

THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC
COURSE OVERVIEW • TEACHER RESOURCES

Grade 3 Prepare, Text Complexity and Reading Stamina Report

Part of the ECR Supplemental Support System.

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GRADE 3
PREPARE CLUSTER
UNNUMBERED INSTRUCTIONAL RUNWAY

Text Complexity and Reading Stamina

EVIDENTIARY REPORT PACKAGE

PASSAGE A	THE RECESS QUESTION	TWO-WEEK ANCHOR
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PASSAGE B	THE MYSTERY OF THE TRAVELING SHELL	LOW + MEDIUM
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DOCUMENT CONTROL	RECORD
Intended Use	Supplemental Support Lesson Guide
Document Type	Official Teacher-Facing Instructional Planning Report
Version / Date	Version 1.0 August 2026
Texts Analyzed	Three prose selections: one two-week anchor and two historical-mystery versions

Package Contents

Scope, organization, and intended instructional use

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

Report Use

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

Source Set Overview

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

Source-Fidelity Note

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

Overall Purpose Statement

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

Official PREPARE Purpose Statement

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

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

What Remains Stable and What Intentionally Increases

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

Four-Week Instructional Progression

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

Research Basis and Measurement Protocol

How the PREPARE evidentiary profile is calculated and interpreted

APPLICATION TO THIS PACKAGE

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

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

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

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

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

Corroborating Quantitative Measure

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

Counting Conventions

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

Grade 3 Placement Note

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

Master Quantitative Comparison

Calculated statistics and professional planning estimates across all PREPARE selections

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

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

What the Numbers Demonstrate

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

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

PREPARE Instructional Architecture

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

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

Genre Laboratory Value

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

PREPARE Evidence Progression

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

Challenge Without Overwhelming

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

The Recess Question - Two-Week Anchor Report

Grade 3 realistic fiction / Teacher-facing text complexity evidentiary profile

Passage A	The Recess Question	Two-Week Anchor
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Establishes a familiar school-based narrative that grows into a civic decision-making inquiry involving inclusion, competing needs, alternatives, respectful listening, multiple perspectives, voting, and reflection.

A. Official Passage Profile

DOCUMENTED RESULT

Grade 3 supplemental support; teacher-supported or partner reading

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

1,058 total words; 390 unique words

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

7.1 words average; 20 words longest conventional sentence

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

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

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

3.6 - corroborating formula only; not a placement decision

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

B. Qualitative and Reader/Task Complexity

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

The Recess Question - Linguistic and Instructional Evidence

Passage A / Two-Week Anchor

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

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

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

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

E. Evidence Density and Writing Value

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

The Recess Question - Passage Evidence Ledger

Direct textual proof for complexity, instruction, and writing use

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

F. Teacher-Facing Instructional Guidance

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

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

G. Formal Placement Rationale

The Mystery of the Traveling Shell - Low Stamina Report

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

Passage B1	The Mystery of the Traveling Shell	Low Stamina
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Establishes the complete clue chain: a coastal shell found inland, map distance, major rivers, distant copper, scarcity, trade, and a final evidence-supported claim.

A. Official Passage Profile

DOCUMENTED RESULT

Grade 3 supplemental support; teacher-supported or partner reading

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

300 total words; 154 unique words

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

10.3 words average; 30 words longest conventional sentence

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

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

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

5.4 - corroborating formula only; not a placement decision

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

B. Qualitative and Reader/Task Complexity

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

Traveling Shell - Low Stamina Linguistic Evidence

Passage B1 | Historical mystery and claim-evidence transfer

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

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

D. Sentence, Cohesion, and Historical-Inquiry Demands

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

E. Evidence Density and Writing Value

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

Traveling Shell - Low Stamina Passage Evidence Ledger

Direct textual proof for complexity, instruction, and writing use

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

F. Teacher-Facing Instructional Guidance

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

G. Formal Placement Rationale

The Mystery of the Traveling Shell - Medium Stamina Report

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

Passage B2	The Mystery of the Traveling Shell	Medium Stamina
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Expands the full inquiry by adding map scale, natural formation, waterways as transportation routes, repeated exchanges, communication, explicit clue organization, qualified inference, and a larger understanding of how artifacts reveal history.

A. Official Passage Profile

DOCUMENTED RESULT

Grade 3 supplemental support; teacher-supported or partner reading

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

700 total words; 329 unique words

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

9.3 words average; 26 words longest conventional sentence

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

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

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

7.6 - corroborating formula only; not a placement decision

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

B. Qualitative and Reader/Task Complexity

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

Traveling Shell - Medium Stamina Linguistic Evidence

Passage B2 | Expanded historical inquiry and evidence synthesis

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

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

D. Sentence, Cohesion, and Historical-Inquiry Demands

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

E. Evidence Density and Writing Value

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

Traveling Shell - Medium Stamina Passage Evidence Ledger

Direct textual proof for complexity, instruction, and writing use

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

F. Teacher-Facing Instructional Guidance

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

G. Formal Placement Rationale

Cross-Text Teacher Guidance

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

Key Instructional Findings

TEACHER IMPLICATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended Repeated Routine

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

Text Selection Decision Rules

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

PREPARE Weekly Progression Summary

How one anchor and one expanding companion establish yearlong habits

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

Continuity Tools for Teachers

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

Evidence and Writing Progression

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

References and Method Notes

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

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

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