAGE

The school garden had one rule posted on the gate: take only what you need and leave something for the next person. For weeks, Nora followed the rule without thinking much about it. Then a storm flattened the tomato plants and scattered the labels from every row. The next morning, Nora found an older neighbor tying broken stems to wooden stakes. No one had asked him to come. Nora wanted to hurry inside before the first bell, but a folded note caught on the gate. It read, "A garden survives because someone stays." Nora looked at the clock, placed her backpack beneath the bench, and reached for a roll of twine. By the time the bell rang, several other students had stopped to help. The garden still looked damaged, but the rows no longer looked abandoned.

PROMPT: How does Nora's decision influence the other students?

STUDENT RESPONSES

Student	Response
Jake	Nora put her backpack under the bench and reached for twine. Other students stopped to help before the bell rang.
Lane	Nora's decision made responsibility visible. When she stayed to repair the garden, other students followed, turning one Action into a shared Reaction.
Luke	The garden was damaged by a storm, and a neighbor tied the stems to stakes. Nora found a note on the gate.

Stop and Analyze

1. What is the thinking job?

2. Which TRACKS does each student choose? _____

3. What level does each response demonstrate? _____

4. What should each student pack up next?

The Garden Gate: Analysis

Student	TRACKS and address	What it reveals	Next move
Lane	TOGGLE-Reflective C + A + R	Explains influence and connects the Action to a shared Reaction and larger idea.	Evaluate which detail is strongest or transfer the synthesis to a fresh passage.
Jake	TOGGLE-Visible A + R	Chooses both sides of the relationship but leaves the influence mostly implied.	Add one sentence explaining how Nora's Action caused the students' response.
Luke	TOGGLE-Foundational / Emergent S + A	Reports setting and events but does not select the evidence that answers influence.	Return to Nora's Action and the students' Reaction; remove unrelated details.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The prompt asks HOW, so the student must connect Nora's Action with the students' Reaction.
- Jake has the needed evidence partners even though the explanation is incomplete.
- Luke needs evidence selection before elaboration.

The Tide Pool

TEXT FOR ANALYSIS

PASSAGE

A tide pool may look calm after the ocean pulls back, but its conditions can change quickly. Sunlight warms the shallow water, wind increases evaporation, and salt becomes more concentrated. Small crabs hide beneath rocks, while sea anemones close their bodies to hold moisture. When the tide returns, cooler water covers the pool and brings fresh oxygen and food.

PROMPT: Why do tide-pool creatures need ways to protect themselves between tides?

STUDENT RESPONSES

Student	Response
Luke	The crabs hide under rocks and the anemones close their bodies.
Jake	The shallow water becomes warmer and saltier, so the creatures use protective Actions to avoid drying out.
Lane	Between tides, the Setting changes faster than the creatures can leave. Their different Reactions show how each survives the same heat, salt, and moisture problem.

Stop and Analyze

The Tide Pool: Analysis

Student	TRACKS and address	What it reveals	Next move
Luke	THINK-Visible A	Chooses relevant protective Actions but does not explain why they are needed.	Connect the Actions to the changing Setting or Key Knowledge.
Jake	THINK-Independent S + A + K	Explains the cause and protective response accurately.	Compare the two creatures' Reactions or state a larger survival idea.
Lane	THINK-Reflective S + R + C	Synthesizes shared conditions with different creature responses.	Evaluate which condition creates the greatest challenge using precise evidence.

KEYS TO KEEP

- Luke is not missing evidence; Luke is missing the explanation of why it matters.
- Jake independently explains a Setting-to-Action relationship.
- Lane uses comparison to move the evidence toward significance.

The Library Cart

TEXT FOR ANALYSIS

PASSAGE

When a pipe burst above the neighborhood library, the children's room closed for repairs. The school still had boxes of donated books, but many younger children could not travel to another branch. Marisol cleaned an old utility cart, labeled the shelves by reading level, and pushed the cart to the apartment courtyard every Wednesday. After two weeks, families began returning books to the cart and adding titles of their own. The library later copied Marisol's route for a temporary mobile service.

PROMPT: Which evidence best supports the idea that Marisol's solution helped more than one group?

STUDENT RESPONSES

Student	Response
Lane	The library copied Marisol's route, which shows that her solution helped families and also gave the library a workable service plan.
Jake	Marisol labeled the shelves by reading level and pushed the cart to the courtyard.
Luke	Families returned books and added titles, and the library later copied the route.

Stop and Analyze

The Library Cart: Analysis

Student	TRACKS and address	What it reveals	Next move
Lane	TAP-Independent R + K	Selects a precise outcome and explains how it proves impact on families and the library.	Weigh whether the family response or library adoption is the stronger primary evidence.
Jake	TAP-Emergent A	Names accurate Actions but does not choose evidence of impact on more than one group.	Compare Actions with Reactions and select the detail that proves broader impact.
Luke	TAP-Visible R	Chooses the two strongest outcome details but does not fully explain what each proves.	Add one connection sentence naming the two groups helped.

KEYS TO KEEP

- The TAP job is selection, so the strongest response must choose evidence of impact, not only effort.
- Luke has precise evidence partners and needs explanation.
- Lane is ready to evaluate evidence strength within the same prompt.

The Solar Oven

TEXT FOR ANALYSIS

PASSAGE

Three teams built solar ovens from pizza boxes. Team One lined the box with dark paper. Team Two added foil that reflected sunlight into the box. Team Three used both dark paper and a foil reflector, then covered the opening with clear plastic. At noon, Team One reached 105 degrees, Team Two reached 118 degrees, and Team Three reached 142 degrees. Team Three also kept the heat longest after a cloud passed.

PROMPT: Which design evidence most strongly supports choosing Team Three's oven for continued testing?

STUDENT RESPONSES

Student	Response
Jake	Team Three used dark paper, foil, and clear plastic.
Lane	Team Three reached the highest temperature and held heat after the sunlight changed, so its design showed both strength and consistency.
Luke	Team Three reached 142 degrees, which was hotter than the other ovens.

Stop and Analyze

The Solar Oven: Analysis

Student	TRACKS and address	What it reveals	Next move
Lane	TAP-Reflective K + R	Selects two outcome measures, weighs them, and explains why the combination supports continued testing.	Identify a limitation or the next evidence needed before a final design claim.
Luke	TAP-Independent K + R	Chooses the strongest temperature result and explains the comparison.	Add the heat-retention evidence and evaluate why consistency matters.
Jake	TAP-Emergent A + K	Names design features but not the results that prove effectiveness.	Shift from what the team built to what the design caused.

KEYS TO KEEP

- A design feature is not the same as evidence that the design worked.
- Luke uses one strong result; Lane evaluates two results together.
- Jake needs the Reaction or outcome produced by the design.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Relieving stress. Raising scores.

Randi Whitney is an educator, curriculum author, presenter, and founder of The Writing Academy®, LLC. With more than thirty years in education, she has worked to make reading and writing instruction clearer for teachers and more understandable for students.

Her work centers on helping teachers see the thinking underneath student answers and writing. Through practical frameworks such as the Four Dimensions, RPLD thinking levels, TRACKS, TRAILS, TREES, and CREATURES, she turns complex expectations into language teachers can use tomorrow.

The Evidence Matrix was created as a companion to The Writing Matrix. Together, the books help teachers identify what a prompt requires, what evidence a student chooses, how deeply the student uses it, and what small instructional move can lead to stronger writing.

Randi is the owner of The Writing Academy®, LLC, a professional learning and curriculum company dedicated to creating teachers who are experts in content, craft, and compliments so that confidence and cognition soar - on the test and beyond.

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Mission: Create teachers who are experts in content, craft, and compliments so that confidence and cognition soar - on the test and beyond.

Slogan: Relieving stress. Raising scores.