

Question Detectives

Sort question types, explain two choices, then write your own.

4.13.A “generate and clarify questions on a topic for formal and informal inquiry;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

FORMAL QUESTION

A formal question asks for facts that you can check in books, articles, or trusted websites.

Why are coral reefs important to ocean animals?

INFORMAL QUESTION

An informal question asks a person about an opinion, experience, or observation.

How did your family choose a meal to cook together?

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For Part 1, read each question and circle FORMAL or INFORMAL.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. How do wetlands help prevent flooding? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2. What causes a lunar eclipse? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3. What details did you notice during your visit to the museum? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4. How did the Erie Canal affect trade? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5. Which book character do you like best, and why? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 6. What was the hardest part of our science experiment? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7. What are the steps in the water cycle? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8. How do bees help flowering plants reproduce? | FORMAL | INFORMAL |
| <hr/> | | |

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM #

HOW I KNEW

ITEM #

HOW I KNEW

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new formal question and one new informal question.

FORMAL

INFORMAL

CHALLENGE

Write a formal question about a school garden. Then revise it into an informal question that asks someone about their experience with the same garden.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	How do wetlands help prevent flooding?	FORMAL	It asks for checkable facts about wetlands.
2	What causes a lunar eclipse?	FORMAL	It asks for a scientific fact that can be researched.
3	What details did you notice during your visit to the museum?	INFORMAL	It asks about a person's observation.
4	How did the Erie Canal affect trade?	FORMAL	It asks for historical facts.
5	Which book character do you like best, and why?	INFORMAL	It asks for a personal opinion.
6	What was the hardest part of our science experiment?	INFORMAL	It asks about a personal experience.
7	What are the steps in the water cycle?	FORMAL	It asks for scientific facts.
8	How do bees help flowering plants reproduce?	FORMAL	It asks for facts that can be researched.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **FORMAL:** What makes some objects float in water?
- **INFORMAL:** What did you enjoy about planting a seed?

Challenge: FORMAL: What conditions do tomato plants need to grow in a school garden? INFORMAL: What has helped your class's tomato plants grow in its school garden?

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Answers: 1 FORMAL, 2 FORMAL, 3 INFORMAL, 4 FORMAL, 5 INFORMAL, 6 INFORMAL, 7 FORMAL, 8 FORMAL. For Part 2 and student-created questions, accept answers that correctly distinguish checkable facts from personal opinions, experiences, or observations.