

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

A SUBSIDIARY OF TEACH BIG®

GRADE



Cluster 1

Short Constructed Response (Informational)

TEACHER LESSON PLAN GUIDE

Grade 4 • Cluster 1

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Statement of Purpose

Cluster 1 opens Grade 4 by teaching students to write a Short Constructed Response (SCR) - a focused, evidence-based paragraph that shows their thinking about a text. The cluster's guiding idea is simple and powerful: the words a writer chooses reveal the level of their thinking, so when students level up their language, they level up their thinking.

Across four modules, students move from recognizing what an SCR is, to stating a clear central idea, to selecting strong text evidence, and finally to explaining why that evidence matters. Each week the writing stamina grows - Low, Medium, High, and then Very High - so students build endurance at the same time their thinking deepens.

Abstract

Module 1, Level Up Your Thinking, introduces the Short Constructed Response and its three parts: a clear thesis or central idea, supporting evidence from the source, and an explanation that connects the two. Module 2, Build a Strong Thesis (Central Idea), focuses on stating a central idea that answers the prompt directly.

Module 3, Prove It with Strong Evidence, teaches students to choose the most relevant details from the source, and Module 4, Make the Evidence Mean Something, completes the response by explaining how the evidence supports the central idea. Every day follows the GRADUATE routine - Gather and Reveal, Attempt, Discuss and Use Again, Award and Target, and Explain to Others - so instruction, practice, and reflection stay consistent all week.

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
4.11A	Writing Process	M1, M2, M3, M4
4.11C	Revising	M1, M2, M3, M4
4.11D	Editing	M1, M2, M3, M4
4.12B	Writing Genre	M1, M2, M3, M4

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

Level Up Your Thinking

Week 1 • Low Stamina

Module 1: Level Up Your Thinking

Week 1 - Low Stamina - Cluster 1 (SCR)

Words = Thinking Level

Teacher Script

"When students level up their language, they level up their thinking - and when thinking grows, achievement follows."

Overarching Question

How can the words we choose make a Short Constructed Response show stronger thinking?

Today We Will Look For

- words that reveal a thinking level
- stronger evidence language
- stronger explanation language
- ways to upgrade a response without simply making it longer

Student reminder: Words = Thinking Level.

Why This Module Matters

Students learn that a Short Constructed Response (SCR) is built from a Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation, and that the precision of the words a writer chooses - not the length - reveals the depth of thinking. Using two Cluster 1 passages, students learn to recognize thinking levels, tell evidence from explanation, apply WHY (complex sentence) and HOW (simple sentence) thesis (central idea) habits, and upgrade a response with stronger, purposeful language.

Module Passage Set — Low Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 1 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (nonfiction) and "Morning in the Village" (historical fiction).

Module Independent Product

Rewrite a WHY response and a HOW response at a higher thinking level - keeping the answer accurate, upgrading the evidence signal phrase and the explanation, and making the relationships among ideas clearer.

Module 1 — Family Communication

Purpose: Families are partners in this work. This page gives every family a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, a question to ask at home, and one simple way to help.

This Week at a Glance

- The big skill: making a Short Constructed Response (SCR) show stronger thinking through precise word choice - Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation.
- The two reading passages: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (about the Magna Carta) and "Morning in the Village" (a day in a Caddo village).
- What your child will produce: upgraded WHY and HOW responses that show stronger thinking, not just more words.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"How could you say that in a way that shows stronger thinking - not just more words?"

One Way to Help

When your child explains something, ask them to point to the exact words that prove it. Choosing precise words to prove an idea is the heart of this week's work.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is beginning Cluster 1 of our 4th-grade writing curriculum, "Level Up Your Thinking." The focus is the Short Constructed Response (SCR): a clear thesis (central idea), strong evidence from the text, and an explanation that proves the idea. The big lesson is that stronger thinking comes from precise word choice, not from simply writing more.

We are reading two passages: "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta and the idea of fairness, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community. Your child will learn to upgrade a response so the thinking is clearer and more precise.

Please try this at home: When your child tells you about something they read or did, ask them to prove it using exact words - "What exactly showed you that?" That is the evidence-and-explanation habit we practice this week.

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija comienza el Grupo 1 de nuestro currículo de escritura de cuarto grado, "Level Up Your Thinking." El enfoque es la Respuesta Construida Corta (SCR): una tesis clara, evidencia sólida del texto y una explicación que demuestre la idea. La gran lección es que el pensamiento más fuerte proviene de la elección precisa de palabras, no de escribir más.

Leemos dos pasajes: "A Promise Written Long Ago," sobre la Carta Magna y la idea de la justicia, y "Morning in the Village," sobre un día en una comunidad Caddo. Su hijo o hija aprenderá a mejorar una respuesta para que el pensamiento sea más claro y preciso.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija le cuente algo que leyó o hizo, pídale que lo demuestre usando palabras exactas: "¿Qué te mostró exactamente eso?" Ese es el hábito de evidencia y explicación que practicamos esta semana.

Con aprecio, El maestro o la maestra de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Module 1 — 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 the difference between evidence and explanation?
- How can changing one word make an answer show stronger thinking?
- Which of our two passages did you find more interesting, and what proved your idea?
- Why is proving an idea with exact words stronger than just saying it?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Prove It

Make a simple claim about your day ("Today was busy"). Then prove it with one exact detail. Ask your child to do the same - claim, then proof.

Family Activity - Level It Up

Start with a plain sentence, then say it again with a more precise word. Talk about how the stronger word changed the meaning, not just the sound.

Module 1 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 1 opens Cluster 1. Students learn that a Short Constructed Response is built from a Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation, and that precise word choice - not length - reveals thinking. Using "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village," students recognize thinking levels, distinguish evidence from explanation, apply WHY and HOW thesis (central idea) habits, and upgrade responses with stronger language, then run a conventions check on their own sentence.

BIG Goal: Students will upgrade a Short Constructed Response so its thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation show stronger, more precise thinking.

Writing TEKS for This Module

The Student Expectation column below is the exact, full wording of each Grade 4 TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Cluster 1 scope and sequence, not paraphrased or abbreviated.

TEKS	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS breakout)
(11)(A)(i)	plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies
(12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
(12)(B)(ii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
(12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
(11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
(11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
(11)(D)(i)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement
(11)(D)(vii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including singular nouns
(11)(D)(ix)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including common nouns
(11)(D)(xxxv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of high-frequency words

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- The SCR micro-plan names the response genre, topic, purpose, and audience before students write.
- Level Up Showdown and the independent WHY/HOW rewrites require students to revise sentence structure and word choice rather than simply add length.
- Students compose brief informational responses with a clear idea, text evidence, and intentional craft.
- The Module 1 Conventions Sweep checks a complete simple sentence, subject-verb agreement, singular/common nouns, and high-frequency spelling.

Module 1 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 1 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 1 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(A)(i) plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies

Writing Genre

- (12)(B)(i) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
- (12)(B)(ii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
- (12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i) revise drafts to improve sentence structure

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vii), (ix), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; singular and common nouns; and correct spelling of high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(F)(i)–(iii), (v)–(vii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content, style, and register for purpose and audience

Writing Genre

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(i)–(iii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths, sentence types, and transition words
- 4(F)(i)–(ii), (v)–(vi), (ix)–(x), (xiii)–(xiv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content and style for purpose and audience

Revising

- 4(D)(i)–(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths and sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Editing

- 4(B)(ii) write text following conventional spelling rules
- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students read, decide, upgrade, and explain. 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	In Listen, Decide, and Defend, students hear two responses and decide which shows stronger thinking.
Speaking	Students defend each decision with the exact word, phrase, evidence, or explanation that made the thinking stronger, and teach a partner how to level up.
Reading	Students reread the two passages to find exact evidence and tell it apart from explanation.
Writing	Students upgrade WHY and HOW responses and run a conventions sweep on their own sentence.

Module 1 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can tell the difference between evidence and explanation in a response.
- I can identify the thinking level of a response from its words.
- I can upgrade a response one level higher by choosing more precise words.
- I can write a Short Constructed Response with a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

I Will Statements

- I will read, decide, defend, plan, write, revise, edit, and explain my decisions.
- I will choose precise words that show stronger thinking, not just longer answers.
- I will prove an idea with the author's exact words.
- I will make the relationships among my ideas clearer.

Success Criteria

- I can name the thinking level of a response and point to the words that reveal it.
- I can upgrade a response so the thinking is clearer, not just harder-sounding.
- I can build a thesis (central idea), add evidence, and explain what it proves.
- I can check my sentence for conventions.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The Level Up Showdown recording (at least two upgraded responses).
- The independent WHY and HOW rewrites at a higher thinking level.
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of how to level up a response.

Module 1 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the Thinking Levels chart, the WHY/HOW thesis (central idea) charts, and sentence frames. You may provide oral rehearsal. You may not choose a student's evidence, decide the thinking level for them, or write their upgrade. The student must still select the quote, choose precise language, and explain what the evidence proves.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Identify evidence versus explanation in a response.	Supported. The teacher may reread the response.	The student labels the quote and the explanation.
Inferential	Identify a response's thinking level from its words.	Guided early, independent by Use Again.	The student names the level and the words that reveal it.
Evaluative	Upgrade a response so the thinking - not just the vocabulary - is stronger.	Independent by the WHY/HOW rewrites.	The student revises word choice and explanation and justifies the change.

Educator Insight

Students often believe longer writing equals stronger thinking, but precise language matters more. Many students confuse evidence with explanation and simply restate text. Some will overuse basic phrases like "this means" without deepening thinking. Others attempt advanced vocabulary incorrectly without understanding its purpose. Watch for students copying sentence stems without meaning. Ask students to explain why they chose certain words to reveal understanding. Reinforce that language reflects thinking, not decoration.

Module 1 — Thinking Levels

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a task 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.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal reasoning, applying understanding to a claim.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, or broader understanding.

The Level-Up Language Ladder

Level	Evidence Signal + Explanation Language
Level 1	The text says... / This shows...
Level 2	According to the text... / This suggests...
Level 3	The text indicates... / This demonstrates...
Level 4	The text establishes... / This strengthens the inference...
Level 5	The evidence converges on the idea... / Ultimately, this reveals...

Challenge: Move one response up one level. Change the thinking, not just the vocabulary.

 Teacher Script

“Stronger vocabulary is only stronger when the student understands and uses it accurately. The goal is precision, not decoration.”

Oral-Rehearsal Frame: Words = Thinking Level **Teacher Script**

“The words ___ show a Level ___ response. I upgraded it by ___. This makes the thinking stronger because ___. On the state writing assessment, precise evidence and explanation language will help you show your thinking all year.”

Module 1 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“Before we begin, let’s preview the words we will use to talk about thinking, evidence, and explanation - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
work	to do a job or effort	The people work together to ____.
use	to put something to a purpose	I use evidence to ____.
show	to make something known	The text shows that ____.
tell	to share information in words	The text tells us ____.
help	to make things easier for someone	The neighbors help by ____.
grow	to develop or increase	The crops grow because ____.
share	to give part of what you have	They share ____ with ____.
prove	to show something is true	I can prove my idea by ____.
choose	to pick on purpose	I choose the word ____ because ____.
upgrade	to make something stronger or better	I upgrade my answer by ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
evidence	proof from the text (often exact words)	My evidence is ____.
explanation	the writer's thinking about what evidence means	My explanation shows ____.
thesis (central idea)	the clear main idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.
implies	suggests without saying directly	The text implies ____.
suggests	points toward an idea	This suggests ____.
demonstrates	shows clearly	This demonstrates ____.
compare	to show how two things are alike or different	I compare ____ and ____.
infer	to figure out using clues and thinking	I infer that ____.
precise	exact and clear	A precise word here is ____.
indicates	points to or shows	The text indicates ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
Magna Carta	MAG-nuh KAR-tuh	a document from 1215 that limited the king's power	The Magna Carta ____.
Runnymede	RUN-ee-meed	the place in England where the Magna Carta was signed	At Runnymede, ____.
barons	BAIR-uhnz	powerful landowners who wanted the king to follow rules	The barons ____.
rights	rytes	freedoms and protections that belong to people	One right the document protected was ____.
Caddo	KAD-oh	a Native American people of the Piney Woods	The Caddo village ____.
Three Sisters	three SIS-terz	corn, beans, and squash grown together to help each other	The Three Sisters ____.
mound	mownd	a tall built-up hill used for important events	The mound ____.
trade	trayd	to exchange goods with others	They trade ____ for ____.
constitution	kon-stih-TOO-shun	a written plan of a government's rules and powers	The U.S. Constitution ____.
justice	JUS-tis	fairness and equal treatment under the law	Justice means ____.



Teacher Resource

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

Module 1 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

This module uses two Cluster 1 passages. "A Promise Written Long Ago" is a nonfiction text about the Magna Carta (1215, Runnymede, England), which limited the king's power and protected certain rights, and later influenced the U.S. Constitution. "Morning in the Village" is historical fiction about a day in a Caddo village in the Piney Woods, where cooperation - the "Three Sisters" crops, shared work, and trade - keeps the community strong.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 1 modules; the text grows in length, detail, vocabulary, evidence density, and conceptual demand from module to module. In Module 1 (Low Stamina), students focus on the core SCR habit: a thesis (central idea), evidence in the author's exact words, and an explanation that proves the idea. The heart of the module is that word choice reveals a thinking level, and that a response is upgraded by making the thinking clearer and more precise, not by making it longer.

Module 1 — Materials and Teacher Preparation



Anchor Charts to Create

- Five Thinking Levels Chart (color-coded)
- WHY Thesis (Central Idea) Chart (Subordinating Conjunctions + Reason Words)
- HOW Thesis (Central Idea) Chart (Prepositions + Method Words)
- "This Means" Ladder
- SCR Structure: Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence + Explanation

Post for Students

- Subordinating Conjunctions: because, since, when, after, so that, although, even though, due to, given that, in light of
- Common Prepositions: by, through, in, with, during, through the use of, in response to, based on

Materials

- Printed passages
- Thinking Level Charts (interactive notebook size)
- Task cards (included in this guide)
- Spinner (Levels 1-5)
- Interactive notebooks, glue, scissors
- Dice (optional), a simple gameboard path
- Student-selected "Pencil Guy" markers

Quick Teacher Reference (Cluster Overview)

Students will: identify thinking levels based on language; recognize evidence versus explanation; apply WHY (complex sentence) and HOW (simple sentence) thesis (central idea) habits; upgrade responses using stronger vocabulary; and build the habit that words reflect thinking.

Module 1 — The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT reading habit has three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop.

Teacher Script

"As strong readers, we use the DOT habit while we read the passages in our Interactive Notebooks. DOT stands for three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop."

Step	What It Means
D — Dot	Place a small dot above any word that seems unfamiliar as you are reading.
O — Discover	Discover the meaning of the word as we learn together through our lessons.
T — Drop	Go back and erase the dot above the word once you know its meaning.

Board text: Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot.

Encouragement: "This habit helps your brain keep track of the words you are still learning. Good readers notice new words, find out what they mean, and celebrate when they own them."

Module 1 — Words Reveal Thinking: The SCR and the Level-Up Ladder

Teacher Script

"Here is the truth: your words show your thinking level. Today you will learn how to level up your thinking using your words."

The SCR Structure

A Short Constructed Response has three parts: Thesis (Central Idea) (the clear idea you will prove) + Evidence (the author's exact words) + Explanation (what the evidence means and why it matters).

Words Reveal Thinking

Basic Language Might Say	Stronger Language Might Say
says	indicates
shows	suggests
this means	demonstrates; establishes; strengthens the inference; ultimately reveals

Ask yourself: What does my word choice show about the depth of my thinking?

WHY and HOW Thesis (Central Idea) Habits

- WHY responses use a complex sentence with a subordinating conjunction (because, since, even though, due to...) to show a reason.
- HOW responses often use a simple sentence that names the method or relationship (by, through, based on...).

Teacher Script

"Stronger vocabulary is only stronger when you understand and use it accurately. The goal is precision, not decoration - choose words that make the thinking clearer, not just harder."

Module 1 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students build a response, they read "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. This helps students gather the exact words they will use as evidence.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

As students read each passage, they TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

Letter	Category	What to Look For	Highlight Color
T	Time	Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives.	Pastel Green
R	Reactions	Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	Pastel Purple
A	Actions	Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	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.	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.	Pastel Orange
S	Scenery / Setting	Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses.	Pastel Green

How to Use TRACKS

Teacher Script

"As we read, we hunt for all six kinds of evidence and highlight each one in its TRACKS color. Time is green, Reactions are purple, Actions are yellow, Character/Concept/Creature is yellow, Key Knowledge is orange, and Scenery/Setting is green. The exact words we highlight become the evidence we quote in our responses."

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 — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

[2] The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed.

[3] The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial.

[4] The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice.

[5] Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.

[6] Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly.

Student Annotation Guide — A Promise Written Long Ago

T — Time

In the year 1215

R — Reactions

People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change

A — Actions

collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions; wanted the king to follow rules

C — Character/Concept/Creature

the Magna Carta; King John; barons

K — Key Knowledge

it limited the king's power; people could not be punished without a fair trial; influenced other governments; rules should apply to everyone

S — Scenery/Setting

Runnymede, England

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

[2] The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed.

[3] The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial.

[4] The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice.

[5] Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.

[6] Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly.

PASSAGE 2 — Morning in the Village

[1] The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside. The tall pine trees were still dark, but she could hear people moving around the village.

[2] Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods. Their homes were built close together, and everyone knew each other. Some people were already cooking, while others were heading out to work.

[3] Tayanita walked with her mother to the fields. Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows. Her mother always called them the “Three Sisters” because they helped each other grow. Tayanita didn't understand all of it, but she knew they needed all three to have enough food.

[4] Nearby, her uncle was talking about planting something different in one part of the field next season. He said it helped the soil stay strong. Tayanita just nodded and kept pulling weeds.

[5] Later, she went with her grandfather to the large mound in the middle of the village. It was tall, and it had taken many years to build. People gathered there for important events. From the top, she could see trees stretching far in every direction.

[6] That afternoon, visitors came from another village. They brought pottery and tools to trade. In return, her people shared food. Tayanita liked watching the trades. It felt like everyone was connected somehow.

[7] As the day ended, she looked around her village. It was busy, but it also felt like home.

Student Annotation Guide — Morning in the Village

R — Reactions

her people shared food

A — Actions

Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows; planting something different in one part of the field; They brought pottery and tools to trade

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Tayanita; Three Sisters

K — Key Knowledge

they helped each other grow; everyone was connected somehow

S — Scenery/Setting

a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods; the large mound in the middle of the village

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Morning in the Village

[1] The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside. The tall pine trees were still dark, but she could hear people moving around the village.

[2] Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods. Their homes were built close together, and everyone knew each other. Some people were already cooking, while others were heading out to work.

[3] Tayanita walked with her mother to the fields. Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows. Her mother always called them the “Three Sisters” because they helped each other grow. Tayanita didn't understand all of it, but she knew they needed all three to have enough food.

[4] Nearby, her uncle was talking about planting something different in one part of the field next season. He said it helped the soil stay strong. Tayanita just nodded and kept pulling weeds.

[5] Later, she went with her grandfather to the large mound in the middle of the village. It was tall, and it had taken many years to build. People gathered there for important events. From the top, she could see trees stretching far in every direction.

[6] That afternoon, visitors came from another village. They brought pottery and tools to trade. In return, her people shared food. Tayanita liked watching the trades. It felt like everyone was connected somehow.

[7] As the day ended, she looked around her village. It was busy, but it also felt like home.

Day 1 - Gather and Reveal



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
ELPS 4(F)(ix)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose

Day 1 Purpose

Students become thinking detectives: they hear two responses, decide which shows stronger thinking, and reveal that word choice - not length - controls the thinking level.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Listen, Decide, and Defend

Pencils down while you listen. I am going to read both responses completely. When I say decide, show A or B. Then you must defend your choice with a word, phrase, evidence detail, or explanation you heard. Listen for which response shows deeper thinking. Do not choose based on which response is longer.

Round 1 — A Promise Written Long Ago

- A: "The king made unfair decisions. This shows people were upset."
- B: "Because the text states that 'The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions,' this suggests the barons wanted limits on the king's power."
- Answer Key: B. It uses exact evidence and explains the larger idea - limits on power - instead of stopping at a general reaction.

Round 2 — Morning in the Village

- A: "They traded things. This means they helped."
- B: "The text indicates that 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This demonstrates that cooperation connected neighboring communities."
- Answer Key: B. It uses precise evidence and extends the explanation to the larger idea of cooperation and connection.

Fresh Recall: Students cover their notes and tell a partner one feature that makes a response show stronger thinking, then record: "Stronger thinking sounds like..."

★ Daily Deck Slide (Thinking Detectives)

Write on the board: Which response shows stronger thinking? What makes it stronger? Circle or name the words that reveal stronger thinking. What changed besides the length?

- Response A: The people work together because they need food. The text says, "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." This means they need to survive.
- Response B: Even though each person has a role, the village works together due to shared responsibility. The text indicates that "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade." This suggests cooperation supports the community.
- Answer Key: Response B shows stronger thinking - more precise language, two connected pieces of evidence, and an explanation of the larger idea of cooperation rather than a restatement.

R — Reveal: Words = Thinking Level

Display the Thinking Levels Chart and the Level-Up Language Ladder (see the Thinking Levels page). Glue the chart into interactive notebooks.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Words Reveal Thinking)

Write on the board: Words = Thinking Level. Basic language: says, shows, this means. Stronger language: indicates, suggests, demonstrates, establishes, strengthens the inference, ultimately reveals. Ask: What does my word choice show about the depth of my thinking?

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "Stronger thinking sounds like ___ because ___."

Day 2 - Attempt

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
ELPS 4(D)(iii)	write content-area texts using a variety of transition words

Day 2 Purpose

Students attempt the module skill through the game Level Up Showdown: identify a response's thinking level and upgrade it one level higher, changing the thinking and not merely the vocabulary.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Level Up Showdown — How to Play)

Write on the board: Spin to land on a thinking level. Draw and read a task card. Identify the current thinking level. Upgrade the response one level higher. Explain what you changed and why. Move your Pencil Guy marker. Record at least two upgraded responses. Success Check: Did your revision add stronger thinking, or only a harder word?



Task Card #1

"The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.' This shows they need food." — Level 1

- Upgrade: According to the text, "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." This suggests they depend on farming.



Task Card #2

"The text says, 'The barons wanted the king to follow rules.' This means they were unhappy." — Level 1

- Upgrade: According to the text, "The barons wanted the king to follow rules." This suggests they wanted limits on the king's power.

**Task Card #3**

"According to the text, 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This suggests they work together." — Level 2

- Upgrade: The text indicates that "They brought pottery and tools to trade." This demonstrates cooperation.

**Task Card #1**

"According to the text, 'The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.' This supports the idea that people wanted change." — Level 2

- Upgrade: The text indicates that "The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions." This demonstrates why the barons wanted limits on his power.

**Task Card #2**

"The text indicates that 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.' This suggests cooperation." — Level 3

- Upgrade: The text establishes that "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." This pattern strengthens the inference that cooperation is essential.

**Task Card #3**

"The text indicates that 'They believed even the king should not have complete power.' This demonstrates the barons wanted limits." — Level 3

- Upgrade: The text establishes that "They believed even the king should not have complete power." This strengthens the inference that the barons believed rulers should be limited by law.



Task Card #1

"The text establishes that 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This strengthens the inference that they cooperate." — Level 4

- Upgrade: The evidence converges on the idea that people "brought pottery and tools to trade." Ultimately, this reveals cooperation builds community.

**Task Card #2**

"The text establishes that 'People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change.' This strengthens the inference that fairness mattered." — Level 4

- Upgrade: The evidence converges on the idea that people "were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change." Ultimately, this reveals that demands for fairness helped drive limits on the king's power.

**Task Card #3**

"The evidence converges on the idea that people 'shared food.' This shows cooperation." — Level 5

- Challenge downgrade: The text indicates that "shared food." This suggests cooperation.

**Task Card #1**

"The evidence converges on the idea that the Magna Carta influenced later governments because 'Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments' and 'Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.'" — Level 5

- Challenge downgrade: The text indicates that the Magna Carta influenced later governments and compares it with the Constitution. This demonstrates a connection across time.

**Sample Round (Modeled)**

Original: According to the text, "They brought pottery and tools to trade." This suggests they work together. (Level 2)

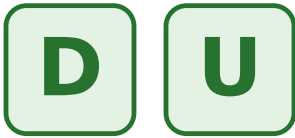
- Upgrade: The text indicates that "They brought pottery and tools to trade." This demonstrates cooperation.

- Teacher Answer Key: The signal phrase and explanation both become more precise. Students should be able to explain the meaning of "demonstrates," not merely substitute it.

Day 2 Closing

Record at least two upgraded responses in your interactive notebook. These become tools you can use anytime.

Day 3 - Discuss and Use Again



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
TEKS (11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
TEKS (11)(D)(i)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement
ELPS 4(F)(x)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 3 Purpose

Students discuss what changed when they leveled up, then independently upgrade a WHY response and a HOW response and run a conventions sweep.

D — Discuss: What Changed When We Leveled Up?

Ask: What words showed the original level? What did you change? Did the evidence become clearer? Did the explanation become deeper? How did your new wording help the reader understand more?



Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How are the words we choose changing the strength of the response?"

Teacher Look-Fors: Students should identify both vocabulary changes and thinking changes - precision, connection, inference, explanation, or clearer relationships among ideas.

U — Use Again: WHY Practice

Prompt: Why do people in Tayanita's village work together? Given Response: The people work together because they need to share resources. The text says, "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade." This means they help each other. Task: Rewrite the response at a higher thinking level. Keep the answer accurate; upgrade the evidence signal phrase; upgrade the explanation; make the

relationship among ideas clearer.

- One Strong Answer: Even though each person has a role, the village works together due to shared responsibility. The text indicates that "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade." This suggests cooperation is necessary.

U — Use Again: HOW Practice

Prompt: How does the author show that ideas from the Magna Carta influenced later governments? Given Response: The author explains the connection by giving information. The text says, "Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments" and "Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens." This means the documents are connected. Task: Rewrite at a higher thinking level. Think: What relationship is the author showing?

- Answer: The author shows the connection through comparison of the Magna Carta and the U.S. Constitution. The text indicates that "Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments" and explains that "Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens." This demonstrates that ideas about limiting government power continued to influence later governments.
- Teacher Answer Key: The stronger response names the method (comparison) and explains the relationship across time rather than stopping with the vague idea that the documents are simply connected.

Standards Application Check — Module 1 Conventions Sweep

Choose one simple sentence from your response. Underline the subject once. Underline the verb twice. Circle one singular noun. Box one common noun. Check the spelling of your high-frequency words. Read the sentence aloud - does the subject agree with the verb?

- Teacher Model: The king follows rules. (subject = king; verb = follows; singular noun = king; common noun = king; agreement is correct.)

Teacher Script

"This is not a new paragraph. It is a quick quality check on the sentence you already wrote."

Day 3 Closing

Students underline one sentence that shows their strongest thinking and star one word they upgraded on purpose.

Day 4 - Award and Target



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
TEKS (11)(D)(xxxv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of high-frequency words
ELPS 4(C)(i)	write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary

Day 4 Purpose

Students recognize specific evidence of their leveled-up thinking and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Give yourself credit for leveling up your thinking today.

- I upgraded a signal phrase.
- I made my explanation more precise.
- I connected evidence to a bigger idea.
- I used a word from my Thinking Level Chart correctly.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award + Target)

Write on the board: AWARD - What did you do well today? TARGET - What will you strengthen next? Complete: "My next thinking-level goal is ___ because ___." Return to the Overarching Question: What have you learned about how word choice changes thinking?

T — Target

Choose a precise next goal.

- Move from one thinking level to the next (for example, Level 2 to Level 3).
- Use stronger explanation words.

Curiosity Questions: "Do authors use thinking levels when they write?" "Can one word change how strong your answer is?"

Day 4 Closing

Complete the sentence: "My next thinking-level goal is ____ because ____."

Day 5 - Explain to Others

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
ELPS 4(F)(ii)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 5 Purpose

Students teach a partner how to level up a response, proving their understanding by explaining the change.

E — Turn and Teach

Teach your partner how to level up a response. You must: name the original thinking level; point to the words that revealed the level; give an upgraded version; explain why the new version shows stronger thinking; and connect your explanation to the Overarching Question.

Sentence Frame: "The words ___ show a Level ___ response. I upgraded it by ___. This makes the thinking stronger because ___."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How can the words we choose make a Short Constructed Response show stronger thinking?

The words we choose reveal the depth and precision of our thinking. Stronger responses use accurate, purposeful vocabulary to introduce evidence, explain relationships, make inferences, and connect ideas. Leveling up does not mean making a response longer or using difficult words just to sound advanced; it means choosing words that make the thinking clearer, more precise, and more meaningful.

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: Strong writers choose precise words that make evidence, relationships, explanations, and inferences clearer. Stronger words should reveal stronger thinking - not simply make writing sound harder. Finish: "One word or phrase I can use to show stronger thinking is ___ because ___."

Teacher Closing Encouragement** Teacher Script**

"You did something important today. You learned that strong thinkers do not just talk about the text - they prove it using exact words. Every time you use quotation marks, you are showing evidence clearly and powerfully. Keep pushing yourself to choose stronger words and stronger thinking. You are in control of how powerful your thinking becomes, and today you took a big step forward."

Module 1 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Why do people in Tayanita's village work together? Rewrite the response so it shows stronger thinking - a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that proves the idea.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "They work together. The text says they grew crops. This means they help." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student names the idea and points toward the text.
- Teacher Notes: The signal phrase ("says") and explanation ("this means they help") are basic and restate rather than prove. There is only a general reaction.
- What Needs Improvement: Upgrade the signal phrase, quote exact words, and explain the larger idea (cooperation) rather than stopping at "they help."

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "The people work together because they need to share resources. According to the text, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.' This suggests they depend on farming." (Level 2)
- What Is Working: A WHY thesis (central idea) with a subordinating conjunction, an exact quote, and a "suggests" explanation.
- Teacher Notes: The thinking is solid but uses one quote and a single-step explanation.
- What Needs Improvement: Connect a second quote and deepen the explanation to reach the larger idea of shared responsibility.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "Even though each person has a role, the village works together due to shared responsibility. The text indicates that 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows' and 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This suggests cooperation is necessary for the community to thrive." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: A precise thesis (central idea), two connected pieces of exact evidence, and an explanation that reaches the larger idea rather than restating the quotes.
- Teacher Notes: The response shows stronger thinking through precise language and connected evidence - exactly what leveling up means.

Module 1 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can identify thinking levels, distinguish evidence from explanation, and upgrade a response.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two passages, Thinking Levels and Level-Up Ladder charts, Level Up Showdown task cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(12)(B)(i) compose informational texts using a clear central idea; (11)(C)(ii) revise drafts to improve word choice
Task	Students perform a formative check in Level Up Showdown and an independent task by upgrading WHY and HOW responses.
Expected Response	Students identify the level, upgrade the signal phrase and explanation, and explain what changed and why.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe Level Up Showdown and Listen/Decide/Defend. Note whether students name the words that reveal a level and explain the meaning of the stronger vocabulary rather than merely substituting it.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 WHY and HOW rewrites serve as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Thesis (Central Idea)	Must state a clear, accurate idea.
Evidence	Must quote the author's exact words.
Explanation	Must explain what the evidence proves, beyond restating it.
Word Choice	Must upgrade at least one signal phrase or explanation word on purpose.

Level	Signal + Explanation Language
1	The text says... / This shows...
2	According to the text... / This suggests...
3	The text indicates... / This demonstrates...
4	The text establishes... / This strengthens the inference...
5	The evidence converges on the idea... / Ultimately, this reveals...

Check the Learning

✓ Check the Learning

Informal, low-stakes ways to SEE what students understand in this module — no worksheet required. Use all three so you gather verbal, visual, and written evidence:

- Verbal — Gather/Reveal — Fist to Five: Students hold up 0-5 fingers to show how sure they are they can tell evidence from explanation.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Show A or B: As you read two responses, students show A or B and name the words that made the thinking stronger.
- Written — Discuss/Use — One-Line Upgrade: Students write one line upgrading a Level 1 response to a higher level.

Assessment Option

Beside any activity, choose how to check without slowing the lesson:

- Listen — assess through student discussion and defended choices.
- Look — observe a Level Up Showdown upgrade or a signal-phrase change.
- Collect — have students produce an upgraded WHY or HOW response you can examine.

Intervention — Module 1

Build the Response with Quotes

Students receive sentence strips that include only direct quotes:

- "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows"
- "They brought pottery and tools to trade"
- "The barons wanted the king to follow rules"

Steps: match the quote to the correct idea; build a full three-sentence response (thesis (central idea), evidence, explanation); add an explanation that tells what the quote means.

Support Frame: According to the text, "___." This suggests ___.



Teacher Script

"You are not allowed to tell what the text says. You must prove it using the author's exact words."

Additional Support: color-code the sentences (thesis (central idea), evidence, explanation) and provide sentence stems. Teacher Answer Check: the quote must match the idea being proved, and the explanation must add meaning rather than repeat the quote.

Module 1 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to name a response's level.	Students name the level and the words that reveal it.	Students think a longer answer is a higher level.	Point to the words, not the length; longer is not stronger.
Ask students to tell evidence from explanation.	Students label the quote and the thinking.	Students restate the quote as the explanation.	Ask, "What does the quote mean? Add that."
Ask students to upgrade a word.	Students explain why the stronger word fits.	Students swap in a hard word they cannot explain.	Require them to explain the meaning of the new word.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Restates instead of proving	Use "Build the Response with Quotes" strips.
Cannot name a level	Use the Level-Up Ladder and match language to a level.
Swaps hard words with no meaning	Ask them to explain the word before using it.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 1 enrichment (multi-quote mastery).

Enrichment — Module 1

Multi-Quote Mastery

Challenge: Use both quotes to build one stronger response.

- "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows"
- "They brought pottery and tools to trade"

Prompt: Why is cooperation important in the village?

Then: explain how the quotes connect; rewrite the response at Levels 3, 4, and 5; and justify the word choices that make each level different.

Teacher Look-For: Students should show increasing depth of explanation, not merely replace one signal verb with another. Advanced challenge: explain why using both quotes strengthens the answer.

Module 1 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Level Up an SCR

Writing Prompt

Choose one prompt below and write a Short Constructed Response, then level it up one thinking level.

- Why did the barons want the king to follow rules?
- How does the author show that cooperation is important in Tayanita's village?

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that words reveal a thinking level. Now build an SCR (thesis (central idea) + evidence + explanation) and upgrade it on purpose.

Planning Support

1. State a clear thesis (central idea) (your answer to the prompt).
2. Choose the author's exact words as evidence.
3. Explain what the evidence proves - not just what it says.
4. Upgrade one signal phrase and one explanation word.

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Thesis (Central Idea)	Write your clear idea.
Step 2: Evidence	Quote the exact words.
Step 3: Explanation	Explain what it proves and why it matters.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My response has a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.
- My evidence is the author's exact words.
- I upgraded at least one word on purpose and can explain why.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your response aloud. Upgrade one signal phrase or explanation so the thinking is clearer.

Edit

Run the Conventions Sweep: subject-verb agreement, singular and common nouns, and high-frequency spelling.

Module 1 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Listen, Decide, and Defend.

Purpose: Students do not passively listen to the teacher explain stronger thinking. They must hear two responses, make a decision, physically show the decision, defend it orally, and then retrieve the idea without looking.

Listening Target: Listen for which response shows deeper thinking. Do not choose based on which response is longer.

Student Materials: one A/B response card per student (or two agreed hand signals); interactive notebook.

Teacher Script

"Pencils down while you listen. I am going to read both responses completely. When I say decide, show A or B. Then you must defend your choice with a word, phrase, evidence detail, or explanation you heard."

Round	Response A	Response B	Answer
1 — A Promise Written Long Ago	"The king made unfair decisions. This shows people were upset."	"Because the text states that 'The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions,' this suggests the barons wanted limits on the king's power."	B — exact evidence + explains the larger idea (limits on power).
2 — Morning in the Village	"They traded things. This means they helped."	"The text indicates that 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This demonstrates that cooperation connected neighboring communities."	B — precise evidence + extends to the larger idea of cooperation.

Fresh Recall: Students cover the slide and tell a partner one feature that makes a response show stronger thinking.

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 You Decide

Stop and think: Which response shows deeper thinking - not which one is longer? Listen for the exact words that reveal the level.

|| Pause Point — Evidence vs. Explanation

Stop and think: Is this the author's exact words (evidence) or my thinking about them (explanation)? A response needs both.

|| Pause Point — Before You Upgrade

Stop and think: Will my change add stronger thinking, or only a harder word? Upgrade the thinking, not just the vocabulary.

|| Pause Point — Conventions Sweep

Stop and think: Does the subject agree with the verb? Check the sentence you already wrote before you move on.

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 read and write this week, 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 set	I can do it
Tell evidence apart from explanation.			
Name a response's thinking level from its words.			
Upgrade a response one level higher on purpose.			
Prove an idea with the author's exact words.			
Check my sentence for conventions.			

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

“At the beginning of this module, we asked how our words can make a Short Constructed Response show stronger thinking. Now we can answer it: our word choices reveal how deeply we understand the text. When we choose precise words that connect evidence, explanation, and ideas, the reader can see stronger thinking.”

Module Overarching Question — Answered

How can the words we choose make a Short Constructed Response show stronger thinking? The words we choose reveal the depth and precision of our thinking. Stronger responses use accurate, purposeful vocabulary to introduce evidence, explain relationships, make inferences, and connect ideas. Leveling up does not mean making a response longer or using difficult words to sound advanced; it means choosing words that make the thinking clearer, more precise, and more meaningful.

Teacher Reflection - Module 1

Which students can tell evidence from explanation?

Which students upgraded the thinking, not just the vocabulary?

Which students still believe longer equals stronger?

Who is ready for Module 2, building strong thesis (central idea) statements for WHAT, WHY, and HOW prompts?

Teacher Notes

Module 1 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Use these adjustments to run Module 1 fully online without losing rigor or participation. Share the two responses on a slide and use an all-participant poll for "Decide A or B," then have students unmute or type the exact word or evidence that made the thinking stronger. Post the Thinking Levels chart and the Level-Up Language Ladder in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run Level Up Showdown with a shared slide of task cards; use a random spinner tool for the level, and have students type their upgrade plus one sentence explaining what they changed. For the WHY and HOW rewrites, students draft in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "What does this word mean?" rather than rewriting the sentence for them. Collect the Conventions Sweep as a one-photo or typed submission of the single checked sentence.

MODULE

2

Build a Strong Thesis (Central Idea)

Week 2 • Medium Stamina

Module 2: Build a Strong Thesis (Central Idea)

Week 2 - Medium Stamina - Cluster 1 (SCR)

The Question Tells You How to Begin

Teacher Script

"The way students begin their response determines the strength of everything that follows. When we teach them to build a strong thesis (central idea), we give them control over their thinking."

Overarching Question

How can the wording of a prompt help us build a strong thesis (central idea) for WHAT, WHY, and HOW responses?

Today We Will Look For

- the TOPIC and the CHARGE inside a prompt
- the WHAT / WHY / HOW clue that signals the answer
- the sentence structure that matches each prompt type
- the three pieces of a strong thesis (central idea): TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER

Student reminder: The question tells you how to begin your answer.

Why This Module Matters

Students learn that a prompt gives clues. It names the TOPIC (the important noun), states the CHARGE (what to do), and signals whether the answer should be WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Using the two Cluster 1 passages at Medium Stamina, students build strong thesis (central idea) statements from three pieces - TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER - and match the sentence structure to the prompt type. The literary focus this module is Setting.

Module Passage Set — Medium Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 1 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (nonfiction) and "Morning in the Village" (historical fiction). This module uses the Medium Stamina versions.

Module Independent Product

Build thesis (central idea) statements for WHAT, WHY, and HOW prompts: box the TOPIC, underline the CHARGE, label the type, and write a thesis (central idea) with TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER in the matching sentence structure.

Module 2 — Family Communication

Purpose: Families are partners in this work. This page gives every family a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, a question to ask at home, and one simple way to help.

This Week at a Glance

- The big skill: building a strong thesis (central idea) - the first sentence of a response - from three pieces: the TOPIC, the CHARGE (what the prompt asks), and the ANSWER.
- The clue words: WHAT (a simple fact sentence), WHY (a "because" reason sentence), and HOW (a "through/by" method sentence).
- The two reading passages: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (the Magna Carta) and "Morning in the Village" (a day in a Caddo village) - this week with a focus on setting.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"What exactly is the question asking you to do - and what is your one-sentence answer?"

One Way to Help

When your child answers a question, ask them to answer in one complete sentence that repeats the topic and adds their point. A clear opening sentence is the heart of this week's work.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child continues Cluster 1 of our 4th-grade writing curriculum with Module 2, "Build a Strong Thesis (Central Idea)." A thesis (central idea) is the clear opening sentence of a response. Your child is learning that a prompt gives clues: it names the TOPIC, states the CHARGE (what to do), and signals whether to answer WHAT, WHY, or HOW. A strong thesis (central idea) puts three pieces together: TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER.

We are still reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community - this week with a closer look at setting (time, place, environment, and community).

Please try this at home: When your child answers a question, ask them to say it back as one clear sentence that names the topic and gives the answer - and, for a "why" question, to add a reason with "because." That is exactly the thesis (central idea) habit we practice this week.

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija continúa el Grupo 1 de nuestro currículo de escritura de cuarto grado con el Módulo 2, "Build a Strong Thesis (Central Idea)." Una tesis es la oración inicial clara de una respuesta. Su hijo o hija está aprendiendo que una indicación da pistas: nombra el TEMA, indica la TAREA (qué hacer) y señala si se debe responder QUÉ, POR QUÉ o CÓMO. Una tesis fuerte une tres partes: TEMA + TAREA + RESPUESTA.

Seguimos leyendo "A Promise Written Long Ago," sobre la Carta Magna, y "Morning in the Village," sobre un día en una comunidad Caddo, esta semana con una mirada más cercana al escenario (tiempo, lugar, ambiente y comunidad).

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija responda una pregunta, pídale que la diga como una oración clara que nombre el tema y dé la respuesta, y, para una pregunta de "por qué," que agregue una razón con "porque." Ese es exactamente el hábito de la tesis que practicamos esta semana.

Con aprecio, El maestro o la maestra de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Module 2 — 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 are the three pieces of a strong thesis (central idea)?
- What is the difference between a WHAT, a WHY, and a HOW question?
- Why does the wording of a question change how you begin your answer?
- What is the setting of "Morning in the Village," and how do you know?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Name the Charge

Ask a simple question ("Why do we recycle?"). Have your child name the topic, the charge (what the question asks), and then answer in one sentence with "because."

Family Activity - What, Why, or How

Take turns asking WHAT, WHY, and HOW questions about your day. Notice how a WHY answer uses "because" and a HOW answer uses "by" or "through."

Module 2 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 2 continues Cluster 1. Students learn to build a strong thesis (central idea) from three pieces - TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER - and to match sentence structure to the prompt type (WHAT = simple, WHY = complex, HOW = simple with a preposition). Using "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" at Medium Stamina, with a focus on setting, students identify the topic and charge, write thesis (central idea) statements for each prompt type, and run a conventions sweep.

BIG Goal: Students will build a strong thesis (central idea) from TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER and match its sentence structure to a WHAT, WHY, or HOW prompt.

Writing TEKS for This Module

The Student Expectation column below is the exact, full wording of each Grade 4 TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Cluster 1 scope and sequence, not paraphrased or abbreviated.

TEKS	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS breakout)
(11)(B)(i)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction
(12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
(12)(B)(ii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
(12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
(11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
(11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
(11)(D)(vi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including past tense of irregular verbs
(11)(D)(viii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including plural nouns
(11)(D)(x)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including proper nouns
(11)(D)(xxxiii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate orthographic patterns

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Thesis (Central Idea) instruction explicitly develops the introduction to the response through TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER.
- WHAT/WHY/HOW practice requires intentional sentence structure and revised word choice.
- Students compose informational thesis (central idea) statements that match prompt type and purpose.
- The Module 2 Conventions Sweep applies irregular past-tense verbs, plural nouns, proper nouns, and grade-appropriate spelling patterns.

Module 2 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 1 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 1 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(A)(i) plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies

Writing Genre

- (12)(B)(i) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
- (12)(B)(ii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
- (12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i) revise drafts to improve sentence structure

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vii), (ix), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; singular and common nouns; and correct spelling of high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(F)(i)–(iii), (v)–(vii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content, style, and register for purpose and audience

Writing Genre

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(i)–(iii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths, sentence types, and transition words
- 4(F)(i)–(ii), (v)–(vi), (ix)–(x), (xiii)–(xiv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content and style for purpose and audience

Revising

- 4(D)(i)–(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths and sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Editing

- 4(B)(ii) write text following conventional spelling rules
- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students listen, build, discuss, and explain. 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	In Listen and Label, students hear a thesis (central idea) and decide whether it is WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
Speaking	Students name the clue that revealed the type and teach a partner the three thesis (central idea) pieces.
Reading	Students reread the passages for setting details and to find the topic and answer.
Writing	Students write WHAT, WHY, and HOW thesis (central idea) statements and run a conventions sweep.

Module 2 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can find the TOPIC and the CHARGE in a prompt.
- I can write a thesis (central idea) with all three pieces: TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER.
- I can match my sentence structure to a WHAT, WHY, or HOW prompt.
- I can describe the setting of a passage using time, place, environment, and community.

I Will Statements

- I will read the prompt for clues before I begin writing.
- I will speak about my thinking, record my work, and explain how the prompt shapes my thesis (central idea).
- I will keep evidence out of the thesis (central idea) unless the task calls for it.
- I will check my thesis (central idea) for all three pieces before I move on.

Success Criteria

- I can point to the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER in my thesis (central idea).
- I can tell WHAT, WHY, and HOW prompts apart and use the right sentence type.
- I can write a clear thesis (central idea) about the setting.
- I can run the conventions sweep on my sentence.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race recordings (at least two strong thesis (central idea) statements).
- The Independent Thesis (Central Idea) Builder (WHAT, WHY, and HOW thesis (central idea) statements).
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of the three thesis (central idea) pieces.

Module 2 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the Three Pieces chart, the Thesis (Central Idea) Types chart, the Setting anchor chart, and sentence frames. You may provide oral rehearsal. You may not choose the student's topic and charge for them, write their thesis (central idea), or decide the answer. The student must still pull the topic and charge from the prompt, choose the sentence type, and write the answer.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Identify the TOPIC and CHARGE in a prompt.	Supported. The teacher may reread the prompt.	The student boxes the topic and underlines the charge.
Inferential	Decide whether a prompt is WHAT, WHY, or HOW and choose the sentence type.	Guided early, independent by Use Again.	The student labels the type and matches the structure.
Evaluative	Build a complete thesis (central idea) with all three pieces in the correct structure.	Independent by the Independent Thesis (Central Idea) Builder.	The student writes a thesis (central idea) with TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER.

Educator Insight

Students often copy part of the question without forming a complete answer. Many will write fragments instead of complete sentences. Some will confuse WHY and HOW structures and use incorrect sentence types. Others will include evidence inside the thesis (central idea) instead of saving it for later. Watch for missing parts of the three pieces (topic, charge, answer). Students may overuse basic words instead of upgrading vocabulary. To fix this, consistently model how to pull the topic and charge from the question and require students to check all three pieces before writing.

Module 2 — Thinking Levels

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a task 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.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal reasoning, applying understanding to a claim.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, or broader understanding.

Thesis (Central Idea) Types Chart

Prompt Type	Sentence Habit	Helpful Clue
WHAT	Simple sentence	facts / details
WHY	Complex sentence	subordinating conjunction + reason (because, since, although, even though, due to)
HOW	Simple sentence	preposition + method / connection (by, through, with, during, based on)

Challenge: Take a WHAT thesis (central idea) and rebuild it as a WHY or HOW thesis (central idea). Notice how the sentence structure changes.

 Teacher Script

"A stronger word is only stronger when it is used accurately. Upgrade vocabulary to match your thinking, not to sound harder."

Oral-Rehearsal Frame: Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea) **Teacher Script**

"My topic is _____. The charge is _____. My answer is _____. This is a _____ (WHAT/WHY/HOW) thesis (central idea), so I used a _____ sentence. On the state writing assessment, a strong thesis (central idea) will help you begin every response with control."

Module 2 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“Before we begin, let’s preview the words we will use to talk about prompts, thesis (central idea) pieces, and setting - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
topic	what something is about	The topic is ____.
answer	your response to a question	My answer is ____.
ask	to put a question	The prompt asks me to ____.
begin	to start	I begin my response by ____.
build	to make part by part	I build my thesis (central idea) by ____.
reason	why something is true	One reason is ____.
clue	a hint that helps you decide	The clue word is ____.
word	a unit of language	A stronger word here is ____.
strong	powerful and clear	A strong thesis (central idea) ____.
match	to go together correctly	My sentence matches the prompt because ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
thesis (central idea)	the clear main idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.
charge	what the prompt is asking you to do	The charge is to ____.
evidence	proof from the text	My evidence is ____.
explanation	thinking about what the evidence means	My explanation shows ____.
response	the writing you build to answer the prompt	My response begins with ____.
complex sentence	a sentence with a subordinating conjunction	A complex sentence uses ____.
simple sentence	a sentence with one complete thought	A simple sentence states ____.
subordinating conjunction	a word like because or since that adds a reason	I use ____ to show a reason.
preposition	a word like through or by that names a method	I use ____ to name the method.
inference	an idea built from clues and thinking	I infer that ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
Magna Carta	MAG-nuh KAR-tuh	a 1215 document that limited the king's power	The Magna Carta ____.
Runnymede	RUN-ee-meed	the place in England where the Magna Carta was signed	At Runnymede, ____.
barons	BAIR-uhnz	powerful landowners who wanted the king to follow rules	The barons ____.
Caddo	KAD-oh	a Native American people of the Piney Woods	The Caddo village ____.
Piney Woods	PY-nee woodz	a forested region of East Texas	In the Piney Woods, ____.
mound	mownd	a tall built-up hill used for important events	The mound ____.
Three Sisters	three SIS-terz	corn, beans, and squash grown together	The Three Sisters ____.
harvest	HAR-vist	the gathering of ripe crops	A successful harvest meant ____.
trade	trayd	to exchange goods with others	They trade ____ for ____.
constitution	kon-stih-TOO-shun	a written plan of a government's rules and powers	The U.S. Constitution ____.



Teacher Resource

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

Module 2 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

This module uses the same two Cluster 1 passages at Medium Stamina. "A Promise Written Long Ago" is a nonfiction text about the Magna Carta (1215, Runnymede, England), which limited the king's power, established that even a ruler must follow the law, and later influenced the U.S. Constitution. "Morning in the Village" is historical fiction about a day in a Caddo village in the Piney Woods, where the setting - the river, the fields, the mound, and the community - shapes daily life.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 1 modules; the text grows in length, detail, vocabulary, evidence density, and conceptual demand from module to module. In Module 2 (Medium Stamina), students focus on building a strong thesis (central idea). The literary focus is setting - time, place, environment, and community - which gives students rich topics for WHAT, WHY, and HOW thesis (central idea) practice.

Module 2 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Anchor Charts to Create

- Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea): TOPIC (noun of importance) + CHARGE (verb of importance) + ANSWER to the charge
- Thesis (Central Idea) Types Chart: WHAT = simple sentence (facts/details); WHY = complex sentence (subordinating conjunction + reason); HOW = simple sentence (preposition + method/connection)
- Setting Anchor Chart: Time, Place, Environment, Community
- Thinking Levels Vocabulary Chart (refer to student notebooks)

Post for Students

- WHY clue words: because, since, although, even though, due to
- HOW clue words: by, through, with, during, based on

Materials

- Printed passages (Medium Stamina)
- Interactive notebooks
- Sentence strips
- Gameboard path
- Spinner (WHAT / WHY / HOW)
- Task cards (included in this guide)
- Glue, scissors
- Student-selected "Pencil Guy" markers

Quick Teacher Reference

Students will: identify the TOPIC and CHARGE in a prompt; write thesis (central idea) statements for WHAT, WHY, and HOW prompts; apply correct sentence structures for each type; use vocabulary from the Thinking Level Charts to strengthen responses; and build the habit of starting strong with a clear thesis (central idea).

Module 2 — The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT reading habit has three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop.



Teacher Script

"As strong readers, we use the DOT habit while we read the passages in our Interactive Notebooks. DOT stands for three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop."

Step	What It Means
D — Dot	Place a small dot above any word that seems unfamiliar as you are reading.
O — Discover	Discover the meaning of the word as we learn together through our lessons.
T — Drop	Go back and erase the dot above the word once you know its meaning.

Board text: Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot.

Encouragement: "This habit helps your brain keep track of the words you are still learning. Good readers notice new words, find out what they mean, and celebrate when they own them."

Module 2 — The Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea)

Teacher Script

"Today you will learn how to build a strong thesis (central idea) using three important pieces. The prompt is not something we copy - it is something we read for clues."

The Three Pieces

Piece	What It Is
TOPIC	the important noun or subject the prompt is about
CHARGE	what the prompt is asking you to do
ANSWER	your clear response to that charge

Self-check: Can you point to all three pieces in your thesis (central idea)?

Thesis (Central Idea) Types: WHAT, WHY, HOW

Prompt Type	Sentence Habit	Helpful Clue
WHAT	Simple sentence	facts / details
WHY	Complex sentence	subordinating conjunction + reason
HOW	Simple sentence	preposition + method / connection

Model a WHY Thesis (Central Idea)

- Prompt: Why is the setting important in Tayanita's village?
- TOPIC: setting. CHARGE: explain why it is important. ANSWER: it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods.
- Model Thesis (Central Idea): "The setting is important because it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods." (A complex sentence using the subordinating conjunction because.)

Model a HOW Thesis (Central Idea)

- Prompt: How does the author show the setting of the village?
- TOPIC: the setting of the village. CHARGE: explain how the author shows it. ANSWER: through details about farming and trading.
- Model Thesis (Central Idea): "The author shows the setting through details about farming and trading in the village." (A simple sentence using the preposition through.)

The Literary Focus: Setting

Setting includes Time, Place, Environment, and Community. Strong setting details give you topics for WHAT, WHY, and HOW thesis (central idea) practice.



Teacher Script

“When you write your thesis (central idea), use your Thinking Levels Chart to upgrade your vocabulary. The words you choose show your thinking.”

Module 2 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students build a response, they reread "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. At Medium Stamina, the passages are longer and richer, so there is more evidence to gather.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

As students read each passage, they TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

Letter	Category	What to Look For	Highlight Color
T	Time	Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives.	Pastel Green
R	Reactions	Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	Pastel Purple
A	Actions	Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	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.	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.	Pastel Orange
S	Scenery / Setting	Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses.	Pastel Green

How to Use TRACKS

Teacher Script

"As we read, we hunt for all six kinds of evidence and highlight each one in its TRACKS color. Time is green, Reactions are purple, Actions are yellow, Character/Concept/Creature is yellow, Key Knowledge is orange, and Scenery/Setting is green. Because this module focuses on setting, pay special attention to the S - Scenery/Setting evidence."

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 — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

[2] England was very different in the early 1200s. Most people worked on farms and lived in small villages. Kings held a great deal of power and made many decisions for the country. People were expected to follow the king's orders, even if they did not agree with them. Because kings had so much authority, many people worried about what could happen if a ruler made poor choices.

[3] King John faced many challenges during his time as ruler. He spent large amounts of money fighting wars, and those wars were often unsuccessful. To pay for them, he demanded more taxes from the people. Many barons believed the taxes were too high. They felt the king was asking for money without listening to their concerns. As time passed, their frustration continued to grow.

[4] The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed.

[5] The meeting at Runnymede was important because it gave the barons an opportunity to express their concerns. They wanted clear limits on the king's authority. They believed leaders should be responsible for their actions and should not be allowed to make decisions without considering the people they governed. Although King John did not like the agreement, he signed the document because he faced strong pressure from the barons.

[6] The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial.

[7] This idea was very unusual at the time. Before the Magna Carta, kings often had the ability to make decisions without being questioned. The Magna Carta introduced the idea that even rulers must obey laws. This helped create a system that was more fair and balanced. It also gave people greater confidence that they would be treated justly.

[8] The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice.

[9] The Magna Carta addressed several concerns that people had about government. It encouraged the idea that leaders should listen to others and follow established laws. While the document did not solve every problem in England, it represented an important step toward limiting government power and protecting individual rights.

[10] Over time, the Magna Carta became known as one of the most influential documents in history. Many leaders and governments studied its ideas. They recognized that laws should apply to everyone and that governments should respect the rights of citizens.

These ideas spread beyond England and influenced countries around the world.

[11] Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.

[12] When American leaders met to create a new government, they wanted to avoid giving too much power to one person or group. They believed government officials should follow laws and be held accountable for their actions. Some of these beliefs can be traced back to ideas found in the Magna Carta. Although the documents were written hundreds of years apart, they share important principles about fairness, rights, and government power.

[13] The influence of the Magna Carta can still be seen today. Courts, lawmakers, and government leaders continue to support ideas such as equal treatment under the law and the protection of individual rights. These principles help guide decisions and remind leaders that their authority has limits.

[14] Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. Its message has lasted for more than 800 years because it teaches an important lesson: good governments protect the rights of people and follow the law. The Magna Carta began as an agreement between a king and a group of barons, but its ideas eventually influenced millions of people around the world. Because of its lasting impact, it remains one of the most important documents in history.

Student Annotation Guide — A Promise Written Long Ago

T — Time

In the year 1215

R — Reactions

limited the king's power

A — Actions

demanded more taxes from the people

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Magna Carta

K — Key Knowledge

people could not be punished without a fair trial

S — Scenery/Setting

lived in small villages

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

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[8] The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice.

[9] The Magna Carta addressed several concerns that people had about government. It encouraged the idea that leaders should listen to others and follow established laws. While the document did not solve every problem in England, it represented an important step toward limiting government power and protecting individual rights.

[10] Over time, the Magna Carta became known as one of the most influential documents in history. Many leaders and governments studied its ideas. They recognized that laws should apply to everyone and that governments should respect the rights of citizens.

These ideas spread beyond England and influenced countries around the world.

[11] Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the **Magna Carta** influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the **Magna Carta**, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.

[12] When American leaders met to create a new government, they wanted to avoid giving too much power to one person or group. They believed government officials should follow laws and be held accountable for their actions. Some of these beliefs can be traced back to ideas found in the **Magna Carta**. Although the documents were written hundreds of years apart, they share important principles about fairness, rights, and government power.

[13] The influence of the **Magna Carta** can still be seen today. Courts, lawmakers, and government leaders continue to support ideas such as equal treatment under the law and the protection of individual rights. These principles help guide decisions and remind leaders that their authority has limits.

[14] Even today, the **Magna Carta** reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. Its message has lasted for more than 800 years because it teaches an important lesson: good governments protect the rights of people and follow the law. The **Magna Carta** began as an agreement between a king and a group of barons, but its ideas eventually influenced millions of people around the world. Because of its lasting impact, it remains one of the most important documents in history.

PASSAGE 2 — Morning in the Village

[1] The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside. The tall pine trees were still dark, but she could hear people moving around the village.

[2] Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods. Their homes were built close together, and everyone knew each other. Some people were already cooking, while others were heading out to work.

[3] Tayanita liked the early morning hours. The village felt peaceful before the day became busy. Smoke drifted from cooking fires, and the smell of food filled the air. Birds called from the trees, and the river moved quietly nearby.

[4] Tayanita walked with her mother to the fields. Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows. Her mother always called them the “Three Sisters” because they helped each other grow. Tayanita didn’t understand all of it, but she knew they needed all three to have enough food.

[5] The fields were important to the village. Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops. Everyone understood that a successful harvest meant there would be enough food for the coming months. Tayanita often helped by pulling weeds or carrying baskets filled with vegetables.

[6] Nearby, her uncle was talking about planting something different in one part of the field next season. He said it helped the soil stay strong. Tayanita just nodded and kept pulling weeds.

[7] Although she did not understand everything her uncle was saying, she enjoyed listening to the adults talk about farming. They seemed to know exactly what the land needed. Tayanita hoped that one day she would learn those things too.

[8] As the morning continued, the sun climbed higher into the sky. The workers moved steadily through the fields. Some people carried tools, while others checked on the growing crops. Children helped where they could, learning important skills from their families.

[9] Later, she went with her grandfather to the large mound in the middle of the village. It was tall, and it had taken many years to build. People gathered there for important events. From the top, she could see trees stretching far in every direction.

[10] Her grandfather told her that many generations of Caddo people had helped build the mound. It was a place where leaders met, ceremonies were held, and community decisions were discussed. Tayanita liked standing at the top because it allowed her to see almost the entire village.

[11] From there, she could spot people working near the fields, children playing near their homes, and smoke rising from cooking fires. Beyond the village, the thick Piney Woods seemed to stretch forever. The forests provided wood, food, and protection for the people who lived there.

[12] As they climbed down from the mound, Tayanita's grandfather pointed toward the river. Several people were gathering water while others prepared canoes. The river was an

important part of daily life. It provided water for cooking and cleaning, and it helped people travel to nearby communities.

[13] That afternoon, visitors came from another village. They brought pottery and tools to trade. In return, her people shared food. Tayanita liked watching the trades. It felt like everyone was connected somehow.

[14] The visitors displayed carefully made pottery decorated with patterns. Some carried stone tools, while others brought items their village was known for making. The Caddo people exchanged food and other goods. The trade helped both villages get things they needed.

[15] Tayanita listened as adults talked with one another. Some discussed hunting, while others shared news about nearby communities. The visitors told stories about places they had traveled and people they had met. Tayanita enjoyed hearing about areas beyond her own village.

[16] She noticed that the visitors were treated with respect. Even though they came from another village, they were welcomed warmly. Her family believed that trade and cooperation helped communities stay strong.

[17] As the afternoon turned to evening, families began preparing meals. Children returned home, and workers finished their tasks for the day. The sounds of conversation filled the village as people gathered together.

[18] Tayanita helped carry food while her mother prepared dinner. She thought about everything she had seen that day. She had helped in the fields, visited the mound, watched traders arrive, and learned more about her community.

[19] As the day ended, she looked around her village. It was busy, but it also felt like home.

[20] The glowing light from the evening fires spread across the village. Families shared meals, told stories, and laughed together. Tayanita felt proud to be part of a community where people worked together and helped one another.

[21] Before going inside, she looked one last time at the homes, the fields, and the trees surrounding the village. Tomorrow would bring another busy day, but she knew she would be ready. Surrounded by family, friends, and traditions that had been passed down for generations, Tayanita felt thankful for the place she called home.

Student Annotation Guide — Morning in the Village

T — Time

The sun was just starting to come up

R — Reactions

trade and cooperation helped communities stay strong

A — Actions

Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Tayanita

K — Key Knowledge

Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows

S — Scenery/Setting

a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Morning in the Village

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Day 1 - Gather and Reveal



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(B)(i)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS 4(F)(ix)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose

Day 1 Purpose

Students gather by classifying thesis (central idea) statements as WHAT, WHY, or HOW, then reveal the three pieces of a thesis (central idea) and the sentence type that matches each prompt.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Listen and Label: WHAT, WHY, or HOW?

Pencils down. Listen to the whole thesis (central idea). Then hold up WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Be ready to name the clue that helped you decide. Challenge: identify the TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER.

Teacher Script: "Do not write while I am speaking. Listen for the sentence clue. If you hear a fact or identification, think WHAT. If you hear a reason relationship such as because, think WHY. If you hear a method or connection such as through, think HOW."

Teacher Read-Aloud Set and Answer Key:

- "The Magna Carta is a document that limited the king's power." — WHAT
- "The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power and protected rights." — WHY
- "The author shows the Magna Carta's influence through a comparison with the U.S. Constitution." — HOW
- "Tayanita's village is a Caddo community near a river in the Piney Woods." — WHAT
- "The setting matters because the land, river, and community support daily life." — WHY
- "The author shows the setting through details about farming, trade, and the river." — HOW

Fresh Recall: Turn the cards face down. Students say the WHAT, WHY, and HOW sentence habits from memory.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Which Beginning Matches the Prompt?)

Write on the board: (1) The setting is important. (2) The setting is important because it shows how the village works together. (3) The author shows the setting through details about farming and trading. Which is WHAT? WHY? HOW? What word helped you decide?

- Answer Key: #1 = WHAT (simple factual statement); #2 = WHY (because introduces a reason); #3 = HOW (through introduces the method).

R — Reveal: The Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea)

Display the Three Pieces chart and the Thesis (Central Idea) Types chart (see the Three Pieces page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER. TOPIC = the important noun; CHARGE = what the prompt asks you to do; ANSWER = your clear response.
- Model WHY (prompt "Why is the setting important in Tayanita's village?"): TOPIC = setting; CHARGE = explain why it is important; ANSWER = it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods. Thesis (Central Idea): "The setting is important because it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods."

- Model HOW (prompt "How does the author show the setting of the village?"): TOPIC = the setting; CHARGE = explain how the author shows it; ANSWER = through details about farming and trading. Thesis (Central Idea): "The author shows the setting through details about farming and trading in the village."

★ Daily Deck Slide (The Three Pieces to a Thesis (Central Idea))

Write on the board: TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER. WHAT = simple sentence (facts). WHY = complex sentence (because + reason). HOW = simple sentence (through/by + method). The question tells you how to begin.

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "The three pieces of a thesis (central idea) are ____, and a WHY thesis (central idea) uses ____."

Day 2 - Attempt

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
ELPS 4(D)(iii)	write content-area texts using a variety of transition words

Day 2 Purpose

Students attempt the module skill through Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race: spin a prompt type, identify the topic and charge, add an answer, and build the matching sentence structure.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race — How to Play)

Write on the board: Spin WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Draw a task card. Identify the TOPIC. Identify the CHARGE. Add an ANSWER. Build the correct sentence type. Explain why your sentence matches the prompt. Move your Pencil Guy. Save two of your strongest thesis (central idea) statements.

Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race — Quick Check

Before you move your marker, ask: Did we include TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER? Did we answer the exact prompt? Does our sentence structure match WHAT, WHY, or HOW? Did we keep evidence out of the thesis (central idea) unless the task calls for it?

- Reminder: WHAT = simple factual sentence; WHY = reason relationship / complex sentence; HOW = method relationship / preposition.



Card 1

Prompt: What is the setting of Tayanita's village?

- Answer: The setting is a Caddo village near a river where people live and work together.

Card 2

Prompt: Why is the setting important in the village?

- Answer: The setting is important because "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows," which shows how people depend on farming.

Card 3

Prompt: How does the author show the setting of the village?

- Answer: The author shows the setting through details like "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade."

Card 4

Prompt: What kind of environment is described in the village?

- Answer: The environment is a forested area near water where people farm and gather.

Card 5

Prompt: Why do visitors come to the village?

- Answer: Visitors come because "They brought pottery and tools to trade," which shows the importance of sharing resources.

Card 6

Prompt: How does the author show why the Magna Carta mattered?

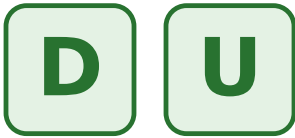
- Answer: The author shows why the Magna Carta mattered through details such as "The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power" and "It also protected certain rights of the people."

Answer Key Notes: WHAT = simple factual sentence; WHY = complex sentence with subordinating conjunction; HOW = simple sentence with preposition.

Day 2 Closing

Write two of your best thesis (central idea) statements in your interactive notebook. These will help you review later.

Day 3 - Discuss and Use Again



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
TEKS (11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
TEKS (11)(D)(vi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including past tense of irregular verbs
ELPS 4(F)(x)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 3 Purpose

Students discuss the pattern of prompt clues, then independently build WHAT, WHY, and HOW thesis (central idea) statements and run a conventions sweep.

D — Discuss the Pattern

Ask: What did the prompt tell you to do? Where did you find the topic? What words revealed the charge? What sentence structure matched the prompt? How did the prompt help you decide how to begin?

- Student: "We took the topic from the question." / "We used because for WHY."
- Teacher: "Exactly. The question tells you how to build your sentence."

Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How does the wording of the prompt guide the thesis (central idea)?"

U — Use Again: Independent Thesis (Central Idea) Builder

For each prompt: box the TOPIC, underline the CHARGE, label it WHAT/WHY/HOW, write a thesis (central idea) with TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER, and check your sentence structure.

Prompts and Answer Reveal:

- **WHAT** — What is the setting of the village? "The setting is a Caddo village near a river where people grow food and live together."
- **WHY** — Why is the setting important to the people in the village? "The setting is important because 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows,' which shows how people depend on farming for survival."
- **HOW** — How does the author show the setting of the village? "The author shows the setting through details like 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows' and 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.'"

Teacher Script

"Accept other accurate responses that contain all three thesis (central idea) pieces and match the intended prompt structure."

Standards Application Check — Module 2 Conventions Sweep

Read: "King John made unfair decisions. The barons wanted rules." Find and label one proper noun, one past-tense irregular verb, one plural noun, and one word you can check for a grade-appropriate spelling pattern.

- **Answer Key:** proper noun = King John; past-tense irregular verb = made; plural nouns = decisions, barons, rules. For the spelling-pattern item, connect the selected word to the pattern named in current spelling instruction.

Teacher Script

"Transfer: Students repeat the same four checks in one thesis (central idea) or response sentence of their own."

Day 3 Closing

Students underline the thesis (central idea) they built best and label its three pieces.

Day 4 - Award and Target



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
TEKS (11)(D)(x)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including proper nouns
ELPS 4(C)(i)	write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary

Day 4 Purpose

Students recognize the strong thesis (central idea) they built and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Circle or underline the thesis (central idea) you built best today. Tell a partner: "My thesis (central idea) is strong because it includes __, __, and __."

- Write "I built a strong thesis (central idea)!" in your notebook.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award + Target)

Write on the board: AWARD - Circle the thesis (central idea) you built best today. TARGET - choose one next step: identify the charge more carefully; use all three thesis (central idea) pieces; match my sentence structure to the prompt; upgrade my vocabulary accurately.

T — Target

Choose one next step.

- I will identify the charge more carefully.
- I will use all three thesis (central idea) pieces.
- I will match my sentence structure to the prompt.

Curiosity Questions: "Can one missing piece weaken your whole response?" "How do authors use strong beginnings in their writing?"

Day 4 Closing

Complete the sentence: "My next thesis (central idea) goal is ____ because ____."

Day 5 - Explain to Others

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
ELPS 4(F)(ii)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 5 Purpose

Students teach a partner how to build a thesis (central idea) from the three pieces, proving their understanding by explaining the formula.

E — Teach the Thesis (Central Idea) Formula

Teach your partner: how to find the TOPIC; how to find the CHARGE; how to add the ANSWER; and how WHAT, WHY, and HOW change the sentence structure. Give one example thesis (central idea).

Sentence Frame: "The prompt helps me build my thesis (central idea) because _____. First I find _____. Then I find _____. Finally, I _____."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How can the wording of a prompt help us build a strong thesis (central idea) for WHAT, WHY, and HOW responses?

The prompt gives us the information we need to begin. We identify the topic, determine the charge, and add a clear answer. The words WHAT, WHY, and HOW also signal the kind of relationship our sentence should communicate: WHAT states information, WHY explains a reason, and HOW explains a method or connection.

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: The prompt reveals the TOPIC and CHARGE, and WHAT/WHY/HOW tells us what kind of relationship to express. We add the ANSWER to build a complete thesis (central idea). Remember: TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER = Strong Thesis (Central Idea).

Teacher Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"You took control of how you begin your thinking today. When you understand how to build a thesis (central idea), you are no longer guessing - you are constructing meaning with purpose. Keep using the three pieces and the sentence types, and your confidence and clarity will grow."

Module 2 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Why is the setting important to the people in Tayanita's village? Write a WHY thesis (central idea) with all three pieces.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student names the topic and gives a general statement.
- Teacher Notes: The thesis (central idea) is missing the charge-answer connection and the WHY reason; it is a simple statement, not a complex WHY sentence.
- What Needs Improvement: Add the answer and a reason with "because" to match the WHY prompt.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because people grow food there." (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: A WHY thesis (central idea) with topic, charge, and a reason using "because."
- Teacher Notes: The answer is accurate but general and does not yet point to specific setting details.
- What Needs Improvement: Sharpen the answer to name how the setting supports the community.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: A complete WHY thesis (central idea) - topic (setting), charge (why it is important), and a precise answer - written as a complex sentence with "because."
- Teacher Notes: All three pieces are present and the sentence structure matches the WHY prompt exactly.

Module 2 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can find the topic and charge and build a thesis (central idea) that matches the prompt type.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two Medium Stamina passages, the Three Pieces and Thesis (Central Idea) Types charts, Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) task cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(11)(B)(i) organize with purposeful structure, including an introduction; (12)(B)(i) compose informational texts using a clear central idea
Task	Students perform a formative check in Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race and an independent task writing WHAT, WHY, and HOW thesis (central idea) statements.
Expected Response	Students identify topic and charge, add an answer, and match the sentence structure to the prompt type.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race and Listen and Label. Note whether students name the clue that reveals the prompt type and include all three thesis (central idea) pieces.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Independent Thesis (Central Idea) Builder serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Topic	Must name the important noun from the prompt.
Charge	Must state what the prompt asks.
Answer	Must give a clear response to the charge.
Sentence Structure	Must match WHAT (simple), WHY (complex), or HOW (preposition).

Answer Key — Thesis (Central Idea) Types

WHAT = simple factual sentence; WHY = complex sentence with a subordinating conjunction; HOW = simple sentence with a preposition.

Check the Learning

✓ Check the Learning

Informal, low-stakes ways to SEE what students understand in this module — no worksheet required. Use all three so you gather verbal, visual, and written evidence:

- Verbal — Gather/Reveal — Fist to Five: Students show 0-5 fingers for how sure they are they can name the three thesis (central idea) pieces.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Show WHAT/WHY/HOW: As you read a thesis (central idea), students hold up WHAT, WHY, or HOW and name the clue.
- Written — Discuss/Use — One-Thesis (Central Idea) Build: Students write one thesis (central idea) with TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER and label the three pieces.

Assessment Option

Beside any activity, choose how to check without slowing the lesson:

- Listen — assess through student discussion and labeled thesis (central idea) types.
- Look — observe a Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race sentence or a boxed topic and underlined charge.
- Collect — have students produce a WHAT, WHY, or HOW thesis (central idea) you can examine.

Intervention — Module 2

Thesis (Central Idea) Puzzle Builder

Build the sentence in three pieces: TOPIC -> CHARGE -> ANSWER. Color or label each strip before you combine them.

Students receive: strips labeled TOPIC, CHARGE, ANSWER, and prompts to match. Steps: match the correct topic and charge; add the answer; build the full sentence.

Check: Is one piece missing? Does the answer match the charge? Is the final sentence complete?

Teacher Script

"If your sentence is missing one piece, it is not complete." Support: provide sentence frames; highlight subordinating conjunctions and prepositions. Teacher Answer Rule: A complete thesis (central idea) must include all three pieces and directly respond to the prompt."

Module 2 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to find the topic and charge.	Students box the topic and underline the charge.	Students copy the whole question.	Point to the noun (topic) and the verb (charge) separately.
Ask students to label a prompt type.	Students say WHAT, WHY, or HOW and the clue.	Students confuse WHY and HOW.	Ask, "Is there a reason (because) or a method (through)?"
Ask students to write a thesis (central idea).	Students include all three pieces.	Students write a fragment.	Require a complete sentence with topic, charge, and answer.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Writes a fragment	Use the Thesis (Central Idea) Puzzle Builder strips.
Puts evidence in the thesis (central idea)	Remind them to save evidence for later unless the task asks for it.
Confuses WHY and HOW	Post the clue words (because vs through) side by side.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 2 enrichment (Multi-Level Thesis (Central Idea) Challenge).

Enrichment — Module 2

Multi-Level Thesis (Central Idea) Challenge

Choose one prompt and write a Level 1 thesis (central idea), a Level 3 thesis (central idea), and a Level 5 thesis (central idea).

Then explain: What changed in your word choice? What changed in the precision of your thinking? Which version answers the charge most clearly?

Advanced: Use your strongest thesis (central idea) to begin a full response with two quotes, such as "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade."

Teacher Prompt: "Explain why your word choices match your thinking level." Teacher Look-For: Students should show increasing precision from Level 1 to Level 5, not just longer sentences.

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

Writing Prompt

Choose one prompt below, mark it, and build a thesis (central idea) with all three pieces.

- Why is the setting important to the people in Tayanita's village?
- How does the author show why the Magna Carta mattered?

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that the prompt gives clues. Now box the TOPIC, underline the CHARGE, and build a thesis (central idea) with TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER in the matching sentence structure.

Planning Support

1. Box the TOPIC (the important noun).
2. Underline the CHARGE (what the prompt asks).
3. Label the prompt WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
4. Write a thesis (central idea) with TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER in the matching sentence type.

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Topic + Charge	Box the topic; underline the charge.
Step 2: Type	Label it WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
Step 3: Thesis (Central Idea)	Write the answer in the matching sentence structure.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My thesis (central idea) includes TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER.
- My sentence structure matches the prompt type.
- I kept evidence out of the thesis (central idea) unless the task called for it.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your thesis (central idea) aloud. Improve sentence structure or word choice so the three pieces are clear.

Edit

Run the Conventions Sweep: past-tense irregular verbs, plural nouns, proper nouns, and grade-appropriate spelling patterns.

Module 2 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Listen and Label.

Purpose: Students classify thesis (central idea) statements as WHAT, WHY, or HOW while listening. They must process the sentence structure rather than copy the teacher's words.

Listening Target: Listen for the clue that tells you whether the thesis (central idea) answers WHAT, WHY, or HOW.

Student Materials: three response cards labeled WHAT, WHY, HOW; optional TOPIC / CHARGE / ANSWER cards for the challenge round.



Teacher Script

"Pencils down. Listen to the whole thesis (central idea). Then label it. Hold up WHAT, WHY, or HOW. Be ready to name the clue that helped you decide."

Thesis (Central Idea) (read aloud)	Answer
"The Magna Carta is a document that limited the king's power."	WHAT
"The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power and protected rights."	WHY
"The author shows the Magna Carta's influence through a comparison with the U.S. Constitution."	HOW
"Tayanita's village is a Caddo community near a river in the Piney Woods."	WHAT
"The setting matters because the land, river, and community support daily life."	WHY
"The author shows the setting through details about farming, trade, and the river."	HOW

Challenge Round: In the second thesis (central idea), topic = Magna Carta; charge = explain why it was important; answer = it limited the king's power and protected rights. Fresh Recall: Turn the cards face down. Students say the WHAT, WHY, and HOW sentence habits from memory.

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 — Find the Topic and Charge

Stop and think: What is the TOPIC (the important noun), and what is the CHARGE (what the prompt asks you to do)?

|| Pause Point — Name the Type

Stop and think: Is this a WHAT, WHY, or HOW prompt? What clue word tells you?

|| Pause Point — Match the Structure

Stop and think: Does my sentence type match the prompt - simple for WHAT/HOW, complex for WHY?

|| Pause Point — Check All Three Pieces

Stop and think: Does my thesis (central idea) include TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER? If one is missing, it is not complete.

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 read and write this week, 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 set	I can do it
Find the TOPIC and CHARGE in a prompt.			
Label a prompt WHAT, WHY, or HOW.			
Write a thesis (central idea) with all three pieces.			
Match my sentence structure to the prompt.			
Check my sentence for conventions.			

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

“At the beginning of this module, we asked how the wording of a prompt helps us build a strong thesis (central idea). Now we can answer it: the prompt is not something we copy - it is something we read for clues. It gives us the topic and charge, and the prompt type helps us decide how to structure our answer. A strong thesis (central idea) begins when we use those clues on purpose.”

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answered

How can the wording of a prompt help us build a strong thesis (central idea) for WHAT, WHY, and HOW responses? The prompt reveals the TOPIC and CHARGE, and WHAT/WHY/HOW tells us what kind of relationship to express. We add the ANSWER to build a complete thesis (central idea). TOPIC + CHARGE + ANSWER = a strong thesis (central idea).

Teacher Reflection - Module 2

Which students can find the topic and charge in a prompt?

Which students match sentence structure to WHAT, WHY, and HOW?

Which students still write fragments or leave out a thesis (central idea) piece?

Who is ready for Module 3, proving a thesis (central idea) with strong evidence using CSI?

Teacher Notes

Module 2 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Use these adjustments to run Module 2 fully online without losing rigor or participation. For Listen and Label, read each thesis (central idea) aloud with cameras on and have students type WHAT, WHY, or HOW in the chat, then call on one student to name the clue word. Post the Three Pieces chart, the Thesis (Central Idea) Types chart, and the Setting anchor chart in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run Build-A-Thesis (Central Idea) Race on a shared slide: give each group a prompt and boxes for TOPIC, CHARGE, and ANSWER, and require the sentence type to match. For the Independent Thesis (Central Idea) Builder, students draft in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "Where is the charge?" and "Does your sentence type match?" rather than writing the thesis (central idea) for them. Collect the Conventions Sweep as a one-photo or typed submission of the single checked sentence.

MODULE

3

Prove It with Strong Evidence

Week 3 • High Stamina

Module 3: Prove It with Strong Evidence

Week 3 - High Stamina - Cluster 1 (SCR)

A Quote Is Not Automatically Strong Evidence

Teacher Script

"When students learn to prove their thinking with evidence, they move from guessing to knowing - and that is where true learning begins."

Overarching Question

How can we decide whether a piece of evidence is strong enough to prove our thesis (central idea)?

Today We Will Look For

- what counts as evidence (exact words in quotation marks) and what does not
- the CSI test: Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), Infer additional ideas
- signal phrases that announce a quote
- the difference between strong and weak evidence

Student reminder: A quote is not automatically strong evidence.

Why This Module Matters

Students learn that quoting is not enough - the quote must be the right quote for the job. Using the two Cluster 1 passages at High Stamina, students apply CSI (Connect, Support, Infer) to decide whether evidence is strong enough to prove a thesis (central idea), announce evidence with signal phrases and quotation marks, and add strong evidence to a thesis (central idea).

Module Passage Set — High Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 1 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (nonfiction) and "Morning in the Village" (historical fiction). This module uses the High Stamina versions.

Module Independent Product

Take a thesis (central idea) and add strong evidence: choose exact quotes that pass CSI, announce them with a signal phrase and quotation marks, and explain why each quote is strong.

Module 3 — Family Communication

Purpose: Families are partners in this work. This page gives every family a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, a question to ask at home, and one simple way to help.

This Week at a Glance

- The big skill: choosing STRONG evidence - not just any quote - using the CSI test: Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), and Infer something meaningful.
- The habit: announce a quote with a signal phrase ("The text says, ...") and use quotation marks.
- The two reading passages: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (the Magna Carta) and "Morning in the Village" (a Caddo village), now at a longer, richer level.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"You gave me your answer - now what are the exact words that prove it?"

One Way to Help

When your child makes a point, ask them to prove it with an exact detail (a quote), not just a summary. Choosing the right proof is the heart of this week's work.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child continues Cluster 1 with Module 3, "Prove It with Strong Evidence." The big idea is that a quote is not automatically strong evidence. Your child is learning the CSI test: strong evidence must Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), and let the writer Infer something meaningful. Students also learn to announce a quote with a signal phrase ("The text says, ...") and quotation marks.

We are still reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community - now at a longer, more detailed level.

Please try this at home: When your child shares an opinion, ask them to prove it with exact words - "What exactly showed you that?" Choosing the strongest proof, not just any detail, is the evidence habit we practice this week.

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija continúa el Grupo 1 con el Módulo 3, "Prove It with Strong Evidence." La gran idea es que una cita no es automáticamente evidencia fuerte. Su hijo o hija está aprendiendo la prueba CSI: la evidencia fuerte debe Conectar con la indicación, Apoyar la tesis y permitir que el escritor Infiera algo significativo. Los estudiantes también aprenden a anunciar una cita con una frase de señal ("El texto dice, ...") y comillas.

Seguimos leyendo "A Promise Written Long Ago," sobre la Carta Magna, y "Morning in the Village," sobre un día en una comunidad Caddo, ahora a un nivel más largo y detallado.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija comparta una opinión, pídale que la demuestre con palabras exactas: "¿Qué te mostró exactamente eso?" Elegir la mejor prueba, no cualquier detalle, es el hábito de evidencia que practicamos esta semana.

Con aprecio, El maestro o la maestra de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Module 3 — 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 the difference between evidence and a summary?
- What does CSI stand for, and how does it help you choose a quote?
- Why is one quote sometimes stronger than another?
- What is a signal phrase, and why do writers use one?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Prove It with Exact Words

Make a claim about your day ("Dinner was a team effort"). Then prove it with one exact detail. Ask your child to do the same - claim, then exact proof.

Family Activity - Strong or Weak?

Give a claim, then two possible proofs - one that fits and one that is off-topic. Have your child pick the stronger proof and explain why with "because."

Module 3 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 3 continues Cluster 1. Students learn what counts as evidence and how to test it with CSI - Connect, Support, Infer. Using "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" at High Stamina, students distinguish strong from weak evidence, announce quotes with signal phrases and quotation marks, add strong evidence to a thesis (central idea), and run an evidence-sentence conventions sweep.

BIG Goal: Students will select evidence that passes CSI and announce it correctly to prove a thesis (central idea).

Writing TEKS for This Module

The Student Expectation column below is the exact, full wording of each Grade 4 TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Cluster 1 scope and sequence, not paraphrased or abbreviated.

TEKS	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS breakout)
(12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
(12)(B)(ii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
(12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
(11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
(11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
(11)(D)(i)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement
(11)(D)(xxxv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of high-frequency words

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Students select and quote evidence that connects to the prompt and supports the thesis (central idea), then revise signal phrases and sentence structures for precision.
- CSI tasks require evidence-based informational responding and craft decisions about which evidence is strongest.
- The Module 3 Conventions Sweep checks sentence completeness, subject-verb agreement, and high-frequency spelling in the student-written evidence sentence.

Module 3 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 1 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 1 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(A)(i) plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies

Writing Genre

- (12)(B)(i) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
- (12)(B)(ii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
- (12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i) revise drafts to improve sentence structure

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vii), (ix), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; singular and common nouns; and correct spelling of high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(F)(i)–(iii), (v)–(vii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content, style, and register for purpose and audience

Writing Genre

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(i)–(iii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths, sentence types, and transition words
- 4(F)(i)–(ii), (v)–(vi), (ix)–(x), (xiii)–(xiv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content and style for purpose and audience

Revising

- 4(D)(i)–(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths and sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Editing

- 4(B)(ii) write text following conventional spelling rules
- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students listen, sort, build, and explain. 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	In Catch the Strongest Evidence, students hear three quotes and star the one that best proves the prompt.
Speaking	Students defend a quote with C, S, and I and teach a partner the CSI test.
Reading	Students reread the passages to find exact quotes and tell strong from weak evidence.
Writing	Students add strong evidence to a thesis (central idea) with signal phrases and run an evidence-sentence sweep.

Module 3 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can tell evidence (exact words in quotation marks) from a summary.
- I can use the CSI test to decide whether a quote is strong enough.
- I can announce a quote with a signal phrase and quotation marks.
- I can add strong evidence to a thesis (central idea) to prove it.

I Will Statements

- I will choose short, meaningful quotes that fit the prompt.
- I will speak about my thinking, record my work, and explain why a quote is strong.
- I will check CSI before I use a quote.
- I will match my quoted words exactly to the passage.

Success Criteria

- I can point to evidence and explain why it is not a summary.
- I can run CSI on a quote and decide strong or weak.
- I can write an evidence sentence with a signal phrase and quotation marks.
- I can check my evidence sentence for conventions.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The CSI Evidence Sort (a recorded strong quote with a CSI explanation).
- The Add-Evidence-to-the-Thesis (Central Idea) practice (a thesis (central idea) with strong quotes).
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of the CSI test.

Module 3 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the CSI chart, the signal-phrases chart, and the strong-vs-weak-evidence chart. You may provide oral rehearsal and sentence frames. You may not choose the student's quote for them, decide strong or weak for them, or write their evidence sentence. The student must still select the quote, run CSI, and announce the evidence.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Tell evidence (exact quoted words) from a paraphrase.	Supported. The teacher may reread the sentence.	The student labels the quote and the summary.
Inferential	Run CSI on a quote and decide strong or weak.	Guided early, independent by Use Again.	The student explains connect, support, and infer.
Evaluative	Choose the strongest of several quotes and announce it correctly.	Independent by Add-Evidence-to-the-Thesis (Central Idea).	The student selects and quotes the best evidence.

Educator Insight

Students often think evidence means explaining instead of quoting. Many will summarize instead of using exact text. Some will choose random quotes that do not connect to the prompt. Others will not introduce their evidence clearly with a signal phrase. Watch for missing quotation marks or incomplete quotes. Students may choose long quotes without understanding them. To fix this, require students to always check CSI and model how to select short, meaningful quotes.

Module 3 — Thinking Levels

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a task 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.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal reasoning, applying understanding to a claim.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, or broader understanding.

The CSI Evidence Test

Letter	Question	A Strong Quote...
C — Connect	Does the quote connect to the prompt?	matches the topic of the prompt.
S — Support	Does the quote support the thesis (central idea)?	proves the idea, not just a general fact.
I — Infer	Can the quote help us infer something important?	lets the writer explain a bigger idea.

Decision: three strong YES answers = strong evidence.



Teacher Script

"A quotation is evidence. A well-chosen quotation that passes CSI is STRONG evidence."

Oral-Rehearsal Frame: CSI



Teacher Script

"This evidence is strong because it connects to ___, supports ___, and helps me infer ___. On the state writing assessment, choosing evidence that passes CSI will make your responses prove your thinking."

Module 3 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“Before we begin, let’s preview the words we will use to talk about evidence, CSI, and signal phrases - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
quote	the exact words from a text	My quote is ____.
prove	to show something is true	I prove my idea by ____.
choose	to pick on purpose	I choose this quote because ____.
strong	powerful and clear	Strong evidence ____.
weak	not strong or convincing	Weak evidence ____.
word	a unit of language	The exact words are ____.
text	the written passage	The text says ____.
check	to test or confirm	I check my quote by ____.
match	to be exactly the same	My quote matches the text because ____.
announce	to introduce clearly	I announce my evidence by ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
evidence	exact words from the text in quotation marks	My evidence is ____.
support	to back up an idea with proof	This quote supports ____.
connect	to link the quote to the prompt	This quote connects to ____.
infer	to figure out something using clues	From this quote I infer ____.
signal phrase	words that announce a quote	I use the signal phrase ____.
citation	showing where the words came from	I cite the text by ____.
explanation	thinking about what the evidence means	My explanation shows ____.
thesis (central idea)	the clear main idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.
prompt	the question or task you answer	The prompt asks me to ____.
relevance	how closely something fits the point	This quote's relevance is ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
Magna Carta	MAG-nuh KAR-tuh	a 1215 document that limited the king's power	The Magna Carta ____.
Runnymede	RUN-ee-meed	the field in England where the Magna Carta was signed	At Runnymede, ____.
barons	BAIR-uhnz	powerful landowners who wanted the king to follow rules	The barons ____.
negotiation	nih-goh-shee-AY-shun	talking to reach an agreement	After months of negotiation, ____.
Caddo	KAD-oh	a Native American people of the Piney Woods	The Caddo village ____.
Three Sisters	three SIS-terz	corn, beans, and squash grown together	The Three Sisters ____.
mound	mownd	a tall built-up hill used for important events	The mound ____.
pottery	POT-uh-ree	objects shaped from clay	The visitors brought pottery to ____.
harvest	HAR-vist	the gathering of ripe crops	A successful harvest meant ____.
Constitution	kon-stih-TOO-shun	a written plan of a government's rules and powers	The U.S. Constitution ____.



Teacher Resource

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

Module 3 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

This module uses the same two Cluster 1 passages at High Stamina. "A Promise Written Long Ago" is a longer nonfiction text about the Magna Carta (1215, Runnymede), the barons' demand for limits on the king's power, and the document's lasting influence on the U.S. Constitution. "Morning in the Village" is a longer historical-fiction account of a day in a Caddo village, rich with details about farming, the mound, the river, and trade.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 1 modules; at High Stamina they are longer and denser, giving students many possible quotes. That density is the point of this module: with more choices available, students must use CSI to decide which evidence is strong enough. The habit to build is that quoting alone is not enough - a quote must connect, support, and let the reader infer.

Module 3 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Anchor Charts to Create

- What is Evidence? / What is NOT Evidence
- Strong Evidence vs. Weak Evidence
- CSI Chart: Connect to the prompt; Support the thesis (central idea); Infer additional ideas
- Signal Phrases for Evidence: The text says...; The author states...; The passage explains...
- Quoting Evidence Rules: use quotation marks; introduce with a signal phrase

Post for Students

- Signal phrases: The text says, "..."; The author states, "..."; The passage explains, "..."; The text indicates, "..."
- Quotation check: signal phrase, comma when needed, opening quotation mark, exact words, closing quotation mark

Materials

- Printed passages (High Stamina)
- Interactive notebooks
- Sentence strips with quotes
- Task cards (included in this guide)
- Gameboard path, spinner
- Glue, scissors
- Student-selected "Pencil Guy" markers

Quick Teacher Reference

Students will: define evidence and identify it in a passage; distinguish strong vs. weak evidence; apply CSI to evaluate evidence; use signal phrases to introduce quotes; use quotation marks correctly; and build the habit of announcing and proving with evidence.

Module 3 — The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT reading habit has three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop.

Teacher Script

"As strong readers, we use the DOT habit while we read the passages in our Interactive Notebooks. DOT stands for three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop."

Step	What It Means
D — Dot	Place a small dot above any word that seems unfamiliar as you are reading.
O — Discover	Discover the meaning of the word as we learn together through our lessons.
T — Drop	Go back and erase the dot above the word once you know its meaning.

Board text: Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot.

Encouragement: "This habit helps your brain keep track of the words you are still learning. Good readers notice new words, find out what they mean, and celebrate when they own them."

Module 3 — Evidence and the CSI Test

Teacher Script

"Today you will learn what evidence is and how to use it correctly. If you are not using quotation marks, you are not using evidence."

What Counts as Evidence

Evidence = exact words from the text in quotation marks.

- Evidence: "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." / "They brought pottery and tools to trade."
- NOT evidence: People grow food. / They trade things.

The CSI Test

Strong evidence must pass CSI.

Letter	Question
C — Connect	Does the quote connect to the prompt?
S — Support	Does the quote support the thesis (central idea)?
I — Infer	Can the quote help us understand or infer something important?

Decision: three strong YES answers = strong evidence. A quote is not automatically strong evidence.

Announce Your Evidence

Use a signal phrase and quotation marks:

- The text says, "..."
- The author states, "..."
- The passage explains, "..."
- The text indicates, "..."

Quotation check: signal phrase, comma when needed, opening quotation mark, exact words, closing quotation mark.

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

Teacher Script

"Your ears and eyes have a job. You are not looking for a quote that is merely true - you are looking for the quote that best connects to the prompt and best supports the idea."

Module 3 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students choose evidence, they reread "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. At High Stamina there are many possible quotes, so TRACKS helps students gather them - and CSI helps them decide which are strongest.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

As students read each passage, they TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

Letter	Category	What to Look For	Highlight Color
T	Time	Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives.	Pastel Green
R	Reactions	Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	Pastel Purple
A	Actions	Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	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.	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.	Pastel Orange
S	Scenery / Setting	Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses.	Pastel Green

How to Use TRACKS

Teacher Script

“As we read, we hunt for all six kinds of evidence and highlight each one in its TRACKS color. Then we use CSI to decide which highlighted words are strong enough to quote for a given prompt. Highlighting finds possible evidence; CSI chooses the best.”

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 — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

[2] England in the early 1200s looked very different from the country people know today. Most people lived in small villages and worked on farms. Travel was difficult, and news spread slowly. Kings held a great deal of power over the land and the people who lived there. They made decisions about laws, taxes, and government. Many people believed that a king's authority came from God and should not be questioned.

[3] King John had been ruling England for several years when problems began to grow. He spent large amounts of money fighting wars with other countries. Many of these military campaigns were unsuccessful, which caused him to lose land and support. Because wars were expensive, King John needed more money. To raise funds, he increased taxes on landowners and demanded payments from people throughout England.

[4] The barons were especially upset. Barons were powerful landowners who controlled large areas of land and often provided support to the king. They believed the taxes were becoming unfair and that King John was making important decisions without listening to others. Many felt that the king was using his power in ways that harmed the people he was supposed to lead.

[5] As time passed, disagreements between King John and the barons became more serious. The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. They argued that leaders should be responsible for their actions and should not be allowed to do whatever they wanted. This idea was unusual because kings often had more authority than anyone else in the country.

[6] Eventually, the barons decided they needed to take action. They organized together and demanded changes. Their goal was not to remove the king from power. Instead, they wanted him to agree to limits on his authority. After months of conflict and negotiations, the barons forced King John to meet them at Runnymede, a grassy field near the River Thames.

[7] There, the Magna Carta was written and signed.

[8] Although the signing of the Magna Carta happened in a single location on a single day, its impact would last for centuries. The document contained promises and rules that were designed to prevent the king from abusing his power. It represented an agreement between the king and the barons about how government should operate.

[9] The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. This idea may seem normal today, but it was revolutionary in 1215. Before the Magna Carta, many rulers believed they could make decisions without restrictions. The document introduced the idea that even leaders must obey the law.

[10] The Magna Carta also protected certain rights of the people. One of its most famous

principles involved fair treatment under the law. For example, it stated that people could not be punished without a fair trial. This meant that a person could not simply be arrested or punished because a ruler wanted it to happen. Instead, there needed to be a legal process.

[11] This idea helped establish an important principle that continues to influence legal systems today. People wanted protection from unfair treatment, and the Magna Carta provided a foundation for those protections. While the document originally focused on the rights of certain groups, many of its ideas later expanded to influence broader concepts of freedom and justice.

[12] The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. They wanted a government that followed laws rather than relying only on the decisions of one person. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice.

[13] The Magna Carta did not solve every problem in England. In fact, conflicts continued after it was signed. Some parts of the agreement were ignored, challenged, or revised over time. However, the ideas contained within the document continued to grow in importance. Leaders, lawmakers, and scholars studied the Magna Carta and recognized that it introduced important concepts about government and individual rights.

[14] As years passed, the Magna Carta became a symbol of the idea that government power should have limits. People increasingly believed that leaders should be accountable for their actions and that citizens should have protections under the law. These beliefs influenced political thinking throughout Europe and beyond.

[15] Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.

[16] When American leaders met to create a new government after the American Revolution, they wanted to avoid some of the problems that had existed under powerful rulers in the past. They believed government officials should follow laws, respect the rights of citizens, and be held accountable for their actions. Many of these principles can be connected to ideas first expressed in the Magna Carta.

[17] The Constitution established a system in which power is divided among different branches of government. This helps prevent any one person or group from gaining too much control. The Magna Carta helped inspire this way of thinking because it emphasized that power should have limits.

[18] The influence of the Magna Carta can still be seen today. Courts use laws and legal procedures to help ensure fairness. Citizens have rights that governments are expected to protect. Leaders are required to follow laws just like everyone else. These ideas may seem ordinary now, but they were groundbreaking when the Magna Carta was first signed more than 800 years ago.

[19] Students who learn about the Magna Carta are studying more than just a historical document. They are learning about the origins of ideas that continue to shape governments around the world. The document reminds people that fairness, justice, and

accountability are important parts of a strong society.

[20] Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. Its message has lasted for more than eight centuries because it teaches an important lesson: governments should protect the rights of people and follow the law. What began as an agreement between a king and a group of barons eventually became one of the most influential documents in world history. Because of its lasting impact on freedom, justice, and government, the Magna Carta remains an important symbol of fairness and the rule of law.

Student Annotation Guide — A Promise Written Long Ago

T — Time

In the year 1215

R — Reactions

limited the king's power

A — Actions

he increased taxes on landowners

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Magna Carta

K — Key Knowledge

people could not be punished without a fair trial

S — Scenery/Setting

a grassy field near the River Thames

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

[2] England in the early 1200s looked very different from the country people know today. Most people lived in small villages and worked on farms. Travel was difficult, and news spread slowly. Kings held a great deal of power over the land and the people who lived there. They made decisions about laws, taxes, and government. Many people believed that a king's authority came from God and should not be questioned.

[3] King John had been ruling England for several years when problems began to grow. He spent large amounts of money fighting wars with other countries. Many of these military campaigns were unsuccessful, which caused him to lose land and support. Because wars were expensive, King John needed more money. To raise funds, he increased taxes on landowners and demanded payments from people throughout England.

[4] The barons were especially upset. Barons were powerful landowners who controlled large areas of land and often provided support to the king. They believed the taxes were becoming unfair and that King John was making important decisions without listening to others. Many felt that the king was using his power in ways that harmed the people he was supposed to lead.

[5] As time passed, disagreements between King John and the barons became more serious. The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. They argued that leaders should be responsible for their actions and should not be allowed to do whatever they wanted. This idea was unusual because kings often had more authority than anyone else in the country.

[6] Eventually, the barons decided they needed to take action. They organized together and demanded changes. Their goal was not to remove the king from power. Instead, they wanted him to agree to limits on his authority. After months of conflict and negotiations, the barons forced King John to meet them at Runnymede, a grassy field near the River Thames.

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principles involved fair treatment under the law. For example, it stated that people could not be punished without a fair trial. This meant that a person could not simply be arrested or punished because a ruler wanted it to happen. Instead, there needed to be a legal process.

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PASSAGE 2 — Morning in the Village

[1] The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside. The tall pine trees were still dark, but she could hear people moving around the village.

[2] Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods. Their homes were built close together, and everyone knew each other. Some people were already cooking, while others were heading out to work.

[3] Tayanita liked the early morning hours. The village felt peaceful before the day became busy. Smoke drifted from cooking fires, and the smell of food filled the air. Birds called from the trees, and the river moved quietly nearby. She could hear the sound of people talking as they began their daily chores.

[4] The Caddo people worked hard to provide for their families. Everyone had responsibilities. Some people farmed, some hunted, and others made tools, baskets, or pottery. Children learned by watching adults and helping with small tasks. Tayanita was proud when her family trusted her with important jobs.

[5] Tayanita walked with her mother to the fields. Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows. Her mother always called them the “Three Sisters” because they helped each other grow. Tayanita didn’t understand all of it, but she knew they needed all three to have enough food.

[6] The fields were important to the village. Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops. Everyone understood that a successful harvest meant there would be enough food for the coming months. Tayanita often helped by pulling weeds or carrying baskets filled with vegetables.

[7] As they worked, her mother explained how the plants supported one another. The corn grew tall and provided a place for the bean vines to climb. The beans helped return nutrients to the soil. The squash spread across the ground and helped keep weeds from growing. Although the explanation seemed complicated, Tayanita liked learning about the plants.

[8] Nearby, her uncle was talking about planting something different in one part of the field next season. He said it helped the soil stay strong. Tayanita just nodded and kept pulling weeds.

[9] Although she did not understand everything her uncle was saying, she enjoyed listening to the adults discuss farming. They seemed to know exactly what the land needed. Her grandfather often said that people should care for the land because the land cared for them. Tayanita thought about those words whenever she worked in the fields.

[10] As the morning continued, the sun climbed higher into the sky. Workers moved steadily through the fields. Some people carried baskets, while others checked on the growing crops. Children helped where they could. The village depended on everyone working together.

[11] By midday, the weather had become warmer. Tayanita wiped sweat from her forehead and took a short break. She sat beneath a tree and looked across the fields. Rows of crops stretched in every direction. Seeing all the work made her realize how much

effort it took to feed an entire village.

[12] Later, she went with her grandfather to the large mound in the middle of the village. It was tall, and it had taken many years to build. People gathered there for important events. From the top, she could see trees stretching far in every direction.

[13] Her grandfather told her that many generations of Caddo people had helped build the mound. It was a special place where leaders met, ceremonies were held, and important decisions were discussed. People respected the mound because it connected them to their history.

[14] Tayanita enjoyed visiting the mound. From the top, she could see the layout of the entire village. Homes were arranged near one another, and smoke rose from cooking fires. Beyond the village stood the forests of the Piney Woods. The trees seemed endless.

[15] Her grandfather pointed toward different parts of the village and explained their importance. He showed her where families gathered for celebrations and where people stored food after harvests. He reminded her that every part of the village served a purpose.

[16] As they climbed down, they passed several people carrying supplies. Some were bringing wood for cooking fires, while others transported baskets of food. The village was always active. Every person contributed in some way.

[17] Near the river, several people were collecting water while others prepared canoes. The river was one of the village's most valuable resources. It provided water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. It also helped people travel to nearby villages and trade with other communities.

[18] That afternoon, visitors came from another village. They brought pottery and tools to trade. In return, her people shared food. Tayanita liked watching the trades. It felt like everyone was connected somehow.

[19] The visitors displayed carefully made pottery decorated with patterns. Some carried stone tools, while others brought items their village was known for producing. The Caddo people examined the goods and discussed what they might exchange.

[20] Trade was important because no single village could make everything it needed. By exchanging goods, communities gained access to resources and tools they might not otherwise have. Trade also helped people build friendships and maintain relationships with neighboring groups.

[21] Tayanita listened as adults talked with one another. Some discussed hunting, while others shared news about nearby communities. The visitors told stories about places they had traveled and people they had met. Tayanita enjoyed hearing about areas beyond her own village.

[22] One visitor described a river far larger than the one near their village. Another talked about meeting people who lived many days away. Tayanita listened carefully and imagined what those places might look like.

[23] She noticed that the visitors were treated with respect. Even though they came from another village, they were welcomed warmly. Her family believed that cooperation helped communities grow stronger. Working together often benefited everyone.

[24] As the afternoon turned to evening, families began preparing meals. Children returned home, and workers finished their tasks for the day. The sounds of conversation filled the village as people gathered together.

[25] Tayanita helped carry food while her mother prepared dinner. The smell of cooking filled the air. Family members shared stories about their day while they worked. These conversations helped everyone stay connected.

[26] As they ate, her grandfather shared stories about Caddo traditions. He spoke about the importance of community, responsibility, and respect. He reminded everyone that each generation had a responsibility to preserve the customs that had been passed down.

[27] Tayanita listened closely. She enjoyed hearing stories about the past. They helped her understand why certain traditions remained important.

[28] As the day ended, she looked around her village. It was busy, but it also felt like home.

[29] The glow of evening fires spread across the village. Families shared meals, laughed together, and prepared for the next day. The sounds of conversation mixed with the gentle sounds of nature surrounding the community.

[30] Before going inside, Tayanita looked one last time at the homes, the fields, the mound, and the forests beyond the village. She thought about everything she had experienced that day. She had worked in the fields, learned from her grandfather, watched traders arrive, and spent time with her family.

[31] Tomorrow would bring another busy day. There would be more work to do and more things to learn. Tayanita smiled as she stepped inside her home. Surrounded by family, friends, and traditions that had been passed down for generations, she felt thankful to be part of the Caddo community and proud of the village she called home.

Student Annotation Guide — Morning in the Village

T — Time

The sun was just starting to come up

R — Reactions

cooperation helped communities grow stronger

A — Actions

Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Tayanita

K — Key Knowledge

Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows

S — Scenery/Setting

a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Morning in the Village

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Day 1 - Gather and Reveal



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS 4(F)(ix)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose

Day 1 Purpose

Students gather by catching the strongest evidence from a set of quotes, then reveal what counts as evidence and the CSI test.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Catch the Strongest Evidence

Do not star yet. Hear all three choices first. Listen to the prompt. Hear three possible quotes. Star the strongest quote. Defend it with C-S-I.

- Round 1 Prompt: Why did the barons want limits on King John's power? Quotes: "At that time, King John ruled England." / "The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions." / "In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England." Answer: 2 - it directly supports the reason the barons wanted change.

- Round 2 Prompt: How does the passage show cooperation in Tayanita's community? Quotes: "The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside." / "They brought pottery and tools to trade." / "It was busy, but it also felt like home." Answer: 2 - it gives an observable action (trade) that supports cooperation.

Teacher Script: "Your ears have a job. You are not listening for a quote that is merely true. You are listening for the quote that best connects to the prompt and best supports the idea." Fresh Recall: Without looking, students name the three CSI questions they should ask before choosing evidence.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Which Response Proves the Idea?)

Write on the board: Response A - "The setting is important because people grow food. The village has crops and trades with others." Response B - "The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows' and 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.'" Which proves the idea better? Is every quote automatically strong evidence?

- Answer Key: Response B - it uses exact words from the passage that directly support farming and trade.

R — Reveal: What Counts as Evidence + the CSI Test

Display the What-is-Evidence chart, the CSI chart, and the signal-phrases chart (see the Evidence and CSI page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- Evidence = exact words from the text in quotation marks. NOT evidence = "People grow food."
- CSI: C - Connect to the prompt; S - Support the thesis (central idea); I - Infer something important. Three strong YES answers = strong evidence.
- Announce evidence with a signal phrase and quotation marks. Chant: "Hey! Hey! Hey! Evidence is on the way!"

★ Daily Deck Slide (The CSI Test)

Write on the board: Strong evidence must pass CSI. C - Does the quote connect to the prompt? S - Does it support the thesis (central idea)? I - Can it help us infer something important? A quote is not automatically strong evidence.

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "Evidence is ___, and it is strong when it passes ___."

Day 2 - Attempt

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(ii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
ELPS 4(D)(iii)	write content-area texts using a variety of transition words

Day 2 Purpose

Students attempt the module skill through CSI Evidence Sort: read a quote, test it with CSI, decide strong or weak, and defend the decision.

★ Daily Deck Slide (CSI Evidence Sort — How to Play)

Write on the board: Draw a task card. Read the quote. Test it with CSI. Decide Strong or Weak for the task. Defend your decision using C, S, and I. Move your Pencil Guy if your reasoning is correct. Record one strong quote and explain why it is strong.

CSI Sample Round

Quote: "They brought pottery and tools to trade." Test it: C - connects to village setting/community? S - supports an idea about trade or cooperation? I - can we infer people depended on one another? Answer: Strong Evidence - it supports trade and community setting and can support an inference about cooperation. Sentence Frame: "This evidence is strong/weak because it ___ the prompt, ___ the thesis (central idea), and helps me infer ___."

Card	Quote	Answer
1	"Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows"	Strong (connects to farming setting)
2	"They brought pottery and tools to trade"	Strong (supports trade and community setting)
3	"People gathered there for important events"	Strong (shows community setting)
4	"The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions"	Strong (supports why the barons wanted change)
5	"The barons wanted the king to follow rules"	Strong (supports the idea that people wanted limits on royal power)
6	"Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens"	Strong (supports the Magna Carta's influence on later government)
7	"People moved around the village"	Weak (too general, lacks strong connection)
8	"The sun was just starting to come up"	Weak (describes time, not strong support)



Day 2 Closing

Record one strong piece of evidence in your interactive notebook and explain why it is strong.

Day 3 - Discuss and Use Again



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
TEKS (11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
TEKS (11)(D)(i)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement
ELPS 4(F)(x)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 3 Purpose

Students discuss why a quote was strong, then independently add strong evidence to a thesis (central idea) and run an evidence-sentence conventions sweep.

D — Discuss: Why Was It Strong?

Choose one quote your group sorted. Explain: How did it connect to the prompt? What part of the thesis (central idea) did it support? What could a reader infer from it? Why would another quote be weaker?

- Student: "It matched the topic." / "It helped prove the idea." Teacher: "If your evidence does not pass CSI, it is not strong."



Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How does CSI help us decide whether evidence is strong enough?"

U — Use Again: Add Evidence to the Thesis (Central Idea)

Given Thesis (Central Idea): The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. Task: Add one or more strong pieces of evidence that pass CSI. Announce the evidence with a signal phrase and quotation marks.

- Answer Reveal: "The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows' and 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.'" (First quote supports farming; second supports trade; both connect directly to the thesis (central idea).)

Second Practice - Given Thesis (Central Idea): The author shows the setting through details about the environment. Add evidence that proves the environment.

- Answer Reveal: "The author shows the setting through details about the environment. The text says, 'The tall pine trees were still dark' and 'Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river.'"

Standards Application Check — Module 3 Evidence-Sentence Sweep

After you write your evidence sentence: confirm it is a complete sentence; check subject-verb agreement in the sentence around the quote; check your high-frequency spelling; and confirm the quoted words match the passage exactly.

- Teacher Model: "The text shows why the barons wanted change when it states, 'The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.'"
- Answer Key / Look-Fors: the sentence frame is complete; "text shows" agrees; high-frequency words are spelled correctly; the quoted evidence is copied accurately from the passage.

Day 3 Closing

Students highlight the strongest quote they used and label its C, S, and I.

Day 4 - Award and Target



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
TEKS (11)(D)(xxxv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of high-frequency words
ELPS 4(C)(i)	write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary

Day 4 Purpose

Students recognize the strong evidence they chose and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Highlight the strongest quote you selected today. Finish: "This quote is strong evidence because ____."

- Write "I used strong evidence today" in your notebook.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award + Target)

Write on the board: AWARD - Highlight the strongest quote you selected today. TARGET - choose one goal: use quotation marks correctly; choose shorter, more meaningful quotes; check CSI before I use a quote; make sure my quote proves my thesis (central idea).

T — Target

Choose one goal.

- I will use quotation marks correctly.
- I will choose shorter, more meaningful quotes.
- I will check CSI before I use a quote.

Curiosity Questions: "Can weak evidence lower your score?" "How do authors choose details to include?"

Day 4 Closing

Complete the sentence: "My next evidence goal is ____ because ____."

Day 5 - Explain to Others

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
ELPS 4(F)(ii)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 5 Purpose

Students teach a partner the CSI test, proving their understanding by explaining how to choose strong evidence.

E — Teach Someone the CSI Test

Teach a partner how to choose strong evidence. You must: state what evidence is; explain C, S, and I; share one quote; explain why the quote is strong or weak; and show how to announce the quote correctly.

Sentence Frame: "This quote is strong evidence because it connects to ___, supports ___, and helps me infer ___."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How can we decide whether a piece of evidence is strong enough to prove our thesis (central idea)?

Strong evidence uses exact words from the text, but quoting alone is not enough. The evidence should pass CSI: it must Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), and help the writer Infer or explain something meaningful. Strong writers also introduce evidence clearly with a signal phrase and quotation marks.

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: Use CSI - Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), Infer something meaningful. A quotation is evidence; a well-chosen quotation that passes CSI is STRONG evidence. Finish: "A quote is strong when it ___."

Teacher Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"You learned that evidence is not optional - it is essential. When you announce and prove your thinking with exact words, you write with confidence and clarity. Keep quoting, connecting, and testing with CSI, and your responses will grow stronger every day."

Module 3 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Why is the setting important to the people in Tayanita's village? Prove your thesis (central idea) with strong evidence that passes CSI.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because people grow food. The village has crops and trades with others." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student states a thesis (central idea) and names farming and trade.
- Teacher Notes: There is no quoted evidence - only a summary - so the idea is not proven with the author's exact words.
- What Needs Improvement: Add exact quotes with a signal phrase and quotation marks that pass CSI.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because people depend on farming. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.'" (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: A thesis (central idea), a signal phrase, and one exact quote that connects and supports.
- Teacher Notes: One quote proves farming; a second quote would strengthen the response and support an inference about the whole community.
- What Needs Improvement: Add a second strong quote (about trade) and connect both to the thesis (central idea).

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows' and 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.'" (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: A clear thesis (central idea) with two exact quotes, each announced correctly, that connect to the prompt, support the thesis (central idea), and let the reader infer that the community depends on cooperation.
- Teacher Notes: Both quotes pass CSI and work together - exactly what strong evidence looks like.

Module 3 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can select evidence that passes CSI and announce it correctly.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two High Stamina passages, the CSI and signal-phrases charts, CSI Evidence Sort task cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts using craft; (11)(C)(ii) revise drafts to improve word choice
Task	Students perform a formative check in CSI Evidence Sort and an independent task adding strong evidence to a thesis (central idea).
Expected Response	Students choose a quote that passes CSI, announce it with a signal phrase, and explain why it is strong.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe CSI Evidence Sort and Catch the Strongest Evidence. Note whether students run all three CSI questions and choose short, meaningful quotes.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Add-Evidence-to-the-Thesis (Central Idea) practice serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Evidence	Must quote the author's exact words in quotation marks.
Connect	The quote must connect to the prompt.
Support	The quote must support the thesis (central idea).
Infer	The quote must let the writer infer or explain something meaningful.

Answer Key — CSI Decision

Three strong YES answers (Connect, Support, Infer) = strong evidence. A quotation that fails any of the three is weak for that task.

Check the Learning

✓ Check the Learning

Informal, low-stakes ways to SEE what students understand in this module — no worksheet required. Use all three so you gather verbal, visual, and written evidence:

- Verbal — Gather/Reveal — Fist to Five: Students show 0-5 fingers for how sure they are they can tell evidence from a summary.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Star the Strongest: As you read three quotes, students star the strongest and name its C, S, and I.
- Written — Discuss/Use — One Evidence Sentence: Students write one evidence sentence with a signal phrase and quotation marks.

Assessment Option

Beside any activity, choose how to check without slowing the lesson:

- Listen — assess through defended CSI choices in discussion.
- Look — observe a CSI Evidence Sort decision or an announced quote.
- Collect — have students produce an evidence sentence you can examine.

Intervention — Module 3

Quote or Not?

Sort each sentence: EVIDENCE = exact words + quotation marks; NOT EVIDENCE = a paraphrase or general statement. Then fix the non-evidence sentence by locating and quoting exact words from the passage.

Students receive mixed sentences (some quotes, some paraphrases). Steps: sort into Evidence and Not Evidence; then rewrite each non-evidence sentence into evidence using exact quoted words.

Teacher Check: After students identify a quote, ask one more question - Does this quote pass CSI for the prompt? This prevents students from treating every quotation as automatically strong.

Teacher Script

"If it is not in quotation marks, it is not evidence." Support: provide sentence stems; highlight quotation marks."

Module 3 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to identify evidence.	Students point to exact words in quotation marks.	Students give a summary.	Remind them: evidence is exact words + quotation marks.
Ask students to run CSI.	Students answer Connect, Support, Infer.	Students think any quote is strong.	Ask, "Does it pass all three - C, S, and I?"
Ask students to announce a quote.	Students use a signal phrase and quotation marks.	Students drop the signal phrase or marks.	Point to the quotation check on the chart.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Summarizes instead of quoting	Use the "Quote or Not?" sort.
Picks an off-topic quote	Run the C question: does it connect to the prompt?
Forgets quotation marks	Use the quotation check steps.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 3 enrichment (Double Evidence Builder).

Enrichment — Module 3

Double Evidence Builder

Build a response with two quotes, then explain how they work together.

Students: write a thesis (central idea), add TWO quotes, and explain how both connect. Required quotes: "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade."

Then explain: What does Quote 1 prove? What does Quote 2 prove? How do the quotes work together? Why are both useful instead of repetitive?

Challenge: Decide whether using both quotes creates a stronger inference than using either quote alone. Teacher Prompt: "Why is one quote not enough in some cases?"

Module 3 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Prove It with Evidence

Writing Prompt

Choose one thesis (central idea) below and add strong evidence that passes CSI.

- The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade.
- The author shows the setting through details about the environment.

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that a quote is not automatically strong evidence. Now choose quotes that pass CSI, announce them with a signal phrase, and prove the thesis (central idea).

Planning Support

1. Reread the passage for exact words that fit the thesis (central idea).
2. Run CSI on each quote: Connect, Support, Infer.
3. Announce the strongest quote with a signal phrase and quotation marks.
4. Add a second quote if it proves a different part of the thesis (central idea).

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Find quotes	Reread for exact words that fit the thesis (central idea).
Step 2: Test with CSI	Keep only quotes that connect, support, and let you infer.
Step 3: Announce	Use a signal phrase and quotation marks.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My evidence is the author's exact words in quotation marks.
- My quotes pass CSI.
- I announced each quote with a signal phrase.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your evidence sentence aloud. Improve the signal phrase or sentence structure so the evidence is announced clearly.

Edit

Run the Conventions Sweep: complete sentence, subject-verb agreement, high-frequency spelling, and quoted words that match the passage exactly.

Module 3 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Catch the Example (Catch the Strongest Evidence).

Purpose: Students listen for the strongest evidence instead of writing everything the teacher says. They must identify the quote that best matches the prompt and defend it with CSI.

Listening Target: Listen for the quote that most directly proves the idea in the prompt.

Student Materials: a notebook or response strip with three boxes; students place a star in Box 1, 2, or 3 after hearing all three choices.

Teacher Script

"Do not star yet. Hear all three choices first. Listen to the prompt, then hear three possible quotes, then star the strongest and defend it with C-S-I."

Round	Prompt	Quotes (1 / 2 / 3)	Answer
1	Why did the barons want limits on King John's power?	"At that time, King John ruled England." / "The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions." / "In the year 1215, ... the Magna Carta was created ... at Runnymede."	2 — it directly supports the reason the barons wanted change.
2	How does the passage show cooperation in Tayanita's community?	"The sun was just starting to come up ..." / "They brought pottery and tools to trade." / "It was busy, but it also felt like home."	2 — it gives an observable action (trade) that supports cooperation.

Fresh Recall: Without looking, students name the three CSI questions they should ask before choosing evidence.

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 — Evidence or Summary?

Stop and think: Is this the author's exact words in quotation marks (evidence) or my own summary (not evidence)?

|| Pause Point — Run CSI

Stop and think: Does this quote Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), and let me Infer something? All three?

|| Pause Point — Announce It

Stop and think: Did I use a signal phrase and quotation marks around the exact words?

|| Pause Point — Strong or Weak?

Stop and think: Is this the strongest quote for the job, or is there a better one in the passage?

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 read and write this week, 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 set	I can do it
Tell evidence from a summary.			
Run the CSI test on a quote.			
Announce a quote with a signal phrase.			
Add strong evidence to a thesis (central idea).			
Check my evidence sentence for conventions.			

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

“At the beginning of this module, we asked how we can decide whether a piece of evidence is strong enough. Now we can answer it: a quote becomes strong evidence when it is the right quote for the job. CSI helps us test whether it connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and gives us something meaningful to infer or explain.”

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answered

How can we decide whether a piece of evidence is strong enough to prove our thesis (central idea)? Strong evidence uses exact words from the text, but quoting alone is not enough. The evidence should pass CSI: Connect to the prompt, Support the thesis (central idea), and help the writer Infer or explain something meaningful. Strong writers introduce evidence with a signal phrase and quotation marks.

Teacher Reflection - Module 3

Which students can tell evidence from a summary?

Which students run all three CSI questions before choosing a quote?

Which students still forget quotation marks or signal phrases?

Who is ready for Module 4, making the evidence mean something through explanation?

Teacher Notes

Module 3 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Use these adjustments to run Module 3 fully online without losing rigor or participation. For Catch the Strongest Evidence, read the prompt and three quotes aloud with cameras on and have students type 1, 2, or 3 in the chat, then call on one student to defend the choice with C-S-I. Post the What-is-Evidence chart, the CSI chart, and the signal-phrases chart in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run CSI Evidence Sort on a shared slide: give each group quotes to drag into Strong or Weak and require a C-S-I justification. For Add-Evidence-to-the-Thesis (Central Idea), students draft in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "Does this quote pass CSI?" rather than choosing the quote for them. Collect the evidence-sentence sweep as a one-photo or typed submission of the single checked sentence.

MODULE

4

**Make the Evidence Mean
Something**

Week 4 • Very High Stamina

Module 4: Make the Evidence Mean Something

Week 4 - Very High Stamina - Cluster 1 (SCR)

Evidence Proves. Explanation Tells What the Proof Means.

Teacher Script

"When students learn how to explain their thinking, they begin to understand that writing is not just about answering - it is about making meaning."

Overarching Question

How does an explanation sentence turn evidence into clear thinking for the reader?

Today We Will Look For

- what an explanation sentence does (and what it does NOT do)
- the Explanation Starter Pack (This means..., This shows..., This reminds me of...)
- the power of THIS - the word that points back to the evidence
- how explanation connects the evidence back to the thesis (central idea)

Student reminder: Evidence proves. Explanation tells the reader what the proof means.

Why This Module Matters

Students complete the SCR - Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, Explanation - by writing the explanation sentence. Using the two Cluster 1 passages at Very High Stamina, students learn that explanation is not repeating the quote; it interprets the evidence, tells why it matters, and connects back to the thesis (central idea). The word THIS points back to the evidence, and starter signals (This means, This shows) help students build the habit of explaining.

Module Passage Set — Very High Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 1 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (nonfiction) and "Morning in the Village" (historical fiction). This module uses the Very High Stamina versions.

Module Independent Product

Complete a full SCR: take a thesis (central idea) and evidence from earlier modules and add an explanation sentence that begins with a starter signal, uses THIS to point back to the evidence, and tells what the evidence means and why it matters.

Module 4 — Family Communication

Purpose: Families are partners in this work. This page gives every family a clear picture of what their child is learning this week, a question to ask at home, and one simple way to help.

This Week at a Glance

- The big skill: writing the EXPLANATION sentence - the sentence after the evidence that tells the reader what the proof means and why it matters.
- The habit: start with a signal like "This means..." or "This shows...", and make sure THIS points back to the evidence.
- The two reading passages: "A Promise Written Long Ago" (the Magna Carta) and "Morning in the Village" (a Caddo village), now at the longest, richest level.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"You gave me a fact - now tell me what it MEANS and why it matters."

One Way to Help

When your child states a fact, ask "So what does that mean?" or "Why does that matter?" Turning a fact into meaning is exactly the explanation habit we practice this week.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child finishes Cluster 1 with Module 4, "Make the Evidence Mean Something." Your child now knows how to write a thesis (central idea) and choose strong evidence. This week they learn the third sentence of a Short Constructed Response: the explanation. Evidence proves an idea; the explanation tells the reader what the proof means and why it matters, and connects it back to the thesis (central idea). Students use starter signals such as "This means..." and "This shows..." and they learn that the word THIS points back to the evidence right before it.

We are still reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community - now at the longest, most detailed level.

Please try this at home: When your child shares a fact, ask "So what does that mean?" and "Why does that matter?" Turning a fact into meaning is the explanation habit we practice this week.

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija termina el Grupo 1 con el Módulo 4, "Make the Evidence Mean Something." Su hijo o hija ya sabe escribir una tesis y elegir evidencia fuerte. Esta semana aprende la tercera oración de una Respuesta Construida Corta: la explicación. La evidencia demuestra una idea; la explicación le dice al lector lo que la prueba significa y por qué importa, y la conecta de nuevo con la tesis. Los estudiantes usan señales de inicio como "Esto significa..." y "Esto muestra..." y aprenden que la palabra ESTO apunta a la evidencia justo antes.

Seguimos leyendo "A Promise Written Long Ago," sobre la Carta Magna, y "Morning in the Village," sobre un día en una comunidad Caddo, ahora al nivel más largo y detallado.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija comparta un hecho, pregúntele "¿Y qué significa eso?" y "¿Por qué importa?" Convertir un hecho en significado es el hábito de explicación que practicamos esta semana.

Con aprecio, El maestro o la maestra de su hijo o hija - The Writing Academy LLC

Module 4 — 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 that an evidence sentence does not?
- What does the word THIS point back to in a response?
- Why is repeating the evidence not the same as explaining it?
- What is one starter you can use to begin an explanation?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - So What Does It Mean?

Share one fact from your day ("It rained"). Then explain it with "This means..." or "This shows..." ("This means we moved the picnic inside").

Family Activity - Point It Back

Give a fact, then an explanation that starts with THIS. Check together that THIS clearly points back to the fact you just said.

Module 4 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 4 completes Cluster 1. Students learn to write the explanation sentence that finishes an SCR - Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, Explanation. Using "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" at Very High Stamina, students distinguish explanation from evidence, use starter signals, make THIS point back to the evidence, and complete a full three-sentence SCR, then run a cumulative conventions sweep.

BIG Goal: Students will write an explanation sentence that interprets the evidence and connects it back to the thesis (central idea), completing a full SCR.

Writing TEKS for This Module

The Student Expectation column below is the exact, full wording of each Grade 4 TEKS breakout — quoted verbatim from the Cluster 1 scope and sequence, not paraphrased or abbreviated.

TEKS	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS breakout)
(11)(B)(i)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction
(12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
(12)(B)(ii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
(12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
(11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
(11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
(11)(D)(i)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement
(11)(D)(vi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including past tense of irregular verbs
(11)(D)(vii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including singular nouns
(11)(D)(viii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including plural nouns
(11)(D)(ix)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including common nouns
(11)(D)(x)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including proper nouns
(11)(D)(xxxiii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate orthographic patterns
(11)(D)(xxxv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of high-frequency words

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Students complete the SCR structure by writing explanation sentences that connect evidence back to the thesis (central idea).
- Explanation practice requires students to revise sentence structure and word choice for clarity and meaning.
- The cumulative Module 4 Conventions Sweep applies the Cluster 1 sentence, noun, verb, capitalization/conventions, and spelling expectations to the completed SCR.

Module 4 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 1 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 1 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(A)(i) plan a first draft by selecting a genre for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies

Writing Genre

- (12)(B)(i) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
- (12)(B)(ii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
- (12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i) revise drafts to improve sentence structure

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vii), (ix), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; singular and common nouns; and correct spelling of high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 1 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(F)(i)–(iii), (v)–(vii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content, style, and register for purpose and audience

Writing Genre

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(i)–(iii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths, sentence types, and transition words
- 4(F)(i)–(ii), (v)–(vi), (ix)–(x), (xiii)–(xiv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content and style for purpose and audience

Revising

- 4(D)(i)–(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths and sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Editing

- 4(B)(ii) write text following conventional spelling rules
- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence types
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students listen, sort, build, and explain. 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	In Catch and Correct the Mistake, students hear a near-miss and repair a weak or repeated explanation.
Speaking	Students justify each sort and teach a partner what an explanation sentence does.
Reading	Students reread the passages to connect quotes to their meaning.
Writing	Students write explanation sentences, complete full SCRs, and run a cumulative conventions sweep.

Module 4 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can tell what an explanation sentence does and how it differs from evidence.
- I can begin an explanation with a starter signal such as "This means" or "This shows."
- I can make the word THIS point back to my evidence.
- I can complete a full SCR with a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

I Will Statements

- I will explain what the evidence means instead of repeating it.
- I will speak about my thinking, record my work, and explain how my explanation connects to the thesis (central idea).
- I will keep my explanation short, direct, and connected to the evidence before it.
- I will run the cumulative conventions sweep on my finished response.

Success Criteria

- I can tell an explanation sentence from an evidence sentence.
- I can write an explanation that interprets the quote and connects to the thesis (central idea).
- I can complete a Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence + Explanation response.
- I can check my finished SCR for conventions.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The Explanation Relay Race sort (evidence vs explanation) with justifications.
- The Build the Third Sentence practice (completed SCRs).
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of what an explanation sentence does.

Module 4 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the What-Explanation-Does chart, the Starter Pack, and the Power-of-THIS chart. You may provide oral rehearsal and sentence frames. You may not write the student's explanation, decide the meaning for them, or supply the connection to the thesis (central idea). The student must still interpret the evidence, choose a starter, and connect back to the thesis (central idea).

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Tell an explanation sentence from an evidence sentence.	Supported. The teacher may reread the pair.	The student sorts the sentences correctly.
Inferential	Write an explanation that tells what the evidence means.	Guided early, independent by Use Again.	The student uses a starter and THIS to interpret the quote.
Evaluative	Complete a full SCR whose explanation connects the evidence to the thesis (central idea).	Independent by Build the Third Sentence.	The student's explanation adds meaning and points back to the thesis (central idea).

Educator Insight

Students often think explanation means repeating the evidence in slightly different words. Others write a personal opinion that is not connected to the quoted evidence at all. Some students can identify evidence but cannot explain why it matters. Watch for explanation sentences that begin correctly but never actually connect back to the thesis (central idea). Students may also confuse a story connection with going off-topic. To fix this, keep the explanation short, direct, and connected to the sentence before it, and repeatedly point out that explanation tells what the evidence means and why it matters.

Module 4 — Thinking Levels

These charts support building rigor. Use them in every module to name the level of thinking a task 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.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Student combines evidence with personal reasoning, applying understanding to a claim.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Student connects evidence to the world, morals, lessons, or broader understanding.

What an Explanation Does

An Explanation IS...	An Explanation is NOT...
tells what the evidence means	another quote or repeated evidence
explains why the evidence matters	a random thought not connected to the evidence
connects the evidence back to the thesis (central idea)	an off-topic story

The Power of THIS: THIS is a demonstrative pronoun that points back to the evidence sentence right before it, helping the writer connect ideas clearly.

Challenge: Write two explanations for the same evidence - one clarifying (This means / This shows) and one connecting (This reminds me of / This makes me think of). Compare which shows stronger thinking.

 Teacher Script

"Keep the explanation short, direct, and connected to the sentence before it."

Oral-Rehearsal Frame: Explanation **Teacher Script**

"My evidence is _____. This means _____. This connects back to my thesis (central idea) because _____. On the state writing assessment, an explanation sentence that adds meaning will complete every response you write."

Module 4 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“Before we begin, let’s preview the words we will use to talk about explanation, meaning, and the SCR - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
explain	to make an idea clear	I explain the quote by ____.
mean	what something stands for	This means ____.
show	to make something known	This shows ____.
point	to direct attention to something	THIS points back to ____.
connect	to link two things together	My explanation connects to ____.
matter	to be important	This matters because ____.
prove	to show something is true	The evidence proves ____.
clear	easy to understand	A clear explanation ____.
think	to use your mind	This makes me think of ____.
understand	to know the meaning of something	The reader can understand ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
explanation	thinking that tells what the evidence means	My explanation shows ____.
clarify	to make an idea clearer	I clarify the quote by ____.
meaning	what the evidence tells us	The meaning of this quote is ____.
signal marker	a starter that begins an explanation	I use the signal marker ____.
demonstrative pronoun	a word like THIS that points to something	THIS is a demonstrative pronoun that ____.
anecdote	a short story that connects to an idea	An anecdote here is ____.
cause	the reason something happens	The cause was ____.
effect	what happens because of a cause	The effect was ____.
metacognition	thinking about your own thinking	I use metacognition when I ____.
thesis (central idea)	the clear main idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
Magna Carta	MAG-nuh KAR-tuh	a 1215 document that limited the king's power	The Magna Carta ____.
Runnymede	RUN-ee-meed	the field in England where the Magna Carta was signed	At Runnymede, ____.
barons	BAIR-uhnz	powerful landowners who wanted the king to follow rules	The barons ____.
territory	TERR-ih-tor-ee	an area of land a country controls	England lost territory when ____.
Caddo	KAD-oh	a Native American people of the Piney Woods	The Caddo village ____.
Three Sisters	three SIS-terz	corn, beans, and squash grown together	The Three Sisters ____.
mound	mownd	a tall built-up hill used for important events	The mound ____.
pottery	POT-uh-ree	objects shaped from clay	The visitors brought pottery to ____.
harvest	HAR-vist	the gathering of ripe crops	A successful harvest meant ____.
Constitution	kon-stih-TOO-shun	a written plan of a government's rules and powers	The U.S. Constitution ____.



Teacher Resource

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

Module 4 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

This module uses the same two Cluster 1 passages at Very High Stamina - the longest and most detailed versions. "A Promise Written Long Ago" is a full nonfiction account of the Magna Carta: King John's costly wars and taxes, the barons' demand for limits on royal power, the signing at Runnymede, and the document's lasting influence on the U.S. Constitution. "Morning in the Village" is a full historical-fiction account of a day in a Caddo village, rich with details of farming, the mound, the river, trade, and family tradition.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 1 modules; at Very High Stamina they carry the most evidence and meaning. That richness supports this module's goal: writing the explanation sentence that turns evidence into clear thinking. The heart of the module is that explanation interprets the evidence - it tells what the quote means and why it matters - and the word THIS keeps the explanation connected to the evidence right before it.

Module 4 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Anchor Charts to Create

- What an Explanation Does: explains the evidence; connects the evidence to the thesis (central idea); helps the reader understand the writer's thinking
- What an Explanation Is / Is Not: IS - tells what the evidence means; IS NOT - repeats the evidence word-for-word or gives a random thought
- SCR Structure So Far: Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, Explanation
- Explanation Starter Pack: This means... / This shows... (clarifying); This reminds me of... / This makes me think of... (story/anecdotal)
- The Power of THIS: THIS is a demonstrative pronoun that points back to the evidence sentence right before it

Post for Students

- Sentence habits: capitalize the first word of each sentence; punctuate the last word of each sentence.

Materials

- Printed passages (Very High Stamina)
- Interactive notebooks, glue, scissors, crayons or colored pencils
- Sorting cards
- Gameboard path, spinner
- Student-selected "Pencil Guy" markers
- Chart paper or whiteboard, sentence strips, highlighters

Quick Teacher Reference

Students will: learn what an explanation sentence is supposed to do; distinguish explanation from evidence; use starter signal markers for explanation; build explanation sentences from thesis (central idea) and evidence from earlier modules; understand that the word THIS points back to nearby evidence; and build the habit of explaining instead of repeating.

Module 4 — The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT Reading Habit

The DOT reading habit has three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop.

Teacher Script

"As strong readers, we use the DOT habit while we read the passages in our Interactive Notebooks. DOT stands for three steps: Dot, Discover, Drop."

Step	What It Means
D — Dot	Place a small dot above any word that seems unfamiliar as you are reading.
O — Discover	Discover the meaning of the word as we learn together through our lessons.
T — Drop	Go back and erase the dot above the word once you know its meaning.

Board text: Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot.

Encouragement: "This habit helps your brain keep track of the words you are still learning. Good readers notice new words, find out what they mean, and celebrate when they own them."

Module 4 — The Explanation Sentence

Teacher Script

"Today we learn the explanation sentence in a Short Constructed Response. The explanation sentence comes after the evidence. Evidence proves. Explanation tells the reader what the proof means."

What an Explanation Does

- It explains the evidence.
- It connects the evidence to the thesis (central idea).
- It helps the reader understand the writer's thinking.

What an Explanation IS / IS NOT

Explanation IS	Explanation is NOT
tells what the evidence means	repeats the evidence word-for-word
explains why it matters	gives a random thought not connected to the evidence
connects back to the thesis (central idea)	an off-topic story

The Explanation Starter Pack

Type	Starters
Clarifying (definition)	This means... / This shows...
Story / anecdotal	This reminds me of... / This makes me think of...

The Power of THIS

THIS is a demonstrative pronoun. THIS points back to the evidence sentence right before it, and it helps the writer connect ideas clearly. Before choosing an explanation, point to the exact evidence THIS refers to.

The SCR So Far

Thesis (Central Idea) -> Evidence -> Explanation. The explanation is the third sentence that finishes the response.

Chant: "Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Teacher Script

"Keep the explanation short, direct, and connected to the sentence before it. Ask yourself: What do I want the reader to understand because of this quote?"

Module 4 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students explain, they reread "A Promise Written Long Ago" and "Morning in the Village" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. At Very High Stamina the passages carry the most evidence - and the most meaning to explain.

The Six Types of Measurable Evidence: TRACKS

As students read each passage, they TAP the TRACKS — they hunt for the six kinds of evidence and highlight each with the TRACKS color below. Use the same six categories, the same wording, and the same colors in every module.

Letter	Category	What to Look For	Highlight Color
T	Time	Age, era, dates, cultural details, or historical details. Often associated with adjectives.	Pastel Green
R	Reactions	Reactions, solutions, resolutions, or effects. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	Pastel Purple
A	Actions	Actions, problems, conflicts, or causes. Often associated with verbs and adverbs.	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.	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.	Pastel Orange
S	Scenery / Setting	Setting characteristics that are acknowledged or measured through the five senses.	Pastel Green

How to Use TRACKS

Teacher Script

“As we read, we hunt for all six kinds of evidence and highlight each one in its TRACKS color. Once we quote a highlighted detail, our explanation sentence tells the reader what that detail means and why it matters.”

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 — A Promise Written Long Ago

[1] Lexile band listed in the scope and sequence: 810–1000L

[2] Documented student-facing word count: 1,490

[3] In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions.

[4] England in the early 1200s was very different from the country people know today. Most people lived in small villages and worked on farms. Roads were rough, and traveling long distances took a great deal of time. There were no cars, trains, or airplanes. News spread slowly because messages had to be carried by travelers on horseback or by foot. Life was difficult for many people, and most families worked hard every day to grow food and care for their homes.

[5] At that time, kings held tremendous power. The king made important decisions about laws, taxes, land, and government. Many people believed a king's authority came from God, which made it difficult for ordinary citizens to challenge his decisions. If a king chose to create a new tax or punish someone, there were often few ways for people to object.

[6] King John became ruler of England in 1199. During his reign, he faced several challenges. He spent large amounts of money fighting wars against neighboring countries. Many of these military campaigns ended unsuccessfully, causing England to lose territory and influence. Because wars were expensive, King John continually searched for ways to raise money.

[7] One of the main ways he raised money was through taxes. He demanded payments from landowners and other groups throughout the kingdom. Many people believed these taxes were unfair. They felt they were being forced to pay more and more money while receiving little in return. As frustration grew, trust in the king began to decline.

[8] Among the most dissatisfied people were the barons. Barons were wealthy landowners who controlled large areas of land throughout England. They often provided soldiers and support to the king during times of war. In return, they expected fair treatment and protection of their rights.

[9] However, many barons believed King John was not treating them fairly. They felt he ignored their concerns and made decisions without listening to anyone else. They worried that if the king's power continued to grow, the rights of the people would become even weaker.

[10] The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. They argued that leaders should be responsible for their actions and should not be allowed to make decisions without limits. At the time, this idea was unusual because many rulers believed they could govern however they wished.

[11] As disagreements increased, tensions between King John and the barons became more serious. The barons began meeting together to discuss possible solutions. They believed something needed to change. Eventually, they decided to demand that the king

agree to certain rules that would limit his authority.

[12] Their goal was not to remove King John from power. Instead, they wanted to make sure he governed more fairly. They hoped to create an agreement that would protect people from unfair treatment and prevent the king from abusing his power.

[13] Finally, in June of 1215, King John met the barons at Runnymede, a grassy meadow beside the River Thames. It was there that one of the most important documents in history was created.

[14] The Magna Carta was written and signed.

[15] Although the document may have seemed like a simple agreement at the time, its impact would last for centuries. The Magna Carta established rules that limited the authority of the king and protected certain rights. It became a symbol of fairness and the belief that no one should be above the law.

[16] The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. Before this document existed, kings often made decisions without restrictions. The Magna Carta introduced a different idea. It stated that the king must follow the law just like everyone else.

[17] Today, this idea may seem ordinary, but in 1215 it was groundbreaking. Many people had never considered the possibility that a king could be required to obey laws. The Magna Carta challenged the belief that rulers should have unlimited authority.

[18] The document also protected certain rights of the people. One of its most famous principles involved fair treatment under the law. For example, it stated that people could not be punished without a fair trial. This meant a person could not simply be arrested or punished because a ruler wanted it to happen.

[19] Instead, there needed to be a legal process. Evidence had to be considered, and decisions needed to be made fairly. This concept became an important foundation for future legal systems.

[20] The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. They wanted leaders who would respect laws and consider the needs of the people they governed. Because of this, the document reflects the growing belief that fairness and justice should be important parts of government.

[21] While the Magna Carta was an important step forward, it did not immediately solve every problem. Conflicts between the king and the barons continued. Some parts of the document were challenged, revised, or ignored over time. Even so, the ideas contained in the Magna Carta continued to spread.

[22] Many people recognized that the document introduced powerful concepts about government. They saw value in the idea that leaders should have limits and that citizens should have protections under the law.

[23] As centuries passed, the Magna Carta became more than just an agreement between a king and a group of barons. It became a symbol of freedom, fairness, and accountability. Scholars, lawmakers, and political leaders studied its principles and applied them in new situations.

[24] Its influence reached far beyond England. Governments in different parts of the world began considering similar ideas about rights and the rule of law. Many leaders believed that fair governments should protect citizens and prevent any one person from becoming too powerful.

[25] Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens.

[26] When American leaders met to design a new government after the American Revolution, they carefully considered lessons from history. They wanted to avoid the problems that can occur when too much power is placed in the hands of one person or group.

[27] As a result, they created a system that divided power among different branches of government. This structure helps prevent any single branch from becoming too powerful. The idea of limiting government authority can be connected to principles first expressed in the Magna Carta.

[28] Other American documents also reflect ideas that can be traced back to the Magna Carta. The Bill of Rights protects important freedoms and guarantees certain legal protections. Concepts such as fair trials, due process, and equal treatment under the law are connected to principles that were first introduced centuries earlier.

[29] The influence of the Magna Carta can still be seen today. Courts continue to rely on laws and legal procedures to help ensure fairness. Government leaders are expected to follow laws rather than act however they choose. Citizens have rights that governments are responsible for protecting.

[30] These ideas help create stability and trust within society. When people believe laws will be applied fairly, they are more likely to feel confident in their government. Fair laws help protect individuals and encourage leaders to act responsibly.

[31] The Magna Carta also reminds people that positive change often begins when individuals work together to address problems. The barons recognized that something needed to change, and they took action to seek a solution. Their efforts resulted in a document that would eventually influence millions of people around the world.

[32] Students who study the Magna Carta are learning about more than a single historical event. They are learning about ideas that continue to shape governments and societies today. Concepts such as fairness, justice, accountability, and equal treatment remain important because they help communities function effectively.

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Its ideas have shaped governments, inspired leaders, and helped protect the rights of citizens for generations. Because of its lasting impact on freedom, justice, and the rule of law, the Magna Carta continues to be remembered as a promise written long ago that still matters today.

Student Annotation Guide — A Promise Written Long Ago

T — Time

In the year 1215

R — Reactions

limited the king's power

A — Actions

demanded payments from landowners

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Magna Carta

K — Key Knowledge

people could not be punished without a fair trial

S — Scenery/Setting

Most people lived in small villages

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — A Promise Written Long Ago

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PASSAGE 2 — Morning in the Village

[1] The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside. The tall pine trees were still dark, but she could hear people moving around the village.

[2] Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods. Their homes were built close together, and everyone knew each other. Some people were already cooking, while others were heading out to work.

[3] Tayanita liked the early morning hours. The village felt peaceful before the day became busy. Smoke drifted from cooking fires, and the smell of food filled the air. Birds called from the trees, and the river moved quietly nearby. She could hear people talking as they began their daily chores.

[4] The Caddo people worked hard to provide for their families. Everyone had responsibilities. Some people farmed, some hunted, and others made baskets, pottery, or tools. Children learned by watching adults and helping whenever they could. Tayanita felt proud when her parents trusted her with important jobs.

[5] Her family had lived in the village for many years. The people knew one another well and often worked together. If someone needed help building a home or gathering food, neighbors were willing to assist. The community depended on cooperation.

[6] Tayanita walked with her mother to the fields. Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows. Her mother always called them the “Three Sisters” because they helped each other grow. Tayanita didn’t understand all of it, but she knew they needed all three to have enough food.

[7] The fields were important to the village. Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops. Everyone understood that a successful harvest meant there would be enough food for the coming months. Tayanita often helped by pulling weeds or carrying baskets filled with vegetables.

[8] As they worked, her mother explained how the plants supported one another. The corn grew tall and provided a place for bean vines to climb. The beans helped improve the soil. The squash spread across the ground and helped keep weeds from taking over. Although the explanation seemed complicated, Tayanita liked learning about the plants.

[9] Nearby, her uncle was talking about planting something different in one part of the field next season. He said it helped the soil stay strong. Tayanita just nodded and kept pulling weeds.

[10] Although she did not understand everything her uncle was saying, she enjoyed listening to the adults discuss farming. They seemed to know exactly what the land needed. Her grandfather often said that people should take care of the land because the land took care of them. Tayanita thought about those words whenever she worked outside.

[11] As the morning continued, the sun climbed higher into the sky. Workers moved steadily through the fields. Some people carried baskets, while others checked the growing crops. Children helped where they could. The village depended on everyone doing their part.

[12] One woman walked through the fields checking the condition of the plants. Another family was preparing an area for future planting. Everywhere Tayanita looked, people were busy. The work was not easy, but everyone understood its importance.

[13] By midday, the weather had become warmer. Tayanita wiped sweat from her forehead and took a short break. She sat beneath a tree and looked across the fields. Rows of crops stretched in every direction. Seeing all the work made her realize how much effort it took to feed an entire village.

[14] Her mother sat beside her and handed her a drink of water.

[15] "You are becoming a good worker," her mother said.

[16] Tayanita smiled. She liked hearing that.

[17] After their break, they continued working until it was time to leave the fields. Tayanita gathered her tools and followed her grandfather toward the center of the village.

[18] Later, she went with her grandfather to the large mound in the middle of the village. It was tall, and it had taken many years to build. People gathered there for important events. From the top, she could see trees stretching far in every direction.

[19] Her grandfather told her that many generations of Caddo people had helped build the mound. It was a special place where leaders met, ceremonies were held, and important decisions were discussed. People respected the mound because it connected them to their history.

[20] As they climbed, her grandfather explained that the mound represented the hard work of many people. No single person had built it alone. Each generation had added to it little by little.

[21] "That is how communities become strong," her grandfather said. "People work together."

[22] Tayanita liked that idea.

[23] When they reached the top, she looked across the village. Homes stood in neat groups. Smoke rose from cooking fires. Children played near their families while adults worked nearby.

[24] Beyond the village stood the Piney Woods. Tall trees covered the landscape in every direction. Tayanita thought the forest looked endless.

[25] Her grandfather pointed toward different parts of the village and explained their importance. He showed her where food was stored after harvests and where families gathered for celebrations. Every place had a purpose.

[26] As they climbed down from the mound, they passed several people carrying supplies. Some were bringing wood for cooking fires. Others transported baskets of food. Everyone seemed busy preparing for the afternoon.

[27] Near the river, several people were collecting water while others prepared canoes. The river was one of the village's most valuable resources. It provided water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. It also helped people travel to nearby villages.

[28] Tayanita enjoyed watching the canoes. She imagined what it would be like to travel

far from home and see places she had never visited before.

[29] That afternoon, visitors came from another village. They brought pottery and tools to trade. In return, her people shared food. Tayanita liked watching the trades. It felt like everyone was connected somehow.

[30] The visitors displayed carefully made pottery decorated with patterns. Some carried stone tools, while others brought items their village was known for producing. The Caddo people examined the goods and discussed possible exchanges.

[31] Trade was important because no village could make everything it needed. By exchanging goods, communities gained access to resources that might not be available nearby. Trade also helped people build friendships and maintain relationships with neighboring groups.

[32] Tayanita listened as adults talked with one another. Some discussed hunting, while others shared news about nearby communities. The visitors told stories about places they had traveled and people they had met.

[33] One visitor described a river much larger than the one near the village. Another spoke about traveling for many days through forests and grasslands. Tayanita listened carefully and imagined what those places looked like.

[34] She noticed that the visitors were treated with respect. Even though they came from another village, they were welcomed warmly. Her family believed that cooperation helped communities grow stronger.

[35] One of the visitors showed Tayanita a piece of pottery decorated with patterns she had never seen before.

[36] "Did you make this?" she asked.

[37] The visitor smiled.

[38] "My family did," he replied.

[39] Tayanita studied the pottery carefully. She admired the skill it must have taken to create something so beautiful.

[40] As the afternoon turned to evening, families began preparing meals. Children returned home, and workers finished their tasks for the day. The sounds of conversation filled the village as people gathered together.

[41] Tayanita helped carry food while her mother prepared dinner. The smell of cooking filled the air. Family members shared stories about their day while they worked.

[42] As they ate, her grandfather shared stories about Caddo traditions. He spoke about the importance of community, responsibility, and respect. He reminded everyone that each generation had a responsibility to preserve the customs that had been passed down.

[43] Tayanita listened closely. She enjoyed hearing stories about the past. They helped her understand why certain traditions remained important.

[44] Her grandfather explained that traditions connected people to those who came before them. They reminded families of their history and helped keep the community strong.

[45] As darkness slowly settled over the village, cooking fires glowed brightly. Families

finished their meals and spent time together. Some people told stories while others laughed and talked about the day.

[46] Tayanita looked around and felt grateful for everything she had experienced. She had worked in the fields, learned from her grandfather, visited the mound, watched traders arrive, and spent time with her family.

[47] As the day ended, she looked around her village. It was busy, but it also felt like home.

[48] The glow of evening fires spread across the village. Families shared meals, laughed together, and prepared for the next day. The sounds of conversation mixed with the gentle sounds of nature surrounding the community.

[49] Before going inside, Tayanita looked one last time at the homes, the fields, the mound, the river, and the forests beyond the village. Tomorrow would bring another busy day. There would be more work to do and more things to learn.

[50] She smiled as she stepped inside her home. Surrounded by family, friends, and traditions that had been passed down for generations, Tayanita felt thankful to be part of the Caddo community and proud of the village she called home.

Student Annotation Guide — Morning in the Village

T — Time

The sun was just starting to come up

R — Reactions

cooperation helped communities grow stronger

A — Actions

Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Tayanita

K — Key Knowledge

Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows

S — Scenery/Setting

a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Morning in the Village

[1] The sun was just starting to come up when Tayanita stepped outside. The tall pine trees were still dark, but she could hear people moving around the village.

[2] Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river in the Piney Woods. Their homes were built close together, and everyone knew each other. Some people were already cooking, while others were heading out to work.

[3] Tayanita liked the early morning hours. The village felt peaceful before the day became busy. Smoke drifted from cooking fires, and the smell of food filled the air. Birds called from the trees, and the river moved quietly nearby. She could hear people talking as they began their daily chores.

[4] The Caddo people worked hard to provide for their families. Everyone had responsibilities. Some people farmed, some hunted, and others made baskets, pottery, or tools. Children learned by watching adults and helping whenever they could. Tayanita felt proud when her parents trusted her with important jobs.

[5] Her family had lived in the village for many years. The people knew one another well and often worked together. If someone needed help building a home or gathering food, neighbors were willing to assist. The community depended on cooperation.

[6] Tayanita walked with her mother to the fields. Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows. Her mother always called them the “Three Sisters” because they helped each other grow. Tayanita didn’t understand all of it, but she knew they needed all three to have enough food.

[7] The fields were important to the village. Families worked together to plant, water, and harvest the crops. Everyone understood that a successful harvest meant there would be enough food for the coming months. Tayanita often helped by pulling weeds or carrying baskets filled with vegetables.

[8] As they worked, her mother explained how the plants supported one another. The corn grew tall and provided a place for bean vines to climb. The beans helped improve the soil. The squash spread across the ground and helped keep weeds from taking over. Although the explanation seemed complicated, Tayanita liked learning about the plants.

[9] Nearby, her uncle was talking about planting something different in one part of the field next season. He said it helped the soil stay strong. Tayanita just nodded and kept pulling weeds.

[10] Although she did not understand everything her uncle was saying, she enjoyed listening to the adults discuss farming. They seemed to know exactly what the land needed. Her grandfather often said that people should take care of the land because the land took care of them. Tayanita thought about those words whenever she worked outside.

[11] As the morning continued, the sun climbed higher into the sky. Workers moved steadily through the fields. Some people carried baskets, while others checked the growing crops. Children helped where they could. The village depended on everyone doing their part.

[12] One woman walked through the fields checking the condition of the plants. Another family was preparing an area for future planting. Everywhere Tayanita looked, people were busy. The work was not easy, but everyone understood its importance.

[13] By midday, the weather had become warmer. Tayanita wiped sweat from her forehead and took a short break. She sat beneath a tree and looked across the fields. Rows of crops stretched in every direction. Seeing all the work made her realize how much effort it took to feed an entire village.

[14] Her mother sat beside her and handed her a drink of water.

[15] "You are becoming a good worker," her mother said.

[16] Tayanita smiled. She liked hearing that.

[17] After their break, they continued working until it was time to leave the fields. Tayanita gathered her tools and followed her grandfather toward the center of the village.

[18] Later, she went with her grandfather to the large mound in the middle of the village. It was tall, and it had taken many years to build. People gathered there for important events. From the top, she could see trees stretching far in every direction.

[19] Her grandfather told her that many generations of Caddo people had helped build the mound. It was a special place where leaders met, ceremonies were held, and important decisions were discussed. People respected the mound because it connected them to their history.

[20] As they climbed, her grandfather explained that the mound represented the hard work of many people. No single person had built it alone. Each generation had added to it little by little.

[21] "That is how communities become strong," her grandfather said. "People work together."

[22] Tayanita liked that idea.

[23] When they reached the top, she looked across the village. Homes stood in neat groups. Smoke rose from cooking fires. Children played near their families while adults worked nearby.

[24] Beyond the village stood the Piney Woods. Tall trees covered the landscape in every direction. Tayanita thought the forest looked endless.

[25] Her grandfather pointed toward different parts of the village and explained their importance. He showed her where food was stored after harvests and where families gathered for celebrations. Every place had a purpose.

[26] As they climbed down from the mound, they passed several people carrying supplies. Some were bringing wood for cooking fires. Others transported baskets of food. Everyone seemed busy preparing for the afternoon.

[27] Near the river, several people were collecting water while others prepared canoes. The river was one of the village's most valuable resources. It provided water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. It also helped people travel to nearby villages.

[28] Tayanita enjoyed watching the canoes. She imagined what it would be like to travel

far from home and see places she had never visited before.

[29] That afternoon, visitors came from another village. They brought pottery and tools to trade. In return, her people shared food. Tayanita liked watching the trades. It felt like everyone was connected somehow.

[30] The visitors displayed carefully made pottery decorated with patterns. Some carried stone tools, while others brought items their village was known for producing. The Caddo people examined the goods and discussed possible exchanges.

[31] Trade was important because no village could make everything it needed. By exchanging goods, communities gained access to resources that might not be available nearby. Trade also helped people build friendships and maintain relationships with neighboring groups.

[32] Tayanita listened as adults talked with one another. Some discussed hunting, while others shared news about nearby communities. The visitors told stories about places they had traveled and people they had met.

[33] One visitor described a river much larger than the one near the village. Another spoke about traveling for many days through forests and grasslands. Tayanita listened carefully and imagined what those places looked like.

[34] She noticed that the visitors were treated with respect. Even though they came from another village, they were welcomed warmly. Her family believed that cooperation helped communities grow stronger.

[35] One of the visitors showed Tayanita a piece of pottery decorated with patterns she had never seen before.

[36] "Did you make this?" she asked.

[37] The visitor smiled.

[38] "My family did," he replied.

[39] Tayanita studied the pottery carefully. She admired the skill it must have taken to create something so beautiful.

[40] As the afternoon turned to evening, families began preparing meals. Children returned home, and workers finished their tasks for the day. The sounds of conversation filled the village as people gathered together.

[41] Tayanita helped carry food while her mother prepared dinner. The smell of cooking filled the air. Family members shared stories about their day while they worked.

[42] As they ate, her grandfather shared stories about Caddo traditions. He spoke about the importance of community, responsibility, and respect. He reminded everyone that each generation had a responsibility to preserve the customs that had been passed down.

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Day 1 - Gather and Reveal



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
ELPS 4(F)(ix)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose

Day 1 Purpose

Students gather by catching and repairing a near-miss explanation, then reveal what an explanation does, the Starter Pack, and the power of THIS.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Catch and Correct the Mistake

The teacher may try to trick your ears. When you hear a near-miss: show CATCH IT!, name the problem, repair the sentence, and explain why your repair is stronger.

Teacher Read-Aloud Set and Answer Key:

- Teacher: "'The barons wanted the king to follow rules' is an explanation." Correct: it is EVIDENCE when quoted, because it uses the author's exact words.

- Teacher: "'This means the barons wanted limits on the king's power' is evidence."

Correct: it is an EXPLANATION - it states the writer's interpretation.

- Teacher: "The text says, 'The barons wanted the king to follow rules.' This means the barons wanted the king to follow rules." Problem: the explanation just repeats the evidence. Repair: "This shows the barons believed the king's power should be limited by rules."

- Teacher: "The text says, 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This reminds me of my favorite store." Problem: off-topic. Repair: "This shows trade connected the village to other communities and helped people share resources."

Fresh Recall: Students close their notes and finish orally: "Evidence proves ____.

Explanation tells ____."

★ Daily Deck Slide (Which One Really Explains?)

Write on the board: A. "I forgot my boots, and the ground was wet." B. "I forgot my boots, and the ground was wet. That means my socks got soaked and I felt uncomfortable all morning." Which explains more clearly? Which part is like evidence? Which part is like explanation?

- Answer Key: B - the second sentence tells the effect and why it mattered; it adds meaning, not just another fact.

R — Reveal: What an Explanation Does

Display the What-Explanation-Does chart, the Starter Pack, and the Power-of-THIS chart (see the Explanation Sentence page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- Explanation IS: tells what the evidence means, explains why it matters, connects back to the thesis (central idea). Explanation is NOT: another quote, repeated evidence, or a random thought.
- Starters: This means... / This shows... (clarifying); This reminds me of... / This makes me think of... (story).
- THIS points back to the evidence sentence right before it.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Evidence Proves, Explanation Explains)

Write on the board: SCR Structure: Thesis (Central Idea) to Evidence to Explanation. Evidence proves. Explanation tells the reader what the proof means. Starters: This means / This shows. THIS points back to the evidence. Chant: "Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "Evidence proves ___, and explanation tells ___."

Day 2 - Attempt

A

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(ii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using genre characteristics
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
ELPS 4(D)(iii)	write content-area texts using a variety of transition words

Day 2 Purpose

Students attempt the module skill through the Explanation Relay Race: sort sentences into Evidence or Explanation and be ready to explain why.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Explanation Relay Race — How to Play)

Write on the board: Pick up a card. Read the sentence. Decide Evidence or Explanation. Place it in the correct category. Be ready to explain why. Move your Pencil Guy for each correct set. Fast check: quotation/exact text = likely evidence; meaning/connection/why it matters = explanation. Chant: "Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm explaining now!"

Card	Sentence	Answer
1	"The tall pine trees were still dark."	Evidence
2	This shows the village is surrounded by nature early in the morning.	Explanation
3	"Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river."	Evidence
4	This means the setting includes natural resources that helped the people live there.	Explanation
5	"Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows."	Evidence
6	This shows the people depend on the land for food.	Explanation
7	"They brought pottery and tools to trade."	Evidence
8	This means the setting is a place where people connect and share resources.	Explanation
9	"The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions."	Evidence
10	This shows why the barons believed the king's power needed limits.	Explanation
11	"The barons wanted the king to follow rules."	Evidence
12	This means the barons believed rules should apply even to a powerful ruler.	Explanation
13	"This reminds me of a town market where people bring what they have and share with others."	Explanation
14	"This makes me think of a farm community where everyone depends on the land."	Explanation
15	"People gathered there for important events."	Evidence
16	This shows the village setting is also a place for community life, not just work.	Explanation

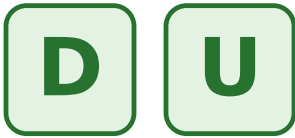
🔑 Explanation Relay Race — Cards and Answer Key

Answer Key: Evidence cards - 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15. Explanation cards - 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16. Teacher Script: "If a sentence has quotation marks and uses the author's exact words, it is evidence. If a sentence tells what the evidence means, it is explanation."

Day 2 Closing

Record one evidence-and-explanation pair in your interactive notebook and underline which is which.

Day 3 - Discuss and Use Again



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(i)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea
TEKS (11)(C)(i)	revise drafts to improve sentence structure
TEKS (11)(D)(i)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement
ELPS 4(F)(x)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 3 Purpose

Students discuss how to tell evidence from explanation, then independently build the third sentence to complete full SCRs and run a cumulative conventions sweep.

D — Discuss: Evidence or Explanation - How Do You Know?

Ask: What did evidence sentences have? What job did explanation sentences do? Why is the word THIS useful? What happens when an explanation does not connect to the evidence?

- Student: "The evidence had quotation marks." / "The explanation told what the quote meant." / "THIS points back to the quote before it."
- Student question: "Can I just repeat the evidence in different words?" Teacher: "That is still too close to the evidence. Your job is to tell why the evidence matters or what we should understand from it."

Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How is the explanation helping the reader understand the evidence?"

U — Use Again: Build the Third Sentence

For each set: read the thesis (central idea), read the evidence, then write the explanation. Begin with a starter signal, make THIS point back to the evidence, tell what the evidence means or why it matters, and capitalize and punctuate correctly. Ask yourself: What do I want the reader to understand because of this quote?

Practice Sets and Answer Keys:

- Set 1 - Thesis (Central Idea): The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. Evidence: "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade." Explanation (example): "This means the village setting helps the people grow food and exchange goods with others."
- Set 2 - Thesis (Central Idea): The author shows the setting through details about the environment. Evidence: "The tall pine trees were still dark" and "Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river." Explanation (example): "This shows the village is surrounded by natural features that shape daily life."
- Set 3 - Thesis (Central Idea): The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. Evidence: "The barons wanted the king to follow rules." Explanation (example): "This means the barons believed the king should not have unlimited power."
- Set 4 - Thesis (Central Idea): The Magna Carta influenced later governments by spreading ideas about limits on power and rights. Evidence: "Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens." Explanation (example): "This shows that limits on government power and protection of rights became lasting ideas."

Teacher Script

"Answers may vary, but each explanation must interpret the evidence and connect back to the thesis (central idea) - it should not simply restate the quotes."

Standards Application Check — Module 4 Cumulative SCR Sweep

Check your Thesis (Central Idea) -> Evidence -> Explanation response: Are your sentences complete and clear? Does each subject agree with its verb? Did you use singular/plural and common/proper nouns correctly? Did you use past-tense irregular verbs correctly when needed? Did you check grade-appropriate spelling patterns and high-frequency words? Did you use capitalization correctly? Does your explanation add meaning instead of repeating the quote?

- Look-Fors: three complete, connected sentences; accurate source quotation; a clear explanation; and no Cluster 1 convention errors that interfere with meaning.

Day 3 Closing

Students underline the explanation sentence in a different color from the thesis (central idea) and evidence so the three parts are clear.

Day 4 - Award and Target



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(ii)	revise drafts to improve word choice
TEKS (11)(D)(xxxiii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including correct spelling of words with grade-appropriate orthographic patterns
ELPS 4(C)(i)	write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary

Day 4 Purpose

Students recognize the explanation they wrote best and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Put a star beside the explanation you are most proud of. Finish: "My explanation helped the reader understand ____."

- Circle the strongest signal marker you used. Earn the title "Meaning Maker" for the day.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award + Target)

Write on the board: AWARD - Put a star beside the explanation you are most proud of. TARGET - choose one next step: connect more clearly to evidence; use THIS correctly; explain why the quote matters; use stronger Thinking Level language; remember capitalization and punctuation.

T — Target

Choose one next step.

- I will make my explanation connect more clearly to my evidence.
- I will use THIS correctly to point back to the quote.
- I will use stronger words from my Thinking Level Chart.

Curiosity Questions: "Why does explanation help a reader trust the writer?" "How does explanation make evidence more powerful?" "Can one quote have more than one possible explanation?"

Day 4 Closing

Complete the sentence: "My next explanation goal is ____ because ____."

Day 5 - Explain to Others

E

TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (12)(B)(iii)	compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using craft
ELPS 4(F)(ii)	write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose

Day 5 Purpose

Students teach a partner what an explanation sentence does, proving their understanding of the full SCR.

E — Turn and Teach: What Does Explanation Do?

Teach your partner: the definition of explanation; one starter signal; what THIS points to; one example using today's evidence; and how explanation connects back to the thesis (central idea).

Frame: "An explanation sentence tells _____. I can start with _____. In this response, THIS points back to _____. The explanation helps the reader understand _____."

- Sample: "An explanation sentence tells what the evidence means. I can start with 'This shows.' In this response, THIS points back to 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.'"

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How does an explanation sentence turn evidence into clear thinking for the reader? An explanation sentence interprets the evidence. It tells the reader what the quoted words mean, why they matter, and how they connect back to the thesis (central idea). Starters such as This means and This shows can help students build the habit of pointing back to the evidence, but the explanation must add the writer's thinking rather than repeat the quote.

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: Evidence gives the proof, but explanation tells the reader what to understand from that proof. The explanation connects the quote to the thesis (central idea) and makes the writer's thinking visible. Finish: "An explanation sentence tells ____."

Teacher Closing Encouragement** Teacher Script**

"You learned that writing is not just about answering - it is about making meaning. When you explain your thinking, you help the reader understand what your evidence proves. You have now built a full response: thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation. Keep making your evidence mean something."

Module 4 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Why is the setting important to the people in Tayanita's village? Complete a full SCR - thesis (central idea), evidence, and an explanation that makes the evidence mean something.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.' The corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student includes a thesis (central idea) and exact evidence.
- Teacher Notes: The third sentence repeats the evidence instead of explaining it - it adds no meaning.
- What Needs Improvement: Replace the repeat with an explanation that starts with a signal and tells what the evidence means.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because people depend on farming. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.' This means they grow food." (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: A thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that begins with a starter and interprets the quote.
- Teacher Notes: The explanation is accurate but general and does not fully connect back to the thesis (central idea) about the community.
- What Needs Improvement: Push the explanation to show why farming matters to the whole village.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. The text says, 'Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows' and 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This means the village setting helps the people grow food and exchange goods with others." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: A complete SCR - a clear thesis (central idea), two exact quotes, and an explanation that interprets both and connects back to the thesis (central idea) using THIS.
- Teacher Notes: The explanation adds meaning and points back to the evidence - the response makes the evidence mean something.

Module 4 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can write an explanation sentence that completes an SCR.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two Very High Stamina passages, the explanation charts, Explanation Relay Race cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts using craft; (11)(C)(i) revise drafts to improve sentence structure
Task	Students perform a formative check in the Explanation Relay Race and an independent task building the third sentence.
Expected Response	Students write an explanation that interprets the evidence, uses THIS, and connects to the thesis (central idea).

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe the Explanation Relay Race and Catch and Correct the Mistake. Note whether students tell explanation from evidence and repair a repeated explanation.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Build the Third Sentence practice serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Starter Signal	Must begin the explanation with a starter (This means / This shows).
THIS	THIS must point back to the evidence sentence before it.
Meaning	Must tell what the evidence means or why it matters.
Connection	Must connect back to the thesis (central idea), not repeat the quote.

Answer Key — Explanation vs Evidence

Evidence = exact words in quotation marks. Explanation = the writer's interpretation that tells what the evidence means and connects it to the thesis (central idea).

Check the Learning

✓ Check the Learning

Informal, low-stakes ways to SEE what students understand in this module — no worksheet required. Use all three so you gather verbal, visual, and written evidence:

- Verbal — Gather/Reveal — Catch It!: Students signal when an explanation merely repeats the evidence and say a stronger version.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Evidence or Explanation: In the relay race, students place a card in the correct category and name why.
- Written — Discuss/Use — Build the Third Sentence: Students write one explanation sentence that starts with a signal and points back with THIS.

Assessment Option

Beside any activity, choose how to check without slowing the lesson:

- Listen — assess through the catch-and-repair discussion.
- Look — observe a relay-race sort or an underlined explanation sentence.
- Collect — have students produce a completed Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence + Explanation response you can examine.

Intervention — Module 4

Match the Explanation (Match, Build, and Say It Slowly)

Read in order: the THESIS (Central Idea), the EVIDENCE, then three EXPLANATION choices. Choose the explanation that tells what the evidence means, connects to the thesis (central idea), and adds understanding. Justify: "This explanation matches because ____."

Teacher Check: Have students physically point to the evidence that THIS refers to before they choose an explanation.

Sample Set A - Thesis (Central Idea): The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. Evidence: "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade." Choices: (a) This means the village setting helps people grow food and share resources. (b) "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." (c) The author wrote a passage. Correct: a.

Sample Set B - Thesis (Central Idea): The author shows the setting through details about the environment. Evidence: "The tall pine trees were still dark" and "Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river." Choices: (a) This shows the setting includes important natural features. (b) The village is a place. (c) "Her family lived in a Caddo village near a river." Correct: a.

Sample Set C - Thesis (Central Idea): The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. Evidence: "The barons wanted the king to follow rules." Choices: (a) This means the barons believed the king should not have unlimited power. (b) The text has information in it. (c) "The barons wanted the king to follow rules." Correct: a.



Teacher Script

"The explanation sentence does not float away by itself. It stays connected to the evidence right before it."

Module 4 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to sort a pair.	Students label evidence vs explanation.	Students think a reworded quote is explanation.	Ask, "Does it tell what the quote MEANS, or just repeat it?"
Ask what THIS points to.	Students point to the evidence before it.	Students use THIS with nothing to point back to.	Have them physically point to the evidence.
Ask students to explain.	Students tell meaning + connect to thesis (central idea).	Students go off-topic.	Ask, "Does this connect back to your thesis (central idea)?"

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Repeats the evidence	Use the "Match the Explanation" choices.
Writes an off-topic story	Check that the anecdote still connects to the thesis (central idea).
Forgets THIS	Point physically to the evidence THIS refers to.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 4 enrichment (Explanation Stretch Lab).

Enrichment — Module 4

Explanation Stretch Lab

Use the same evidence to write two different strong explanations: a clarifying explanation (This means... / This shows...) and a story or connection explanation (This reminds me of... / This makes me think of...).

Then compare: Which stays closest to the thesis (central idea)? Which helps the reader picture the idea? How does each change the reader's understanding? Which shows the stronger thinking level, and why?

Challenge Set - Thesis (Central Idea): The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. Evidence: "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade." Possible responses: "This means the setting gives people a place to grow food and exchange goods." / "This makes me think of a community market where people bring what they have and depend on one another."



Teacher Script

"You are going to stretch your thinking by proving that one quote can be explained in more than one strong way."

Module 4 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Build a Full SCR

Writing Prompt

Choose one thesis (central idea)-and-evidence set below and add the explanation sentence to complete a full SCR.

- Thesis (Central Idea): The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade. Evidence: "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade."
- Thesis (Central Idea): The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. Evidence: "The barons wanted the king to follow rules."

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that explanation makes the evidence mean something. Now finish the response with an explanation that interprets the evidence and connects it to the thesis (central idea).

Planning Support

1. Reread the evidence and ask: What does this quote mean? Why does it matter?
2. Begin with a starter signal (This means / This shows).
3. Make THIS point back to the evidence.
4. Connect the meaning back to the thesis (central idea).

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Read the quote	Ask what it means and why it matters.
Step 2: Start the explanation	Use a starter; make THIS point back.
Step 3: Connect to the thesis (central idea)	Tell the reader what to understand.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My response has a thesis (central idea), evidence, and an explanation.
- My explanation interprets the evidence instead of repeating it.
- THIS points back to my evidence, and the explanation connects to the thesis (central idea).

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your full SCR aloud. Improve the explanation's word choice so it adds meaning and connects clearly to the thesis (central idea).

Edit

Run the Cumulative SCR Sweep: complete sentences with subject-verb agreement, singular/plural and common/proper nouns, irregular past-tense verbs, spelling patterns and high-frequency words, and correct capitalization.

Module 4 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Catch and Correct the Mistake.

Purpose: Students listen for a deliberate near-miss, signal when they hear the error, and repair it. This requires active discrimination between evidence and explanation and between a weak explanation and a meaningful one.

Listening Target: Listen for the moment when evidence and explanation get mixed up or when an explanation merely repeats the quote.

Student Materials: a "Catch It!" hand signal or card; notebook for the repaired sentence.

Teacher Script

"I may give you an explanation that is close - but not correct. Your job is to catch the problem, repair it, and tell us why the new version makes the reader understand more."

Teacher Says	Problem / Correction
"The barons wanted the king to follow rules' is an explanation."	It is EVIDENCE when quoted - it uses the author's exact words.
"This means the barons wanted limits on the king's power' is evidence."	It is an EXPLANATION - it states the writer's interpretation.
"The text says, 'The barons wanted the king to follow rules.' This means the barons wanted the king to follow rules."	The explanation repeats the evidence. Repair: "This shows the barons believed the king's power should be limited by rules."
"The text says, 'They brought pottery and tools to trade.' This reminds me of my favorite store."	Off-topic. Repair: "This shows trade connected the village to other communities and helped people share resources."

Fresh Recall: Students close their notes and finish orally: "Evidence proves ____.
Explanation tells ____."

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 — Evidence or Explanation?

Stop and think: Does this sentence quote the author's exact words (evidence), or does it tell what the words mean (explanation)?

|| Pause Point — What Does THIS Point To?

Stop and think: When I write THIS, what exact evidence does it point back to?

|| Pause Point — Meaning, Not Repeating

Stop and think: Am I telling what the evidence MEANS, or just repeating the quote in new words?

|| Pause Point — Connect to the Thesis (Central Idea)

Stop and think: Does my explanation connect the evidence back to my thesis (central idea)?

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 read and write this week, 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 set	I can do it
Tell an explanation sentence from an evidence sentence.			
Begin an explanation with a starter signal.			
Make THIS point back to my evidence.			
Complete a full SCR (thesis (central idea), evidence, explanation).			
Check my finished response for conventions.			

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

“At the beginning of this module, we asked how an explanation sentence turns evidence into clear thinking. Now we know: evidence gives the proof, but explanation tells the reader what to understand from that proof. The explanation connects the quote to the thesis (central idea) and makes the writer's thinking visible.”

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answered

How does an explanation sentence turn evidence into clear thinking for the reader? An explanation sentence interprets the evidence. It tells the reader what the quoted words mean, why they matter, and how they connect back to the thesis (central idea). Starters such as This means and This shows help students point back to the evidence, but the explanation must add the writer's thinking rather than repeat the quote.

Teacher Reflection - Module 4

Which students can tell explanation from evidence?

Which students write explanations that add meaning instead of repeating the quote?

Which students use THIS to point back to the evidence?

Which students can now build a complete Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence + Explanation response?

Teacher Notes

Module 4 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Use these adjustments to run Module 4 fully online without losing rigor or participation. For Catch and Correct the Mistake, read each near-miss aloud with cameras on and have students type "Catch it!" plus a repaired sentence in the chat, then call on one student to explain why the repair is stronger. Post the What-Explanation-Does chart, the Starter Pack, and the Power-of-THIS chart in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run the Explanation Relay Race on a shared slide: give each group sentences to drag into Evidence or Explanation with a one-line justification. For Build the Third Sentence, students draft in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "What does THIS point back to?" and "Does this connect to your thesis (central idea)?" rather than writing the explanation for them. Collect the cumulative SCR sweep as a one-photo or typed submission of the completed three-sentence response.