

ELA OPEN RESPONSE PROMPTS

GRADE 3-8

The goal of this power point is to familiarize students with the types of evidence-based questions that often appear on high stakes tests. Use these prompts to practice breaking down the questions. Students will learn the key academic vocabulary imbedded in the question; how to understand what the question is asking; how many parts it has; and what a good answer might look like.

Students do not have to read a passage to practice analyzing a question type. After seeing many questions, students can begin to see connections between genres and questions. For example, biography passages often have questions about accomplishments, struggles, and mentors. Literary questions often are about how characters change over time. Poetry questions involve mood, symbols, and figurative language. Fables, folktales, and myths often ask about a lesson learned or moral imparted.

When using these ELA Prompts, you might use a Pepper style (see slide 5) and ask students:

1. What is this question asking you to do?
2. Are you retelling, explaining, describing?
3. What type of question is this? Is it a change question? A compare question? Chronology question? Problem solution? Point of view? Author's craft?
4. Where are the verbs? (describe, explain, compare?)
5. Does the prompt supply an adjective must you provide your own (or both)?
6. What are some adjectives might you use?
7. What would a good answer look like?
8. Is this a two part question? Three parts? More?

Remember when asking students to respond orally...

1. If students are nervous, allow them to quickly confer in two person groups before answering.

1. Have all students respond on white board or use their hands if they can respond with a number of fingers. (i.e. How many parts?)

2. Have students call out responses chorally, “What genre is this about?” “FOLK TALE”

Guidelines for Peppering Students

The idea of “peppering” students comes from a baseball drill. A player stands a few feet away from a pitcher who tosses soft pitches. The batter repeatedly taps back to the pitcher. The goal is to get many hitting repetitions in a short amount of time. The academic game is explained in *Teach Like a Champion* by Doug Lemov. (See the video on youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PARflwF215k>.) Here are 4 important points to remember:

- 1.Explain to students why you are playing. Explain that you are calling on everyone without hands raised. You are not not trying to embarrass, but only to get everyone a lot of “at bats.”
- 2.Remind students, there is no hand-raising. Students should be trying to answer every question in their heads.
- 3.Remember the format: Ask a question, pause, then call on a student. Mix your pace from quick to slow. Don’t get too excited by correct answers.
- 4.If students don’t know an answer they can say, “I need help.” This is not a big deal. Other students can now raise their hand and give the answer. Go back to the student and repeat the same question.

With third graders on the MCAS Test, make sure they know if the question is “short response” or “open response.”

I sometimes ask how many lines are you allowed for your answer. How might you divide the space? What kind of details (specific or general?) *Always specific!*

Feel free to use grade 3 prompts in grade 4 or 5 or 6.... They are questions and can be used across grade levels!

I have included examples for the third and fourth grade prompts to give an idea about what you might ask. For some questions I have included some sample answers.

Third Grade Prompts

Based on the article, how did the land make a pack horse librarian's job difficult?

Grade 3, 2011

Short Response

Is this open response or short response? How many lines in the answer box?

Short response 6 lines

In your own words what is this question about?

Explain how the land makes the librarian's job difficult.

What is the adjective in the question?

difficult

What are some ways the land might make a horse-riding librarian's job difficult?

Steep, wet, slippery, rocky, uneven, snowy, bumpy, desert, sandy...

Based on the article, explain why George Washington Carver is famous. Support your answer with important information from the article. Grade 3, 2010

What is this question asking you to do?

Explain why
GWC is famous

What is the important adjective in the question? Famous

What might someone be famous?

Inventing, changing something, first to do something, fighting something, helping people, being very smart, funny, athletic, talented, being extraordinary in some way...

How are you going to organize your answer? How might it go?

First, George Washington Carver was famous because he invented... (detail detail). He also was the first one to (detail detail explain) Another reason he is famous is because he changed the way...(detail detail explain)

Based on the story how does Skate show that she cares for GUM?

12 Based on the story, how does Skate show that she cares for GUM?

Grade 3,
2012

Short answer or open response? Short response 6 lines

In your own words what is this question about?

How might one character show she cares for another? What kinds of examples might make sense here? How detailed should you be?

Based on the story, explain how the big orange splot causes the neighborhood to change. Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 3, 2011

Explain how something causes something else to **change**

What is this question asking you to do?

Other than *support* what are the key verbs in the question?

Explain, causes

How are you going to organize your answer?

You have to explain what the neighborhood was like before the Splot and then after the Splot. It's a **Change** question. And explain how it caused the change. Why or how it changed!

Based on the folktale, how does the ant show that he is clever?

Short response

Grade 3, 2010

Is this open response or short response? How many lines in the answer box?

What is this question asking?

What is the adjective in the question?

What does does this question seem like a folktale situation?

What are some ways an ant might show he is clever?

Based on the story, explain how the storm makes it difficult for Milton to get milk for his family. Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 3, 2009

In your own words what is this question asking you to do?

Explain how the storm makes it difficult for Milton

Who do you think Milton is?

The main character of the story

What is the adjective in the question?

Difficult

How might a storm make it difficult for you to get milk?

It might be difficult to walk or see. It might be cold or windy. It might knock things down or have lightning...

How many ways do you think you should include?

Several ways

More than 1?

According to the selection, explain why Joanna Cole's books are successful. Support your answer with important information from the selection.

Grade 3, 2008

Based on the story, what makes visiting Nanna and Poppy's house special to the narrator? Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 3, 2008

Based on the story, describe how Moe's life on the street is different from Moe's life in the apartment. Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 3, 2007

Based on the selection, describe three eating habits of the Pilgrims and give a reason for each one. Look at the examples in the boxes below, but use different examples in your answer.

Why the Pilgrims Ate

Reason

Example: People used bread as a plate.

Example: They did not have bowls.

Grade 3, 2007

Describe how the gardener's feelings toward Munchkin change from the beginning to the end of the story. Use important information from the story in your answer.

Grade 3, 2006

Harriet Quimby worked hard to reach her goals. Name two of her goals. Explain how she reached each of these goals. Use important information from the selection in your answer.

Grade 3, 2006

According to the selection, Mr. Hay helped Marshall become a bicycle racer. List FOUR things that Mr. Hay did to help Marshall. Use important details from the selection in your answer.

Grade 3, 2005

In this story, the reader can tell what the characters are like through their actions. Read the sentences in the chart below about Henry and his friend. Complete the chart with examples from the story that support the sentences. Give two examples for each character.

Henry enjoys the outdoors. For example: He hops on rocks to get across a river.

Henry's friend is hard working. For example: Mr. Hawthorne hires him to pull weeds.

Grade 3, 2005

In your own words, describe what happened at the first playing of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Include at least FOUR important details from the selection in your answer.

Grade 3, 2005

Why is the story titled “Mr. Lucky Straw?”
Write your answer below. Use important
details from the story in your answer.

Grade 3, 2004

In the selection, there are sounds of animals or things. In the chart below, list four sounds. Tell what animal or thing makes each sound.

Grade 3, 2003

Explain why Matthew Henson is famous.
Use important information from the
selection in your answer.

Grade 3, 2003

4th Grade Prompts

Based on the folktale, explain the **most likely** reason the author states that “Rabbit was the strongest of all.” Support your answer with important details from the folktale.

MCAS Grade 4 2012

In your own words what is this question about?

What genre is the story?

If the passage didn't indicate it was a folktale, why does it seem like a folktale?

Why might rabbit be “strongest of all?”

Based on the selection, describe what the author's first experience with a volcano was like. Support your answer with important information from the selection.

MCAS Grade 4 2012

In your own words what is this question asking you to do?

What are some adjectives that could you imagine using here?

What kind of details would you use? (specific or general?)

Fiction or non-fiction? Why do you think test writers chose this selection for kids to read?

Based on the selection, describe how StingRay and Plastic are different from one another. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 4, 2011

In your own words what is this question asking you to do?

What are StingRay and Plastic?

Main characters in the story?

What are some adjectives that could you imagine using here?

Stubborn, brave, optimistic, pessimistic, foolish, lonely, scared, shy, talkative, strong...

How would you organize your answer?

Write about one character and then compare it to the other. Use lots of examples to support...

Based on the article describe how roller coasters have changed over time. Use important details from the article to support your answers.

Grade 4, 2010

In your own words what is this question asking you to do?

Since this is a **change** question, how many parts to your answer?

How might roller coasters have changed? What will you be looking for in your reading?

Fiction or non-fiction? Why do you think test writers chose this selection for kids to read?

Based on the selection, explain how the experiences at U.S. Space Academy help kids understand what it is like to be in space. Support your answer with important information from the selection.

Grade 4, 2009

In your own words what is this question asking you to do?

What kinds of experiences might kids get at a Space Academy?

What might kids learn about what it is like to be in space?

Fiction or non-fiction? Why do you think test writers chose this selection for kids to read?

According to the chapter, why does reading to the class make Ida feel both happy and scared at the same time? Support your answer with important details from the chapter.

Grade 4, 2009

In your own words what is this question asking you to do?

How many parts to this question?

Why might Ida feel scared to read? Feel happy?

What genre? Why will it be important to read the introduction to this selection?

Explain how Tom's feelings change from the beginning to the end of the selection. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 4, 2008

According to the folktale, explain how the emperor chooses the next emperor. Support your answer with important details from the folktale.

Grade 4, 2008

Based on the article, describe the challenges Annie Smith Peck faced throughout her life. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 4,
2008

Based on the article, what do Fenway Park workers do to help fans have an enjoyable experience at the ballpark? Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 4, 2008

Based on the article, describe the problems that *Voyager's* team faced, both before and during the flight. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 4,
2007

Describe the different feelings that the speaker has throughout the poem.
Support your answer with important details from the poem.

Grade 4, 2007

Based on the chapter, explain why Jane decides to go on an adventure. Support your answer with important details from the chapter.

Grade 4, 2007

The article states that “dirt is amazing stuff!” Based on the article, explain why dirt is so important. Support your answer with important information from the article.

Grade 4, 2007

In the article “Bringing Back Salmon,” the students raise salmon eggs.

- Describe how the students cared for the eggs.
- Describe how the eggs hatched.
- Describe how the students knew when to release the eggs into the creek.

Support your answers with important details from the article.

Grade 4, 2006

In the poem “The Photograph,” Mama and the speaker, who is her son, look at photographs from the past.

Explain why the photographs are important to Mama.

Explain why the photographs are important to the speaker, her son.

Support your answer with important details from the poem.

Grade 4, 2006

In the story, the preacher first tells Opal, “No dogs.” Explain why the preacher changes his mind. Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 4, 2006

Based on the article, describe the different ways humans and animals use teeth. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 4, 2006

Based on the article, describe FOUR ways the author's family benefited from reusing items. Use important and specific information from the article to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2005

Explain what the old woman learns in this story. Use important and specific information from the story to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2005

Describe the different stages walking sticks go through from egg to adult. Use important and specific information from the article to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2005

Explain how the Farmer's Market makes life easier for the rats that live in the neighborhood. Provide important and specific details from the story to help support your explanation.

Grade 4, 2005

This article gives reasons for keeping a journal. Explain THREE reasons for keeping a journal using important and specific information from the article to support your ans.

Grade 4, 2004

The introduction to the story states that Mullah Nasreddin “solves life’s problems with a mixture of foolishness and wisdom.” Give an example of something Mullah Nasreddin does that can be seen as BOTH foolish and wise. Explain how this action can be seen as foolish and how it can be seen as wise. Use important and specific information from the story to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2004

Reread the last sentence from the selection in which Gonzalo talks about Tio Juan. What events in the selection lead Gonzalo to think Tio Juan has changed from a baby to a man? Support this statement with important and specific details from the selection.

Grade 4, 2004

Explain what made Trudy's swim across the English Channel so dangerous. Use important and specific information from the article to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2004

According to the article, how do tarantulas protect themselves from enemies? Use important and specific details from the article to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2003

Identify and describe THREE different types of dangerous storms described in the selection. Use information from the selection to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2003

In your own words, describe what happened at the first playing of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Include at least FOUR important details from the selection in your answer.

Grade 4, 2005

CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG goes through many changes as she becomes a flying car. Describe FOUR of these changes. Use important and specific details from the selection to support your answer.

Grade 4, 2003

Think about how the student in this poem feels about doing homework.

Describe how the student feels about doing homework.

Explain how the poet convinces you of the student's feelings about doing homework. Use important details in your answer.

Grade 4, 2003

5th Grade Prompts

Based on the selection, describe the differences between Shift's and Puzzle's personalities. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

MCAS grade 5, 2012

Based on the selection, describe the difficulties the Warsaw girls' basketball team overcame to win the state championship. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 5, 2011

Explain how the students in the poem see the rain as both good and bad. Support your answer with important details from the poem.

Grade 5, 2010

Based on the selection, explain why a trip to Antarctica could be considered a great adventure. Support your answer with important information from the selection.

Grade 5, 2010

Based on the article, explain why fireflies might be considered interesting insects. Support your answer with important information from the article.

Grade 5, 2009

Based on the story, describe Caddie's character traits. Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 5, 2009

Based on the selection, describe how the Japanese paper house was designed to be flexible and convenient for daily life. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 5, 2008

In the play, Araminta agrees to stay on the plantation and help Jim escape.

Explain why

A. Araminta decides to stay behind **and**

B. How she helps Jim to make his escape

Support your answer with important details from the play

Grade 5, 2008

Based on the selection, explain the challenges the boy faces in getting the pearl. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 5, 2008

In paragraph 1, the author states that if you have not heard about hypothermia, it is “something you should know about.” Based on the article, explain the **most likely** reason the author makes this statement. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 5, 2008

Based on the article, explain how dogs are trained to be actors and how they are treated while they are working. Support your answer with important information from the article.

Grade 5, 2007

Explain how Anansi tricks Turtle and how Turtle tricks Anansi in the folktale.
Support your answer with important details from the folktale.

Grade 5, 2007

Based on the selection, explain why Old Glory was important to William Driver, and how William Driver showed that the flag was important to him. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 5, 2007

Explain how Virgil's feelings toward the garden change from the beginning to the end of the story. Support your answer with important details from the story.

Grade 5, 2007

In the chapter, Gareth helps Jason in an unusual way.

Describe what Gareth does to help Jason. Explain how Gareth's actions make Jason feel better.

Support your answer with important details from the chapter.

Grade 5, 2006

Based on the selections, describe the mood of the speaker before and after the rain.

Support your answer with important details from "Debts" and "First Rain."

Grade 5, 2005

The purposes of this article are to entertain and inform readers.

Explain one way the author entertains readers.

Explain one way the author informs readers. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 5, 2006

Based on the article, describe three different behaviors of chickadees that make them interesting to humans. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 5, 2006

6th Grade Prompts

Explain the different ways Turtle persuades other characters in the play to do what he wants. Support your answer with important details from the play.

Grade 6, 2011

Based on the passage, explain why the author calls the discovery of China's underground city an "incredible story." Support your answer with important details from the passage.

Grade 6, 2011

Based on the folktale, explain how March and the shepherd can both be considered tricksters. Support your answer with important details from the folktale.

Grade 6, 2010

Based on the selection, explain why Dorothea Lange became a famous photographer. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 6, 2010

Based on the article, explain how siblings can work together to get along. Support your answer with important information from the article.

Grade 6, 2009

Based on the passage, explain how Thoreau's experiences at Walden Pond helped him to appreciate nature. Support your answer with important details from the passage.

Grade 6, 2009

The setting is an important element in the selection. Describe the setting and explain how it is important to the selection. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 6, 2008

Based on the article, describe what people have learned from studying slave quilts. Support your answer with important information from the article.

Grade 6, 2008

Based on the poem, explain why the speaker's memory of his mother's kitchen is important to him. Support your answer with important details from the poem.

Grade 6, 2008

Based on the article, explain why a market survey, business plan, and budget are important parts of starting a new business. Support your answer with important information from the article.

Grade 6, 2007

The instructions in “Invisible Inks” might be easier to follow if the selection used heading for different sections.

a.) Break the selection into **three** sections. Using the paragraph numbers, identify where each section will begin.

b.) Write an appropriate heading for **each** of the three sections you identified in part (a). Explain why **each** heading is appropriate.

Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 6, 2007

Based on the poem, explain how the cat is different at night from how she is during the day. Support your answer with important details from the poem.

Grade 6, 2007

Based on the selection, describe Jo's character traits. Support your answer with important details from the selection.

Grade 6, 2007

In “Throwing a Tree,” the poet uses personification, a literary device that uses human qualities to describe an object. Give at least **two** examples of personification used in the poem. Explain why each is an example of personification. Support your answer with important details from the poem.

Grade 6, 2006

Based on the article, list and describe **five** important events that happened in the creation of Surtsey. List events in chronological order. Support your answer with important details from the article

Grade 6, 2006

Based on the article, describe the qualities that Isaac Asimov had that led him to become a successful science fiction writer. Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 6, 2006

Based on the two selections, explain how Roald Dahl used his experiences as a chocolate taster to turn a real event into an imaginative story. Support your answer with important details from the selections.

Grade 6, 2006

Imagine that you are an editor and someone has submitted a short story or poem to your magazine. Based on the article, what are **two** things you would look for when deciding whether or not to publish it? Support your answer with important details from the article.

Grade 6, 2006

7th Grade Prompts

Based on the article, explain the obstacles to building the Panama Canal and how each obstacle was overcome. Support your answer with important and specific details from the article.

G7 MCAS #7 2012

Basically, what is this question asking?

Is it a two part or one part question?

What kind of obstacles might they have encountered?

What kinds of solutions? How should your answer be organized?

Describe the narrator's changing feelings throughout the excerpt. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

G7 MCAS #19 2012

Absolutely True Diary of Part-Time Indian

- | | |
|--|---|
| Basically, what is this question asking? | To describe changing feelings |
| What kind of question is this? | A change question. How before...how during, how after |
| How might a character's feelings change? | Depressed to joyful, angry to calm... |
| What kind of evidence could you use? | You can see he was depressed because... |

Based on the excerpt, explain why it took many years for hamburgers to become popular in the United States. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2011

Explain how Clara's feelings change in the excerpt. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2011

Based on the excerpt, describe Louie's character. Support your answer with important and specific details from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2010

Based on the excerpt, explain why scorpions have been able to survive for millions of years. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2010

Based on the excerpt, describe how the narrator's visit to the prison affects her. Support your answer with important and specific evidence from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2009

Based on the excerpt, explain how practicing yoga could benefit a middle-school student. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2009

Based on the article, explain why Rico might be considered a special dog. Support your answer with important and specific information from the article.

Grade 7, 2008

Based on the excerpt, describe the relationship between Bones and Jim. Support your answer with important and specific details from the scene.

Grade 7, 2008

Explain why the field trip to the graveyard has a powerful effect on Gogol in the excerpt. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2008

Based on the excerpt, describe the qualities Elizabeth possessed that helped her rule England for 45 years. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2008

Describe the techniques the author uses to keep the reader interested in the article. Support your answer with important and specific details from the article.

Grade 7, 2007

Based on the tall tale, describe how the bear behaves like a human. Use relevant and specific information from the tall tale to support your answer.

Grade 7, 2007

In the excerpt, Burn Sanderson's arrival affects Mama, Travis, and Little Arliss differently. Describe how each character reacts to Burn Sanderson's visit. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 7, 2007

Based on the pamphlet, explain what the citizens of amine can do to help prevent mercury contamination. Use relevant and specific information from the pamphlet to support your answer.

Grade 7, 2007

Based on the excerpt, explain what signing the muster book means to Adam. Use relevant specific examples from the excerpt to support your answer.

Grade7, 2006

Describe some problems that scientists face when designing intelligence tests for animals. Use relevant specific information from the article to support your answer.

Grade 7, 2005

8th Grade Prompts

Based on the article, explain Anand's motivation for helping the old man. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the excerpt.

G8 MCAS #11 2012

Based on the selection, explain how Santiago feels about growing up in two cultures. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the selection.

G8 MCAS #18 2012

“How to Eat a Guava” from *When I was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago

Based on information in the article, explain why it is difficult for teenagers to get enough sleep. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the article.

Grade 8, 2011

Describe the mood created by the author in the memoir. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the memoir.

Grade 8, 2010

Based on the article, identify the three factors that limit the height of a skate ramp and explain how each of them limits the ramp's height. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the article.

Grade 8, 2010

Based on the article, explain how the author engages the reader in the subject. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the article.

Grade 8, 2009

Based on the excerpt, explain what Donatelli means when he says, “Everybody wants to be a champion. That’s not enough.” Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the excerpt.

Grade 8, 2009

Explain the techniques President Reagan uses in his speech to honor the Challenger astronauts. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the speech.

Grade 8, 2008

Explain how Lisa's behavior throughout the excerpt affects Paul. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the excerpt.

Grade 8, 2008

Explain the importance of the setting throughout the excerpt. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the excerpt.

Grade 8, 2008

Based on the article, describe how fairy tales changed over time. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the article.

Grade 8, 2008

Describe how the author characterizes Julius and Stanley in the excerpt. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 8, 2007

Describe the conflict between Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the excerpt. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 8, 2007

In the excerpt, the narrator describes the Abenaki way of doing things. Explain how the events in the excerpt reflect the Abenaki way. Use relevant and specific information from the excerpt to support your answer.

Grade 8, 2007

Based on the article, explain the reasons why sanitation workers have developed their own slang. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the article.

Grade 8, 2007

Choose two actors mentioned in the article. Compare the ways they prepared for the film. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the article.

Grade 8, 2006

Imagine you are looking for a new dog. Based on the article, describe the steps that could be involved in an Internet search for information about getting a dog. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the article.

Grade 8, 2006

In paragraphs 4 and 15, Sally Jane hears her mother tell her, “You have to let them go, Sally Jane.” Explain how these words are important to the story. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the story.

Grade 8, 2006

Eugene turns and speaks directly to the audience several times during the excerpt. Explain what the audience learns about Eugene when he speaks to the audience. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

Grade 8, 2006