

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

A SUBSIDIARY OF TEACH BIG®

GRADE



Cluster 1

Short Constructed Response (Informational)

TEACHER LESSON PLAN GUIDE

Grade 3 • Cluster 1

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Table of Contents

FRONT MATTER

Statement of Purpose 5

Abstract 6

Standards at a Glance 7

MODULES

Module 1 — Shaping the Prompt / Cracking the SCR Question Code 9

Module 2 — Writing a Thesis (Central Idea) / Central Idea 71

Module 3 — Understanding and Selecting Strong Evidence 143

Module 4 — Explaining Evidence / Build the Full SCR Ladder 213

Statement of Purpose

Cluster 1 opens Grade 3 by teaching students to write a Short Constructed Response (SCR) - a focused, evidence-based paragraph that shows their thinking about a text. Students learn to shape the prompt, state a clear central idea, choose strong evidence, and explain it.

Across four modules students move from cracking the SCR question code, to writing a thesis (central idea), to selecting strong evidence, and finally to explaining that evidence and building the full SCR. Each week the writing stamina grows from Low to Very High.

Abstract

Module 1, Shaping the Prompt / Cracking the SCR Question Code, teaches students to read what a prompt is asking. Module 2, Writing a Thesis (Central Idea), focuses on a central idea that answers the prompt.

Module 3, Understanding and Selecting Strong Evidence, teaches students to choose the most relevant details, and Module 4, Explaining Evidence / Build the Full SCR Ladder, completes the response by explaining how the evidence supports the central idea. Every day follows the Teach BIG GRADUATE routine, moving students from gathering and revealing the skill, through attempting, discussing, and using it, to awarding growth, targeting the next step, and explaining their thinking to others.

Standards at a Glance

The TEKS below are taught and practiced across Cluster 1. The **exact, verbatim Student Expectation wording** for each — quoted from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills — appears on the **TEKS Correlations** page inside each module, along with where in the week it is taught.

TEKS	STRAND	MODULES
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TEKS 4.7(C) — “use text evidence to support an appropriate response” — applies wherever students use text evidence in this cluster.

ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standards) are correlated on each module’s daily “TEKS and ELPS for Today” pages.

M O D U L E

1

Shaping the Prompt / Cracking the SCR Question Code

Week 1 • Low Stamina • approximately 150 words

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CLUSTER 1

Short Constructed Response

Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans

Building the foundation of a short constructed response: shaping the prompt, finding the noun, verb, and clue word, and deciding whether a question is asking what, why, or how.



- Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans
- 4 Modules
- 4 Weeks
- Passage 1
- Passage 2

Written by Randi Whitney

Module 1: Shaping the Prompt / Cracking the SCR Question Code

Week 1 - Low Stamina - approximately 150 words

A Little Inspiration Goes a Long Way!

Great teachers do not just teach answers - they teach students how to read a question like a detective. When a child learns to see the noun, the verb, and the clue word inside a prompt, every answer that follows gets stronger.

Why This Module Matters

A common misconception among teachers is that students struggle with constructed responses primarily because they cannot write well. In reality, many students struggle because they misinterpret the prompt before they ever begin writing. When students learn to identify the nouns, verbs, and clue words within a question, they gain a clearer understanding of what the prompt requires.

Module Essential Question

How can a writer tell exactly what a short constructed response prompt is asking before writing a single sentence?

Parent Communication

Purpose

Families are partners in this work, and partnership only happens when families know what is going on. This page exists so that every family has three things: a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, real questions they can ask at the dinner table, and one or two simple things they can do together that need no materials and no preparation. Nothing here is homework for the family. It is an invitation to talk. When a child explains the week's learning to someone at home, the learning gets stronger, and the family gets to see the thinking that usually stays inside the classroom.

How to Send It

Copy the letter in the language each family prefers, or send both. The conversation starters and the family activities are the same in either language, so a family reading the Spanish letter and a child reading the English page are still talking about the same thing.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child begins learning how to understand exactly what a writing prompt is asking before they start answering. We call this Shaping the Prompt or Cracking the SCR Question Code. To do this, students learn a special system using shapes. They will use a red circle for the main noun, a yellow box for the verb, and a green triangle for the clue word. These shapes help them decide if a question is asking what, why, or how. They will also practice dotting any unknown words as they read.

We will use these skills while reading "The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth" and "Life Along the Nile River". Your child is learning how to plan a first draft and write a short constructed response. This type of writing has exactly three sentences: a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence from the text, and an explanation.

I am so excited to see your child grow as a writer! Please ask your child to show you how they circle a noun, box a verb, and triangle a clue word. It is a great way to see their hard work in action.

With appreciation, Your child's teacher - The Writing Academy LLC

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija comienza a aprender a entender exactamente lo que pide una pregunta de escritura antes de responderla. Lo llamamos "Dar forma a la pregunta / Descifrar el código de la pregunta de la RCC (Respuesta Construida Corta)". Los estudiantes aprenden a encerrar en un círculo el sustantivo principal, a poner el verbo en un cuadro y a marcar con un triángulo la palabra clave para decidir si una pregunta pide QUÉ, POR QUÉ o CÓMO.

Esta semana leeremos dos pasajes: "Los peregrinos eligieron Plymouth" y "La vida a lo largo del río Nilo". En un lenguaje sencillo, los estudiantes practican planificar un primer borrador y escribir una respuesta construida corta.

Pueden apoyar en casa pidiéndole a su hijo o hija que les muestre cómo encerrar un sustantivo en un círculo, poner un verbo en un cuadro y marcar una palabra clave con un triángulo. ¡Gracias por acompañar a su hijo o hija en este aprendizaje!

Con aprecio, La maestra o el maestro de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Family Conversation Starters

Send these home with the letter, or post them in the class stream. None of them can be answered with only yes or no.

- Show me a prompt you marked this week. What does each shape mean?
- What is the difference between a why question and a how question? Teach me.
- Tell me about the Pilgrims. Why did they choose Plymouth?
- Tell me about the Nile River. How did it help farmers grow crops?
- What is the hardest part of figuring out what a question is really asking?

Simple Family Activities

Both activities need little or no materials and both end in a conversation rather than a worksheet.

Family Activity - Mark the Question

Ask your child a real question about your day, such as why did we go to the store this morning. Have your child say the noun, the verb, and the clue word out loud, then name whether it is a what, why, or how question. Two minutes, no paper needed.

Family Activity - Question Detective at Dinner

At dinner, take turns asking a what question, a why question, and a how question about your day. Let your child catch the clue word each time.

Module 1 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Before students can successfully answer a Short Constructed Response (SCR), they must first understand exactly what the prompt is asking them to do. Many students struggle not because they cannot write, but because they misinterpret the structure and demands of the prompt itself. "Shaping the Prompt" teaches students to analyze the parts of a question before attempting to answer it. By visually identifying the key components of a prompt, students learn to determine the task the question requires.

BIG Goal: Students will be introduced to the Short Constructed Response (SCR).

TEKS Correlations

The Student Expectation column below is the exact wording of each TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, not paraphrased.

TEKS	Strand	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS)	Where It Is Taught and Practiced in This Module
3.11A(i)	Writing Process — Planning	plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies	Days 1-2 and Day 5: students plan by analyzing the prompt (noun, verb, clue word) before writing, and brainstorm before the Day 5 draft.
3.12A(i)	Writing — Genre	compose literary texts, including personal narratives, using genre characteristics	Days 1-2: students are introduced to the short constructed response (SCR) genre and name its parts.
3.12A(ii)	Writing — Genre	compose literary texts, including personal narratives, using craft	Days 1-2: students name the craft moves of an SCR.
3.12B(i)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea	Days 3-5: students compose a short constructed response with a clear thesis (central idea).
3.12B(ii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics	Days 3-5: students include the parts of an SCR (thesis (central idea), evidence, explanation).

3.12B(iii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft	Days 3-5: students use craft to explain their evidence.
3.11C(i)	Revising	revise drafts to improve sentence structure	Day 5 revising: students improve one sentence in their draft.
3.11D(i)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement	Day 5 editing: students check for complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement.
3.11D(vi)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including singular nouns	Day 5 editing: students check singular nouns in their sentences.
3.11D(viii)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including common nouns	Day 5 editing: students check common nouns in their sentences.
3.11D(xxxii)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate high-frequency words	Day 5 editing: students check spelling of high-frequency words.

Interdisciplinary context (background only, not a writing standard): the two passages connect to Social Studies 3.14C.

Module 1 — ELPS Correlations

Matched from the approved K-12 ELPS/ELAR Crosswalk to the actual language demands of this module. The final column names the day or days on which each expectation is explicitly addressed, so no searching is required.

ELPS	Domain	Language Pattern	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(E)	Listening	Comprehension	Demonstrate listening comprehension of spoken language during classroom interactions by recalling, retelling, responding, or asking for clarification.	Days 1, 3, 4, and 5
1(C)	Listening	Following Directions	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Day 2
2(E)	Speaking	Discourse	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail during classroom interactions.	Days 3 and 5
2(F)	Speaking	Respond to Information	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during formal and informal classroom interactions.	Days 1, 2, and 3
3(E)	Reading	Purpose for Reading	Use pre-reading strategies, including previewing text features, connecting to prior knowledge, and making predictions, to develop comprehension.	Day 1

4(D)	Writing	Language Structures / Syntax	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and types and connecting words.	Days 1, 2, and 3
4(E)	Writing	Conventions	Write using conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense.	Day 5

ELPS Woven Into Intervention

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(C)	Listening	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Intervention, after Day 3
2(F)	Speaking	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during classroom interactions.	Intervention, after Day 3

ELPS Woven Into Enrichment

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
2(E)	Speaking	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail.	Enrichment, after Day 4
4(D)	Writing	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and connecting words.	Enrichment, after Day 4

Module 1 — ELPS Linguistic Accommodations

Purpose: These accommodations maintain grade-level rigor while opening clear avenues to success for emergent bilingual students as they learn to analyze prompts and identify WHAT, WHY, and HOW questions.

Level	Language Objective
Pre-Production	Point to the noun, verb, and clue word when the teacher names them, using the red circle, yellow box, and green triangle.
Beginning	Match a marked question to its type (WHAT, WHY, or HOW) using a picture-supported chart.
Intermediate	Say aloud which word is the noun, which is the verb, and which is the clue word, using a sentence frame.
High Intermediate	Explain in a full sentence why a question is a WHAT, WHY, or HOW question.
Advanced	Analyze a new prompt independently and justify the question type with evidence from the passage.

Students at the Pre-Production and Beginning levels will rely on the shape colors and picture cues; students at the Intermediate and higher levels will use the sentence frames to explain their thinking in their own words.

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students learn shaping the prompt and cracking the SCR question code. Every task below is open to English learners at any proficiency level; the supports are built in, not bolted on.

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students hear a prompt read aloud, then name the question code and the answer it calls for.
Speaking	Students say their thinking aloud to a partner before they write, using the sentence frames provided.
Reading	Students read the passage and the prompt closely, marking the words that carry the meaning.
Writing	Students shape a prompt and name what it asks in writing, moving from a spoken idea to a written response.

Module 1 — Learning Destination

Module Learning Objective

Students will decode a short constructed response prompt by identifying the noun, the verb, and the clue word, and will determine whether the question is asking WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

I Will Statements

- I will mark the noun of a prompt with a red circle.
- I will mark the verb of a prompt with a yellow box.
- I will mark the clue word of a prompt with a green triangle.
- I will decide whether a prompt is asking WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

I Can Statements

- I can find the noun of importance in a prompt.
- I can find the verb of importance in a prompt.
- I can find the clue word that tells me what, why, or how.
- I can explain to a partner what a prompt is asking me to do.

★ Daily Deck

Daily Deck - Module Slide 1: the I Will and I Can statements for this module, so students see the week's target before anything else.

Success Criteria

- All three marks appear on the prompt and each mark is on the correct word.
- The student names the prompt type as WHAT, WHY, or HOW and gives the clue word as the reason.
- The student restates the prompt in his or her own words without changing what it asks.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The completed prompt-marking practice shows three prompts marked correctly.
- The Day 5 exit ticket shows one unfamiliar prompt marked correctly and named as WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
- Both pieces are kept together so growth across the week is visible in one place.

Module 1 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a prompt aloud, repeat it, and let students touch each word before marking. You may reduce the number of prompts. You may not tell a student which word is the noun, which word is the verb, or which word is the clue. The student must still locate the three words and must still name the prompt type and say why.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Locate the noun, the verb, and the clue word inside the prompt.	Supported. The teacher may read the prompt aloud twice.	The three marks are on the three correct words.
Inferential	Decide what kind of answer the clue word demands.	Guided on Days 1 and 2, independent by Day 5.	The student names WHAT, WHY, or HOW and cites the clue word.
Evaluative	Judge whether a proposed answer would actually satisfy what the prompt asks.	Partner discussion on Day 3, independent on Day 5.	The student explains why a sample answer does or does not do the job the prompt gave.

Possible Teacher Misconceptions

The Misconception	What a Teacher Might Misunderstand	A Practical Way to Self-Correct
Students struggle because they cannot write well.	A teacher may reteach writing mechanics when the real breakdown is prompt reading.	Before reteaching writing, ask the student to mark the prompt. Most errors disappear once the task is clear.
The clue word does not matter much.	A teacher may accept any reasonable answer regardless of WHAT, WHY, or HOW.	Cover the answer and ask whether it does the exact job the clue word named. If not, it is off task.
Marking the prompt is a warm-up to hurry through.	Because the marking takes under a minute, it can be treated as a routine.	Protect the full step. Every later module depends on students doing this without help.

Possible Student Misconceptions

What Students May Misunderstand	What a Teacher Might Notice	A Practical Way to Correct or Reteach It
Every noun in the prompt is the topic.	The student circles two or three nouns in red.	Ask which noun the rest of the sentence is about. Give prompts with a single noun for two practices, then return to full prompts.
WHY and HOW mean about the same thing.	The student names the prompt type by guessing rather than by reading the clue word.	Say two answers back to back, one with because and one with the steps, and ask which gives a reason.
The verb does not need to connect to the noun.	The student boxes a verb far from the circled noun.	Ask which verb tells what to do with the noun they circled, then re-mark together.

Thinking Levels Charts

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a prompt and a student response require.

The Five Thinking Levels

Level	Color	Thinking Stage	Description
Level 1	Red	Foundational	Student follows directions or repeats information exactly as taught with little independent thinking.
Level 2	Orange	Emergent	Student begins trying ideas independently but may be uncertain or inconsistent.
Level 3	Yellow	Visible	Student connects ideas directly to textual evidence or proof from the passage.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal inference, applying understanding to self or deeper meaning.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, themes, or broader life understanding.

The Progression of Thinking

Level	Hidden Question	Student Thinking	Thinking Focus
Foundational (Red)	Why did it happen?	I can explain the cause.	Cause and Effect
Emergent (Orange)	Why was it done?	I can explain the purpose.	Purpose and Motivation
Visible (Yellow)	Why is it important in the passage?	I can explain why it matters in the text.	Importance and Contribution
Independent (Green)	Why is it important to me?	I can explain what I can learn, value, or apply to my own life.	Personal Meaning and Application
Reflective (Blue)	Why is it important to everyone?	I can explain the universal lesson or significance.	Universal Meaning and Life Lessons

Module 1 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

"Before we begin, let's preview some words you will see in today's lesson and passages. Good readers notice vocabulary before they begin reading or answering questions."

Tier 1 Vocabulary

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
build	to make something by putting parts together	The Pilgrims had to ____ homes before winter.
water	the clear liquid people, plants, and animals need to live	The river gave the people fresh ____ to drink.
river	a long body of moving water that flows across the land	The Nile is a long ____ that flows through Egypt.
trees	tall plants with a trunk that give wood and shade	The Pilgrims used tall ____ to build their homes.
homes	the places where people live	The settlers built small ____ near the harbor.
land	the solid ground that is not covered by water	The Pilgrims looked for ____ where crops could grow.
people	men, women, and children	Boats carried ____ and goods up and down the Nile.
winter	the coldest season of the year	____ was coming, so the Pilgrims worked quickly.
crops	plants that farmers grow for food	Farmers planted ____ such as wheat and barley.
fish	animals that live in water and can be caught for food	The river gave the people ____ to eat.
towns	places where people live, work, and shop	Over time, ____ grew along the riverbanks.
help	to make something easier for someone	The Nile River would ____ farmers grow crops.
choose	to pick one thing out of many	The Pilgrims had to ____ a place to settle.
grow	to get bigger or to raise plants	Rich soil helped the plants ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary

Teacher Script

"These are academic thinking words that help us understand questions and explain answers."

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
noun	a person, place, or thing	The ____ is the person, place, or thing the question is about.
verb	an action word that tells what to do	I box the ____ because it tells me what to do.
clue	a hint that helps you figure something out	The green triangle marks the ____ word.
prompt	the question or task you are asked to answer	First I read the ____ before I answer.
question type	whether a question asks WHAT, WHY, or HOW	The clue word tells me the ____.
identify	to name or point out something	A what question asks me to ____ something.
explain	to tell why or how in your own words	A why question asks me to ____ a reason.
describe	to tell what something is like	A what question can ask me to ____ something.
process	the steps that make something happen	A how question asks about a ____.
cause	the reason something happens	A why question asks about a ____.
evidence	a fact from the passage that supports your answer	I support my answer with ____ from the passage.
response	the answer you write	My ____ must match what the prompt asks.
analyze	to look closely at the parts of something	I ____ the prompt by marking its three parts.
determine	to decide or figure out	I ____ whether the question is what, why, or how.

For more practice with academic words, see the Teach BIG Academic Vocabulary Companion App.

Tier 3 Vocabulary

Teacher Script

"These words are connected specifically to the historical topics in our passages. When we understand them, the passage becomes easier to understand."

Word	Say It This Way	Student-Friendly Definition
Pilgrims	PIL-grims	a group of travelers who sailed to America in 1620
Plymouth	PLIM-uth	the place where the Pilgrims settled
Atlantic Ocean	at-LAN-tik OH-shun	the large ocean the Pilgrims crossed
harbor	HAR-ber	a safe place near land where ships can anchor
colony	KOL-uh-nee	a new community of people who settle in a faraway place
shelter	SHEL-ter	something built to protect people from weather
settlers	SET-lerz	people who move to a new place to live
ancient Egypt	AYN-shunt EE-jipt	a land long ago along the Nile River
Nile River	NYL RIV-er	a long river that flows from south to north through Egypt
desert	DEZ-ert	dry land with little water or rain
floodwaters	FLUHD-waw-terz	water that spills over a river's banks when it rises
soil	soyl	the top layer of earth where plants grow
wheat	hweet	a grain farmers grow to make bread
barley	BAR-lee	a grain farmers grow for food
riverbanks	RIV-er-banks	the land along the sides of a river

See the Vocabulary Opportunities page for 50 activities, and the companion TWA Vocabulary Practice.

Module 1 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

In 1620, the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to find a place where they could practice their beliefs freely. They settled in Plymouth because it had forests for building homes and ships, fresh water, and land for crops. The harbor also allowed their ship to anchor safely before winter arrived.

Ancient Egypt was mostly a hot, dry desert where it was hard to grow crops. The Nile River flowed through this land and flooded every year, leaving behind dark, rich soil. This allowed farmers to grow wheat and barley, while the river provided fish and a way to move goods by boat.

Before students write their short constructed response, they must analyze the prompt. Using red circles for the main noun, yellow boxes for the verb, and green triangles for clue words helps them identify if they need to explain what, why, or how. This step prevents the most common mistake of misreading the task. Once they dot unknown words and analyze the prompt, they can write their three sentences: a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation.

Module 1 — Materials, Preparation, and Timing

Materials to Gather

- Whiteboard or Smartboard and dry erase markers
- Chart or anchor chart paper and sticky notes
- Printed copies of Passage 1 and Passage 2
- Student notebooks or response journals
- Highlighters or colored pencils in three colors: red or pink, yellow, and green

Preparation Before Day 1

- Draw the "Cracking the SCR Question Code" anchor chart.
- Make the shapes key: red circle = noun, yellow box = verb, green triangle = clue word.
- Copy both passages for each student.
- Prepare the Shape Detectives word cards (noun, verb, and WHAT/WHY/HOW cards) and colored tokens

(red circle, yellow box, green triangle).

Timing and Transition Overview

Day	Minutes	GRADUATE Stage	What Happens
Day 1	15	G — Gather + R — Reveal	Hook, introduce DOT, model the shapes and WHAT/WHY/HOW.
Day 2	15	A — Attempt	Guided practice: Shape Detectives and the Lightning Round.
Day 3	15	D — Discuss + U — Use	Discuss a prompt, then mark three prompts independently.
Day 4	15	A — Award + T — Target	Celebrate growth and name one next step.
Day 5	15	E — Educate and Explain to Others	Teach a partner and complete the exit check.

Tiny Times Transition

A Tiny Time is a quick, zero-material movement routine — under one minute — used to move students between activities while reinforcing the Three Shapes. Third graders learn through movement, so making the shapes with their bodies turns a transition into another repetition of the habit and resets focus before the next task.

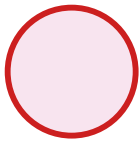
When to use a Tiny Time: whenever the class moves from one activity to the next, whenever energy dips, and right before a new, challenging prompt to prime students for analysis.

How to run a Tiny Time, step by step:

- Signal the class and get all eyes on you.
- Teacher script: "Tiny Time! Show me a circle." Call one shape at a time — circle, box, or triangle.
- Students make the shape with their hands and bodies: a red circle for the noun of importance, a yellow box for the verb of importance, and a green triangle for the clue word.
- As they hold the shape, students whisper the thinking it stands for: a circle is the noun, a box is the verb, and a triangle whispers WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
- Call two or three shapes in a row, then have students return quietly to their seats ready to work.

Example call-and-response: the teacher says "Box!" and students form a yellow box and whisper "verb — the action word." The teacher says "Triangle!" and students form a green triangle and whisper "clue word — WHAT, WHY, or HOW." No materials are needed, and every student can succeed, which is what makes the routine build confidence.

Module 1 — Anchor Charts and the DOT Reading Habit



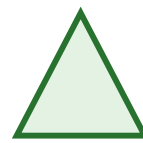
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Part of the Question	What It Means
Red Circle	Main Noun	The topic or subject the question is about.
Yellow Box	Verb	The action the question is asking you to do.
Green Triangle	Clue Word	The word that shows if the question is WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

Clue Word	The Question Is Asking You To
WHAT	Identify or describe something.
WHY	Explain a reason or a cause.
HOW	Explain a process, a method, or the way something happened.

The DOT Reading Habit

Teacher Script

"Before we begin reading, we are going to use an important reading habit that strong readers use. While you are reading the passages in your Interactive Notebook, place a small dot above any word you are unsure about."

Board text: Dot = I'm not sure about this word yet.

Encouragement: "This helps your brain keep track of words you are learning. Good readers notice the words they are still growing into."

Create the Anchor Chart

Teacher directions: Build an anchor chart from the information on this page. On chart paper, write the three shapes and what each one marks (red circle = noun, yellow box = verb, green triangle = clue word), the WHAT / WHY / HOW chart, and the DOT reading reminder. Display it all week so students can refer to it.

Module 1 — Shaping the Prompt: Modeled Annotation

Teacher Script

"Let's learn how to mark our prompt. Look at the question: Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth as their settlement? First, draw a red circle around Pilgrims because that is our main noun. Next, put a yellow box around choose since that is the verb telling us what to do. Then, draw a green triangle around Why because it is our clue word. This tells us we must explain a reason."

Teacher Script

"Before you read the story, look for words you do not know. Place a small dot above any word that is new to you."

To write your short constructed response, use exactly three sentences. First, write a thesis (central idea). Second, give one piece of evidence from the text. Third, write an explanation.

Let us learn how to shape your prompt for Passage 2.

Teacher Script

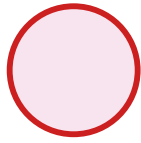
"First, let us mark our question: How did the Nile River help farmers grow crops? Draw a red circle around Nile River and farmers because those are our main nouns. Put a yellow box around help because that is the verb telling us what to do. Put a green triangle around How. The word How is our clue word that tells us to explain a process."

Now, look at the text. Dot any words you do not know. Find these details in order: first, the river flooded. Second, the floods left rich soil. Third, farmers planted crops in that soil.

When you write your short constructed response, use exactly three sentences. Start with a thesis (central idea). Next, write one piece of evidence from the text. End with an explanation. Do not write an introduction or a conclusion.

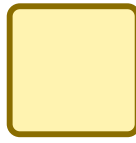
Module 1 — The Three Shapes: Cracking the SCR Question Code

Cluster 1 uses three shapes to break a writing prompt into its parts. There is no tree and no evidence-type sorting in this module — students learn to read the question itself.



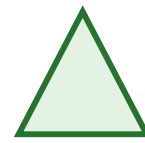
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Marks	Meaning
Red Circle	The main noun	The topic or subject of the question.
Yellow Box	The verb	The action the question asks you to do.
Green Triangle	The clue word	The word that signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

WHAT / WHY / HOW Thinking Chart

Question Type	Thinking Clue	What the Answer Must Do
WHAT	Name it	Identify or describe information from the passage.
WHY	Give a reason	Explain a reason or cause, often using the word because.
HOW	Explain the ways	Explain a process, a method, or the way something happened.

How to Use the Shapes Chart

Teacher Script

"First we circle the main noun in red. Next we box the verb in yellow. Then we triangle the clue word in green. Finally we ask: is this question a WHAT, a WHY, or a HOW?"

- WHAT asks us to identify or describe something.
- WHY asks us to explain a reason or a cause.
- HOW asks us to explain a process or the way something happened.

Before Students Read

Preview the two passages with students before reading. Each passage appears twice: first a plain copy to read, then a color-coded copy. As you read, students TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. TRACKS marks the evidence in the passage; the shapes are used only to analyze the prompt.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

Students look for six kinds of measurable evidence in every passage. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

T Time — Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

R Reactions — Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Purple.)

A Actions — Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

C Character, Concept, Creature — Characters' or people's names, animals or animals' names, or major concepts used as the central idea. Often nouns or proper nouns. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

K Key Knowledge — All other important information necessary to the meaning of the passage that is not accounted for by another TRACKS category (background knowledge). (Highlight color: Pastel Orange.)

S Scenery / Setting — Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

PASSAGE 1 — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth (Stamina: Low)

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. After many weeks at sea, they reached the coast of North America.

[2] The Pilgrims explored the land and found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and ships. There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted. The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely.

[3] Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly. They started constructing small homes and gathering wood for fires. Soon, Plymouth became the place where they settled and built their new colony.

Student Annotation Guide — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth**T — Time**

In 1620; Winter was coming

R — Reactions

Plymouth became the place where they settled

A — Actions

sailed across the Atlantic Ocean; started constructing small homes

C — Character/Concept/Creature

the Pilgrims

K — Key Knowledge

their beliefs freely; fresh water

S — Scenery/Setting

forests filled with tall trees

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. After many weeks at sea, they reached the coast of North America.

[2] The Pilgrims explored the land and found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and ships. There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted. The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely.

[3] Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly. They started constructing small homes and gathering wood for fires. Soon, Plymouth became the place where they settled and built their new colony.

PASSAGE 2 — Life Along the Nile River (Stamina: Low)

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals.

[2] Running through this desert was the Nile River, a long river that flowed from south to north. Each year, the river would rise and spill over its banks. When the water went back down, it left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants.

[3] Farmers planted crops such as wheat and barley in the soil left by the floodwaters. The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming. Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people and goods.

[4] Over time, towns and cities grew along the riverbanks, and the Nile became the center of daily life for the people of ancient Egypt.

Student Annotation Guide — Life Along the Nile River**T — Time**

Ancient Egypt; Each year

R — Reactions

towns and cities grew

A — Actions

rise and spill over its banks; planted crops

C — Character/Concept/Creature

the Nile River

K — Key Knowledge

flowed from south to north

S — Scenery/Setting

hot, dry desert; dark, rich soil

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Life Along the Nile River

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals.

[2] Running through this desert was the Nile River, a long river that flowed from south to north. Each year, the river would rise and spill over its banks. When the water went back down, it left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants.

[3] Farmers planted crops such as wheat and barley in the soil left by the floodwaters. The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming. Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people and goods.

[4] Over time, towns and cities grew along the riverbanks, and the Nile became the center of daily life for the people of ancient Egypt.

🕒 Day 1 - Gather and Reveal (15 minutes)

G

R

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(i) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS	3(E) — share information in cooperative interactions; 1(E) — use prereading supports

GATHER

Attention activity - Would You Rather: "Would you rather eat an apple or broccoli? Would you rather answer a why or a how question?"

Teacher Script

"Class, today we are going to become question detectives. Every reading test question has a secret code hidden inside it. Strong readers do not just read the story - they also study the question to understand exactly what their brain needs to do."

★ Daily Deck Slide

Display Passage 1 title, then show: Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth as a place to settle?

Teacher Script

"Let's imagine you just finished reading this passage about the Pilgrims. Now you see this question. If you don't understand the question, your answer may miss the real point. But today you are going to learn a habit that helps you decode the question first. By the end of this lesson, you will know how to find three important clues inside every SCR question."

 Teacher Script

"Before we begin reading, we are going to use an important reading habit that strong readers use. While you are reading the passages in your Interactive Notebook, place a small dot above any word you are unsure about. As you learn the word, figure it out, or understand its meaning, you may erase the dot. This helps your brain keep track of words you are learning. Good readers notice the words they are still growing into."

 Daily Deck Slide

Dot = I'm not sure about this word yet.

REVEAL **Teacher Script**

"Every short constructed response question falls into one of three thinking categories."

 Daily Deck Slide

WHAT - WHY - HOW

Explain, and have students take notes in their Interactive Notebooks:

- WHAT questions ask you to identify or describe something. Example: What natural resources did the Pilgrims find near Plymouth?
- WHY questions ask you to explain a reason or cause. Example: Why did the Pilgrims settle in Plymouth?
- HOW questions ask you to explain a process or method. Example: How did the Nile River help farmers grow crops?

 Teacher Script

"The noun tells us what the question is about. The verb tells us what thinking action we must do. The clue word tells us if the question is WHAT, WHY, or HOW."

 Daily Deck Slide (cont.)

Introduce the Shaping the Prompt habit. Draw the shapes and explain: red circle marks the noun (the topic); yellow box marks the verb (the action); green triangle marks the clue word (WHAT, WHY, or HOW).

Modeling the Process

Have students find this question in their notebooks: Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth as their settlement?

Teacher Script

"First, I find the noun, the main topic. I draw a red circle around Pilgrims. That tells me who the question is about. Now I look for the verb, the action word. I draw a yellow box around choose. This tells me what action I must explain. Now I look for the clue word that tells me the question type. I draw a green triangle around Why. This triangle tells me the question is asking WHY, which means I must explain a reason."

Embedded Check for Understanding

Students point to the noun, the verb, and the clue word on a shared prompt and name WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

Purpose: Students will listen for key parts of a question to practice the shape marking system.

Teacher Script

"Alright class, let's play a listening game! I am going to read a question. When you hear the main noun, make a circle with your hand. When you hear the verb or what we need to do, make a box with your fingers. When you hear the clue word, make a triangle and shout out if it is asking WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Let's try it!"

Example 1: Why did the Nile flood every year? (Circle for Nile, box for flood, triangle and shout WHY)

Example 2: What did the Pilgrims eat during the first winter? (Circle for Pilgrims, box for eat, triangle and shout WHAT)

Example 3: How did the Nile help farmers? (Circle for Nile, box for help, triangle and shout HOW)

Example 4: Why did the Pilgrims travel to a new land? (Circle for Pilgrims, box for travel, triangle and shout WHY)

🕒 Day 2 - Attempt (15 minutes)

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11A(i) — plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies
ELPS	4(D) — write grade-appropriate sentences; 2(I) — monitor understanding of spoken language

ATTEMPT



Teacher Script

"Now we will practice together using the Nile River passage."



Daily Deck Slide

How did the Nile River help farmers grow crops?



Teacher Script

"Turn to your partner and mark the question using our shapes. Circle Nile River, box help, triangle How. Ask yourself which noun takes the action of the verb - that is the noun you circle. Then ask yourself which verb is closest to the noun you circled - that is the verb you box in." Teacher circulates while students work.

Shape Detectives - InterActivity (Group Practice)

Students cut out the game cards in their Interactive Notebooks and make a Practice Pocket to store the pieces. Continue to use this game after the lesson as a Forgetting Interrupted activity.



Teacher Script

"Today you're going to be Shape Detectives. Your job is to quickly decide what type of word you see."

Step 1 - Spread the cards: each group receives a mixed pile of word cards. The full set of word cards is printed below and included here in the teacher edition so the game can be run even without the student edition. Copy and cut the cards ahead of time.

Word Cards (Shape Detectives Game)

These cards are provided in the teacher edition so the Shape Detectives game can be run independently of the student edition. Print, cut apart, and shuffle before Day 2. The correct shape is shown for teacher reference only.

Card Word	Correct Shape
Pilgrims	Red circle (noun)
Plymouth	Red circle (noun)
harbor	Red circle (noun)
farmers	Red circle (noun)
Nile River	Red circle (noun)
flood	Red circle (noun)
crops	Red circle (noun)
choose	Yellow box (verb)
explain	Yellow box (verb)
describe	Yellow box (verb)
tell	Yellow box (verb)
help	Yellow box (verb)
grow	Yellow box (verb)
what	Green triangle (clue word)
why	Green triangle (clue word)
how	Green triangle (clue word)

Step 2 - The teacher calls the aspect to locate:

- "Find a noun!" Students place a red circle token on the noun cards. Teacher checks answers.
- "Find a verb!" Students place yellow boxes on the verbs.
- "Find a question clue!" Students place green triangles on What, Why, or How.

Step 3 - Lightning Round: the teacher holds up cards one at a time and students shout the shape or make it with their hands. Show grow, students respond "Yellow box! Verb!" Show river, students respond "Red circle! Noun!" Show How, students respond "Green triangle! Question clue!"

Teacher Script

"Excellent work, Shape Detectives! Now let's use the same thinking habit on a real question from our passage."

 Answer Key

Nile prompt: circle Nile River (and farmers), box help, triangle How = HOW (explain a process).

🕒 Day 3 - Discuss and Use (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(ii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
ELPS	4(F) — write to respond and explain; 3(E) — share in cooperative interactions

DISCUSS

Teacher Script

"Now we will practice together using the Nile River passage."

★ Daily Deck Slide

How did the Nile River help farmers grow crops?

Student directions: "Turn to your partner and mark the question using our shapes."

Students mark: circle Nile River / farmers, box help, triangle How.

Ask: "What noun did you circle in red?" (Expected: Nile River / farmers.) "What verb did you box in yellow?" (Expected: help.) "What green triangle clue word did you find?" (Expected: How.)

Teacher Script

"That tells us this is a HOW question, which means we must explain a process or way something happens."

★ Daily Deck Slide (cont.)

Ask: "What details from the passage might help answer this question?" Possible responses: the river flooded; the floods left rich soil; farmers planted crops in the soil.

USE (Independent Practice) **Teacher Script**

"Now you will try this strategy independently. Go to page 14 in your Interactive Notebook and look at the questions."

Students draw a red circle around the noun, a yellow box around the verb, and a green triangle around the clue word for each prompt:

- From Passage 1: What natural resources did the Pilgrims find near Plymouth?
- From Passage 1: Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly?
- From Passage 2: How did the Nile River affect where towns and cities were built?

Teacher monitors students as they work.

 Answer Key

- What natural resources did the Pilgrims find near Plymouth? Noun: resources. Verb: find. Clue: What. Type: WHAT (identify).
- Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly? Noun: Pilgrims. Verb: build. Clue: Why. Type: WHY (reason).
- How did the Nile River affect where towns and cities were built? Noun: Nile River. Verb: affect. Clue: How. Type: HOW (process).

🕒 Day 4 - Award and Target (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11C(i) — revise drafts to improve sentence structure
ELPS	2(I) — monitor and self-correct understanding; 5(B) — write using newly acquired vocabulary

AWARD



Teacher Script

"Great readers celebrate progress."



Teacher Script

"Raise your hand if you were able to identify the noun, identify the verb, and determine WHAT, WHY, or HOW."

Students discuss one thing they did well today. Example responses: "I correctly found the verbs." "I could identify WHY questions." "I remembered to circle nouns in red."



Teacher Script

"You are becoming strategic readers who study questions carefully before answering them."

TARGET



Teacher Script

"Learning always opens the door to new questions."

Students respond: Which type of question felt easiest for you today? Which type felt the most challenging?

Curiosity questions: Why do test writers ask WHAT, WHY, and HOW questions? How could identifying the question type help you write stronger responses? Students record one curiosity question.

🕒 Day 5 - Educate and Explain to Others (15 minutes)

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(iii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft; 3.11D — edit drafts using standard English conventions
ELPS	4(F) — write to explain; 3(D) — speak using grade-level content vocabulary

EXPLAIN

Teacher Script

"Turn to someone near you and teach them one thing you learned today. Use items from your notebook if you would like to demonstrate a concept to your learners."

Students explain: how to identify nouns; how to find verbs; how to determine WHAT, WHY, or HOW questions.

Teacher Script

"When you teach someone else, your brain strengthens the learning."

EDUCATE

Teacher Script

"Turn to someone near you and teach them what you learned today about reading a prompt with the three shapes. Teaching it out loud in your own words is how you prove you truly own it."

Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today you learned that answering a question begins with understanding the question. When you circle nouns in red, box verbs in yellow, and triangle clue words in green, you unlock the thinking hidden inside the prompt. That means you are no longer guessing. You are reading like an expert."

Exit Ticket

Prompt: Give students this question and have them mark it independently before they leave — "How does the Nile River help farmers grow their crops?" Circle the noun, box the verb, triangle the clue word, and label the prompt WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

Answer Key

Example answer: circle Nile River (noun), box help (verb), triangle How (clue word), and label the prompt HOW because it asks students to explain a process.

Module 1 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

These exemplars show three levels of a short constructed response to the same Module 1 prompt, so teachers can calibrate their expectations and show students what "getting stronger" looks like. Prompt: Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly?

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "They built houses."
- What Is Working: The student names an action from the passage.
- Teacher Notes: There is no thesis (central idea) that answers WHY, and there is no evidence or explanation.
- What Needs Improvement: Mark the prompt first, then answer with a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "The Pilgrims built shelters quickly because winter was coming."
- What Is Working: The response has a thesis (central idea) that answers WHY and uses the word because.
- Teacher Notes: It is on task but has no evidence quoted or paraphrased from the passage and no explanation.
- What Needs Improvement: Add one piece of evidence from the passage and a sentence that explains how it answers the prompt.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "The Pilgrims needed to build shelters quickly because winter was coming. The passage says winter was coming and they needed to begin building shelters. Without shelter, the Pilgrims could not survive the cold, so building quickly kept them safe."
- What Is Working: Three sentences - a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation - all answering WHY.
- Teacher Notes: This is the target for Module 1's end-of-module writing.
- What Needs Improvement: Ready for a partner share and a light edit for conventions.

Exemplar Engagement Activity

Show all three responses without the labels and ask students to rank them and say why. Then have partners upgrade the Low response one level at a time - first add the thesis (central idea), then the evidence, then the explanation - so students feel how each part makes the answer stronger.

Module 1 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can mark a prompt (noun, verb, clue word) and name it as WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The three Day 3 prompts, student notebooks, red, yellow, and green pencils.
Related TEKS Breakout	3.11A(i) planning; 3.12B(i) SCR genre.
Task	Students independently mark each prompt with the three shapes and write the question type underneath.
Expected Response	Noun circled in red, verb boxed in yellow, clue word triangled in green, and the correct type named.

Informal Assessment

During Days 1-3, watch and listen as students mark prompts in partners and in the Shape Detectives game. Note who places all three marks on the correct words and who names the type using the clue word. This is a planning check, not a grade.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 independent practice is the formative check. Students mark three prompts on their own; the answer key below shows the expected marking and type.

Prompt	Noun (red)	Verb (yellow)	Clue (green)	Type
What natural resources did the Pilgrims find near Plymouth?	resources	find	What	WHAT - identify
Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly?	Pilgrims	build	Why	WHY - explain a reason
How did the Nile River affect where towns and cities were built?	Nile River	affect	How	HOW - explain a process

Answer Key

Teacher note: after the lesson, use a self-selected grade-level passage for additional practice.

Module 1 — Intervention: Question Type Detective

Field	Detail
Purpose	Support students who struggle to determine whether a prompt is WHAT, WHY, or HOW by giving them sentence frames, visual clues, and scaffolded practice.
Group Size	Small group (3-6 students)
Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Materials	Thinking Clue Cards, clue-word sort cards, sentence-frame cards, both passages
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.11A(i) planning; 3.12B(i) SCR genre
Relevant ELPS	1(C) follow oral directions; 2(F) restate and respond

Step 1 - Review the Three Question Types

Teacher Script

"Sometimes questions can be confusing. Today we are going to slow down and look carefully at the thinking each question is asking us to do."

Daily Deck Slide

WHAT = identify or name information. WHY = explain a reason. HOW = explain a way or process.

Step 2 - Use Thinking Clues

Students look at their Thinking Clue Card: WHAT = name it; WHY = give a reason; HOW = explain the ways. Teacher script: "When we understand what our brain is supposed to do, the question becomes easier."

Step 3 - Sentence Frame Support

Provide response starters. WHAT: "The passage shows that..." / "The text explains that..."
WHY: "This happened because..." / "The reason is..." HOW: "First..." / "The passage explains that..."

Step 4 - Guided Sorting Practice

Give students three questions to place under WHAT, WHY, or HOW: Explain the reason the Pilgrims chose Plymouth. Describe the process the Nile River helped farmers grow crops. Identify the natural resources near Plymouth. Teacher asks: "What thinking does this question require?"

Step 5 - Connect Back to the Lesson Habit

Teacher Script

"Now let's use the habit from our lesson." Students circle the noun, box the verb, triangle the clue. Example: "Explain the reason the Pilgrims chose Plymouth." Verb: explain. Clue: reason. Guide students to say: "This is a WHY question because it asks for a reason."

Step 6 - One Supported Practice Question (Reassessment)

Display: Describe the process the Nile River helped farmers grow crops. Ask: What is the noun? What is the verb? What type of thinking does this question ask for? Students respond: HOW question.

Answer Key

Accept a correctly marked prompt in which the noun is circled, the verb is boxed, the clue word is triangled, and the named type matches the clue word.

Module 1 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Point to a prompt and ask students to mark the noun.	Student circles the single noun the question is about.	Student circles every noun in red.	Ask which noun the rest of the sentence is about; practice with one-noun prompts.
Ask students to name the clue word and the type.	Student triangles the clue word and says WHAT, WHY, or HOW.	Student guesses the type without reading the clue word.	Cover the answer and read only the clue word; name the type from the clue.
Ask what thinking the verb requires.	Student explains identify, give a reason, or explain a process.	Student boxes a verb not tied to the noun.	Ask which verb tells what to do with the circled noun; re-mark together.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Confuses WHY and HOW	Sentence frames: WHY = "because...", HOW = "First... then..."; route to the Question Type Detective intervention.
Marks the wrong noun or verb	Model "which noun takes the action of the verb" with one-noun prompts before returning to full prompts.
Masters quickly	Route to the Question Surgeons enrichment.



Teacher Resource

Thinking Clue Cards, sentence-frame cards, and the WHAT/WHY/HOW anchor chart support this module's checks.

Module 1 — Enrichment: Question Surgeons

Field	Detail
Purpose	Extend students who have mastered prompt analysis by having them rebuild, diagnose, and transform prompts.
Group Size	Pairs or small groups
Materials	Prompt-piece cards, small charts, both passages
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.12B(i) SCR genre; 3.11A(i) planning
Relevant ELPS	2(E) narrate and explain; 4(D) grade-appropriate sentences

Step 1 - The Surgery Challenge

Teacher Script

"You are now going to become Question Surgeons. Your job is to examine the pieces of a question and rebuild it correctly so the reader knows exactly what type of thinking is required." Give each group a mixed pile of prompt pieces to assemble into a complete prompt. Example result: Explain the reason settlers chose Plymouth.

Step 2 - Diagnose the Question

After reconstructing the question, students circle the noun, box the verb, and triangle the thinking clue, then determine WHAT, WHY, or HOW and record answers on a small chart.

Step 3 - Advanced Thinking Challenge

Teacher Script

"Now your group will transform the same prompt into all three question types." Example - Explain the reason the Pilgrims chose Plymouth. WHAT: Identify the location where the Pilgrims settled. WHY: Explain the reason the Pilgrims chose Plymouth. HOW: Describe the process the Pilgrims used to choose a settlement location.

Step 4 - Author a New Prompt

Students write one original SCR prompt based on either passage. It must connect to the passage, clearly represent WHAT, WHY, or HOW, and include a strong noun and verb. Groups exchange prompts and determine each other's type.

Step 5 - Expert Reflection

Students answer in their notebook: Which type of question requires the most thinking? Which would be hardest for a reader to answer? What makes a strong SCR prompt?

Teacher script: "Great readers and writers do more than answer questions. They understand how questions are built. When you understand the structure of questions, you gain control over your thinking as a reader."

Module 1 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Plan and Draft

Writing Prompt

Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly?

Connection to This Module

This week you learned to mark a prompt with the three shapes and to name it WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Now you will use that same habit to plan and write a short constructed response.

Planning Support

1. Mark the prompt: circle the noun, box the verb, triangle the clue word, and name the type.
2. Find the topic (the noun) and the charge (what the verb asks you to do).
3. Find one piece of evidence in the passage that answers the prompt.
4. Plan your explanation: how does that evidence answer the question?

Drafting Space

Write your short constructed response - a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation. No introduction and no conclusion.

Success Criteria

- My thesis (central idea) answers the prompt.
- I include one piece of evidence from the passage.
- I explain how the evidence answers the prompt.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise, Edit, and Share

Revise

Read your response aloud. Improve one sentence so it is clear and complete (TEKS 3.11C).

Edit

Check for complete sentences, subject-verb agreement, singular and common nouns, and correctly spelled high-frequency words (TEKS 3.11D).

Share

Read your response to a partner. Your partner names the thesis (central idea), the evidence, and the explanation.



Teacher Resource

Additional revising and editing daily slides, teacher lesson plans, student interactive workbooks, and the Module 1 answer keys are available in the companion resources.

Auditory Engagement

Auditory Engagement Moments

Give every learner a chance to HEAR and SAY the thinking, not only read it. These moments are built around this module's work — shaping the prompt and cracking the SCR question code:

- Choral-read each prompt twice — the whole class first, then just the clue word the second time.
- Partner "echo and add": one student restates the prompt, the partner names what it is asking for.
- Sound out the three clues aloud — say "noun, verb, clue word" as you mark the prompt.
- One student reads the model answer aloud; the class gives a thumbs signal for whether it fits the prompt.

Pause Points

Pause the lesson at these moments and give students a few quiet seconds to think before they answer. Each pause names exactly what to think about.

Pause Point — Before Writing

Stop and think: What is the prompt really asking me to do? Say it in your own words before you write.

Pause Point — Midway

Stop and think: Does what I have written so far circle the noun, box the verb, and underline the clue word before answering? If not, fix it now, not later.

Pause Point — Before You Finish

Stop and think: Would a reader who never saw the prompt still understand my answer? Add the one sentence that makes it clear.

Module 1 — At-Home Connection

Purpose

These at-home tasks turn your child into a question detective at home. They need little or no materials and each one ends in a short conversation, not a worksheet. When a child explains the learning to you, the learning gets stronger.

Feature	Detail
Time	A few minutes each
Materials	None needed

Teacher Information - Task Card 1

Teacher note: send this ice-blue card home first. It practices marking the noun, verb, and clue word on everyday questions.



Task Card 1 - Mark the Question

TEKS 3.12B(i). On two questions a family member asks you, circle the noun, box the verb, and triangle the clue word, then say whether it is a WHAT, WHY, or HOW question. Family signature: _____



Teacher Information - Task Card 2

Teacher note: this pale-green card sorts family questions by type.



Task Card 2 - Question Detective at Dinner

TEKS 3.12B(i). At dinner, sort three family questions as WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Say how you knew. Family signature: _____



Teacher Information - Task Card 3

Teacher note: Card 3 is the same assignment with built-in language support - a word bank and a frame. It is not a reduced standard.



Task Card 3 - Three-Part Question Builder

TEKS 3.12B(i). Write one WHAT question, one WHY question, and one HOW question about your day. Word bank: what, why, how, because, first, then. Frame: "____ did ____?" Family signature: _____



Module 1 — My Progress Tracker

Teacher Script

"This is your very own progress tracker. As we learn this week, you get to color in how you feel about each skill by yourself. Be honest with yourself, because this shows you how much you are growing. You are the one in charge of your own learning, and I am so proud of the thinking you are doing."

Directions: This tracker is for YOU! As you practice finding the Three Shapes, look at each skill below. If you can do it all by yourself without help, color in or check the box that matches how you feel. Be honest with yourself — this helps you see how much you are growing!

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Circle the noun (the who or what) in red.			
Box the verb (the action word) in yellow.			
Triangle the clue word in green.			
Decide if the question asks WHAT (tell or identify).			
Decide if the question asks WHY (give a reason).			
Decide if the question asks HOW (explain the steps).			
Write my answer in a full sentence.			

One thing I am proud of:

One thing I want to get better at:

Module 1 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closure Script



Teacher Script

"You have learned to read a question like a detective. Circle the noun, box the verb, triangle the clue word, and you will always know what the question is really asking. I am proud of the thinking you did this week."



Module Essential Question - Answered

How can a writer tell exactly what a short constructed response prompt is asking before writing a single sentence? They mark the main noun with a red circle, the verb with a yellow box, and the clue word with a green triangle, and then decide whether the question is asking WHAT, WHY, or HOW before they begin to write.

Teacher Reflection - Module 1

Which students confused WHY with HOW, and what will I do next?

Did the Shape Detectives practice help students mark prompts accurately?

Which students circled the wrong noun or verb, and who is ready for enrichment?

Who needs the Question Type Detective intervention before Module 2?

Teacher Notes

Teacher Artifacts of Effectiveness

Collect and date evidence that shows the skill was taught and learned: photographs of student-marked prompts from the Day 3 independent practice; completed Shape Detectives card sorts; the Module 1 Student Tracking Sheet showing growth across the week; and one exit ticket at each level (still developing, approaching, and secure) so a reviewer can see the range of the class.

Virtual Classroom Adjustment



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Teaching this module to computer or remote learners? Keep every activity — just adjust HOW students share and respond as they learn to shape a prompt and name what it asks:

- Display the prompt on screen; students annotate it in a shared slide or on their own printout.
- Use a chat "waterfall": everyone types the clue word at once and sends together.
- Students record a 20-second voice note of their answer, or type it in a shared doc, before sharing.
- Keep the clue-marking routine on screen so remote students mark the prompt the same way.
- Keep the Pause Points — a few seconds of quiet think-time works the same on camera.

MODULE

2

**Writing a Thesis (Central Idea)
/ Central Idea**

Week 2 • Medium Stamina • two passages

Teach BIG®

The Writing Academy LLC

CLUSTER 1

Short Constructed Response

Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans

Building the foundation of a short constructed response: shaping the prompt, finding the noun, verb, and clue word, and deciding whether a question is asking what, why, or how.



- Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans
- 4 Modules
- 4 Weeks
- Passage 1
- Passage 2

Written by Randi Whitney

Module 2: Writing a Thesis (Central Idea) / Central Idea

Week 2 - Medium Stamina - two passages

A Little Inspiration Goes a Long Way!

When we give students clear habits, guided practice, and encouraging words, we do more than teach writing—we teach confidence.

Why This Module Matters

A strong short constructed response begins with a thesis (central idea) statement that directly answers the prompt. Students learn to pull the TOPIC and CHARGE from the prompt, supply an ANSWER from their reading, and match their sentence structure to the prompt type.

Module Essential Question

How can a writer build a thesis (central idea) statement that answers a WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW short constructed response prompt?

Parent Communication

Purpose

Families are partners in this work, and partnership only happens when families know what is going on. This page exists so that every family has three things: a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, real questions they can ask at the dinner table, and one or two simple things they can do together that need no materials and no preparation. Nothing here is homework for the family. It is an invitation to talk. When a child explains the week's learning to someone at home, the learning gets stronger, and the family gets to see the thinking that usually stays inside the classroom.

How to Send It

Copy the letter in the language each family prefers, or send both. The conversation starters and the family activities are the same in either language, so a family reading the Spanish letter and a child reading the English page are still talking about the same thing.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is learning how to write a thesis (central idea) statement, also called a central idea, for a short constructed response. A thesis (central idea) is the sentence that directly answers the prompt. Students will use the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER. The topic and charge come from the prompt, and the answer comes from the writer's reading.

Students will also learn that the kind of prompt changes the kind of thesis (central idea) they write. A WHAT prompt needs a simple sentence with facts or details. A WHY prompt needs a complex sentence with because and reasons. A Relational HOW prompt needs a simple sentence with a preposition that shows ways or connections.

We will use these skills while reading "The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth" and "Life Along the Nile River." Please ask your child to teach you the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) and to explain what makes a WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW thesis (central idea) fit its prompt.

With appreciation, Your child's teacher - The Writing Academy LLC

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija está aprendiendo a escribir una declaración de tesis, también llamada idea central, para una respuesta construida corta. Una tesis es la oración que responde directamente a la pregunta. Los estudiantes usarán las Tres Partes de una Tesis: TEMA, ENCARGO y RESPUESTA. El tema y el encargo vienen de la pregunta, y la respuesta viene de la lectura del escritor.

Los estudiantes también aprenderán que el tipo de pregunta cambia el tipo de tesis que escriben. Una pregunta QUÉ necesita una oración simple con hechos o detalles. Una pregunta POR QUÉ necesita una oración compleja con porque y razones. Una pregunta CÓMO relacional necesita una oración simple con una preposición que muestre formas o conexiones.

Pueden apoyar en casa pidiéndole a su hijo o hija que les enseñe las Tres Partes de una Tesis. ¡Gracias por acompañar a su hijo o hija en este aprendizaje!

Con aprecio, La maestra o el maestro de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Family Conversation Starters

Send these home with the letter, or post them in the class stream. None of them can be answered with only yes or no.

- Teach me the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea). Which pieces come from the prompt?
- What kind of sentence does a WHAT prompt need? What kind does a WHY prompt need?
- Tell me why the Pilgrims chose Plymouth using a thesis (central idea) with because.
- Tell me how water connected life in both passages using the word through.
- What is the hardest part of building a thesis (central idea) that fits a prompt?

Simple Family Activities

Both activities need little or no materials and both end in a conversation rather than a worksheet.

Family Activity - Build a Thesis (Central Idea)

Ask your child a WHAT, WHY, or HOW question about the day. Have your child name the topic, charge, and answer, then say a thesis (central idea) that matches the question type. Two minutes, no paper needed.

Family Activity - Thesis (Central Idea) Type at Dinner

At dinner, take turns asking a what question, a why question, and a relational how question. Let your child tell whether the thesis (central idea) needs facts or details, reasons with because, or ways or connections with a preposition.

Module 2 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Students use the prompt-analysis foundation from Module 1 to write a thesis (central idea) statement, or central idea, that directly answers a Short Constructed Response (SCR) prompt. They identify the TOPIC and CHARGE in the prompt, determine their ANSWER from the passages, and match the thesis (central idea) structure to a WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW prompt. The two familiar passages provide medium stamina while students focus on building purposeful first sentences.

BIG Goal: Students will write a thesis (central idea) statement that answers a Short Constructed Response (SCR) prompt.

TEKS Correlations

The Student Expectation column below is the exact wording of each TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, not paraphrased.

TEKS	Strand	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS)	Where It Is Taught and Practiced in This Module
3.11A(i)	Writing Process — Planning	plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies	Days 1-3: students use TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER to plan a thesis (central idea) before drafting.
3.12B(i)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea	Days 1-5: students compose a thesis (central idea), or central idea, that directly answers the prompt.
3.12B(ii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics	Days 2-3: students match the thesis (central idea) sentence structure to a WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW prompt.
3.12B(iii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft	Days 3-5: students use sentence structure and connecting words to fit the prompt type.
3.11C(i)	Revising	revise drafts to improve sentence structure	Day 5: students check that the sentence type fits the prompt type.
3.11D(i)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement	Day 5: students check that their WHAT and Relational HOW theses are complete simple sentences.
3.11D(xxxii)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate high-frequency words	Day 5: students check spelling in their thesis (central idea) statements.

Interdisciplinary context (background only, not a writing standard): the two passages connect to Social Studies 3.14C.

Module 2 — ELPS Correlations

Matched from the approved K-12 ELPS/ELAR Crosswalk to the actual language demands of this module. The final column names the day or days on which each expectation is explicitly addressed, so no searching is required.

ELPS	Domain	Language Pattern	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(E)	Listening	Comprehension	Demonstrate listening comprehension of spoken language during classroom interactions by recalling, retelling, responding, or asking for clarification.	Days 1, 3, 4, and 5
1(C)	Listening	Following Directions	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Day 2
2(E)	Speaking	Discourse	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail during classroom interactions.	Days 3 and 5
2(F)	Speaking	Respond to Information	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during formal and informal classroom interactions.	Days 1, 2, and 3
3(E)	Reading	Purpose for Reading	Use pre-reading strategies, including previewing text features, connecting to prior knowledge, and making predictions, to develop comprehension.	Day 1

4(D)	Writing	Language Structures / Syntax	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and types and connecting words.	Days 1, 2, and 3
4(E)	Writing	Conventions	Write using conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense.	Day 5

ELPS Woven Into Intervention

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(C)	Listening	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Intervention, after Day 3
2(F)	Speaking	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during formal and informal classroom interactions.	Intervention, after Day 3

ELPS Woven Into Enrichment

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
2(E)	Speaking	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail.	Enrichment, after Day 4
4(D)	Writing	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and connecting words.	Enrichment, after Day 4

Module 2 — ELPS Linguistic Accommodations

Purpose: These accommodations maintain grade-level rigor while opening clear avenues to success for emergent bilingual students as they learn to build a thesis (central idea) with a TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER.

Level	Language Objective
Pre-Production	Point to the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER cards when the teacher names them.
Beginning	Match a prompt to WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW using a picture-supported chart.
Intermediate	Say the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER for a prompt using a sentence frame.
High Intermediate	Explain in a full sentence why a thesis (central idea) structure matches the prompt type.
Advanced	Build a thesis (central idea) independently and justify the sentence type with details from the passage.

Students at the Pre-Production and Beginning levels will rely on color-coded cards and picture cues; students at the Intermediate and higher levels will use the sentence frames to explain their thinking in their own words.

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students learn writing a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt. Every task below is open to English learners at any proficiency level; the supports are built in, not bolted on.

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students hear a prompt read aloud, then say a one-sentence thesis (central idea) that answers it.
Speaking	Students say their thinking aloud to a partner before they write, using the sentence frames provided.
Reading	Students read the passage and the prompt closely, marking the words that carry the meaning.
Writing	Students write a thesis (central idea) in writing, moving from a spoken idea to a written response.

Module 2 — Learning Destination

Module Learning Objective

Students will write a thesis (central idea) statement that directly answers a short constructed response prompt by identifying the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER and matching the thesis (central idea) structure to WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW.

I Will Statements

- I will find the TOPIC and CHARGE in a prompt.
- I will think of an ANSWER from the passage.
- I will write a thesis (central idea) that answers a WHAT prompt with facts or details.
- I will write a thesis (central idea) that answers a WHY prompt with because and reasons.
- I will write a thesis (central idea) that answers a Relational HOW prompt with a preposition and connections.

I Can Statements

- I can name the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER.
- I can tell which pieces come from the prompt and which piece comes from the writer.
- I can write a thesis (central idea) that fits the job of the prompt.
- I can explain to a partner why my thesis (central idea) structure fits the prompt type.

★ Daily Deck

Daily Deck - Module Slide 1: the I Will and I Can statements for this module, so students see the week's target before anything else.

Success Criteria

- The thesis (central idea) directly answers the prompt.
- The TOPIC and CHARGE match the prompt, and the ANSWER comes from the passages.
- A WHAT thesis (central idea) uses a simple sentence with facts or details.
- A WHY thesis (central idea) uses a complex sentence with because and reasons.
- A Relational HOW thesis (central idea) uses a simple sentence with a preposition and ways or connections.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The completed independent practice shows a TOPIC, CHARGE, ANSWER, and matching thesis (central idea) for each prompt.
- The Day 5 exit ticket shows one thesis (central idea) whose structure matches an unfamiliar prompt.
- Both pieces are kept together so growth across the week is visible in one place.

Module 2 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a prompt aloud, repeat it, and provide the color-coded cards or sentence frames. You may reduce the number of prompts. You may not supply the TOPIC, CHARGE, or ANSWER for the student. The student must still identify the pieces and build a thesis (central idea) whose sentence type matches the prompt.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Identify the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER.	Supported. The teacher may read the prompt aloud twice.	The pieces are correctly labeled.
Inferential	Select facts or details, reasons, or ways and connections from the passages.	Guided on Days 1 and 2, independent by Day 3.	The ANSWER fits what the prompt asks.
Evaluative	Judge whether a thesis (central idea) sentence type satisfies the exact prompt type.	Partner discussion on Day 3, independent on Day 5.	The student explains why the thesis (central idea) does or does not fit the prompt.

Possible Teacher Misconceptions

The Misconception	What a Teacher Might Misunderstand	A Practical Way to Self-Correct
A thesis (central idea) is any first sentence.	A teacher may accept a sentence that is related to the topic but does not directly answer the prompt.	Ask whether the sentence does the exact job of WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW.
All prompt types use the same sentence structure.	A teacher may focus on content only and overlook facts or details, reasons, and connections.	Use the Prompt Type = Thesis (Central Idea) Type chart before students write.
A Relational HOW prompt asks for steps.	A teacher may accept a sequence instead of a relationship.	Ask students to show how ideas, people, or things are connected and to use a preposition.

Possible Student Misconceptions

What Students May Misunderstand	What a Teacher Might Notice	A Practical Way to Correct or Reteach It
The ANSWER comes from the prompt.	The student copies the question but does not add information from the passages.	Ask what the writer knows from the reading that answers the charge.
A WHAT thesis (central idea) needs because.	The student gives reasons when the prompt asks for facts or details.	Contrast the WHAT and WHY sentence frames, then rebuild the thesis (central idea).
A HOW prompt always asks for steps.	The student writes first, next, and last for a Relational HOW prompt.	Use through, with, by, or across to show the connection.

Thinking Levels Charts

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a prompt and a student response require.

The Five Thinking Levels

Level	Color	Thinking Stage	Description
Level 1	Red	Foundational	Student follows directions or repeats information exactly as taught with little independent thinking.
Level 2	Orange	Emergent	Student begins trying ideas independently but may be uncertain or inconsistent.
Level 3	Yellow	Visible	Student connects ideas directly to textual evidence or proof from the passage.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal inference, applying understanding to self or deeper meaning.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, themes, or broader life understanding.

The Progression of Thinking

Level	Hidden Question	Student Thinking	Thinking Focus
Foundational (Red)	Why did it happen?	I can explain the cause.	Cause and Effect
Emergent (Orange)	Why was it done?	I can explain the purpose.	Purpose and Motivation
Visible (Yellow)	Why is it important in the passage?	I can explain why it matters in the text.	Importance and Contribution
Independent (Green)	Why is it important to me?	I can explain what I can learn, value, or apply to my own life.	Personal Meaning and Application
Reflective (Blue)	Why is it important to everyone?	I can explain the universal lesson or significance.	Universal Meaning and Life Lessons

Module 2 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

"These are academic thinking words that help us understand questions and explain answers."

Tier 1 Vocabulary

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
water	the clear liquid people, plants, and animals need to live	The river gave people ____ to drink.
river	a long body of moving water that flows across the land	The Nile is a long ____.
land	the solid ground that is not covered by water	The Pilgrims found ____ for crops.
harbor	a safe place near land where ships can anchor	A ____ kept the ship safe.
soil	the top layer of earth where plants grow	Rich ____ helped crops grow.
farming	growing plants for food	The river supported ____.
settlement	a place where people begin living in a new area	Plymouth became a ____.
transportation	a way to travel or move goods	Boats gave people ____.
build	to make something by putting parts together	The Pilgrims had to ____ homes before winter.
trees	tall plants with a trunk that give wood and shade	The Pilgrims used tall ____ to build their homes.

Tier 2 Vocabulary

Teacher Script

"These are academic thinking words that help us understand questions and explain answers."

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
thesis (central idea)	a sentence that directly answers the prompt	My ____ answers the prompt.
prompt	the question or task you are asked to answer	First I read the ____.
response	the answer you write	My ____ must match the prompt.
short constructed response	a brief written answer to a prompt	I write a ____ about the passage.
simple sentence	a complete sentence with one main idea	A WHAT thesis (central idea) can be a ____.
complex sentence	a sentence with a main part and a dependent part	A WHY thesis (central idea) can be a ____ with because.
subordinating clause	a part of a sentence that depends on another part, often starting with because	Because can begin a ____.
preposition	a word that shows a relationship, such as through	Through is a ____.
topic	the noun of importance from the prompt	The ____ tells what the prompt is about.
charge	the verb of importance from the prompt	The ____ tells what I need to answer.
answer	the writer's response to the charge	My ____ comes from my reading.
relational	showing how ideas, people, or things are connected	A ____ HOW prompt asks for connections.
connection	a way ideas, people, or things are linked	Through can show a ____.
evidence	a fact from the passage that supports your answer	I find ____ in the passage.
detail	a small fact that gives more information	A WHAT thesis (central idea) can include a ____.
reason	why something happened	A WHY thesis (central idea) gives a ____.
structure	the way a sentence is built	I match the sentence ____ to the prompt.

For more practice with academic words, see the Teach BIG Academic Vocabulary Companion App.

Tier 3 Vocabulary

Teacher Script

"These words are connected specifically to the historical topics in our passages. When we understand them, the passage becomes easier to understand."

Word	Say It This Way	Student-Friendly Definition
Mayflower	MAY-flow-er	the ship that carried the Pilgrims across the ocean
Native Americans	NAY-tiv uh-MAIR-ih-kunz	the first peoples who lived in North America
New England	noo ING-glund	a region in the northeastern United States where Plymouth is located
corn	korn	a crop the Pilgrims learned to grow in their new home
fishermen	FISH-er-men	people whose job is catching fish
merchants	MUR-chunts	people who buy, sell, or trade goods
trade	trayd	the exchange of goods between people or places
transportation	trans-por-TAY-shun	the way people or goods move from place to place
civilizations	siv-uh-luh-ZAY-shunz	large groups of people with shared ways of living and organized communities
crops	krahps	plants grown by farmers for food or other useful products

Module 2 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

In 1620, the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, tall trees, and a safe harbor. These details can become an ANSWER in a WHAT thesis (central idea), or they can become reasons in a WHY thesis (central idea).

Ancient Egyptians lived near the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation. The same information can be used differently depending on the prompt: facts or details for WHAT, reasons with because for WHY, and ways or connections with a preposition for Relational HOW.

Module 2 builds on the prompt analysis from Module 1. A thesis (central idea) statement directly answers the prompt using Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER. The TOPIC and CHARGE come from the prompt; the ANSWER comes from the writer. Students must then match the prompt type to the appropriate sentence structure instead of beginning with a random sentence.

Module 2 — Materials, Preparation, and Timing

Materials to Gather

- Copies of both passages
- Whiteboard and markers
- Anchor chart paper
- Interactive notebooks
- Scissors
- Thesis (Central Idea) game cards
- Prompt category cards
- Spinner labeled WHAT / WHY / HOW
- Gameboard and game pieces
- Student-selected “Pencil Guy” markers
- Matching cards
- Highlighters or colored pencils
- Teacher answer key
- Exit slips

Preparation Before Day 1

- Write the "Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea)" and prompt-type thesis (central idea) chart on anchor chart paper.
- Copy both passages for each student; the renderer inserts the passages, so do not add passage text here.
- Prepare the spinner, prompt cards, thesis (central idea) part cards, gameboard, and Pencil Guy markers.
- Have students cut out the game cards in their Interactive Notebooks and make a Practice Pocket from a sized envelope or scrap paper.

Timing and Transition Overview

Day	Minutes	GRADUATE Stage	What Happens
Day 1	15	G — Gather + R — Reveal	Mystery Door Prompt Sort; model the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) and prompt-type sentence structures.
Day 2	15	A — Attempt	Play Spin, Build, and Move! with prompt and thesis (central idea)-part cards.
Day 3	15	D — Discuss + U — Use	Discuss the habit, then Label It, Build It, Write It independently.
Day 4	15	A — Award + T — Target	Celebrate the BEST parts and name one next step.
Day 5	15	E — Educate and Explain to Others	Teach a partner and complete the exit check.

Tiny Times Transition

A Tiny Time is a brief, silent activity that helps students shift their focus between lesson parts without raising their voices or needing supplies. It reinforces the module skill of identifying a central idea while allowing for a calm reset. Because it takes under one minute and requires zero materials, it fits seamlessly into any part of your day.

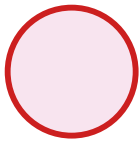
When to use a Tiny Time: During transitions between writing blocks, after group work, or when you need to refocus the class quietly.

How to run a Tiny Time, step by step:

- Choose a simple topic related to current reading or life experiences.
- Signal for silence and give students ten seconds to silently craft one complete sentence that states their main point.
- Pair students up with a "whisper partner" so they can share their thesis (central idea) quietly.
- Listen for clear, concise sentences and gently redirect if the statement is too vague or long.
- Bring the class back together with a brief nod or hand signal to end the activity.

Example: Teacher script: "Think of one thing you love about our school. Silently write that idea in your head as a complete sentence. Now, turn to your partner and whisper it."

Module 2 — Anchor Charts and the DOT Reading Habit



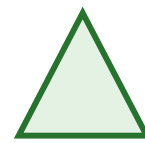
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Part of the Question	What It Means
Red Circle	Main Noun	The topic or subject the question is about.
Yellow Box	Verb	The action the question is asking you to do.
Green Triangle	Clue Word	The word that shows if the question is WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

Piece	Where It Comes From	What It Means
TOPIC	The prompt	The noun of importance from the prompt.
CHARGE	The prompt	The verb of importance from the prompt.
ANSWER	The writer	The writer's answer to the charge.

Prompt Type	Thesis (Central Idea) Type	What the Thesis (Central Idea) Includes
WHAT	simple sentence	facts/details
WHY	complex sentence with because	reasons
Relational HOW	simple sentence with a preposition	ways/connections

The DOT Reading Habit

Teacher Script

"Before we begin reading, we are going to use an important reading habit that strong readers use. While you are reading the passages in your Interactive Notebook, place a small dot above any word you are unsure about."

Board text: Dot = I'm not sure about this word yet.

Encouragement: "This helps your brain keep track of words you are learning. Good readers notice the words they are still growing into."

Create the Anchor Chart

Teacher directions: Build an anchor chart from the information on this page. On chart paper, write the three shapes and what each one marks (red circle = noun, yellow box = verb, green triangle = clue word), the WHAT / WHY / HOW chart, and the DOT reading reminder. Display it all week so students can refer to it.

Module 2 — Writing a Thesis (Central Idea): Modeled Thesis (Central Idea) Building

Teacher Script

"Today we are learning how to write a thesis (central idea) statement that answers a Short Constructed Response prompt the right way. A thesis (central idea) statement is the sentence that directly answers the prompt. Every thesis (central idea) has Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): the TOPIC the CHARGE the ANSWER The TOPIC and the CHARGE come from the prompt. The ANSWER comes from the writer. Now let's learn how each kind of prompt changes the thesis (central idea)."

Prompt: What resources made Plymouth a good place to settle?

Teacher Script

"First, I find my TOPIC. The noun of importance here is Plymouth or resources at Plymouth. Now I find my CHARGE. The verb of importance is made. Now I think of my ANSWER. The passage says Plymouth had fresh water, land for crops, tall trees, and a safe harbor. This is a WHAT prompt, so I need a simple sentence with facts/details. I can write: Plymouth had fresh water, land for crops, tall trees, and a safe harbor that made it a good place to settle."

Teacher Script

"That thesis (central idea) is a simple sentence, and it contains facts and details."

Prompt: Why did people live near the Nile River?

Teacher Script

"My TOPIC is people near the Nile River. My CHARGE is did live or lived. My ANSWER is that the river gave them water, food, rich soil, and transportation. This is a WHY prompt, so I need a complex sentence with a subordinating clause such as because, and my answer should include reasons. I can write: People lived near the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation."

Teacher Script

"That thesis (central idea) gives reasons, and the word because helps create the subordinating clause."

Prompt: How did water connect life in both passages?

 Teacher Script

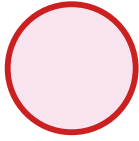
"My TOPIC is water. My CHARGE is connect. My ANSWER is that water helped people survive, grow food, and build communities. This is a Relational HOW prompt, so I need a simple sentence with a preposition that shows ways or connections. I can write: Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement."

 Teacher Script

"That sentence answers HOW by showing ways and connections. The preposition through helps explain the relationship."

Module 2 — The Three Shapes: Cracking the SCR Question Code

Cluster 1 uses three shapes to break a writing prompt into its parts. Students continue to use the shapes to identify the question itself before they build a thesis (central idea).



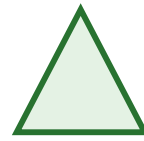
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Marks	Meaning
Red Circle	The main noun	The topic or subject of the question.
Yellow Box	The verb	The action the question asks you to do.
Green Triangle	The clue word	The word that signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

WHAT / WHY / HOW Thinking Chart

Question Type	Thinking Clue	What the Answer Must Do
WHAT	Name it	Identify or describe information from the passage.
WHY	Give a reason	Explain a reason or cause, often using the word because.
HOW	Explain the ways	Explain a process, a method, or the way something happened.

How to Use the Shapes Chart



Teacher Script

"First we circle the main noun in red. Next we box the verb in yellow. Then we triangle the clue word in green. Finally we ask: is this question a WHAT, a WHY, or a HOW?"

- WHAT asks us to identify or describe something.
- WHY asks us to explain a reason or a cause.
- HOW asks us to explain a process or the way something happened.

Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea)

Piece	Means	Where It Comes From
TOPIC	The noun of importance	The prompt
CHARGE	The verb of importance	The prompt
ANSWER	The writer's response to the charge	The writer

Prompt Type	Thesis (Central Idea) Structure	What the Thesis (Central Idea) Must Do
WHAT	simple sentence	Give facts or details.
WHY	complex sentence with because	Give reasons.
Relational HOW	simple sentence with a preposition	Show ways or connections.

Before Students Read

Preview the two passages with students before reading. Each passage appears twice: first a plain copy to read, then a color-coded copy. As you read, students TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. TRACKS marks the evidence in the passage; the shapes are used only to analyze the prompt.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

Students look for six kinds of measurable evidence in every passage. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

T Time — Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

R Reactions — Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Purple.)

A Actions — Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

C Character, Concept, Creature — Characters' or people's names, animals or animals' names, or major concepts used as the central idea. Often nouns or proper nouns. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

K Key Knowledge — All other important information necessary to the meaning of the passage that is not accounted for by another TRACKS category (background knowledge). (Highlight color: Pastel Orange.)

S Scenery / Setting — Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

PASSAGE 1 — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth (Stamina: Medium)

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. They wanted to find a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. The trip across the ocean was long and difficult. Storms rocked the ship, and many passengers became sick during the journey.

[2] The Pilgrims traveled on a ship called the Mayflower. The ship was crowded with men, women, and children. Families slept in small spaces below the deck. Food and water had to last for many weeks. Even though the trip was uncomfortable, the Pilgrims continued because they hoped to build a better life.

[3] After many weeks at sea, the travelers finally reached the coast of North America. Cold weather was beginning to spread across the land, so the Pilgrims knew they needed to find a place to settle quickly.

[4] Groups of settlers explored the area looking for fresh water, forests, and safe places for ships to anchor. Eventually, they found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and fires. There was also rich soil where crops could be planted.

[5] The harbor at Plymouth helped ships stay safe while supplies were unloaded. This made it easier for the settlers to move food, tools, and building supplies from the ship to the land.

[6] Winter arrived soon after the Pilgrims settled. Snow and freezing temperatures covered the colony. Many families lived in small shelters while workers hurried to build stronger homes. Some settlers became sick because of the cold weather and lack of fresh food.

[7] The Pilgrims worked together each day. Some people chopped wood for fires while others cooked meals or cared for children. Everyone had an important job. The settlers knew they needed to cooperate if they wanted the colony to survive.

[8] When spring arrived, Native Americans in the area helped the Pilgrims learn how to grow crops such as corn. The settlers also learned how to fish and hunt in the new environment.

[9] Slowly, Plymouth began to grow stronger. Families planted crops, repaired homes, and gathered supplies for the next winter. Over time, Plymouth became an important colony in New England.

[10] Today, people remember the Pilgrims because they worked hard to build one of the earliest English settlements in North America.

Student Annotation Guide — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

T — Time

In 1620; Cold weather was beginning; Winter arrived

R — Reactions

became sick; helped the Pilgrims learn how to grow crops

A — Actions

Storms rocked the ship

C — Character/Concept/Creature

the Pilgrims

K — Key Knowledge

the Mayflower; rich soil

S — Scenery/Setting

crowded with men, women, and children

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. They wanted to find a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. The trip across the ocean was long and difficult. Storms rocked the ship, and many passengers became sick during the journey.

[2] The Pilgrims traveled on a ship called the Mayflower. The ship was crowded with men, women, and children. Families slept in small spaces below the deck. Food and water had to last for many weeks. Even though the trip was uncomfortable, the Pilgrims continued because they hoped to build a better life.

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[10] Today, people remember the Pilgrims because they worked hard to build one of the earliest English settlements in North America.

PASSAGE 2 — Life Along the Nile River (Stamina: Medium)

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals. Very few people lived far away from the Nile River because water was difficult to find.

[2] Running through the desert was the Nile River, a long river that flowed from south to north. Each year, the river would rise and spill over its banks. When the floodwaters went back down, they left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants.

[3] The yearly floods were very important to the people of ancient Egypt. Without the Nile River, farmers would not have been able to grow enough food. The rich soil near the river helped crops grow well during the farming season.

[4] Farmers planted crops such as wheat and barley in the soil left by the floodwaters. They also grew vegetables and fruits near the riverbanks. The Nile provided water for drinking, cooking, and farming.

[5] The river also supplied fish for people to eat. Many families depended on fishing to help feed the community. Farmers and fishermen worked hard each day to support their families.

[6] Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people and goods. Some boats carried food while others carried stone, wood, and supplies. The river made travel easier because crossing the hot desert by foot was difficult.

[7] Villages, towns, and cities grew along the riverbanks. Most people in ancient Egypt lived close to the Nile because it provided water, food, and transportation.

[8] The Nile River also helped trade grow in ancient Egypt. Merchants used boats to move goods between cities. This helped communities exchange supplies and resources.

[9] Over time, the Nile became the center of daily life for the people of ancient Egypt. Farmers depended on the floods, fishermen depended on the water, and traders depended on the river for transportation.

[10] Today, people still remember how important the Nile River was to ancient Egypt. The river helped one of the world's earliest civilizations survive and grow.

Student Annotation Guide — Life Along the Nile River

T — Time

Ancient Egypt; Each year

R — Reactions

Boats traveled up and down the Nile; trade grow

A — Actions

water was difficult to find; planted crops

C — Character/Concept/Creature

the Nile River

K — Key Knowledge

from south to north

S — Scenery/Setting

hot, dry desert; dark, rich soil

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Life Along the Nile River

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals. Very few people lived far away from the Nile River because water was difficult to find.

[2] Running through the desert was the Nile River, a long river that flowed from south to north. Each year, the river would rise and spill over its banks. When the floodwaters went back down, they left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants.

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🕒 Day 1 - Gather and Reveal (15 minutes)

G

R

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(i) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS	3(E) — share information in cooperative interactions; 1(E) — use prereading supports

GATHER

Attention activity - Mystery Door Prompt Sort. Place three large signs around the room: WHAT, WHY, and RELATIONAL HOW.

🔊 Teacher Script

"Writers, today you are entering the Thesis (Central Idea) Lab. Inside this room are three mystery doors. One door belongs to WHAT prompts. One door belongs to WHY prompts. One door belongs to RELATIONAL HOW prompts. I am going to read a prompt aloud. Your job is to decide which mystery door that prompt belongs behind. Listen carefully, because smart writers do not just answer questions. Smart writers study the kind of question first."

Read these prompts aloud one at a time:

1. What resources made Plymouth a good place to settle?
2. Why did people live near the Nile River?
3. How did water connect life in both passages?

After each prompt, students point or move to the mystery door sign they think matches.

🔊 Teacher Script

"Excellent thinking. Today we are learning that the prompt tells us what kind of thesis (central idea) to write. That is a strong writing HABIT."

★ Daily Deck Slide

Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC, CHARGE, ANSWER.

REVEAL **Teacher Script**

"Today we are learning how to write a thesis (central idea) statement that answers a Short Constructed Response prompt the right way. A thesis (central idea) statement is the sentence that directly answers the prompt. Every thesis (central idea) has Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): the TOPIC the CHARGE the ANSWER The TOPIC and the CHARGE come from the prompt. The ANSWER comes from the writer. Now let's learn how each kind of prompt changes the thesis (central idea)."

Write on the board: Prompt: What resources made Plymouth a good place to settle?

 Teacher Script

"First, I find my TOPIC. The noun of importance here is Plymouth or resources at Plymouth. Now I find my CHARGE. The verb of importance is made. Now I think of my ANSWER. The passage says Plymouth had fresh water, land for crops, tall trees, and a safe harbor. This is a WHAT prompt, so I need a simple sentence with facts/details. I can write: Plymouth had fresh water, land for crops, tall trees, and a safe harbor that made it a good place to settle."

 Teacher Script

"That thesis (central idea) is a simple sentence, and it contains facts and details."

Write next: Prompt: Why did people live near the Nile River?

 Teacher Script

"My TOPIC is people near the Nile River. My CHARGE is did live or lived. My ANSWER is that the river gave them water, food, rich soil, and transportation. This is a WHY prompt, so I need a complex sentence with a subordinating clause such as because, and my answer should include reasons. I can write: People lived near the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation."

 Teacher Script

"That thesis (central idea) gives reasons, and the word because helps create the subordinating clause."

Write next: Prompt: How did water connect life in both passages?

 Teacher Script

"My TOPIC is water. My CHARGE is connect. My ANSWER is that water helped people survive, grow food, and build communities. This is a Relational HOW prompt, so I need a simple sentence with a preposition that shows ways or connections. I can write: Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement."

 Teacher Script

"That sentence answers HOW by showing ways and connections. The preposition through helps explain the relationship."

 Daily Deck Slide

Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) TOPIC CHARGE ANSWER
 Prompt Type = Thesis (Central Idea) Type WHAT = simple sentence with facts/details
 WHY = complex sentence with because and reasons Relational HOW = simple sentence with a preposition and ways/connections

Embedded Check for Understanding

Students name the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER for one shared prompt, then tell which thesis (central idea) structure fits.

Purpose: Students will identify the three thesis (central idea) pieces and connect the prompt type to a sentence type.

🕒 Day 2 - Attempt (15 minutes)

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11A(i) — plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies
ELPS	4(D) — write grade-appropriate sentences; 2(I) — monitor understanding of spoken language

ATTEMPT

Students work in pairs or small groups.

Materials for each group: one spinner labeled WHAT / WHY / HOW, prompt cards, thesis (central idea) part cards for TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER, a gameboard, and one Pencil Guy marker chosen by the group.

Teacher Script

"Now you are going to play a game called Spin, Build, and Move! Each team will choose the Pencil Guy of their choice to be their game marker. Your Pencil Guy will show how far your thinking moves today. First, spin the spinner. Next, draw a prompt card that matches what you spun. Then, work together to identify the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC CHARGE ANSWER After that, build the correct kind of thesis (central idea) sentence. If your thesis (central idea) is correct, move your Pencil Guy forward one space."

Spin, Build, and Move! - InterActivity (Group Practice)

Students cut out the game cards contained in their Interactive Notebooks. Make sure they use sized envelopes or scrap paper to create a Practice Pocket to store their game pieces. Continue to use this game after the lesson as a Forgetting Interrupted Activity.

Prompt Cards

WHAT Prompt Cards	WHY Prompt Cards	Relational HOW Prompt Cards
What resources made Plymouth a good place to settle?	Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth?	How did water support life in both passages?
What did the Nile River provide for ancient Egyptians?	Why did towns and cities grow along the Nile River?	How did natural resources connect survival in both passages?
What made Plymouth a safe harbour?	Why did farmers use the Nile River?	How did the harbor help the Pilgrims' settlement?
What important features were found at Plymouth?	Why did the Pilgrims need to build shelters quickly?	How did the Nile River connect farming and transportation?

Prompt Type	Answer Key Thesis (Central Idea)
WHAT 1	Plymouth had fresh water, land for crops, tall trees, and a safe harbor.
WHAT 2	The Nile River provided ancient Egyptians with water, fish, rich soil, and transportation.
WHAT 3	The Pilgrims found forests, fresh water, land for crops, and a safe harbor near Plymouth.
WHAT 4	Plymouth had forests, fresh water, land for crops, and a safe harbor.
WHY 1	The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.
WHY 2	Towns and cities grew along the Nile River because the river supported farming, drinking water, fishing, and travel.
WHY 3	Farmers used the Nile River because the river provided rich soil and water for crops.
WHY 4	The Pilgrims needed to build shelters quickly because winter was coming.
Relational HOW 1	Water supported life in both passages through farming, drinking, and survival.
Relational HOW 2	Natural resources connected survival in both passages through food, water, shelter, and farming.
Relational HOW 3	The harbor helped the Pilgrims' settlement through safe anchoring for their ship.
Relational HOW 4	The Nile River connected farming and transportation through rich soil for crops and boat travel.

🕒 Day 3 - Discuss and Use (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(ii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
ELPS	4(F) — write to respond and explain; 3(E) — share in cooperative interactions

DISCUSS

Teacher Script

"Now let's stop and think about what you noticed while building your thesis (central idea) statements. I want to hear what strong writing habits you used."

Discussion questions:

1. What are the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea)?
2. Which two pieces come from the prompt?
3. Which piece comes from the writer?
4. What kind of thesis (central idea) does a WHAT prompt need?
5. Why does a WHY prompt often use the word because?
6. What does a Relational HOW prompt ask us to show?
7. Which prepositions could help answer a Relational HOW prompt?
8. How do facts/details differ from reasons?
9. How do ways/connections differ from reasons?

Possible student responses: "The three pieces are topic, charge, and answer." "The topic and charge come from the prompt." "The answer comes from the writer." "A WHAT prompt needs a simple sentence." "A WHY prompt needs reasons." "A HOW prompt needs ways or connections." "Prepositions like by, through, with, and across could help."

Teacher Script

"Yes. That is exactly right. The prompt gives us clues about what kind of thinking the answer needs."

Student question: "How do I know if a HOW prompt is relational?"

 Teacher Script

"A Relational HOW prompt asks you to show how ideas, people, or things are connected. It is not just asking for steps. It is asking for a connection or relationship."

Student question: "What if my thesis (central idea) has the right idea but the wrong sentence type?"

 Teacher Script

"That means your thinking is on the right track, and now you need to strengthen your writing habit by matching the sentence structure to the prompt."

USE (Independent Practice) - Label It, Build It, Write It **Teacher Script**

"Now you will use the same knowledge in a different way. This time, you will work independently. You will read each prompt, identify the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea), and then write the complete thesis (central idea) in the correct sentence type."

For each item, students write: Prompt, TOPIC, CHARGE, ANSWER, Final Thesis (Central Idea).

Item	Prompt	TOPIC	CHARGE	ANSWER	Correct Thesis (Central Idea)
1 — WHAT	What made Plymouth a safe and useful place for settlement?	Plymouth	made	fresh water, tall trees, land for crops, and a safe harbor	Plymouth had fresh water, tall trees, land for crops, and a safe harbor that made it a safe and useful place for settlement.
2 — WHY	Why did ancient Egyptians depend on the Nile River?	ancient Egyptians / Nile River	depend	water, food, soil, and transportation	Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.
3 — Relational HOW	How did land and water connect survival in both passages?	land and water	connect	through farming, shelter, drinking water, and settlement	Land and water connected survival in both passages through farming, shelter, drinking water, and settlement.
4 — WHY	Why did the Pilgrims begin building shelters quickly?	Pilgrims	begin building	winter was coming	The Pilgrims began building shelters quickly because winter was coming.

🕒 Day 4 - Award and Target (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11C(i) — revise drafts to improve sentence structure
ELPS	2(I) — monitor and self-correct understanding; 5(B) — write using newly acquired vocabulary

AWARD

Teacher Script

"Writers, today you practiced a powerful writing habit. You studied the prompt, built your answer on purpose, and matched your sentence type to the job of the question. That is something to celebrate."

Choose one or more recognition moments:

1. Three-Piece Snap: Students snap three times and say: "Topic. Charge. Answer."
2. Pencil Guy Parade: Students hold up their Pencil Guy marker and say: "My thinking moved with purpose!"
3. Notebook Brag Line: Students write: "One thing I did well today was _____."
4. Partner Praise: Students tell a partner: "I noticed you were strong at _____."

Teacher Script

"Strong learners stop and think about what they can already do and what they still want to grow. That is how learning becomes stronger."

TARGET

Write these stems on the board:

1. One part of writing a thesis (central idea) that I can do well is...
2. One part I still want to practice is...
3. One question I still have is...
4. One kind of prompt I want to get even better at is...

Curiosity questions:

- Could one topic be answered with a WHAT, a WHY, and a HOW prompt?
- Why is it important that the thesis (central idea) matches the exact job of the prompt?
- How would a thesis (central idea) change if we were writing a longer response?
- What happens if the answer does not include facts, reasons, or connections when needed?

 Teacher Script

"These are smart curiosity questions. Curiosity helps us target what we want to learn next."

🕒 Day 5 - Educate and Explain to Others (15 minutes)

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(iii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft; 3.11D — edit drafts using standard English conventions
ELPS	4(F) — write to explain; 3(D) — speak using grade-level content vocabulary

EXPLAIN

🔊 Teacher Script

"Now you are going to become the teacher. Turn to someone near you and explain how to write a thesis (central idea) statement. Teach them the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea), and teach them how the sentence changes for WHAT, WHY, and Relational HOW prompts."

Student oral frames:

- "The Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) are _____, _____, and _____."
- "A WHAT prompt needs a _____ sentence with _____."
- "A WHY prompt needs a _____ sentence with _____."
- "A Relational HOW prompt needs a _____ sentence with _____."
- "An example from the passages is _____."

Sample Turn and Teach Response: "The Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) are topic, charge, and answer. A WHAT prompt needs a simple sentence with facts or details. A WHY prompt needs a complex sentence with because and reasons. A Relational HOW prompt needs a simple sentence with a preposition and ways or connections."

EDUCATE

 Teacher Script

"Turn to someone near you and teach them what you learned today about building a thesis (central idea). Teaching it out loud in your own words is how you prove you truly own it."

Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today we learned an important writing HABIT for Short Constructed Response. We learned that every thesis (central idea) has Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC CHARGE ANSWER We also learned that the prompt tells us what kind of sentence to write: WHAT = simple sentence with facts/details WHY = complex sentence with because and reasons Relational HOW = simple sentence with a preposition and ways/connections That means we do not just start writing randomly. We study the prompt, we think carefully, and then we build a thesis (central idea) that fits the job."

Exit Ticket

Prompt: How did water connect life in both passages? Students identify the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER, then write a Relational HOW thesis (central idea).

Answer Key

TOPIC: water. CHARGE: connect. ANSWER: water helped people survive, grow food, and build communities. Thesis (Central Idea): Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement.

Module 2 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

These exemplars show three levels of a short constructed response to the same Module 2 prompt, so teachers can calibrate their expectations and show students what "getting stronger" looks like. Prompt: Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth?

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "The Pilgrims chose Plymouth."
- What Is Working: The student includes the topic and charge.
- Teacher Notes: There is no answer to WHY because the response gives no reason.
- What Needs Improvement: Add because and reasons from the passage to make a thesis (central idea) that matches the prompt.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water."
- What Is Working: The response directly answers WHY and uses because.
- Teacher Notes: It has the correct complex sentence structure but includes only one reason.
- What Needs Improvement: Add the other relevant reasons from the passage.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor."
- What Is Working: The thesis (central idea) directly answers WHY with because and reasons from the passage.
- Teacher Notes: This is the target for Module 2's thesis (central idea) work.
- What Needs Improvement: Ready to become the first sentence of a later short constructed response.

Exemplar Engagement Activity

Show all three responses without the labels and ask students to rank them and say why. Then have partners upgrade the Low response one level at a time — first add because, then add the reasons — so students feel how each part makes the thesis (central idea) stronger.

Module 2 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can identify the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER and write a thesis (central idea) that matches the prompt type.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The Day 3 independent-practice prompts, student notebooks, and pencils.
Related TEKS Breakout	3.11A(i) planning; 3.12B(i) SCR genre.
Task	Students independently label the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) and write the complete thesis (central idea) in the correct sentence type.
Expected Response	The TOPIC and CHARGE come from the prompt, the ANSWER comes from the passages, and the thesis (central idea) structure fits WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW.

Informal Assessment

During Days 1-3, watch and listen as students sort prompts, build thesis (central idea) statements during Spin, Build, and Move!, and explain their choices. Note who identifies all three pieces and who matches the sentence type to the prompt. This is a planning check, not a grade.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 independent practice is the formative check. Students label and build four thesis (central idea) statements on their own; the answer key below shows the expected thesis (central idea) structures.

Prompt	Prompt Type	Expected Thesis (Central Idea)
What made Plymouth a safe and useful place for settlement?	WHAT	Plymouth had fresh water, tall trees, land for crops, and a safe harbor that made it a safe and useful place for settlement.
Why did ancient Egyptians depend on the Nile River?	WHY	Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.
How did land and water connect survival in both passages?	Relational HOW	Land and water connected survival in both passages through farming, shelter, drinking water, and settlement.
Why did the Pilgrims begin building shelters quickly?	WHY	The Pilgrims began building shelters quickly because winter was coming.

Answer Key

Teacher note: after the lesson, use a self-selected grade-level passage for additional thesis (central idea) practice.

Module 2 — Intervention: Thesis (Central Idea) Match-Up

Field	Detail
Purpose	Support students who need extra practice by making the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER visible before they build a thesis (central idea).
Group Size	Small group (3-6 students)
Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Materials	color-coded prompt strips, color-coded topic cards, color-coded charge cards, color-coded answer cards, sentence frames
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.11A(i) planning; 3.12B(i) SCR genre
Relevant ELPS	1(C) follow oral directions; 2(F) restate and respond

Step 1 - Slow Down the Parts

Teacher Script

"We are going to slow the work down and make the parts easier to see. Sometimes strong learning happens when we pull it apart and put it back together."

Daily Deck Slide

Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC, CHARGE, ANSWER.

Step 2 - Sentence Frame Support

Provide sentence frames:

- WHAT: "____ had ____ that made it ____."
- WHY: "____ because ____."
- Relational HOW: "____ connected ____ through ____."

Step 3 - Guided Match-Up

Prompt: Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth?

Cards:

- TOPIC: the Pilgrims / Plymouth
- CHARGE: choose
- ANSWER: fresh water, land for crops, trees, and a harbor

Correct Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees, and a harbor.

Step 4 - Additional Intervention Practice

1. What did the Nile River provide?

Thesis (Central Idea): The Nile River provided water, fish, rich soil, and transportation.

1. How did water connect life in both passages?

Thesis (Central Idea): Water connected life in both passages through farming, drinking, and settlement.

Step 5 - Connect Back to the Lesson HABIT

Ask students to name the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER before they read each thesis (central idea) aloud. Ask which sentence frame matches the prompt type.

Answer Key

Accept a thesis (central idea) that directly answers the prompt and uses facts or details for WHAT, because and reasons for WHY, or a preposition with ways or connections for Relational HOW.

Module 2 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to name the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea).	Student names TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER and says that the TOPIC and CHARGE come from the prompt.	Student says every piece comes from the prompt.	Ask which part is the writer's response after reading the passage.
Ask what a WHAT prompt needs.	Student says a simple sentence with facts or details.	Student uses because and reasons for a WHAT prompt.	Read the prompt again and ask whether it asks for details or a reason.
Ask what a WHY prompt needs.	Student writes a complex sentence with because and reasons.	Student has the right idea but the wrong sentence type.	Teacher script: "That means your thinking is on the right track, and now you need to strengthen your writing habit by matching the sentence structure to the prompt."
Ask what a Relational HOW prompt needs.	Student writes a simple sentence with a preposition and ways or connections.	Student gives steps instead of a relationship.	Explain that a Relational HOW prompt asks how ideas, people, or things are connected.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Cannot separate the three pieces	Use color-coded prompt, TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER cards in Thesis (Central Idea) Match-Up.
Confuses facts, reasons, and connections	Return to the Prompt Type = Thesis (Central Idea) Type anchor chart and compare the three sentence frames.
Has the right idea but the wrong sentence type	Have the student choose the matching WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW frame before revising.
Masters quickly	Route to the Prompt Architect Challenge enrichment.

Teacher Resource

The color-coded cards, sentence frames, prompt-type chart, and Spin, Build, and Move! game support this module's checks.

Module 2 — Enrichment: Prompt Architect Challenge

Field	Detail
Purpose	Extend students who have mastered thesis (central idea) building by having them create WHAT, WHY, and Relational HOW prompts and matching thesis (central idea) statements.
Group Size	Pairs or small groups
Materials	Both passages, student notebooks, and the prompt-type thesis (central idea) chart
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.12B(i) SCR genre; 3.11A(i) planning
Relevant ELPS	2(E) narrate and explain; 4(D) grade-appropriate sentences

Step 1 - The Prompt Architect Challenge

Teacher Script

"You are ready for higher-level thinking. Instead of only answering prompts, you are going to design them. Then you will prove that you understand the lesson by writing a matching thesis (central idea) for each one."

Requirements:

- Write 1 WHAT prompt.
- Write 1 WHY prompt.
- Write 1 Relational HOW prompt.
- Write a matching thesis (central idea) for each.
- Explain why each thesis (central idea) structure fits the prompt type.

Step 2 - Sample Enrichment Response

Prompt Type	Prompt	Thesis (Central Idea)
WHAT	What resources helped the Pilgrims settle at Plymouth?	The Pilgrims used fresh water, forests, land for crops, and a safe harbor to settle at Plymouth.
WHY	Why did life grow along the Nile River?	Life grew along the Nile River because the river provided water, rich soil, fish, and transportation.
Relational HOW	How did water connect the lives of the Pilgrims and ancient Egyptians?	Water connected the lives of the Pilgrims and ancient Egyptians through survival, farming, and community growth.

Explanation: "The WHAT thesis (central idea) gives details. The WHY thesis (central idea) gives reasons with because. The HOW thesis (central idea) shows connections with the preposition through."

Step 3 - Expert Reflection

Students explain why each thesis (central idea) structure fits the prompt type and share one prompt with a partner.

Module 2 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Build a Thesis (Central Idea)

Writing Prompt

How did water connect life in both passages?

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that every thesis (central idea) has Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER. Now you will use that HABIT to build a thesis (central idea) that matches a Relational HOW prompt.

Planning Support

1. Read the prompt and identify the TOPIC.
2. Find the CHARGE, or verb of importance.
3. Think of the ANSWER from the two passages.
4. Match the prompt type to the sentence type: Relational HOW = simple sentence with a preposition and ways or connections.
5. Write the thesis (central idea).

Drafting Space

Write your thesis (central idea) statement.

Success Criteria

- My thesis (central idea) answers the prompt.
- I include the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER.
- I use a preposition to show ways or connections.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise, Edit, and Share

Revise

Read your thesis (central idea) aloud. Check that it is a simple sentence and that it shows a connection (TEKS 3.11C).

Edit

Check for a complete sentence, subject-verb agreement, and correctly spelled high-frequency words (TEKS 3.11D).

Share

Read your thesis (central idea) to a partner. Your partner names the TOPIC, CHARGE, ANSWER, and the preposition.



Teacher Resource

Additional revising and editing daily slides, teacher lesson plans, student interactive workbooks, and the Module 2 answer keys are available in the companion resources.

Auditory Engagement

Auditory Engagement Moments

Give every learner a chance to HEAR and SAY the thinking, not only read it. These moments are built around this module's work — writing a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt:

- Say the prompt aloud, then say a one-sentence thesis (central idea) that answers it; partners echo it back.
- "Two tries": each student says their thesis (central idea) two different ways and picks the stronger one aloud.
- Read three sample theses aloud; students signal which one actually answers the prompt.
- Partners read each other's thesis (central idea) aloud and check that it answers, not just repeats, the prompt.

Pause Points

Pause the lesson at these moments and give students a few quiet seconds to think before they answer. Each pause names exactly what to think about.

Pause Point — Before Writing

Stop and think: What is the prompt really asking me to do? Say it in your own words before you write.

Pause Point — Midway

Stop and think: Does what I have written so far make the thesis (central idea) actually answer the prompt, not just repeat it? If not, fix it now, not later.

Pause Point — Before You Finish

Stop and think: Would a reader who never saw the prompt still understand my answer? Add the one sentence that makes it clear.

Module 2 — At-Home Connection

Purpose

These at-home tasks turn your child into a thesis (central idea) builder at home. They need little or no materials and each one ends in a short conversation, not a worksheet. When a child explains the learning to you, the learning gets stronger.

Feature	Detail
Time	A few minutes each
Materials	None needed

Teacher Information - Task Card 1

Teacher note: send this ice-blue card home first. It practices naming the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea).



Task Card 1 - Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea)

TEKS 3.12B(i). Ask a family member to give you a question about your day. Say the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER you would use to build a thesis (central idea). Family signature: _____



Teacher Information - Task Card 2

Teacher note: this pale-green card practices matching prompt type to thesis (central idea) structure.



Task Card 2 - Thesis (Central Idea) Type at Dinner

TEKS 3.12B(i). At dinner, make one WHAT, one WHY, and one Relational HOW prompt about your day. Say whether each thesis (central idea) needs facts or details, reasons with because, or ways or connections with a preposition. Family signature: _____



Teacher Information - Task Card 3

Teacher note: Card 3 is the same assignment with built-in language support — a word bank and a frame. It is not a reduced standard.

**Task Card 3 - Thesis (Central Idea) Builder**

TEKS 3.12B(i). Write one WHY thesis (central idea) about your day. Word bank: topic, charge, answer, because, reason. Frame: "_____ because _____." Family signature:



Module 2 — My Progress Tracker

Teacher Script

"This is your very own progress tracker. As we learn this week, you get to color in how you feel about each skill by yourself. Be honest with yourself, because this shows you how much you are growing. You are the one in charge of your own learning, and I am so proud of the thinking you are doing."

Directions: This tracker is for YOU! As you practice building a thesis (central idea), look at each skill below. If you can do it all by yourself without help, color in or check the box that matches how you feel. Be honest with yourself — this helps you see how much you are growing!

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Find the TOPIC in a prompt.			
Find the CHARGE in a prompt.			
Think of an ANSWER from the passages.			
Write a WHAT thesis (central idea) with facts or details.			
Write a WHY thesis (central idea) with because and reasons.			
Write a Relational HOW thesis (central idea) with a preposition and connections.			
Explain why my thesis (central idea) fits the prompt.			

One thing I am proud of:

One thing I want to get better at:

Module 2 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closure Script

Teacher Script

"Today we learned an important writing HABIT for Short Constructed Response. We learned that every thesis (central idea) has Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC CHARGE ANSWER We also learned that the prompt tells us what kind of sentence to write: WHAT = simple sentence with facts/details WHY = complex sentence with because and reasons Relational HOW = simple sentence with a preposition and ways/connections That means we do not just start writing randomly. We study the prompt, we think carefully, and then we build a thesis (central idea) that fits the job."

Module Essential Question - Answered

How can a writer build a thesis (central idea) statement that answers a WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW short constructed response prompt? The writer finds the TOPIC and CHARGE in the prompt, thinks of an ANSWER from the passages, and matches the sentence type to the prompt: facts or details for WHAT, because and reasons for WHY, and a preposition with ways or connections for Relational HOW.

Teacher Reflection - Module 2

Which students could name the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) but could not turn them into a sentence?

Which prompt type needed the most reteaching: WHAT, WHY, or Relational HOW?

Did Spin, Build, and Move! help students match the sentence structure to the prompt?

Who needs the Thesis (Central Idea) Match-Up intervention before Module 3?

Teacher Notes

Teacher Artifacts of Effectiveness

Collect and date evidence that shows the skill was taught and learned: photographs of the Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) anchor chart; completed Spin, Build, and Move! game work; the Day 3 Label It, Build It, Write It independent practice; the Module 2 Student Tracking Sheet showing growth across the week; and one exit ticket at each level (still developing, approaching, and secure) so a reviewer can see the range of the class.

Virtual Classroom Adjustment



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Teaching this module to computer or remote learners? Keep every activity — just adjust HOW students share and respond as they learn to write a thesis (central idea):

- Collect each thesis (central idea) through a form or shared doc for the same feedback you would give in person.
- Send pairs to breakout rooms to turn a prompt into a thesis (central idea), then share back.
- Screen-share one student's thesis (central idea) for quick, whole-class feedback.
- Post sentence frames on screen; remote students lean on them even more than in the room.
- Keep the Pause Points — a few seconds of quiet think-time works the same on camera.

MODULE

3

**Understanding and Selecting
Strong Evidence**

Week 3 • High Stamina • two passages

Teach BIG®

The Writing Academy LLC

CLUSTER 1

Short Constructed Response

Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans

Building the foundation of a short constructed response: shaping the prompt, finding the noun, verb, and clue word, and deciding whether a question is asking what, why, or how.



- Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans
- 4 Modules
- 4 Weeks
- Passage 1
- Passage 2

Written by Randi Whitney

Module 3: Understanding and Selecting Strong Evidence

Week 3 - High Stamina - two passages

A Little Inspiration Goes a Long Way!

When students learn to prove their thinking with confidence, they begin to see themselves as real readers, real writers, and real thinkers.

Why This Module Matters

Students build on their thesis (central idea) work by learning that evidence is proof from the passage that supports an answer. They learn to select evidence with purpose, check it with the CSI HABIT, and introduce exact words from a passage with a signal marker and quotation marks.

Module Essential Question

How can a writer choose and cite the strongest evidence from a passage to support a thesis (central idea)?

Parent Communication

Purpose

Families are partners in this work, and partnership only happens when families know what is going on. This page exists so that every family has three things: a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, real questions they can ask at the dinner table, and one or two simple things they can do together that need no materials and no preparation. Nothing here is homework for the family. It is an invitation to talk. When a child explains the week's learning to someone at home, the learning gets stronger, and the family gets to see the thinking that usually stays inside the classroom.

How to Send It

Copy the letter in the language each family prefers, or send both. The conversation starters and the family activities are the same in either language, so a family reading the Spanish letter and a child reading the English page are still talking about the same thing.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is learning how to select strong evidence for a short constructed response. Evidence is proof from the passage that helps support an answer. Students will learn that evidence is not an opinion, a random detail, or a sentence copied without a reason.

Students will use the CSI HABIT to choose strong evidence. CSI means Connects to the prompt, Supports my thesis (central idea) statement, and Infers additional ideas. They will also practice using signal markers such as “The text states,” and quotation marks when they use exact words from a passage.

We will use these skills while reading “The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth” and “Life Along the Nile River.” Please ask your child to explain what evidence is, what makes evidence strong, and how a signal marker introduces a quote.

With appreciation, Your child's teacher - The Writing Academy LLC

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija está aprendiendo a seleccionar evidencia sólida para una respuesta construida corta. La evidencia es prueba del pasaje que ayuda a apoyar una respuesta. Los estudiantes aprenderán que la evidencia no es una opinión, un detalle al azar ni una oración copiada sin una razón.

Los estudiantes usarán el HÁBITO CSI para elegir evidencia sólida: se Conecta con la pregunta, Sustenta la declaración de tesis y ayuda a Inferir ideas adicionales. También practicarán marcadores de señal, como “El texto dice,” y comillas cuando usen palabras exactas del pasaje.

Pueden apoyar en casa pidiéndole a su hijo o hija que explique qué es evidencia, qué hace que la evidencia sea sólida y cómo un marcador de señal presenta una cita.

Con aprecio, La maestra o el maestro de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Family Conversation Starters

Send these home with the letter, or post them in the class stream. None of them can be answered with only yes or no.

- What is evidence, and what is not evidence?
- Teach me the three CSI words for strong evidence.
- How can a sentence from a passage be weak evidence for one thesis (central idea)?
- What does a signal marker do before a quote?
- Can you show me where the comma and quotation marks go in a quoted-evidence sentence?

Simple Family Activities

Both activities need little or no materials and both end in a conversation rather than a worksheet.

Family Activity - Evidence Detective



Teacher Script

"one fact from a book, show, or conversation and one opinion. Have your child explain which one could be evidence from a passage and why. Two minutes, no paper needed."

Family Activity - CSI at Dinner

Ask your child to share a claim about the day, then ask for proof. Have your child explain whether the proof connects to the question, supports the claim, and helps you infer more.

Module 3 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Students use their Module 2 thesis (central idea) statements to select strong evidence for a Short Constructed Response (SCR). They distinguish evidence from opinion, use the CSI HABIT to decide whether evidence connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea) statement, and helps them infer additional ideas, and practice introducing exact quoted evidence with a signal marker, comma, and quotation marks. The familiar Pilgrims and Nile passages are read at high stamina; the renderer inserts them, so they are not reproduced here.

BIG Goal: Students will select and write one strong piece of quoted evidence that supports a thesis (central idea) statement.

TEKS Correlations

The Student Expectation column below is the exact wording of each TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, not paraphrased.

TEKS	Strand	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS)	Where It Is Taught and Practiced in This Module
3.11A(i)	Writing Process — Planning	plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies	Days 1-3: students select evidence that matches a thesis (central idea) and a prompt before writing.
3.11A(ii)	Writing Process — Planning	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction, transitions, and a conclusion	Days 1-3: students add a purposeful quoted-evidence sentence to a thesis (central idea).
3.12B(i)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea	Days 1-5: students select evidence that supports the thesis (central idea), or central idea.
3.12B(ii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics	Days 1-5: students use quoted evidence as a supporting detail in an SCR.

3.12B(iii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft	Days 1-5: students choose relevant evidence and introduce it with a signal marker.
3.11C(i)	Revising	revise drafts to improve sentence structure	Day 5: students revise an evidence sentence so it clearly introduces a quote.
3.11D(iv)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including commas in compound and complex sentences and after introductory words, phrases, and clauses	Days 1-5: students use a comma after a signal marker.
3.11D(x)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct capitalization of proper nouns	Day 5: students check capitalization in quoted evidence.
3.11D(xxxii)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate high-frequency words	Day 5: students check spelling in their evidence sentences.

Interdisciplinary context (background only, not a writing standard): the two passages connect to Social Studies 3.14C.

Module 3 — ELPS Correlations

Matched from the approved K-12 ELPS/ELAR Crosswalk to the actual language demands of this module. The final column names the day or days on which each expectation is explicitly addressed, so no searching is required.

ELPS	Domain	Language Pattern	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(E)	Listening	Comprehension	Demonstrate listening comprehension of spoken language during classroom interactions by recalling, retelling, responding, or asking for clarification.	Days 1, 3, 4, and 5
1(C)	Listening	Following Directions	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Day 2
2(E)	Speaking	Discourse	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail during classroom interactions.	Days 1, 3, and 5
2(F)	Speaking	Respond to Information	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during formal and informal classroom interactions.	Days 2 and 3
3(E)	Reading	Purpose for Reading	Use pre-reading strategies, including previewing text features, connecting to prior knowledge, and making predictions, to develop comprehension.	Day 1

4(D)	Writing	Language Structures / Syntax	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and types and connecting words.	Days 3 and 5
4(E)	Writing	Conventions	Write using conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense.	Days 3 and 5

ELPS Woven Into Intervention

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(C)	Listening	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Intervention, after Day 3
2(F)	Speaking	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during formal and informal classroom interactions.	Intervention, after Day 3

ELPS Woven Into Enrichment

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
2(E)	Speaking	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail.	Enrichment, after Day 4
4(D)	Writing	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and connecting words.	Enrichment, after Day 4

Module 3 — ELPS Linguistic Accommodations

Purpose: These accommodations maintain grade-level rigor while opening clear avenues to success for emergent bilingual students as they learn to select and introduce strong evidence.

Level	Language Objective
Pre-Production	Point to an evidence card or an opinion card and point to the C, S, or I on a CSI card when the teacher names it.
Beginning	Match a quote card to Evidence / Not Evidence and use a picture-supported CSI chart.
Intermediate	Say whether evidence connects to the prompt and supports the thesis (central idea) using a sentence frame.
High Intermediate	Explain in a full sentence why a quote is strong or weak evidence for a thesis (central idea).
Advanced	Select and write quoted evidence independently, then justify the CSI check.

Students at the Pre-Production and Beginning levels will rely on color-coded cards, quotation-mark cards, and picture cues; students at the Intermediate and higher levels will use sentence frames to explain their thinking in their own words.

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students learn understanding and selecting strong evidence. Every task below is open to English learners at any proficiency level; the supports are built in, not bolted on.

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students hear a thesis (central idea) read aloud, then name a detail from the passage that supports it.
Speaking	Students say their thinking aloud to a partner before they write, using the sentence frames provided.
Reading	Students read the passage and the prompt closely, marking the words that carry the meaning.
Writing	Students choose strong evidence from the passage in writing, moving from a spoken idea to a written response.

Module 3 — Learning Destination

Module Learning Objective

Students will select strong evidence from a passage to support a thesis (central idea) statement by using the CSI HABIT and will write quoted evidence using a signal marker, comma, and quotation marks.

I Will Statements

- I will tell what evidence is and what evidence is not.
- I will use CSI to check whether evidence is strong.
- I will choose evidence that connects to the prompt and supports my thesis (central idea).
- I will use a signal marker before quoted evidence.
- I will use a comma and quotation marks correctly.

I Can Statements

- I can find proof from the passage.
- I can tell whether a statement is evidence, not evidence, strong evidence, or weak evidence.
- I can explain how evidence connects to the prompt and supports my thesis (central idea).
- I can write: Signal marker, “quoted evidence.”

★ Daily Deck

Daily Deck - Module Slide 1: the I Will and I Can statements for this module, so students see the week’s target before anything else.

Success Criteria

- My evidence comes from the passage, not my opinion.
- My evidence connects to the prompt and supports my thesis (central idea).
- My evidence helps me infer an additional idea.
- I introduce quoted evidence with a signal marker and comma.
- I put quotation marks around the exact words from the passage.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The completed Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence Builder shows a correctly selected quote and CSI check.
- The Day 5 exit ticket shows one strong quoted-evidence sentence.
- Both pieces are kept together so growth across the week is visible in one place.

Module 3 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read the thesis (central idea) and evidence cards aloud, repeat directions, and provide the CSI checklist or signal-marker cards. You may reduce the number of cards. You may not tell a student which evidence is strongest or supply the reason it fits. The student must still decide whether it is evidence and explain the CSI match.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Identify whether a statement is evidence from the passage or not evidence.	Supported. The teacher may read the statement aloud twice.	The student sorts text proof from opinion.
Inferential	Use CSI to decide whether text proof is strong or weak for a thesis (central idea).	Guided on Days 1 and 2, independent by Day 3.	The student explains the connection and support.
Evaluative	Judge which of two quotes is the stronger match and explain why.	Partner discussion on Day 2, independent on Day 5.	The student names the CSI reason and writes the strongest quote correctly.

Possible Teacher Misconceptions

The Misconception	What a Teacher Might Misunderstand	A Practical Way to Self-Correct
Every sentence copied from the text is strong evidence.	A teacher may accept a quote just because it is accurate.	Ask whether the quote connects to the prompt and directly supports the thesis (central idea).
A quote does not need an introduction.	A teacher may allow evidence to be dropped into writing.	Require a signal marker, comma, and quotation marks during this lesson.
Strong means the longest quote.	A teacher may select length instead of relevance.	Use CSI to compare the job each quote does for the thesis (central idea).

Possible Student Misconceptions

What Students May Misunderstand	What a Teacher Might Notice	A Practical Way to Correct or Reteach It
My opinion is evidence.	The student says, "I think," instead of using passage proof.	Sort opinion and evidence cards, then return to the passage for a quote.
Every passage detail supports every thesis (central idea).	The student calls a background detail strong for an unrelated thesis (central idea).	Ask which exact words in the thesis (central idea) the quote proves.
Quotation marks are decorations.	The student omits the comma or puts quotes around only part of the exact words.	Rehearse: signal marker, comma, quotation marks, exact words.

Thinking Levels Charts

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a prompt and a student response require.

The Five Thinking Levels

Level	Color	Thinking Stage	Description
Level 1	Red	Foundational	Student follows directions or repeats information exactly as taught with little independent thinking.
Level 2	Orange	Emergent	Student begins trying ideas independently but may be uncertain or inconsistent.
Level 3	Yellow	Visible	Student connects ideas directly to textual evidence or proof from the passage.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal inference, applying understanding to self or deeper meaning.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, themes, or broader life understanding.

The Progression of Thinking

Level	Hidden Question	Student Thinking	Thinking Focus
Foundational (Red)	Why did it happen?	I can explain the cause.	Cause and Effect
Emergent (Orange)	Why was it done?	I can explain the purpose.	Purpose and Motivation
Visible (Yellow)	Why is it important in the passage?	I can explain why it matters in the text.	Importance and Contribution
Independent (Green)	Why is it important to me?	I can explain what I can learn, value, or apply to my own life.	Personal Meaning and Application
Reflective (Blue)	Why is it important to everyone?	I can explain the universal lesson or significance.	Universal Meaning and Life Lessons

Module 3 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script



Teacher Script

"These are academic thinking words that help us understand questions and explain answers."

Tier 1 Vocabulary

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
proof	something that shows an idea is true	The quote is ____ for my answer.
words	letters put together to make meaning	I use the exact ____ from the passage.
sentence	a group of words that shares a complete thought	My evidence is a ____ from the passage.
detail	a small fact that gives more information	This ____ supports my thesis (central idea).
quote	exact words taken from a text	I put quotation marks around a ____.
match	to fit or go together	My evidence must ____ my thesis (central idea).
strong	helpful and clear	I choose ____ evidence.
weak	not helpful enough for the job	This is ____ evidence for my thesis (central idea).
build	to make something by putting parts together	The Pilgrims had to ____ homes before winter.
water	the clear liquid people, plants, and animals need to live	The river gave the people fresh ____ to drink.

Tier 2 Vocabulary

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
evidence	proof from the passage that helps support an answer	My ____ comes from the text.
thesis (central idea)	a sentence that directly answers the prompt	My evidence supports my ____.
prompt	the question or task you are asked to answer	My evidence connects to the ____.
quoted evidence	exact words from the text used as proof	I use ____ to support my answer.
signal marker	words that introduce quoted evidence	The text states, is a ____.
punctuation	marks that help readers understand writing	I use correct ____ around a quote.
support	to give proof that helps an idea	My quote will ____ my thesis (central idea).
inference	an idea figured out from clues in the text	The evidence helps me make an ____.
connect	to fit with or relate to	Strong evidence must ____ to the prompt.
quote	to use the exact words from a text	I can ____ a sentence correctly.
relevant	closely connected to the topic or prompt	I choose ____ evidence.
strong evidence	text proof that connects, supports, and helps infer	I use CSI to choose ____.

For more practice with academic words, see the Teach BIG Academic Vocabulary Companion App.

Tier 3 Vocabulary

Word	Say It This Way	Student-Friendly Definition
voyage	VOY-ij	a long trip by ship or boat
passengers	PASS-en-jerz	people traveling in a vehicle or ship who are not the crew
seasick	SEE-sik	feeling sick because a boat is moving on the water
survival skills	ser-VY-vul skils	abilities that help people stay alive in a difficult place
squash	skwahsh	a plant with a vegetable that the Pilgrims grew for food
fertile	FUR-tl	able to grow many healthy plants well
natural resources	NATCH-er-ul ree-SOR-siz	useful things found in nature, such as forests or water
harvest season	HAR-vist SEE-zun	the time of year when farmers gather ripe crops
sailors	SAY-lerz	people who work or travel on boats and ships
historians	his-TOR-ee-unz	people who study and write about the past

Module 3 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

The Module 2 thesis (central idea) statements provide the purpose for this module's evidence work. The Pilgrims thesis (central idea) explains that Plymouth had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor. The Nile thesis (central idea) explains that the river provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.

Evidence is proof from the passage that supports an answer. A sentence can come from the passage and still be weak evidence if it does not connect to the prompt or directly support the thesis (central idea). Students use the CSI HABIT: strong evidence Connects to the prompt, Supports the thesis (central idea) statement, and helps the reader Infer additional ideas.

Students practice quoted evidence. A signal marker announces the quote, followed by a comma and quotation marks around the exact words from the passage: Signal marker, "quoted evidence."

Module 3 — Materials, Preparation, and Timing

Materials to Gather

- Copies of both passages
- Whiteboard and markers
- Anchor chart paper
- Student interactive notebooks
- Evidence cards
- Strong/weak evidence sorting cards
- Signal marker cards
- Spinner labeled Evidence / Not Evidence / Strong / Weak
- Gameboard and game pieces
- Student-selected Pencil Guy markers
- Highlighters
- Sentence strips
- Quotation mark cards
- Exit slips

Preparation Before Day 1

- Write the “What Is Evidence?” and “CSI HABIT for Strong Evidence” anchor charts on chart paper.
- Write signal-marker examples and the quoted-evidence pattern: Signal marker, “quoted evidence.”
- Copy both passages for each student; the renderer inserts the passages, so do not add passage text here.
- Prepare the spinner, evidence cards, thesis (central idea) cards, CSI checklist cards, gameboard, and Pencil Guy markers.
- Have students cut out the game cards in their Interactive Notebooks and make a Practice Pocket from a sized envelope or scrap paper.

Timing and Transition Overview

Day	Minutes	GRADUATE Stage	What Happens
Day 1	15	G — Gather + R — Reveal	Evidence Detective Freeze; define evidence and model CSI.
Day 2	15	A — Attempt	Play CSI Evidence Quest with evidence and thesis (central idea) cards.
Day 3	15	D — Discuss + U — Use	Discuss the HABIT, then complete Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence Builder.
Day 4	15	A — Award + T — Target	Celebrate evidence work and name one next step.
Day 5	15	E — Educate and Explain to Others	Teach a partner and complete the exit check.

Tiny Times Transition

A Tiny Time is a brief, silent routine that helps students reset their focus between lesson segments without raising their voices or needing extra supplies. It reinforces the module skill of identifying strong evidence while keeping the classroom calm and ready for the next activity. This quick check-in ensures everyone is mentally engaged before diving back into work.

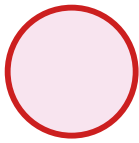
When to use a Tiny Time: Between independent reading, partner discussion, or direct instruction segments when you need a quiet reset.

How to run a Tiny Time, step by step:

- Read one sentence aloud in a soft, steady voice while students sit quietly with their hands ready.
- Ask students to silently evaluate if the sentence provides strong evidence for the claim.
- Students give a quiet thumbs up for strong evidence or a thumbs down for weak evidence.
- Invite one or two students to whisper a brief reason for their choice to a partner.
- Smoothly transition into the next activity without further discussion.

Example: Teacher script: "I will read one sentence. Listen carefully. Is this strong evidence? 'My dog is the best because he is cute.' Thumbs up if it is strong, thumbs down if it is weak."

Module 3 — Anchor Charts and the DOT Reading Habit



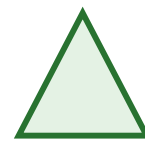
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Part of the Question	What It Means
Red Circle	Main Noun	The topic or subject the question is about.
Yellow Box	Verb	The action the question is asking you to do.
Green Triangle	Clue Word	The word that shows if the question is WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

CSI Part	What It Means
C — Connects	The evidence connects to the prompt.
S — Supports	The evidence supports my thesis (central idea) statement.
I — Infers	The evidence helps me infer additional ideas.



CSI HABIT for Strong Evidence — Anchor Chart

If my evidence does not connect, support, or help me infer, it is probably weak evidence.



Signal Markers and Quoted Evidence — Anchor Chart

The text states, The author says, The passage explains, The text shows, The author describes,
Signal marker, “quoted evidence.”

The DOT Reading Habit

Teacher Script

"Before we begin reading, we are going to use an important reading habit that strong readers use. While you are reading the passages in your Interactive Notebook, place a small dot above any word you are unsure about."

Board text: Dot = I'm not sure about this word yet.

Encouragement: "This helps your brain keep track of words you are learning. Good readers notice the words they are still growing into."

Create the Anchor Chart

Teacher directions: Build an anchor chart from the information on this page. On chart paper, write the three shapes and what each one marks (red circle = noun, yellow box = verb, green triangle = clue word), the WHAT / WHY / HOW chart, and the DOT reading reminder. Display it all week so students can refer to it.

Module 3 — Selecting Strong Evidence: Modeled CSI Check

Teacher Script

"Now I need evidence that supports this thesis (central idea)."

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Write: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

Teacher Script

"Let's check CSI: Does it Connect to the prompt? Yes. Does it Support my thesis (central idea)? Yes. Does it help me Infer why Plymouth was useful? Yes. That means this is strong evidence."

Thesis (Central Idea): Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.

Write: The text says, "Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert."

Teacher Script

"Is this from the text? Yes. But is it strong evidence for the thesis (central idea)? Not as strong. Why? Because while it gives background, it does not directly show what the Nile provided. It is related, but it does not support the thesis (central idea) as clearly. That makes it weaker evidence."

Teacher Script

"When writers use quoted evidence, they should announce it clearly. That is called a signal marker. A signal marker helps readers know that evidence is coming."

Write: The text states, The author says, The passage explains, The text shows, The author describes,

Teacher Script

"When we use quoted evidence, we need correct punctuation. Here is the writing HABIT."

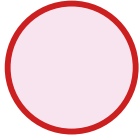
Write: Signal marker, "quoted evidence."

 Teacher Script

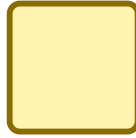
"Notice: the signal marker comes first there is a comma after the signal marker quotation marks go around the exact words from the passage"

Module 3 — The Three Shapes and CSI Strong Evidence HABIT

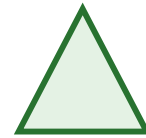
Cluster 1 continues to use three shapes to break a writing prompt into its parts. Students use the shapes to read the question, then use the CSI HABIT to choose evidence that does the job of the thesis (central idea).



Red Circle
Noun (topic)



Yellow Box
Verb (action)



Green Triangle
Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Marks	Meaning
Red Circle	The main noun	The topic or subject of the question.
Yellow Box	The verb	The action the question asks you to do.
Green Triangle	The clue word	The word that signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

CSI Strong Evidence HABIT

Letter	Meaning	Question to Ask
C	Connects to the prompt	Does this evidence match the question?
S	Supports my thesis (central idea) statement	Does this evidence prove my answer?
I	Infers additional ideas	What else can I understand from this evidence?

Quoted Evidence Pattern

Part	What It Does
Signal marker	Announces that evidence is coming.
Comma	Comes after the signal marker.
Quotation marks	Go around the exact words from the passage.



Teacher Script

"First we circle the main noun in red. Next we box the verb in yellow. Then we triangle the clue word in green. Finally we ask: is this question a WHAT, a WHY, or a HOW?"

Before Students Read

Preview the two passages with students before reading. Each passage appears twice: first a plain copy to read, then a color-coded copy. As you read, students TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. TRACKS marks the evidence in the passage; the shapes are used only to analyze the prompt.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

Students look for six kinds of measurable evidence in every passage. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

T Time — Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

R Reactions — Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Purple.)

A Actions — Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

C Character, Concept, Creature — Characters' or people's names, animals or animals' names, or major concepts used as the central idea. Often nouns or proper nouns. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

K Key Knowledge — All other important information necessary to the meaning of the passage that is not accounted for by another TRACKS category (background knowledge). (Highlight color: Pastel Orange.)

S Scenery / Setting — Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

PASSAGE 1 — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth (Stamina: High)

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. They left England because they wanted more freedom. The Pilgrims hoped to build a safe community where families could live according to their own beliefs.

[2] The Pilgrims traveled on a ship called the Mayflower. The voyage lasted for many weeks. The ship carried more than one hundred passengers, including men, women, and children. The ship was crowded, and families had very little space.

[3] During the trip, storms caused huge waves to crash against the ship. Strong winds pushed the Mayflower off course several times. Many passengers became seasick because the ship rocked back and forth on the rough water.

[4] Life on the ship was not easy. Most passengers stayed below deck for long periods of time. Meals were simple and included dried meat, bread, beans, and cheese. The travelers had to protect their food and water because they did not know how long the trip would last.

[5] After many weeks at sea, the Pilgrims finally reached the coast of North America. Winter was beginning, so the settlers needed to find a place to live quickly.

[6] Small groups explored the land looking for fresh water, forests, and safe harbors. Eventually, they found an area called Plymouth. Nearby forests provided wood for homes, fires, and tools. The land also had rich soil where crops could be planted.

[7] The harbor at Plymouth made it possible for ships to anchor safely. Settlers unloaded tools, food, and supplies from the Mayflower. These supplies helped the colony survive during the first months.

[8] Winter in Plymouth was harsh. Snow and freezing temperatures covered the land. Many settlers still lived on the Mayflower while homes were being built.

[9] Workers spent long days cutting trees and building shelters. Some people gathered firewood while others cooked meals or cared for children. Everyone in the colony had responsibilities.

[10] Many Pilgrims became sick during the winter because of the cold weather and lack of fresh food. Some families lost loved ones during this difficult time. Even during hardships, the settlers continued helping one another.

[11] When spring arrived, the environment became easier to manage. Native Americans in the area helped the Pilgrims learn important survival skills. The settlers learned how to grow corn in the local soil and where to fish and hunt.

[12] The Pilgrims planted crops such as corn, beans, and squash. Families worked together in the fields during planting season. As crops began to grow, the colony slowly became stronger.

[13] Boats traveled along the coast carrying people and goods between settlements. More settlers arrived from England hoping to begin new lives in North America.

[14] Over time, Plymouth grew into an important colony. New homes, farms, and buildings

were constructed. Families worked hard every day to improve the community.

[15] The natural environment played an important role in the colony's success. Forests provided wood. Rivers and harbors supported travel and trade. Fertile soil helped farmers grow crops.

[16] Today, Plymouth is remembered as one of the earliest English colonies in North America. The Pilgrims' story shows how teamwork, determination, and natural resources helped settlers survive in a new environment.

Student Annotation Guide — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

T — Time

In 1620; Winter was beginning

R — Reactions

became seasick; worked together

A — Actions

left England; planted crops

C — Character/Concept/Creature

The Pilgrims

K — Key Knowledge

the Mayflower; rich soil

S — Scenery/Setting

Strong winds; Winter in Plymouth was harsh

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. They left England because they wanted more freedom. The Pilgrims hoped to build a safe community where families could live according to their own beliefs.

[2] The Pilgrims traveled on a ship called the Mayflower. The voyage lasted for many weeks. The ship carried more than one hundred passengers, including men, women, and children. The ship was crowded, and families had very little space.

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PASSAGE 2 — Life Along the Nile River (Stamina: High)

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals. Because of this, most people settled close to the Nile River.

[2] The Nile River was one of the most important rivers in the ancient world. It flowed through the desert from south to north. Each year, the river would rise and flood nearby land.

[3] When the floodwaters went back down, they left behind dark, rich soil. This soil was good for growing plants and crops. Without the floods, farming would have been much harder in ancient Egypt.

[4] The yearly flooding followed a pattern. Ancient Egyptians learned when the floods would arrive and planned their farming around the river. Farmers waited for the floodwaters to go down before planting seeds.

[5] Farmers planted crops such as wheat and barley in the rich soil near the riverbanks. They also grew vegetables and fruits. The Nile provided water for drinking, cooking, and farming.

[6] The river also supplied fish for people to eat. Fishing became an important part of life in ancient Egypt. Many families depended on fish and crops for food.

[7] Farmers worked hard throughout the year. They planted seeds, cared for crops, and gathered food during harvest season. Rich soil near the Nile helped crops grow better than crops in the dry desert.

[8] The Nile River also helped people travel from place to place. Boats moved up and down the river carrying people and goods. Some boats carried food while others transported wood, stone, or tools.

[9] Travel by boat was often easier than traveling across the desert. The river connected villages, towns, and cities throughout ancient Egypt.

[10] Trade grew because of the Nile River. Merchants exchanged goods between communities. Cities near the river became busy centers of trade and business.

[11] Many people in ancient Egypt lived close to the riverbanks. Villages and towns were built near the Nile because families depended on water and farmland.

[12] The Nile also influenced jobs in ancient Egypt. Some people became farmers while others worked as fishermen, merchants, builders, or sailors.

[13] The river provided important natural resources for the civilization. Water helped crops grow, fish provided food, and transportation helped trade develop.

[14] Ancient Egyptians respected the Nile because they understood how important it was to survival. Without the river, living in the desert would have been much more difficult.

[15] The environment shaped daily life in ancient Egypt. Farmers depended on floodwaters, merchants depended on boats, and families depended on the river for water and food.

[16] Over time, large cities grew along the Nile River. Temples, homes, markets, and farms appeared throughout the region. The civilization became stronger because the Nile supported farming and trade.

[17] Today, historians study the Nile River to understand how geography influenced ancient civilizations. The river helped ancient Egypt become one of the world's earliest and most successful civilizations.

Student Annotation Guide — Life Along the Nile River

T — Time

Ancient Egypt; Each year

R — Reactions

Trade grew; became stronger

A — Actions

rise and flood nearby land; planned their farming

C — Character/Concept/Creature

The Nile River

K — Key Knowledge

one of the most important rivers in the ancient world

S — Scenery/Setting

hot, dry desert; dark, rich soil

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Life Along the Nile River

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals. Because of this, most people settled close to the Nile River.

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🕒 Day 1 - Gather and Reveal (15 minutes)

G

R

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(i) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS	3(E) — use pre-reading strategies; 2(E) — explain information orally

GATHER

Attention activity - Evidence Detective Freeze. Read a statement. If it sounds like real evidence from a passage, students freeze and make quote fingers. If it is not evidence, students cross their arms.

🔊 Teacher Script

"Readers and writers, today we are becoming Evidence Detectives. I am going to read a statement. If it sounds like real evidence from a passage, freeze and make quote fingers. If it is not evidence, cross your arms. Listen carefully. Ready?"

Read these aloud:

1. "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."
2. "I think the Pilgrims were probably happy."
3. "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."
4. "The Nile River was the best river ever."

🔊 Teacher Script

"You are already noticing something important. Evidence comes from the text. It is proof. It is not just any sentence we say with confidence."

🔊 Teacher Script

"Let's say our evidence chant together. Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"

Repeat twice with motions: wave both hands in the air on "Hey! Hey! Hey!" and make quote fingers on "Evidence is on the way!"

★ Daily Deck Slide

Evidence is proof from the passage that helps support an answer.

REVEAL

Teacher Script

"Today we are learning an important writing HABIT. Strong writers do not just make a claim and stop. Strong writers prove what they say with evidence. Evidence is proof from the passage that helps support an answer. Let's talk about what evidence is and what it is not."

Write on the board:

Evidence IS:

- words or ideas from the passage
- proof that helps support a thesis (central idea)
- a detail that matches the prompt

Evidence IS NOT:

- your opinion alone
- a random detail from the text
- a copied sentence with no purpose

Teacher Script

"Let's look at examples from our passages."

Prompt: Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth?

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Possible evidence: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

Teacher Script

"This is evidence because it comes from the text and supports the thesis (central idea)."

Not evidence: The Pilgrims were smart to move there.

 Teacher Script

"That is not evidence. It is an opinion. It does not quote or use proof from the passage."

 Teacher Script

"Now let's learn how to tell if evidence is strong or weak. We will use the CSI HABIT."

 Teacher Script

"Strong evidence uses CSI. C means it Connects to the prompt S means it Supports my thesis (central idea) statement I means it helps me Infer additional ideas That means strong evidence does more than sound good. It has a job."

 Daily Deck Slide

Strong Evidence Uses CSI

C = Connects to the prompt S = Supports my thesis (central idea) statement I = Infers additional ideas

Modeling Strong and Weak Evidence

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Write: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

 Teacher Script

"Now I need evidence that supports this thesis (central idea)."

 Teacher Script

"Let's check CSI: Does it Connect to the prompt? Yes. Does it Support my thesis (central idea)? Yes. Does it help me Infer why Plymouth was useful? Yes. That means this is strong evidence."

Thesis (Central Idea): Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.

Add: The text says, "Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert."

 Teacher Script

"Is this from the text? Yes. But is it strong evidence for the thesis (central idea)? Not as strong. Why? Because while it gives background, it does not directly show what the Nile provided. It is related, but it does not support the thesis (central idea) as clearly. That makes it weaker evidence."

 Teacher Script

"When writers use quoted evidence, they should announce it clearly. That is called a signal marker. A signal marker helps readers know that evidence is coming."

Write on the board: The text states, The author says, The passage explains, The text shows, The author describes,

 Teacher Script

"Signal markers make our writing sound clear and organized."

 Teacher Script

"When we use quoted evidence, we need correct punctuation. Here is the writing HABIT."

Write on the board: Signal marker, "quoted evidence."

Examples: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted." The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."

 Teacher Script

"Notice: the signal marker comes first there is a comma after the signal marker quotation marks go around the exact words from the passage"

Embedded Check for Understanding

Students identify whether a shared statement is evidence or not evidence and use one CSI word to explain whether it is strong.

Purpose: Students will identify text proof and begin to judge whether it has a job in the response.

🕒 Day 2 - Attempt (15 minutes)

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11A(i) — plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies
ELPS	1(C) — follow oral directions; 2(F) — respond to information

ATTEMPT

Students work in pairs or small groups.

Materials for each group: spinner labeled Evidence / Not Evidence / Strong / Weak, evidence cards, thesis (central idea) cards, CSI checklist cards, gameboard, and one Pencil Guy marker of the group's choice.



Teacher Script

"Now it is your turn to play CSI Evidence Quest. Each group will choose the Pencil Guy of your choice to be your game marker. You will: 1. spin the spinner 2. draw a card 3. decide if the card shows Evidence, Not Evidence, Strong Evidence, or Weak Evidence 4. if needed, match it to a thesis (central idea) statement from Module 2 5. explain your thinking using CSI If your group is correct, move your Pencil Guy one space."

CSI Evidence Quest - InterActivity (Group Practice)

Students cut out the game cards contained in their Interactive Notebooks. Make sure they use sized envelopes or scrap paper to create a Practice Pocket to store their game pieces. Continue to use this game after the lesson as a Forgetting Interrupted Activity.

Thesis (Central Idea) Cards

1. The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.
2. Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.
3. Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement.

Card	Evidence?	Strength and Match
The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."	Yes	Strong; matches Pilgrims thesis (central idea) because it connects, supports, and helps infer why Plymouth was useful.
The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."	Yes	Strong; matches Nile thesis (central idea).
The author says, "The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely."	Yes	Strong; matches Pilgrims thesis (central idea).
I think the Pilgrims were brave.	No	Opinion, not text proof.
The text states, "Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert."	Yes	Weak to medium for the Nile thesis (central idea) because it gives background but does not directly prove what the Nile provided.
The passage explains, "When the water went back down, it left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants."	Yes	Strong; matches Nile thesis (central idea).
Plymouth was probably the best place ever.	No	Opinion, not text proof.
The author describes, "Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people and goods."	Yes	Strong; matches Nile thesis (central idea).
The text states, "Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly."	Yes	Strong for a shelters thesis (central idea); weak for a Plymouth-resources thesis (central idea).
I like learning about rivers.	No	Personal opinion, not text proof.

Evidence Cards and Answer Key

Teacher script: "Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"

🕒 Day 3 - Discuss and Use (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(ii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
ELPS	4(F) — write to respond and explain; 3(E) — share in cooperative interactions

DISCUSS

Teacher Script

"Let's talk about what you noticed. Evidence is more than copying words. Evidence has a job to do."

Discussion questions:

1. What is evidence?
2. What is not evidence?
3. What makes evidence strong?
4. What makes evidence weak?
5. How does the CSI HABIT help us check evidence?
6. Why do we need signal markers?
7. Why do quotation marks matter?
8. How can the same quoted sentence be strong for one thesis (central idea) and weak for another?

Possible student responses: "Evidence is proof from the text." "Not every sentence from the passage is strong evidence." "Strong evidence connects to the prompt." "Strong evidence supports the thesis (central idea)." "Weak evidence might be related but not very helpful." "Signal markers show that evidence is coming." "Quotation marks show the exact words from the text."

Teacher Script

"Yes. That is an important idea. Evidence must do a job."

 Teacher Script

"Exactly. A quote is not strong just because it came from the passage."

 Teacher Script

"Well said. Writers choose evidence on purpose."

Student question: "Can something be from the passage and still be weak evidence?"

 Teacher Script

"Yes. That is a very smart question. A sentence can be from the passage, but if it does not connect well to the prompt or support the thesis (central idea) clearly, it may still be weak evidence."

Student question: "Do I always have to use quotation marks?"

 Teacher Script

"You use quotation marks when you are using the exact words from the text. In this lesson, we are practicing quoted evidence, so yes."

Student question: "What if I forget the signal marker?"

 Teacher Script

"Then your evidence may sound dropped into the writing. The signal marker helps announce it clearly. It tells the reader, 'Hey! Here comes proof.'"

USE (Independent Practice) - Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence Builder

 Teacher Script

"Now you will use your knowledge again in a different way. In your Interactive Notebook, you will take a thesis (central idea) statement and add one quoted evidence sentence that supports it. You must: 1. choose the best evidence 2. use a signal marker 3. punctuate the quote correctly"

Item	Task	Answer Key
1	Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor. Choose the best quoted evidence and write it correctly.	The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted." CSI: C = yes; S = yes; I = yes.
2	Thesis (Central Idea): Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation. Decide if this evidence is strong or weak: The text states, "Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert."	Weak evidence because it gives background, but it does not directly show what the Nile provided.

🕒 Day 4 - Award and Target (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11C(i) — revise drafts to improve sentence structure
ELPS	2(I) — monitor and self-correct understanding; 5(B) — write using newly acquired vocabulary

AWARD

Teacher Script

"Today you did something powerful. You did not just answer questions. You began proving your thinking with real evidence from the text."

Choose one or more celebrations:

1. Evidence Chant Celebration: "Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"
2. CSI Air Tap: students tap three fingers in the air and say, "Connect! Support! Infer!"
3. Notebook Glow Line: students write, "One thing I did well with evidence today was _____."
4. Partner Praise: students say, "You chose strong evidence when you _____."

Teacher Script

"Strong readers and writers stop and notice what they can do well and what still needs practice."

TARGET

Write these reflection stems on the board:

One thing I understand about evidence is...

One thing I still need to practice is...

One question I still have about quoting evidence is...

One way I can make my evidence stronger is...

Curiosity questions:

- Can one piece of evidence support more than one thesis (central idea)?
- Why is some text evidence stronger than other text evidence?
- How can a quote help a reader understand more than the exact words say?
- Why is it important to introduce evidence instead of dropping it into writing?

**Teacher Script**

"These are the kinds of questions that grow strong habits in reading and writing."

🕒 Day 5 - Educate and Explain to Others (15 minutes)

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(iii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft; 3.11D — edit drafts using standard English conventions
ELPS	4(F) — write to explain; 3(D) — speak using grade-level content vocabulary

EXPLAIN

🔊 Teacher Script

"Now you will become the teacher. Turn to someone near you and explain: what evidence is what evidence is not what makes evidence strong how to use a signal marker before a quote"

🔊 Teacher Script

"Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"

Student oral frames:

- "Evidence is _____."
- "Evidence is not _____."
- "Strong evidence connects to _____."
- "Strong evidence supports _____."
- "A signal marker helps by _____."
- "One example from the passages is _____."

Sample Turn and Teach Response: "Evidence is proof from the text. Evidence is not just an opinion. Strong evidence connects to the prompt and supports the thesis (central idea). A signal marker helps by introducing the quote clearly. One example is, 'The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."'"

EDUCATE



Teacher Script

"Turn to someone near you and teach them what you learned today about choosing strong evidence. Teaching it out loud in your own words is how you prove you truly own it."

Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today we learned that evidence is proof from the passage that helps support our thinking. We learned that evidence is not just any sentence, and it is not just our opinion. We learned the CSI HABIT for checking strong evidence: Connects to the prompt Supports my thesis (central idea) statement Infers additional ideas We also learned how to use a signal marker and quotation marks to introduce quoted evidence clearly. And every time we got ready to prove our thinking, we remembered: Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"

Exit Ticket

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Write one strong quoted evidence sentence with a signal marker, a comma, and quotation marks. Then tell which CSI parts make it strong.

Answer Key

The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted." It connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and helps the writer infer why Plymouth was useful.

Module 3 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

These exemplars show three levels of evidence selection for the same Module 2 thesis (central idea) so teachers can calibrate their expectations. Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "I think Plymouth was a good place."
- What Is Working: The student has an idea about Plymouth.
- Teacher Notes: This is an opinion, not evidence from the passage.
- What Needs Improvement: Choose exact text proof that supports the thesis (central idea).

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert."
- What Is Working: The student used words from the passage.
- Teacher Notes: The statement is evidence from the text, but it does not directly support the Pilgrims thesis (central idea).
- What Needs Improvement: Select evidence that connects to Plymouth's resources.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "The text states, 'There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted.'"
- What Is Working: The response uses a signal marker, comma, quotation marks, and evidence that connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and helps infer why Plymouth was useful.
- Teacher Notes: This is the target for Module 3's evidence work.
- What Needs Improvement: Ready to become the evidence sentence in a later short constructed response.

Exemplar Engagement Activity

Show all three responses without the labels and ask students to rank them using CSI. Then have partners revise the Low response into text evidence and compare it with the Medium response to choose the strongest fit.

Module 3 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can select strong evidence that supports a thesis (central idea) and write it as quoted evidence.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The Day 3 Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence Builder, student notebooks, evidence cards, and pencils.
Related TEKS Breakout	3.11A(i) planning; 3.12B(i) SCR genre.
Task	Students independently select evidence, use CSI to judge its strength, and write a signal marker plus correctly punctuated quote.
Expected Response	The quote comes from the passage, connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and uses a signal marker, comma, and quotation marks.

Informal Assessment

During Days 1-3, watch and listen as students freeze for evidence, sort CSI Evidence Quest cards, and explain their choices. Note who distinguishes evidence from opinion and who can explain why a passage detail is strong or weak for a specific thesis (central idea). This is a planning check, not a grade.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 independent practice is the formative check. Students write one quoted-evidence sentence and judge one example; the answer key below shows the expected response.

Task	Expected Response
Pilgrims thesis (central idea): choose and write the best evidence.	The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted." CSI: connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and helps infer why Plymouth was useful.
Nile thesis (central idea): judge "Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert."	It is weak evidence for this thesis (central idea) because it gives background but does not directly show what the Nile provided.

Answer Key

Teacher note: after the lesson, use a self-selected grade-level passage for additional evidence-selection practice.

Module 3 — Intervention: Evidence or Not? Match-Up

Field	Detail
Purpose	Support students who need extra practice recognizing evidence and using signal markers.
Group Size	Small group (3-6 students)
Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Materials	evidence cards, not-evidence cards, signal marker cards, quote cards, CSI checklist mini-cards
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.11A(i) planning; 3.12B(i) SCR genre
Relevant ELPS	1(C) follow oral directions; 2(F) restate and respond

Step 1 - Slow Down the Match-Up

Teacher Script

"We are going to slow it down and make the work easier to see. First, you will sort what is evidence and what is not. Then, you will practice adding a signal marker to real evidence."

Step 2 - Intervention Steps

1. Sort cards into Evidence and Not Evidence.
2. Match evidence cards to a thesis (central idea).
3. Add a signal marker.
4. Read the full evidence sentence aloud.

Step 3 - Guided Practice

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Quote Card: "The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely."

Signal Marker Card: The author says,

Correct Full Sentence: The author says, "The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely."

Step 4 - Additional Intervention Frame

- The text states, "_____."
- The passage explains, "_____."

Step 5 - Connect Back to the Lesson HABIT

Ask students to name whether their card is evidence and to use CSI to tell why it matches the thesis (central idea) before they read the full sentence aloud.

Module 3 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Read a statement and ask whether it is evidence.	Student says it is text proof or identifies it as opinion.	Student treats “I think” as evidence.	Ask whether the statement came from the passage; return to the evidence cards.
Ask students to apply CSI to a quote and thesis (central idea).	Student tells whether it connects, supports, and helps infer.	Student calls every quote strong.	Ask which exact words in the thesis (central idea) the quote proves.
Ask students to write a quoted-evidence sentence.	Student uses signal marker, comma, quotation marks, and exact words.	Student drops in a quote or omits punctuation.	Rehearse the pattern: Signal marker, “quoted evidence.”

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Cannot distinguish evidence from opinion	Use Evidence or Not? Match-Up cards and read each card aloud.
Selects a related but weak quote	Use the CSI checklist and underline the thesis (central idea) words the quote supports.
Forgets quotation punctuation	Provide a signal-marker card and quotation-mark cards, then have the student build the sentence.
Masters quickly	Route to the Evidence Ladder Challenge enrichment.



Teacher Resource

The evidence cards, thesis (central idea) cards, CSI checklist cards, signal-marker cards, and CSI Evidence Quest game support this module’s checks.

Module 3 — Enrichment: Evidence Ladder Challenge

Field	Detail
Purpose	Extend students who have mastered the concept by having them build from a thesis (central idea) to multiple pieces of evidence and explain why one is stronger than another.
Group Size	Pairs or small groups
Materials	Both passages, student notebooks, and CSI checklist cards
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.12B(i) SCR genre; 3.11A(i) planning
Relevant ELPS	2(E) narrate and explain; 4(D) grade-appropriate sentences

Step 1 - The Evidence Ladder Challenge

Teacher Script

"You are ready for a bigger challenge. You will build an Evidence Ladder. Start with a thesis (central idea) from Module 2. Then add: one strong evidence sentence one second evidence sentence an explanation of which evidence is stronger and why"

Choose one thesis (central idea):

1. The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.
2. Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.
3. Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement.

Step 2 - Directions

- Add two quoted evidence sentences.
- Explain which quote is strongest using CSI.
- Explain what you can infer from the evidence.

Step 3 - Sample Enrichment Response

Thesis (Central Idea): Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.

Evidence 1: The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."

Evidence 2: The author describes, "Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people

and goods.”

Explanation: Evidence 1 is strongest because it directly supports water, food, and farming. Evidence 2 is also strong because it supports transportation. Together, they help me infer that the Nile was central to daily life.

Step 4 - Expert Reflection

Students explain why each quote is strong or weak for the selected thesis (central idea) and share their evidence ladder with a partner.

Module 3 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence Builder

Writing Prompt

Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth?

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that evidence is proof from the passage that supports an answer. Now you will use the CSI HABIT to select and write one strong quoted-evidence sentence for a Module 2 thesis (central idea).

Planning Support

1. Read the prompt and thesis (central idea).
2. Choose evidence that Connects to the prompt.
3. Check that the evidence Supports the thesis (central idea) statement.
4. Explain what the evidence helps you Infer.
5. Add a signal marker, comma, and quotation marks around the exact words from the passage.

Drafting Space

Write the thesis (central idea) and one strong quoted-evidence sentence.

Success Criteria

- My evidence comes from the passage.
- My evidence connects to the prompt and supports my thesis (central idea).
- I use a signal marker before the quote.
- I use a comma and quotation marks correctly.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise, Edit, and Share

Revise

Read your evidence sentence aloud. Check that your selected quote clearly supports the thesis (central idea) (TEKS 3.11C).

Edit

Check that the signal marker has a comma after it and that quotation marks go around the exact words from the passage (TEKS 3.11D).

Share

Read your thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence to a partner. Your partner names the CSI parts that make the evidence strong.



Teacher Resource

Additional revising and editing daily slides, teacher lesson plans, student interactive workbooks, and the Module 3 answer keys are available in the companion resources.

Auditory Engagement

Auditory Engagement Moments

Give every learner a chance to HEAR and SAY the thinking, not only read it. These moments are built around this module's work — understanding and selecting strong evidence:

- Read a passage detail aloud; partners say "proves it" or "does not" and why.
- Evidence hunt by ear: read the prompt, then students call out details from the passage that support it.
- Read two pieces of evidence aloud; the class picks the STRONGER one and says why out loud.
- Partners read their chosen evidence aloud and check it truly matches the thesis (central idea).

Pause Points

Pause the lesson at these moments and give students a few quiet seconds to think before they answer. Each pause names exactly what to think about.

Pause Point — Before Writing

Stop and think: What is the prompt really asking me to do? Say it in your own words before you write.

Pause Point — Midway

Stop and think: Does what I have written so far test each detail by asking 'does this prove my thesis (central idea)?' before keeping it? If not, fix it now, not later.

Pause Point — Before You Finish

Stop and think: Would a reader who never saw the prompt still understand my answer? Add the one sentence that makes it clear.

Module 3 — At-Home Connection

Purpose

These at-home tasks turn your child into an evidence detective at home. They need little or no materials and each one ends in a short conversation, not a worksheet. When a child explains the learning to you, the learning gets stronger.

Feature	Detail
Time	A few minutes each
Materials	None needed

Teacher Information - Task Card 1

Teacher note: send this ice-blue card home first. It practices distinguishing evidence from an opinion.



Task Card 1 - Evidence Detective

TEKS 3.12B(i). Tell a family member one fact you learned from a book or passage and one opinion. Explain which statement could be evidence and why. Family signature:



Teacher Information - Task Card 2

Teacher note: this pale-green card practices the CSI HABIT.



Task Card 2 - CSI at Dinner

TEKS 3.12B(i). Share a claim about your day and a fact that proves it. Tell how the fact Connects, Supports, or helps someone Infer more. Family signature:



Teacher Information - Task Card 3

Teacher note: Card 3 is the same assignment with built-in language support — a word bank and a frame. It is not a reduced standard.



Task Card 3 - Signal Marker Builder

TEKS 3.12B(i). Practice saying a quoted-evidence sentence. Word bank: The text states, The author says, comma, quotation marks. Frame: "The text states, '_____.'" Family signature: _____



Module 3 — My Progress Tracker

Teacher Script

"This is your very own progress tracker. As we learn this week, you get to color in how you feel about each skill by yourself. Be honest with yourself, because this shows you how much you are growing. You are the one in charge of your own learning, and I am so proud of the thinking you are doing."

Directions: This tracker is for YOU! As you practice selecting strong evidence, look at each skill below. If you can do it all by yourself without help, color in or check the box that matches how you feel. Be honest with yourself — this helps you see how much you are growing!

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Tell what evidence is.			
Tell what evidence is not.			
Choose evidence that connects to the prompt.			
Choose evidence that supports my thesis (central idea).			
Use CSI to tell whether evidence is strong.			
Use a signal marker before a quote.			
Use a comma and quotation marks correctly.			

One thing I am proud of:

One thing I want to get better at:

Module 3 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closure Script

Teacher Script

"Today we learned that evidence is proof from the passage that helps support our thinking. We learned that evidence is not just any sentence, and it is not just our opinion. We learned the CSI HABIT for checking strong evidence: Connects to the prompt Supports my thesis (central idea) statement Infers additional ideas We also learned how to use a signal marker and quotation marks to introduce quoted evidence clearly. And every time we got ready to prove our thinking, we remembered: Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"

Module Essential Question - Answered

How can a writer choose and cite the strongest evidence from a passage to support a thesis (central idea)?

The writer finds the TOPIC and CHARGE in the prompt, thinks of an ANSWER from the passages, and then selects quoted evidence that connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and helps the reader infer additional ideas.

Teacher Reflection - Module 3

Which students could distinguish evidence from opinion but could not select strong evidence for a thesis (central idea)?

Did CSI Evidence Quest help students explain why evidence was strong or weak?

Which students need another practice with signal markers, commas, or quotation marks?

Who needs the Evidence or Not? Match-Up intervention before the next module?

Teacher Notes

Teacher Artifacts of Effectiveness

Collect and date evidence that shows the skill was taught and learned: photographs of the CSI HABIT anchor chart; completed CSI Evidence Quest game work; the Day 3 Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence Builder independent practice; the Module 3 Student Tracking Sheet showing growth across the week; and one exit ticket at each level (still developing, approaching, and secure) so a reviewer can see the range of the class.

Virtual Classroom Adjustment



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Teaching this module to computer or remote learners? Keep every activity — just adjust HOW students share and respond as they learn to choose strong evidence from the passage:

- Have students highlight evidence directly in a shared copy of the passage.
- Use reactions or a poll to vote which piece of evidence is strongest.
- Run a chat or voice-thread where each student drops ONE detail that supports the thesis (central idea).
- Screen-share the thesis (central idea) at the top so every remote piece of evidence is checked against it.
- Keep the Pause Points — a few seconds of quiet think-time works the same on camera.

MODULE

4

**Explaining Evidence / Build
the Full SCR Ladder**

Week 4 • Very High Stamina • two passages

Teach BIG®

The Writing Academy LLC

CLUSTER 1

Short Constructed Response

Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans

Building the foundation of a short constructed response: shaping the prompt, finding the noun, verb, and clue word, and deciding whether a question is asking what, why, or how.



- Supplemental Teacher Daily Lesson Plans
- 4 Modules
- 4 Weeks
- Passage 1
- Passage 2

Written by Randi Whitney

Module 4: Explaining Evidence / Build the Full SCR Ladder

Week 4 - Very High Stamina - two passages

A Little Inspiration Goes a Long Way!

Students grow stronger when we return to the same ideas, add one new layer, and let success build on success.

Why This Module Matters

A short constructed response needs more than a thesis (central idea) and a quote. Writers must explain what the evidence means, why it matters, and how it proves the thesis (central idea). In this final module, students bring together the full SCR ladder: thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

Module Essential Question

How can a writer explain how their evidence proves the thesis (central idea) in a short constructed response?

Parent Communication

Purpose

Families are partners in this work, and partnership only happens when families know what is going on. This page exists so that every family has three things: a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, real questions they can ask at the dinner table, and one or two simple things they can do together that need no materials and no preparation. Nothing here is homework for the family. It is an invitation to talk. When a child explains the week's learning to someone at home, the learning gets stronger, and the family gets to see the thinking that usually stays inside the classroom.

How to Send It

Copy the letter in the language each family prefers, or send both. The conversation starters and the family activities are the same in either language, so a family reading the Spanish letter and a child reading the English page are still talking about the same thing.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is learning how to explain evidence in a short constructed response. After writers give evidence from a passage, they explain what the evidence means or why it matters. This helps the reader understand how the evidence supports the thesis (central idea), or central idea.

Students will practice two explanation bookends. A Definition explanation can begin with “This means” or “This shows.” A Story/Anecdote explanation can begin with “This reminds me of” or “This makes me think of.” They will also learn that the word this points back to the evidence sentence right before it.

We will use these skills while reading “The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth” and “Life Along the Nile River.” This is the final module, where students bring together a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation to build a full SCR ladder.

With appreciation, Your child's teacher - The Writing Academy LLC

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija está aprendiendo a explicar la evidencia en una respuesta construida corta. Después de presentar evidencia de un pasaje, los escritores explican lo que significa la evidencia o por qué es importante. Esto ayuda al lector a entender cómo la evidencia apoya la tesis o idea central.

Los estudiantes practicarán dos formas de explicación. Una explicación de definición puede comenzar con “Esto significa” o “Esto muestra.” Una explicación de historia/anécdota puede comenzar con “Esto me recuerda” o “Esto me hace pensar.” También aprenderán que la palabra esto señala la oración de evidencia que está justo antes.

Pueden apoyar en casa pidiéndole a su hijo o hija que explique qué significa una evidencia y cómo apoya la idea central. ¡Gracias por acompañar a su hijo o hija en este aprendizaje!

Con aprecio, La maestra o el maestro de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Family Conversation Starters

Send these home with the letter, or post them in the class stream. None of them can be answered with only yes or no.

- What does an explanation sentence do?
- How is explanation different from evidence? Teach me.
- What can a Definition explanation start with?
- What can a Story/Anecdote explanation start with?
- What does the word this point back to in an explanation sentence?

Simple Family Activities

Both activities need little or no materials and both end in a conversation rather than a worksheet.

Family Activity - Explain the Detail

Share one detail from a book, show, or conversation. Have your child explain what the detail means or why it matters. They can start with “This means” or “This shows.” Two minutes, no paper needed.

Family Activity - Build the Ladder at Dinner

Ask your child to share a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation from the Pilgrims or Nile River passage. Let your child point out how the explanation helps the evidence support the thesis (central idea).

Module 4 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Students return to the familiar Pilgrims and Nile River passages at very high stamina to add the final layer of a Short Constructed Response (SCR): the explanation sentence. After a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence, students explain what the evidence means, why it matters, or what it helps the reader understand. They use Definition signal markers (This means, This shows) and Story/Anecdote signal markers (This reminds me of, This makes me think of) while keeping the explanation connected to the evidence with the word this. The final module brings the full SCR ladder together: thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

BIG Goal: Students will explain how evidence proves the thesis (central idea) in a Short Constructed Response (SCR).

TEKS Correlations

The Student Expectation column below is the exact wording of each TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, not paraphrased.

TEKS	Strand	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS)	Where It Is Taught and Practiced in This Module
3.11A(i)	Writing Process — Planning	plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies	Days 1-3: students plan an explanation that follows a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence.
3.12B(i)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea	Days 1-5: students connect evidence and explanation to a clear thesis (central idea).
3.12B(ii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics	Days 1-5: students build a complete SCR with a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.
3.12B(iii)	Writing — Genre	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft	Days 1-5: students use Definition and Story/Anecdote explanation signal markers.
3.11C(i)	Revising	revise drafts to improve sentence structure	Day 4: students reflect on and improve an explanation sentence.
3.11D(i)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement	Days 1 and 5: students capitalize the first word and punctuate the last word of each sentence.
3.11D(xxxii)	Editing	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate high-frequency words	Day 5: students check spelling in their full SCR ladder.

Interdisciplinary context (background only, not a writing standard): the two passages connect to Social Studies 3.14C.

Module 4 — ELPS Correlations

Matched from the approved K-12 ELPS/ELAR Crosswalk to the actual language demands of this module. The final column names the day or days on which each expectation is explicitly addressed, so no searching is required.

ELPS	Domain	Language Pattern	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(E)	Listening	Comprehension	Demonstrate listening comprehension of spoken language during classroom interactions by recalling, retelling, responding, or asking for clarification.	Days 1, 3, 4, and 5
1(C)	Listening	Following Directions	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Day 2
2(E)	Speaking	Discourse	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail during classroom interactions.	Days 1, 3, and 5
2(F)	Speaking	Respond to Information	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during formal and informal classroom interactions.	Days 1, 2, and 3
3(E)	Reading	Purpose for Reading	Use pre-reading strategies, including previewing text features, connecting to prior knowledge, and making predictions, to develop comprehension.	Day 1

4(D)	Writing	Language Structures / Syntax	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and types and connecting words.	Days 2, 3, and 5
4(E)	Writing	Conventions	Write using conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense.	Days 1 and 5

ELPS Woven Into Intervention

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
1(C)	Listening	Follow oral directions with accuracy.	Intervention, after Day 3
2(F)	Speaking	Restate, ask questions about, or respond to information during classroom interactions.	Intervention, after Day 3

ELPS Woven Into Enrichment

ELPS	Domain	Complete ELPS Student Expectation	Day Addressed
2(E)	Speaking	Narrate, describe, or explain information orally with increasing specificity and detail.	Enrichment, after Day 4
4(D)	Writing	Write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths and connecting words.	Enrichment, after Day 4

Module 4 — ELPS Linguistic Accommodations

Purpose: These accommodations maintain grade-level rigor while opening clear avenues to success for emergent bilingual students as they explain what evidence means and how it supports a thesis (central idea).

Level	Language Objective
Pre-Production	Point to the evidence sentence and then the matching explanation sentence when the teacher names each part.
Beginning	Match an evidence sentence to a Definition explanation using a signal-marker strip.
Intermediate	Say what an evidence sentence means using the frame, "This means ____."
High Intermediate	Explain orally how evidence supports the thesis (central idea) using a Definition or Story/Anecdote signal marker.
Advanced	Write and justify an explanation sentence that shows how evidence proves the thesis (central idea).

Students at the Pre-Production and Beginning levels will rely on paired sentence strips, the sort mat, and visible signal markers; students at the Intermediate and higher levels will use the oral and written frames to explain their thinking in their own words.

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students learn explaining evidence and building the full SCR ladder. Every task below is open to English learners at any proficiency level; the supports are built in, not bolted on.

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students hear a piece of evidence read aloud, then explain in one sentence how it supports the thesis (central idea).
Speaking	Students say their thinking aloud to a partner before they write, using the sentence frames provided.
Reading	Students read the passage and the prompt closely, marking the words that carry the meaning.
Writing	Students explain how the evidence supports the thesis (central idea) in writing, moving from a spoken idea to a written response.

Module 4 — Learning Destination

Module Learning Objective

Students will write an explanation sentence after evidence that tells what the evidence means, why it matters, or what the reader can understand from it, and will connect the explanation to the thesis (central idea).

I Will Statements

- I will tell what my evidence means.
- I will use This means or This shows for a Definition explanation.
- I will use This reminds me of or This makes me think of for a Story/Anecdote explanation.
- I will explain how my evidence proves my thesis (central idea).

I Can Statements

- I can tell the difference between evidence and explanation.
- I can start my explanation with a signal marker.
- I can use the word this to point back to my evidence sentence.
- I can build a full SCR ladder with a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

★ Daily Deck

Daily Deck - Module Slide 4: the I Will and I Can statements for this module, so students see the week's target before anything else.

Success Criteria

- My explanation comes after my evidence sentence.
- My explanation is in my own words, not another quote or copied evidence.
- My explanation uses a signal marker and tells what the evidence means or why it matters.
- My thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation work together in a full SCR ladder.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The Day 3 Bookends of Explanation notebook activity includes a Definition and a Story/Anecdote explanation.
- The Day 5 exit ticket includes a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation that are connected.
- Both pieces are kept together so growth across the week is visible in one place.

Module 4 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence aloud, repeat it, and let students point to the sentence before they write. You may provide the signal markers This means, This shows, This reminds me of, and This makes me think of. You may not tell a student what the evidence means or write the explanation for the student. The student must still use their own words to explain how the evidence supports the thesis (central idea).

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Locate the evidence sentence and the explanation sentence.	Supported. The teacher may read the pair aloud twice.	The student identifies the quote or passage detail as evidence and the own-words sentence as explanation.
Inferential	Tell what the evidence means and how it supports the thesis (central idea).	Guided on Days 1 and 2, independent by Day 5.	The student writes an explanation using a signal marker.
Evaluative	Judge whether an explanation is connected to the evidence and thesis (central idea).	Partner discussion on Day 3, independent by Day 5.	The student explains why a copied quote or random thought is not a strong explanation.

Possible Teacher Misconceptions

The Misconception	What a Teacher Might Misunderstand	A Practical Way to Self-Correct
Explanation is another quote.	A teacher may accept a second quote after the evidence as explanation.	Ask the writer to tell what the quote means in their own words.
Any personal connection is an explanation.	A teacher may accept a story that wanders away from the passage.	Reread the evidence and ask how the connection helps the reader understand it.
The word this is only a sentence starter.	A teacher may not teach what this points back to.	Point from this to the evidence sentence right before it every time students practice.

Possible Student Misconceptions

What Students May Misunderstand	What a Teacher Might Notice	A Practical Way to Correct or Reteach It
Explanation is copied evidence.	The student repeats the quote or adds another quote.	Use the frame “This means...” and ask for the meaning in the student’s own words.
A random opinion can explain evidence.	The student writes an unrelated thought after the quote.	Ask what the evidence helps the reader understand about the thesis (central idea).
This does not need to point back to evidence.	The explanation begins with This but names a new topic.	Have the student draw an arrow from This to the evidence sentence right before it.

Thinking Levels Charts

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a prompt and a student response require.

The Five Thinking Levels

Level	Color	Thinking Stage	Description
Level 1	Red	Foundational	Student follows directions or repeats information exactly as taught with little independent thinking.
Level 2	Orange	Emergent	Student begins trying ideas independently but may be uncertain or inconsistent.
Level 3	Yellow	Visible	Student connects ideas directly to textual evidence or proof from the passage.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal inference, applying understanding to self or deeper meaning.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, themes, or broader life understanding.

The Progression of Thinking

Level	Hidden Question	Student Thinking	Thinking Focus
Foundational (Red)	Why did it happen?	I can explain the cause.	Cause and Effect
Emergent (Orange)	Why was it done?	I can explain the purpose.	Purpose and Motivation
Visible (Yellow)	Why is it important in the passage?	I can explain why it matters in the text.	Importance and Contribution
Independent (Green)	Why is it important to me?	I can explain what I can learn, value, or apply to my own life.	Personal Meaning and Application
Reflective (Blue)	Why is it important to everyone?	I can explain the universal lesson or significance.	Universal Meaning and Life Lessons

Module 4 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

"These are academic thinking words that help us understand questions and explain answers."

Tier 1 Vocabulary

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
tell	to say or explain something	I can ____ what the evidence means.
means	shows the idea something has	This ____ the Pilgrims had resources.
matters	is important	The evidence ____ because it supports the thesis (central idea).
quote	the exact words from a text	The evidence sentence can use a ____.
copy	to write the same words again	I do not ____ the evidence for my explanation.
thought	an idea in your mind	My explanation is not a random ____.
story	an account of something that happened	A ____ explanation helps connect an idea to life.
explain	to tell what something means or why it matters	I can ____ my evidence.
build	to make something by putting parts together	The Pilgrims had to ____ homes before winter.
water	the clear liquid people, plants, and animals need to live	The river gave the people fresh ____ to drink.

Tier 2 Vocabulary

Teacher Script

"These are academic thinking words that help us understand questions and explain answers."

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
explanation	a sentence that tells what evidence means or why it matters	My _____ comes after my evidence.
evidence	a quote or detail from the passage that supports the thesis (central idea)	My _____ gives proof from the passage.
thesis (central idea)	the central idea that answers the prompt	My _____ is supported by evidence.
signal marker	words that help show the kind of explanation a writer is giving	"This means" is a _____.
definition	an explanation that tells what evidence means	A _____ explanation can start with "This shows."
anecdote	a short story or connection	An _____ can help a reader understand more.
story	a connection that helps explain an idea	A _____ explanation can start with "This reminds me of."
demonstrative pronoun	a word that points to something already named and close by	The word _____ points back to the evidence.
metacognition	thinking about your own thinking	Using the same passages helps with _____.
clarify	to make an idea easier to understand	My explanation can _____ the evidence.
elaborate	to add more information	I _____ by telling what the evidence means.
support	to give proof for an idea	Evidence and explanation _____ the thesis (central idea).
response	the answer a writer gives	My _____ has a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.
punctuation	marks that show where a sentence ends	I check the last _____ in my sentence.
capitalize	to use a capital letter at the beginning	I _____ the first word.

For more practice with academic words, see the Teach BIG Academic Vocabulary

Companion App.

Tier 3 Vocabulary



Teacher Script

"These words are connected specifically to the historical topics in our passages. When we understand them, the passage becomes easier to understand."

Word	Say It This Way	Student-Friendly Definition
Mediterranean Sea	med-ih-tuh-RAY-nee-un SEE	the sea where the Nile River empties
flood cycle	fluhd SY-kul	the regular pattern of a river rising and then going back down
flax	flaks	a plant used in ancient Egypt to make cloth and clothing
nets	nets	woven ropes used by fishermen to catch fish
pyramids	PIR-uh-midz	huge stone buildings made in ancient Egypt
mud bricks	muhd briks	blocks made from mud that were used to build homes
river valley civilizations	RIV-er VAL-ee siv-uh-luh-ZAY-shunz	early large communities that grew beside rivers
geography	jee-OG-ruh-fee	the study of Earth's land, water, and places
construction projects	kun-STRUHK-shun PROJ-ekts	planned jobs for building something large
temples	TEM-pulz	buildings used for worship in ancient Egypt

Module 4 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

In the Pilgrims passage, Plymouth offered fresh water, land where crops could be planted, trees for building, and a safe harbor. In the Nile River passage, the river provided fish, water for drinking and farming, rich soil after floodwaters went down, and transportation for people and goods.

Students have already learned to build a thesis (central idea) and add evidence. Module 4 adds the explanation sentence, which comes after the evidence sentence. Its job is to tell what the evidence means, why it matters, or what readers can understand from it. Explanation is not another quote, copied evidence, or a random thought.

Students use two bookends from DEEP FACTS: D = Definition and S = Story/Anecdote. Definition explanations can begin with “This means” or “This shows.” Story/Anecdote explanations can begin with “This reminds me of” or “This makes me think of.” The demonstrative pronoun this points back to the evidence sentence right before it and helps the explanation stay connected to the evidence and thesis (central idea).

Module 4 — Materials, Preparation, and Timing

Materials to Gather

- Copies of both passages
- Whiteboard and markers
- Anchor chart paper
- Interactive notebooks
- Note-taking templates
- Explanation cards
- Evidence cards
- Sort cards
- Sentence strips
- Spinner
- Racing game cards
- Cones or markers for relay stations if desired
- Gameboard and game pieces
- Student-selected Pencil Guy markers
- Highlighters or colored pencils
- Exit slips

Preparation Before Day 1

- Write the “What an Explanation Does,” “Our Two Bookends for Explaining,” and “Why We Use THIS” anchor charts on chart paper.
- Copy both passages for each student; the renderer inserts the passages, so do not add passage text here.
- Prepare evidence cards, explanation cards, sort mats labeled Evidence and Explanation, relay lanes or gameboard, and Pencil Guy markers.
- Have students cut out the game cards in their Interactive Notebooks and make a Practice Pocket from a sized envelope or scrap paper.
- Prepare the four-flap note-taking page and starter signal-marker strips.

Timing and Transition Overview

Day	Minutes	GRADUATE Stage	What Happens
Day 1	15	G — Gather + R — Reveal	Mystery Object Explain-It; model Definition and Story/Anecdote explanations.
Day 2	15	A — Attempt	Play Evidence or Explanation Relay Race and add an explanation.
Day 3	15	D — Discuss + U — Use	Discuss the bookends, then complete Bookends of Explanation independently.
Day 4	15	A — Award + T — Target	Celebrate explanation work and name one next step.
Day 5	15	E — Educate and Explain to Others	Teach a partner and build the full SCR ladder.

Tiny Times Transition

A Tiny Time is a brief, silent bridge between lesson segments that reinforces our core skill without disrupting the calm of our classroom. By using zero materials and keeping the activity under one minute, we maintain focus while giving students a mental reset. This routine specifically targets evidence by forcing immediate, quiet connections between facts and ideas.

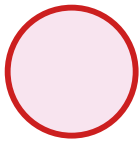
When to use a Tiny Time: During transitions between reading and writing, or when shifting from individual work to group discussion.

How to run a Tiny Time, step by step:

- Select a specific fact from the current text that supports the thesis (central idea).
- Direct students to silently identify how that fact proves the central idea.
- Ask them to turn to their elbow partner and whisper one "because..." sentence.
- Listen quietly for a few seconds to ensure the connection is made.
- Call the class back to attention with a gentle hand signal or soft chime.

Example: Teacher script: "Look at the detail about the muddy tracks in the forest. Silently think about how that proves the animal was large. Now, whisper a 'because' sentence to your partner."

Module 4 — Anchor Charts and the DOT Reading Habit



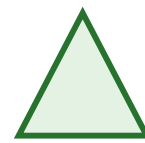
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Part of the Question	What It Means
Red Circle	Main Noun	The topic or subject the question is about.
Yellow Box	Verb	The action the question is asking you to do.
Green Triangle	Clue Word	The word that shows if the question is WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

An Explanation Sentence Helps Me Tell	Explanation Is NOT
what the evidence means	another quote
why the evidence matters	a copy of the evidence
what I can understand from it	a random thought

Our Two Bookends for Explaining

Bookend	Signal Markers
Definition	This means; This shows
Story/Anecdote	This reminds me of; This makes me think of

Why We Use “THIS”

THIS points back to the evidence sentence right before it. THIS is a demonstrative pronoun. It refers to something already named and close by.

Explanation Chant



Teacher Script

“Wow! Wow! Wow! I’m explaining now!”

The DOT Reading Habit

Teacher Script

"Before we begin reading, we are going to use an important reading habit that strong readers use. While you are reading the passages in your Interactive Notebook, place a small dot above any word you are unsure about."

Board text: Dot = I'm not sure about this word yet.

Encouragement: "This helps your brain keep track of words you are learning. Good readers notice the words they are still growing into."

Create the Anchor Chart

Teacher directions: Build an anchor chart from the information on this page. On chart paper, write the three shapes and what each one marks (red circle = noun, yellow box = verb, green triangle = clue word), the WHAT / WHY / HOW chart, and the DOT reading reminder. Display it all week so students can refer to it.

Module 4 — Explaining Evidence: Modeled Writing

Teacher Script

"Today, we are adding the explanation sentence. It comes after the evidence sentence. Its job is to help the reader understand what the evidence means or what it makes us think about."

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Evidence: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

Teacher Script

"Now I need to explain the evidence."

This means Plymouth had resources the Pilgrims needed to live and grow food.

Teacher Script

"My explanation did not repeat the quote. It told what the quote means. The word This points directly back to the evidence sentence right before it."

Thesis (Central Idea): Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.

Evidence: The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."

This reminds me of how people need stores, water, and roads near their homes so daily life is easier.

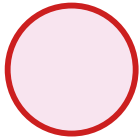
Teacher Script

"This explanation uses a story or anecdotal connection. It does not wander away from the passage. It still helps me understand the evidence better."

Build the full SCR ladder in this order: thesis (central idea), evidence, then explanation. An explanation is not another quote, copied evidence, or a random thought. Start strong by capitalizing the first word. End correctly by punctuating the last word.

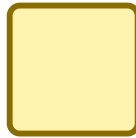
Module 4 — The Three Shapes and Explanation Bookends HABIT

Cluster 1 continues to use three shapes to break a writing prompt into its parts. Students use the shapes to read the question, then use the Explanation Bookends HABIT to tell how evidence proves the thesis (central idea).



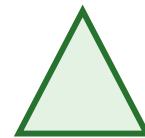
Red Circle

Noun (topic)



Yellow Box

Verb (action)



Green Triangle

Clue word (what/why/how)

Shape	Marks	Meaning
Red Circle	The main noun	The topic or subject of the question.
Yellow Box	The verb	The action the question asks you to do.
Green Triangle	The clue word	The word that signals WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

Explanation Bookends HABIT

Bookend	Signal Marker	What It Does
Definition	This means; This shows	Tells what the evidence means or why it matters.
Story/Anecdote	This reminds me of; This makes me think of	Connects the evidence to an idea that helps the reader understand more.

The Full SCR Ladder

Part	What It Does
Thesis (Central Idea)	Gives the central idea that answers the prompt.
Evidence	Gives proof from the passage.
Explanation	Tells what the evidence means and how it proves the thesis (central idea).

Teacher Script

"First we circle the main noun in red. Next we box the verb in yellow. Then we triangle the clue word in green. Finally we ask: is this question a WHAT, a WHY, or a HOW?"

Before Students Read

Preview the two passages with students before reading. Each passage appears twice: first a plain copy to read, then a color-coded copy. As you read, students TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. TRACKS marks the evidence in the passage; the shapes are used only to analyze the prompt.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

Students look for six kinds of measurable evidence in every passage. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

T Time — Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

R Reactions — Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Purple.)

A Actions — Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

C Character, Concept, Creature — Characters' or people's names, animals or animals' names, or major concepts used as the central idea. Often nouns or proper nouns. (Highlight color: Pastel Yellow.)

K Key Knowledge — All other important information necessary to the meaning of the passage that is not accounted for by another TRACKS category (background knowledge). (Highlight color: Pastel Orange.)

S Scenery / Setting — Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses. (Highlight color: Pastel Green.)

PASSAGE 1 — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth (Stamina: Very High)

[1] In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. The Pilgrims hoped to build a new community where families could worship the way they wanted.

[2] The Pilgrims traveled on a ship called the Mayflower. More than one hundred passengers crowded onto the ship. Men, women, and children traveled together during the long voyage.

[3] The trip across the ocean lasted for many weeks. Storms caused the ship to rock back and forth on rough water. Huge waves crashed against the sides of the Mayflower. Many passengers became seasick during the difficult journey.

[4] Life on the ship was crowded and uncomfortable. Families slept in small spaces below deck. Meals were simple and often included dried meat, bread, beans, and cheese. Fresh water had to last for the entire trip.

[5] Even though conditions were difficult, the Pilgrims continued traveling because they hoped to build a better future in North America.

[6] After many weeks at sea, the travelers finally saw land. The Pilgrims reached the coast near present-day Massachusetts. Winter was beginning, so the settlers needed to find a place to settle quickly.

[7] Small groups explored the area looking for forests, fresh water, rich soil, and safe harbors. These natural resources would help the settlers survive.

[8] Eventually, the Pilgrims selected an area called Plymouth. Nearby forests provided wood for homes, fires, and tools. The harbor allowed ships to anchor safely while supplies were unloaded.

[9] The land around Plymouth also had rich soil where crops could be planted. Streams provided fresh water for drinking and farming.

[10] Soon after arriving, the settlers began building shelters. Workers chopped trees and carried wood to construction sites. Families hurried to finish homes before the cold weather became worse.

[11] Winter in Plymouth was harsh. Snow and freezing temperatures covered the colony. Many settlers became sick because of the cold weather and lack of fresh food.

[12] Some families still lived aboard the Mayflower while homes were being built. Crowded living spaces caused diseases to spread quickly.

[13] Even during these hardships, the Pilgrims worked together every day. Some people gathered wood while others cooked meals or cared for children. Everyone had responsibilities that helped the colony survive.

[14] The settlers depended heavily on natural resources. Forests provided lumber and firewood. Rivers and harbors supported travel and trade. Rich soil helped farmers grow crops.

[15] When spring arrived, Native Americans in the region helped the Pilgrims learn

important survival skills. The settlers learned how to grow corn in the local soil. They also learned where to fish and hunt.

[16] Farmers planted crops such as corn, beans, squash, wheat, and barley. Families worked together during planting and harvesting seasons.

[17] As the weather became warmer, the colony slowly improved. Homes were repaired, gardens were planted, and more supplies were gathered for the next winter.

[18] Boats traveled along the coast carrying people and goods between settlements. Trade helped colonies exchange supplies and food.

[19] Over time, more settlers arrived from England hoping to build new lives in North America. Plymouth continued growing as new homes, farms, and buildings were constructed.

[20] Religion remained an important part of daily life in the colony. Families attended church services together and worked closely with neighbors.

[21] Although life in Plymouth improved over time, the settlers still faced challenges. Harsh winters, poor harvests, and sickness sometimes created problems for the colony.

[22] Despite these hardships, the Pilgrims continued working together. Their determination helped Plymouth become one of the earliest successful English colonies in North America.

[23] Today, Plymouth remains an important part of American history. The story of the Pilgrims shows how people adapted to a new environment using teamwork, natural resources, and hard work.

Student Annotation Guide — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

T — Time

In 1620; present-day Massachusetts

R — Reactions

became seasick; worked together every day

A — Actions

Storms caused the ship to rock; began building shelters

C — Character/Concept/Creature

The Pilgrims; Religion

K — Key Knowledge

the Mayflower; rich soil

S — Scenery/Setting

rough water; Snow and freezing temperatures

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

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[22] Despite these hardships, the Pilgrims continued working together. Their determination helped Plymouth become one of the earliest successful English colonies in North America.

[23] Today, Plymouth remains an important part of American history. The story of the Pilgrims shows how people adapted to a new environment using teamwork, natural resources, and hard work.

PASSAGE 2 — Life Along the Nile River (Stamina: Very High)

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals. Because water was difficult to find in the desert, most people settled near the Nile River.

[2] The Nile River was one of the longest rivers in the world. It flowed through the desert from south to north before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

[3] The Nile was very important to ancient Egypt because it provided water in a dry environment. Each year, the river would rise and flood nearby land.

[4] When the floodwaters moved back down, they left behind dark, rich soil along the riverbanks. This soil was fertile and helped farmers grow crops.

[5] The yearly floods followed a regular pattern. Ancient Egyptians learned when the river would rise and when the floods would end. Farmers planned their planting seasons around the flood cycle.

[6] Without the Nile River, farming would have been very difficult in ancient Egypt. Most of the desert land was too dry for crops to survive.

[7] Farmers planted crops such as wheat and barley in the rich soil near the Nile. They also grew vegetables, fruits, and flax. Flax was used to make cloth and clothing.

[8] The Nile also supplied water for drinking, cooking, and farming. Families depended on the river every day.

[9] Fishing became another important activity along the Nile. Fishermen used nets and boats to catch fish from the river. Fish provided food for many families.

[10] Farmers and fishermen worked hard throughout the year. During planting season, farmers prepared fields and planted seeds. During harvest season, workers gathered crops before they spoiled.

[11] The Nile River also helped transportation and trade grow in ancient Egypt. Boats traveled up and down the river carrying people and goods.

[12] Some boats carried food while others carried wood, tools, stone, or building supplies. Merchants traded goods between villages and cities.

[13] Traveling by river was much easier than crossing the hot desert. The Nile connected communities throughout ancient Egypt.

[14] Villages, towns, and cities were built near the riverbanks because families depended on water and farmland. Large populations gathered along the Nile.

[15] The environment influenced many jobs in ancient Egypt. Some people became farmers while others worked as fishermen, merchants, builders, or sailors.

[16] Builders used stone from nearby areas to create temples, statues, and pyramids. Boats on the Nile helped transport heavy materials used in construction projects.

[17] The Nile River also supported trade with nearby regions. Merchants exchanged food, tools, cloth, and other supplies with different communities.

[18] Religion was also connected to the Nile. Ancient Egyptians believed the river was a gift that helped life continue in the desert.

[19] The river influenced daily routines throughout the civilization. Farmers depended on floodwaters. Fishermen depended on the river for food. Merchants depended on boats for transportation and trade.

[20] Families often lived in homes made from mud bricks near the riverbanks. Communities worked together during planting and harvest seasons.

[21] Children in ancient Egypt helped families with daily chores. Some gathered water while others helped care for crops or animals.

[22] As trade and farming improved, cities along the Nile became larger and stronger. Markets, temples, and homes appeared throughout the region.

[23] The Nile helped ancient Egypt become one of the world's earliest river valley civilizations. Access to water, fertile soil, transportation, and food allowed the civilization to grow.

[24] Historians study the Nile River because it shows how geography can influence where people settle and how civilizations develop.

[25] The environment around the Nile shaped nearly every part of life in ancient Egypt. The river provided natural resources, transportation, and fertile farmland.

[26] Today, people still recognize the importance of the Nile River in ancient history. The river helped ancient Egypt survive and become one of the most successful civilizations of the ancient world.

Student Annotation Guide — Life Along the Nile River

T — Time

Ancient Egypt; Each year

R — Reactions

Fishing became another important activity; cities along the Nile became larger and stronger

A — Actions

rise and flood nearby land; planned their planting seasons

C — Character/Concept/Creature

The Nile River; Ancient Egyptians believed

K — Key Knowledge

one of the longest rivers in the world

S — Scenery/Setting

hot, dry desert; the Mediterranean Sea; dark, rich soil

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Life Along the Nile River

[1] Ancient Egypt was mostly covered by hot, dry desert. In many places, the land was too dry to grow crops or raise animals. Because water was difficult to find in the desert, most people settled near the Nile River.

[2] The Nile River was one of the longest rivers in the world. It flowed through the desert from south to north before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

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[5] The yearly floods followed a regular pattern. Ancient Egyptians learned when the river would rise and when the floods would end. Farmers planned their planting seasons around the flood cycle.

[6] Without the Nile River, farming would have been very difficult in ancient Egypt. Most of the desert land was too dry for crops to survive.

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[9] Fishing became another important activity along the Nile. Fishermen used nets and boats to catch fish from the river. Fish provided food for many families.

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🕒 Day 1 - Gather and Reveal (15 minutes)

G

R

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(i) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS	3(E) — share information in cooperative interactions; 1(E) — use prereading supports

GATHER

Attention Activity - Mystery Object Explain-It. Hold up a classroom object, such as a pencil, a water bottle, or a book, without saying much about it. Ask students to turn to a partner and explain what it is used for without naming the object at first.

Teacher Script

"Writers, today we are learning how to explain. To warm up our brains, I am holding an object. Do not call out the name. Instead, turn to a partner and explain what it does or why it matters."

Pause for partner talk.

Teacher Script

"You just did something important. You did not just name the object. You explained it. Explaining helps another person understand more."

Teacher Script

"That is exactly what explanation does in writing. After we give evidence, we explain it so the reader understands what it means."

Teacher Script

"Say it with me and do the motions. Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Repeat twice. Students hold three fingers up on either side of the face for "Wow! Wow! Wow!" and roll their hands in front of the body for "I'm explaining now!"

REVEAL **Teacher Script**

"In Module 2, we learned how to write a thesis (central idea) statement. In Module 3, we learned how to add evidence. Now in Module 4, we are adding the next part: the explanation sentence. The explanation sentence comes after the evidence sentence. Its job is to help the reader understand what the evidence means or what it makes us think about."

 Daily Deck Slide

Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence + Explanation

 Teacher Script

"When we use the same passages, the same terms, and build on what we already know, we are helping our brains remember. We are interrupting the forgetting process. This is called metacognition. Metacognition means we are thinking about our own thinking."

 Teacher Script

"Let's be very clear."

 Daily Deck Slide

Explaining IS:

- telling what the evidence means
- showing why the evidence matters
- helping the reader understand more

Explaining IS NOT:

- copying the quote again
- giving another piece of evidence instead of explaining
- saying something random

Modeling Definition Explanation

Write the following thesis (central idea) and evidence from Module 3:

Thesis (Central Idea): The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.

Evidence: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

 Teacher Script

"Now I need to explain the evidence."

Write: This means Plymouth had resources the Pilgrims needed to live and grow food.

 Teacher Script

"My explanation did not repeat the quote. It told what the quote means."

 Teacher Script

"Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Modeling Story/Anecdote Explanation

Thesis (Central Idea): Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.

Evidence: The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."

Write: This reminds me of how people need stores, water, and roads near their homes so daily life is easier.

 Teacher Script

"This explanation uses a story or anecdotal connection. It does not wander away from the passage. It still helps me understand the evidence better."

Teaching the Purpose of "THIS" **Teacher Script**

"Notice that both explanation sentences start with the word This. Why? Because this points directly back to the evidence sentence right before it. The evidence is close by. That is why this is such a helpful word here."

 Teacher Script

"This is called a demonstrative pronoun. It refers back to something already named and physically close in the writing."

★ Daily Deck Slide

Evidence Sentence

This means...

This shows...

This reminds me of...

This makes me think of...

🔊 Teacher Script

"The word this helps the explanation stay connected to the evidence."

🔊 Teacher Script

"As we write today, remember: capitalize the first word of each sentence punctuate the last word of each sentence"

★ Daily Deck Slide

Start strong. End correctly.

Creative Note-Taking Opportunity - Flip-Flap Explanation Notes

Students fold a notebook page into four flaps and label them:

1. What explaining does
2. What explaining is not
3. Definition starters
4. Story starters

🔊 Teacher Script

"Today we are taking notes in a creative way so your brain has something visual to hold onto. Fold your page into four flaps. Under each flap, you will record the most important ideas from today's lesson."

Under the flaps, students write:

Flap	Notes
What explaining does	tells what evidence means; tells why evidence matters; helps the reader understand more
What explaining is not	not another quote; not copied evidence; not a random opinion
Definition starters	This means; This shows
Story starters	This reminds me of; This makes me think of

Verbal Explanation Activity - Tell a Friend Better

Teacher Script

"Now we are going to practice explaining out loud. I want you to tell a partner how to get ready for recess without just listing one word answers. Explain it clearly."

After a few volunteers, connect it back.

Teacher Script

"You noticed that when we explain, we add more so another person understands. That is exactly what explanation sentences do in writing."

Embedded Check for Understanding

Show an evidence sentence and the sentence "This means Plymouth had resources the Pilgrims needed to live and grow food." Ask students to identify which sentence is evidence, which is explanation, and what the word this points back to.

🕒 Day 2 - Attempt (15 minutes)

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11A(i) — plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies
ELPS	4(D) — write grade-appropriate sentences; 2(I) — monitor understanding of spoken language

ATTEMPT

Students work in teams with a physical relay setup across the room. Make two sort mats: Evidence and Explanation. Students may also play with a partner using the sort mat and cards in their Interactive Notebooks.

Materials: evidence cards, explanation cards, sort mats labeled Evidence and Explanation, gameboard or relay lanes, Pencil Guy markers.

🔊 Teacher Script

"Now it is time to race with our brains. This game is called Evidence or Explanation Relay Race. Your team will choose the Pencil Guy of your choice as your marker. When I say go, one teammate will grab a card, read it, and decide if it belongs in the Evidence pile or the Explanation pile. Then the next teammate goes. Your team must work quickly, but also carefully. Fast thinking is great, but accurate thinking wins."

🔊 Teacher Script

"Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Evidence or Explanation Relay Race - InterActivity (Group Practice)

Students cut out the game cards in their Interactive Notebooks and make a Practice Pocket to store the pieces. Continue to use this game after the lesson as a Forgetting Interrupted activity.

Sort Cards

Card	Sentence
1	The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."
2	This means Plymouth had important resources for survival.
3	The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."
4	This shows the Nile helped people meet daily needs.
5	The author says, "The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely."
6	This means ships could stop there safely.
7	The text states, "When the water went back down, it left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants."
8	This reminds me of gardens growing better in rich dirt.
9	The author describes, "Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people and goods."
10	This makes me think of how travel routes help communities grow.
11	I like the Pilgrims.
12	The Nile River was cool.

Category	Cards
Evidence	1, 3, 5, 7, 9
Explanation	2, 4, 6, 8, 10
Neither strong evidence nor explanation for this task	11, 12

Building Activity - Add the Explanation

After sorting, give teams a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence from prior lessons. Students add either a Definition explanation or a Story/Anecdote explanation.

Set	Thesis (Central Idea)	Evidence	Possible Definition Explanation	Possible Story/Anecdote Explanation
1	The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.	The text states, "The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely."	This shows Plymouth was safer for ships to stop and unload supplies.	This makes me think of how a safe parking place helps people arrive where they need to go.
2	Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.	The passage explains, "When the water went back down, it left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants."	This means the Nile helped farmers grow crops more successfully.	This reminds me of how plants grow better when they are given what they need.
3	Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement.	The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."	This shows water helped people survive and build communities.	This makes me think of how towns still depend on water for everyday life.

🕒 Day 3 - Discuss and Use (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(ii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
ELPS	4(F) — write to respond and explain; 3(E) — share in cooperative interactions

DISCUSS

Teacher Script

“Let’s talk about what you noticed. Evidence and explanation work together, but they are not the same.”

Discussion Questions

1. What is the job of an explanation sentence?
2. How is explanation different from evidence?
3. Why do we start explanation with words like This means or This shows?
4. Why is the word this helpful?
5. What makes a story/anecdotal explanation useful?
6. What would make an explanation weak?
7. Why does explanation come after evidence?
8. How does revisiting the same passages help our brains learn?

Possible Student Responses

- “Explanation tells what the evidence means.”
- “Evidence is the quote, but explanation is our thinking.”
- “The word this points back to the sentence before it.”
- “A story explanation helps me connect it to real life.”
- “Using the same passages helps us remember better.”

Teacher Responses

Teacher Script

"Yes. That is exactly the habit we want." "Excellent. Evidence gives proof, and explanation helps the reader understand the proof." "Well said. That is metacognition—thinking about how we learn."

Possible Student Questions and Teacher Responses

Student question: "Can explanation have a quote in it?"

Teacher Script

"For this lesson, the explanation should be your own words. The quote belongs in the evidence sentence."

Student question: "What if I just repeat the evidence?"

Teacher Script

"Then you are not really explaining yet. Explaining means telling what the evidence means or what it helps us understand."

USE (Independent Practice) - Bookends of Explanation

Students work independently in their Interactive Notebooks.

Teacher Script

"Now you will use your learning in a different way. In your notebook, you will take a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence, then write two explanation sentences: · one using a Definition signal marker · one using a Story/Anecdote signal marker"

★ Daily Deck Slide

Cluster 1, Module 4: Explanation Sentence

For each item:

- Thesis (Central Idea)
- Evidence
- Definition Explanation
- Story/Anecdote Explanation

Item	Thesis (Central Idea)	Evidence	Definition Explanation	Story/Anecdote Explanation
1	The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water, land for crops, trees for building, and a safe harbor.	The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."	This means the Pilgrims found resources they needed for food and survival.	This makes me think of how families choose places to live where they can get what they need.
2	Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.	The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."	Students write a Definition explanation.	Students write a Story/Anecdote explanation.
3	Water connected life in both passages through survival, farming, and settlement.	The author describes, "Boats traveled up and down the Nile carrying people and goods."	This means water also helped people travel and share resources.	This makes me think of how roads connect towns and help people move what they need.

Item	Definition Explanation	Story/Anecdote Explanation
1	This means the Pilgrims found resources they needed for food and survival.	This makes me think of how families choose places to live where they can get what they need.
2	This shows the Nile helped people live, eat, and grow crops.	This reminds me of how people stay close to places that help them meet daily needs.
3	This means water also helped people travel and share resources.	This makes me think of how roads connect towns and help people move what they need.

🕒 Day 4 - Award and Target (15 minutes)



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.11C(i) — revise drafts to improve sentence structure
ELPS	2(I) — monitor and self-correct understanding; 5(B) — write using newly acquired vocabulary

AWARD

Teacher Script

"Today you added a new layer to your SCR writing. You did not stop at evidence. You explained it. That is the kind of work thoughtful writers do."

Choose one or more:

1. Chant Celebration

Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!

1. Bookend Cheer

Students hold hands apart like bookends and say: "Definition on one side! Story on the other side!"

1. Notebook Glow Line

Students write: One thing I explained well today was _____.

1. Partner Praise

Students tell a partner: "I liked how you explained _____."

TARGET

Teacher Script

"Strong learners stop and notice what they are doing well and what they still want to improve."

Write these stems on the board:

1. One thing I understand about explanation is...
2. One thing I still need to practice is...
3. One signal marker I can use well is...
4. One question I still have is...

Curiosity Questions

- How is explanation different from summary?
- Why does an explanation help a reader trust the writer more?
- How do definition and story explanations each help in different ways?
- What might the other parts of DEEP FACTS teach later?



Teacher Script

"These curiosity questions help stretch your thinking beyond today's lesson."

🕒 Day 5 - Educate and Explain to Others (15 minutes)

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Focus
TEKS	3.12B(iii) — compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft; 3.11D — edit drafts using standard English conventions
ELPS	4(F) — write to explain; 3(D) — speak using grade-level content vocabulary

EXPLAIN - Turn and Teach

🔊 Teacher Script

“Now you will become the teacher. Turn to someone near you and explain: · what an explanation sentence does · how it is different from evidence · what Definition and Story/Anecdote explanations sound like”

🔊 Teacher Script

“Wow! Wow! Wow! I’m explaining now!”

Student Oral Frames

- “An explanation sentence helps the reader understand _____.”
- “Evidence is _____, but explanation is _____.”
- “A Definition explanation might start with _____.”
- “A Story/Anecdote explanation might start with _____.”
- “The word this points back to _____.”

Sample Turn and Teach Response

 Teacher Script

"An explanation sentence helps the reader understand what the evidence means. Evidence is the quote from the text, but explanation is my own thinking about the quote. A Definition explanation might start with 'This means.' A Story/Anecdote explanation might start with 'This reminds me of.' The word 'this' points back to the evidence sentence right before it."

EDUCATE **Teacher Script**

"Turn to someone near you and teach them what you learned today about explaining how evidence proves the thesis (central idea). Teaching it out loud in your own words is how you prove you truly own it."

Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today we learned that the explanation sentence helps the reader understand what the evidence means. We learned that explanation is not another quote and not a random thought. We practiced two bookends from DEEP FACTS: D = Definition S = Story/Anecdote We also learned that the word this is very important because it points directly back to the evidence sentence right before it. That is why it works so well in explanation writing. And because we kept using the same passages and the same important terms, we helped interrupt forgetting in our brains. That is called metacognition—thinking about our own thinking. Let's say our chant one more time: Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Exit Ticket - Build the Full SCR Ladder

Prompt: Why did people settle in places with helpful natural resources?

Students write a thesis (central idea), one evidence sentence, and one Definition or Story/Anecdote explanation. They capitalize the first word and punctuate the last word of each sentence.

Answer Key

Thesis (Central Idea): People settled in places with helpful natural resources because those places provided what they needed to survive.

Evidence: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

Definition Explanation: This means people chose places where they could find water and grow food.

Module 4 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

These exemplars show three levels of a short constructed response to the same Module 4 prompt, so teachers can calibrate their expectations and show students what "getting stronger" looks like. Prompt: Why did people settle in places with helpful natural resources?

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "There was fresh water and land."
- What Is Working: The student names details from the passage.
- Teacher Notes: There is no thesis (central idea), evidence sentence, or explanation.
- What Needs Improvement: Build the SCR ladder by adding a thesis (central idea), evidence, and an explanation of what the evidence means.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "People settled in places with helpful natural resources because those places provided what they needed to survive. The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted.""
- What Is Working: The response has a thesis (central idea) and evidence that support it.
- Teacher Notes: The response stops after the evidence.
- What Needs Improvement: Add an explanation sentence in the writer's own words that tells what the evidence means.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "People settled in places with helpful natural resources because those places provided what they needed to survive. The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted." This means people chose places where they could find water and grow food."
- What Is Working: The thesis (central idea), evidence, and Definition explanation form a full SCR ladder. The explanation tells what the evidence means and supports the thesis (central idea).
- Teacher Notes: This is the target for Module 4's end-of-module writing.
- What Needs Improvement: Ready for a partner share and a light edit for capitalization and punctuation.

Exemplar Engagement Activity

Show all three responses without the labels and ask students to rank them and say why. Then have partners upgrade the Low response one level at a time — first add the thesis (central idea), then the evidence, then the explanation — so students feel how each part makes the answer stronger.

Module 4 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can explain what evidence means and how it proves the thesis (central idea).
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The Day 3 Bookends of Explanation activity, student notebooks, thesis (central idea) and evidence sentences, and exit slips.
Related TEKS Breakout	3.12B(i) clear central idea; 3.12B(ii) SCR genre; 3.12B(iii) craft.
Task	Students write a Definition explanation and a Story/Anecdote explanation after a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence, then build a full SCR ladder.
Expected Response	An explanation follows the evidence, uses the student's own words and a signal marker, and tells what the evidence means or why it matters.

Informal Assessment

During Days 1-3, watch and listen as students identify evidence and explanation, sort the relay cards, and explain the word this. Note who repeats a quote, adds another piece of evidence, or gives a random thought instead of explaining. This is a planning check, not a grade.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 independent Bookends of Explanation activity is the formative check. Students write both kinds of explanations for a thesis (central idea) and evidence sentence; the answer key below shows the expected response for Item 2.

Thesis (Central Idea)	Evidence	Definition Explanation	Story/Anecdote Explanation
Ancient Egyptians depended on the Nile River because it provided water, food, rich soil, and transportation.	The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."	This shows the Nile helped people live, eat, and grow crops.	This reminds me of how people stay close to places that help them meet daily needs.

Answer Key

Teacher note: after the lesson, use a self-selected grade-level passage for additional practice.

Module 4 — Intervention: Quote or Explain? Match-Up

Field	Detail
Purpose	Support students who need extra practice telling the difference between evidence and explanation.
Group Size	Small group (3-6 students)
Time Needed	10-12 minutes
Materials	Quote cards, explanation cards, matching mats, starter signal marker strips
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.12B(i) clear central idea; 3.12B(ii) SCR genre; 3.12B(iii) craft
Relevant ELPS	1(C) follow oral directions; 2(F) restate and respond

Step 1 - Name the Two Parts



Teacher Script

"We are going to slow it down and make the parts easier to see. First, you will match each evidence sentence to an explanation sentence. Then you will read the pair aloud."

Review: Evidence is the quote or detail from the passage. Explanation tells what the evidence means or what it helps the reader understand.

Step 2 - Match Evidence to Explanation

Set	Evidence	Explanation Choices	Correct Answer
1	The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."	a. This means Plymouth had resources people could use. b. The Pilgrims sailed across the ocean.	a
2	The passage explains, "The river also provided fish to eat and water for drinking and farming."	a. This shows the Nile helped people survive. b. The Nile River was long.	a
3	The author says, "The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely."	a. This makes me think of how safe places help people arrive and settle. b. The Pilgrims built homes.	a

Step 3 - Use a Signal Marker

Give students the starter strips: This means, This shows, This reminds me of, and This makes me think of. Students read each correct pair aloud and say which sentence is evidence and which is explanation.

Step 4 - One Supported Practice Question (Reassessment)

Display: The text states, “When the water went back down, it left behind dark, rich soil that was good for growing plants.” Ask students to choose or say an explanation that tells what the evidence means.

Answer Key

Accept an explanation such as: “This means the Nile helped farmers grow crops more successfully.” The explanation must be in the student’s own words and must tell what the evidence means.

Module 4 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Show a quote and a sentence beginning with This means. Ask students to name each part.	Student identifies the quote as evidence and the own-words sentence as explanation.	Student calls another quote an explanation.	Ask whether the sentence tells what the quote means; if it is another quote, it is evidence.
Ask what the word this points back to.	Student says this points back to the evidence sentence right before it.	Student treats this as a new or random topic.	Have the student point to the evidence sentence, then reread the explanation.
Ask students to explain how a sample explanation supports the thesis (central idea).	Student connects the meaning of the evidence to the central idea.	Student repeats the evidence instead of explaining it.	Prompt with “This means...” or “This shows...” and ask for the meaning in the student’s own words.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Repeats evidence instead of explaining	Use the Quote or Explain? Match-Up intervention and provide Definition signal marker strips.
Gives a random thought	Reread the evidence and thesis (central idea), then ask what the evidence helps the reader understand.
Masters quickly	Route to the Build the Full SCR Ladder enrichment.



Teacher Resource

Evidence cards, explanation cards, sort mats, starter signal marker strips, and the explanation bookends anchor chart support this module's checks.

Module 4 — Enrichment: Build the Full SCR Ladder

Field	Detail
Purpose	Extend students who have mastered explanation by having them build a fuller response and compare two explanation types.
Group Size	Pairs or small groups
Materials	Both passages, notebooks, signal-marker strips
Relevant TEKS Breakout	3.12B(i) clear central idea; 3.12B(ii) SCR genre; 3.12B(iii) craft
Relevant ELPS	2(E) narrate and explain; 4(D) grade-appropriate sentences

Step 1 - Climb the Ladder



Teacher Script

"You are ready to climb higher. Build an SCR ladder by using everything we have practiced so far."

Students write:

- thesis (central idea)
- evidence
- explanation with Definition
- explanation with Story/Anecdote
- short note about which explanation is stronger and why

Enrichment Prompt

Why did people settle in places with helpful natural resources?

Sample Enrichment Response

Thesis (Central Idea): People settled in places with helpful natural resources because those places provided what they needed to survive.

Evidence: The text states, "There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted."

Definition Explanation: This means people chose places where they could find water and grow food.

Story/Anecdote Explanation: This reminds me of how communities are often built near resources that make life easier.

Reflection: The definition explanation is more direct, but the story explanation helps connect the idea to real life.

Step 2 - Compare the Bookends

Students identify which signal marker begins each explanation and explain why the Definition explanation is more direct and how the Story/Anecdote explanation connects the idea to real life.

Step 3 - Expert Reflection

Students answer in their notebook: Which explanation is stronger for this evidence, and why?



Teacher Script

"Build an SCR ladder by using everything we have practiced so far."

Module 4 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Build the Full SCR Ladder

Writing Prompt

Why did people settle in places with helpful natural resources?

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that the explanation sentence comes after evidence. It tells what the evidence means, why it matters, or what readers can understand from it. Now you will use the full SCR ladder: thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

Planning Support

1. Write a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt.
2. Find one piece of evidence in the passage that supports the thesis (central idea).
3. Choose a signal marker: This means, This shows, This reminds me of, or This makes me think of.
4. Write an explanation in your own words that tells how the evidence proves the thesis (central idea).

Drafting Space

Write your short constructed response — a thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation. No introduction and no conclusion.

Success Criteria

- My thesis (central idea) answers the prompt.
- I include one piece of evidence from the passage.
- I explain what the evidence means or why it matters.
- I use a signal marker and keep my explanation connected to the evidence.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise, Edit, and Share

Revise

Read your response aloud. Improve one explanation sentence so it clearly tells what the evidence means (TEKS 3.11C).

Edit

Check that I capitalize the first word and punctuate the last word of each sentence.

Share

Read your response to a partner. Your partner names the thesis (central idea), the evidence, and the explanation.



Teacher Resource

Additional revising and editing daily slides, teacher lesson plans, student interactive workbooks, and the Module 4 answer keys are available in the companion resources.

Auditory Engagement

Auditory Engagement Moments

Give every learner a chance to HEAR and SAY the thinking, not only read it. These moments are built around this module's work — explaining evidence and building the full SCR ladder:

- Two-voice chain: one student reads the evidence, the partner says the "This shows..." explanation.
- Read a piece of evidence aloud, then pause; the class supplies the explanation sentence out loud.
- Read a full SCR aloud — thesis (central idea), evidence, explanation — so students hear the whole ladder.
- Partners read each other's explanation aloud and echo it back to check the connection is clear.

Pause Points

Pause the lesson at these moments and give students a few quiet seconds to think before they answer. Each pause names exactly what to think about.

Pause Point — Before Writing

Stop and think: What is the prompt really asking me to do? Say it in your own words before you write.

Pause Point — Midway

Stop and think: Does what I have written so far add the sentence that explains HOW the evidence proves the thesis (central idea)? If not, fix it now, not later.

Pause Point — Before You Finish

Stop and think: Would a reader who never saw the prompt still understand my answer? Add the one sentence that makes it clear.

Module 4 — At-Home Connection

Purpose

These at-home tasks help your child explain what evidence means. They need little or no materials and each one ends in a short conversation, not a worksheet. When a child explains the learning to you, the learning gets stronger.

Feature	Detail
Time	A few minutes each
Materials	None needed

Teacher Information - Task Card 1

Teacher note: send this ice-blue card home first. It practices telling what a detail means.



Task Card 1 - Explain It

TEKS 3.12B(iii). Share one fact you learned today. Then tell a family member what that fact means or why it matters. Start with “This means...” or “This shows...” Family signature: _____



Teacher Information - Task Card 2

Teacher note: this pale-green card lets families hear the difference between evidence and explanation.



Task Card 2 - Evidence or Explanation at Dinner

TEKS 3.12B(ii). Tell a family member one detail from the Pilgrims or Nile River passage. Then explain the detail in your own words. Ask your family member which part was the evidence and which part was the explanation. Family signature: _____



Teacher Information - Task Card 3

Teacher note: Card 3 is the same assignment with built-in language support — a word bank and a frame. It is not a reduced standard.

**Task Card 3 - Full SCR Ladder**

TEKS 3.12B(i). Tell a family member your thesis (central idea), one piece of evidence, and an explanation. Word bank: thesis (central idea), evidence, explanation, This means, This shows. Frame: "This means ____." Family signature:



Module 4 — My Progress Tracker

Teacher Script

"This is your very own progress tracker. As we learn this week, you get to color in how you feel about each skill by yourself. Be honest with yourself, because this shows you how much you are growing. You are the one in charge of your own learning, and I am so proud of the thinking you are doing."

Directions: This tracker is for YOU! As you practice explaining evidence, look at each skill below. If you can do it all by yourself without help, color in or check the box that matches how you feel. Be honest with yourself — this helps you see how much you are growing!

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Tell what evidence is.			
Tell what an explanation sentence does.			
Tell the difference between evidence and explanation.			
Use This means or This shows.			
Use This reminds me of or This makes me think of.			
Tell what the word this points back to.			
Build a full SCR ladder with a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.			

One thing I am proud of:

One thing I want to get better at:

Module 4 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closure Script

Teacher Script

"Today we learned that the explanation sentence helps the reader understand what the evidence means. We learned that explanation is not another quote and not a random thought. We practiced two bookends from DEEP FACTS: D = Definition S = Story/Anecdote We also learned that the word this is very important because it points directly back to the evidence sentence right before it. That is why it works so well in explanation writing. And because we kept using the same passages and the same important terms, we helped interrupt forgetting in our brains. That is called metacognition—thinking about our own thinking. Let's say our chant one more time: Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Module Essential Question - Answered

How can a writer explain how their evidence proves the thesis (central idea) in a short constructed response? The writer places an explanation after the evidence and uses their own words to tell what the evidence means, why it matters, or what the reader can understand from it. Definition and Story/Anecdote signal markers help the writer keep the explanation connected to the evidence and show how it supports the thesis (central idea).

Teacher Reflection - Module 4

Which students could identify evidence but could not explain what it meant?

Which students copied the evidence or wrote a random thought instead of an explanation?

Did the Evidence or Explanation Relay Race help students sort the two parts accurately?

Who needs the Quote or Explain? Match-Up intervention after this final module?

Teacher Notes

Teacher Artifacts of Effectiveness

Collect and date evidence that shows the skill was taught and learned: photographs of the explanation bookends anchor chart; completed Evidence or Explanation Relay Race sorts; the Day 3 Bookends of Explanation independent practice; the Module 4 Student Tracking Sheet showing growth across the week; the full SCR ladder exit ticket; and one exit ticket at each level (still developing, approaching, and secure) so a reviewer can see the range of the class.

Virtual Classroom Adjustment



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Teaching this module to computer or remote learners? Keep every activity — just adjust HOW students share and respond as they learn to explain how the evidence supports the thesis (central idea):

- Collect the full SCR through a form, a shared doc, or a photo of student work.
- Put the checklist (thesis (central idea) / evidence / explanation) on screen as students draft.
- Have students record a short screencast reading their finished response aloud.
- Use breakout pairs to swap responses and check that the evidence has an explanation.
- Keep the Pause Points — a few seconds of quiet think-time works the same on camera.