

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

A SUBSIDIARY OF TEACH BIG®

GRADE



Cluster 2

Extended Constructed Response - Informational

TEACHER LESSON PLAN GUIDE

Grade 4 • Cluster 2

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Statement of Purpose

Cluster 2 teaches students to write an informative Extended Constructed Response (ECR) - a multi-paragraph, evidence-based answer to a prompt about a text. The cluster's picture is a growing tree: the roots are the passage and the prompt, the trunk is the thesis (central idea), and the branches are the reasons or ways, the evidence, and the explanation.

Across four modules students grow the whole tree, moving from understanding the parts of an ECR to writing a clear central idea, organizing their reasons, and choosing the strongest evidence. Each week the writing stamina grows from Low to Very High.

Abstract

Module 1, Growing the Tree, introduces the ECR and its parts. Module 2, Writing the Thesis (Central Idea), focuses on stating a main idea that answers the prompt directly.

Module 3, Organizing Reasons and Ways, teaches students to structure their supporting points, and Module 4, Choosing Evidence, has students select the details that best prove the central idea. Every day follows the Teach BIG GRADUATE routine, moving students from gathering and revealing the skill, through attempting, discussing, and using it, to awarding growth, targeting the next step, and explaining their thinking to others.

Standards at a Glance

The TEKS below are taught and practiced across Cluster 2. 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
4.11B	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

Growing the Tree

Week 1 • Low Stamina

Module 1: Growing the Tree

Week 1 - Low Stamina - Cluster 2 (ECR Informative)

From Short Response to Extended Response

Teacher Script

"A strong thesis (central idea) gives student thinking a place to stand, a direction to grow, and a purpose to shine."

Overarching Question

How does understanding the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR help us build a strong informative response?

Today We Will Look For

- the parts of an informative ECR: roots, trunk, and branches
- the prompt's Noun of Importance, Verb of Importance, and WHY/HOW clue
- the difference between an SCR (a question) and an ECR (a statement)
- ways to grow a thesis (central idea) into reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation

Student reminder: Roots strong, trunk tall, branches growing.

Why This Module Matters

Students learn that an Extended Constructed Response (ECR) grows like a tree: the roots are the passage and the prompt, the trunk is the thesis (central idea), and the branches are the reason or way, the evidence, and the explanation. Using two Cluster 2 passages, students learn to read an ECR prompt as a statement, mark the Noun of Importance (NOI), the Verb of Importance (VOI), and the WHY/HOW clue, and then build a clear informative response around a central idea.

Module Passage Set — Low Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 2 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "The Energy We Use Everyday" (nonfiction) and "Columbus's Arrival" (nonfiction).

Module Independent Product

Build an ECR tree for an informative prompt: circle the NOI, box the VOI, triangle the WHY/HOW clue, then add a thesis (central idea), one evidence detail, and one explanation that connects the evidence back to the thesis (central idea).

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: building an informative Extended Constructed Response (ECR) that grows from a passage and prompt (roots) to a thesis (central idea) (trunk) to reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation (branches).
- The two reading passages: "The Energy We Use Everyday" (about renewable and nonrenewable resources) and "Columbus's Arrival" (about Columbus's 1492 voyage and its effects).
- What your child will produce: an ECR tree that shows a clear thesis (central idea) supported by evidence and explanation.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"What is your main idea, and what proof from the reading grows out of it?"

One Way to Help

When your child makes a point, ask them to add "because" or "this shows that..." to explain it. Growing a reason into an explanation is the heart of this week's work.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is beginning Cluster 2 of our 4th-grade writing curriculum, "ECR Informative." The focus is the Extended Constructed Response (ECR), which we picture as a growing tree: the roots are the passage and the prompt, the trunk is the thesis (central idea) (the main idea), and the branches are the reason or way, the evidence, and the explanation. The big lesson is that an ECR prompt is a statement to respond to, not a question to answer briefly.

We are reading two passages: "The Energy We Use Everyday," about renewable and nonrenewable resources, and "Columbus's Arrival," about Columbus's 1492 voyage and its lasting effects. Your child will learn to plan an informative response around a clear central idea and to support it with evidence and explanation.

Please try this at home: When your child shares an idea, ask them "Why?" or "How do you know?" and encourage them to explain their reasoning with a detail. That is the thesis (central idea)-evidence-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 2 de nuestro currículo de escritura de cuarto grado, "ECR Informative." El enfoque es la Respuesta Construida Extendida (ECR), que imaginamos como un árbol que crece: las raíces son el pasaje y la indicación, el tronco es la tesis (la idea principal) y las ramas son la razón o la manera, la evidencia y la explicación. La gran lección es que una indicación de ECR es una afirmación a la cual responder, no una pregunta para contestar brevemente.

Leemos dos pasajes: "The Energy We Use Everyday," sobre los recursos renovables y no renovables, y "Columbus's Arrival," sobre el viaje de Colón en 1492 y sus efectos duraderos. Su hijo o hija aprenderá a planificar una respuesta informativa alrededor de una idea central clara y a apoyarla con evidencia y explicación.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija comparta una idea, pregúntele "¿Por qué?" o "¿Cómo lo sabes?" y anímelo a explicar su razonamiento con un detalle. Ese es el hábito de tesis, 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 a thesis (central idea), and why does a strong response need one?
- What is the difference between evidence and explanation?
- Why is an ECR prompt a statement instead of a question?
- Which of our two passages did you find more interesting, and what is one thing it taught you?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Grow an Idea

Start with a main idea out loud ("Our family works best as a team"). Then grow it: give one reason, one example, and one sentence that explains why the example proves the idea.

Family Activity - Why or How

Take turns making a statement, then ask each other "Why?" or "How do you know?" Practice answering with a full explanation, not just a few words.

Module 1 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 1 opens Cluster 2. Students learn that an Extended Constructed Response grows like a tree: roots (passage + prompt), trunk (thesis (central idea)), and branches (reason or way, evidence, explanation). Using "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival," students learn to read an ECR prompt as a statement, mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue, build a thesis (central idea), and support it with evidence and explanation, then run a conventions check on their own sentence.

BIG Goal: Students will build an informative ECR around a clear central idea, supporting a thesis (central idea) with evidence and an explanation that connects back to the 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 2 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 identify the prompt, build the ECR structure, and compose brief informative response parts around a clear central idea.
- A short level-up revision asks students to improve sentence structure and word choice in a response they already created.
- The Module 1 standards application check requires students to edit sentence agreement, nouns, irregular past tense, spelling patterns, and high-frequency words in context.

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

These are the standards listed for Cluster 2 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(B)(i) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction

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-ii) revise drafts to improve sentence structure and word choice

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(x), (xxxiii), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; past tense of irregular verbs; singular, plural, common, and proper nouns; and correct spelling using grade-appropriate orthographic patterns and high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Editing

- 4(A)(i) apply relationships between sounds and letters of the English language to represent sounds when writing [Teacher only]
- 4(B)(i)–(ii) write text following conventional spelling patterns and 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)(i)–(ii) write content-area-specific text using conventions and grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students read, decide, 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 Listen and Sketch, students listen for the parts of the ECR tree and sketch the roots, trunk, and branches from memory.
Speaking	Students justify each BOOM BOOM GRAB choice and teach a partner one part of the ECR tree.
Reading	Students reread the two passages to find exact evidence and tell it apart from explanation.
Writing	Students build an ECR tree, write a thesis (central idea) with evidence and explanation, and run a conventions sweep on their own sentence.

Module 1 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can name the parts of an informative ECR: roots, trunk, and branches.
- I can read an ECR prompt as a statement and mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue.
- I can write a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt with a clear central idea.
- I can support my thesis (central idea) with evidence and an explanation that connects back to it.

I Will Statements

- I will use the passage and the prompt as the roots of my thinking.
- I will speak about my thinking, record my work, and explain how my choices strengthen the response.
- I will tell evidence apart from explanation and use both.
- I will make sure every branch connects back to the trunk.

Success Criteria

- I can label the roots, trunk, and three branches of an ECR tree.
- I can mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue in a prompt.
- I can build a thesis (central idea) and grow it with evidence and explanation.
- I can check my sentence for conventions.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The BOOM BOOM GRAB recording of correctly sorted Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation cards.
- The independent ECR tree with NOI, VOI, and clue marked and the three branches filled in.
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of one part of the ECR tree.

Module 1 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the ECR Tree chart, the Prompt Shapes chart, and the SCR vs. ECR chart. You may provide oral rehearsal and sentence frames. You may not choose a student's thesis (central idea), mark the prompt for them, or write their evidence and explanation. The student must still build the thesis (central idea), select the evidence, and explain what it proves.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Identify the roots, trunk, and branches of an ECR and sort Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation.	Supported. The teacher may reread the sentence.	The student labels each tree part correctly.
Inferential	Mark a prompt's NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue and write a matching thesis (central idea).	Guided early, independent by Use.	The student marks the prompt and states a thesis (central idea) that fits it.
Evaluative	Grow a thesis (central idea) with evidence and an explanation that connects back to the trunk.	Independent by the Independent Tree Builder.	The student adds evidence and an explanation that proves the idea.

Educator Insight

Students often confuse evidence with explanation and believe quoting the text is enough. Many also think the thesis (central idea) must repeat the prompt exactly without adding meaning. Another misconception is that longer writing equals better writing rather than clearer reasoning. Some students struggle to identify the verb of importance and instead focus only on nouns. Others may treat ECR prompts like questions and respond too briefly. You may notice students skipping the explanation branch entirely. To correct this, consistently model how explanation connects evidence to the thesis (central idea).

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.

Growing the ECR Tree Higher

Level	What the Response Does
Level 1	Names an idea but has no clear thesis (central idea) or explanation.
Level 2	States a thesis (central idea) and gives evidence but stops before explaining.
Level 3	States a thesis (central idea), gives evidence, and explains what it means.
Level 4	Connects evidence and explanation to the central idea with clear reasoning.
Level 5	Connects the idea to a larger understanding about the topic.

Challenge: Grow one response up one level by adding a branch, not just more words.

 Teacher Script

"A taller tree is not a stronger tree unless every branch connects back to the trunk. The goal is clear reasoning, not decoration."

Oral-Rehearsal Frame: Roots, Trunk, Branches **Teacher Script**

"My thesis (central idea) is _____. My evidence is _____. This explanation connects back to my thesis (central idea) because _____. On the state writing assessment, a clear thesis (central idea) with evidence and explanation 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 the ECR tree, the prompt, and the parts of an informative response - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
idea	a thought about something	My idea about the passage is ____.
reason	why something is true or happens	One reason is ____.
show	to make something known	The text shows that ____.
explain	to make an idea clear	I explain my idea by ____.
answer	what you say to a prompt	My answer to the prompt is ____.
prove	to show something is true	I can prove my idea by ____.
build	to make something part by part	I build my response by ____.
plan	to think out before writing	My plan is to ____.
connect	to link two things together	I connect the evidence to my thesis (central idea) by ____.
support	to hold up or back up an idea	I support my thesis (central idea) with ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
thesis (central idea)	the clear central idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.
evidence	proof from the text (often exact words)	My evidence is ____.
explanation	the writer's thinking about what the evidence means	My explanation shows ____.
prompt	the statement that tells you what to write about	The prompt asks me to ____.
analyze	to look closely at parts to understand the whole	I analyze the prompt by ____.
response	the writing you build to answer the prompt	My response includes ____.
inform	to give information about a topic	This response informs the reader about ____.
structure	the way the parts are organized	The structure of my ECR is ____.
central idea	the main point the whole response is about	The central idea is ____.
transition	a word that links ideas (because, however, in addition)	I use the transition ____ to ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
renewable	rih-NOO-uh-buhl	able to be replaced over time and used again	A renewable resource is ____.
nonrenewable	non-rih-NOO-uh-buhl	not able to be replaced quickly once it is used	A nonrenewable resource is ____.
resource	REE-sorss	a material or supply that people use	One resource we use is ____.
pollution	puh-LOO-shun	harmful materials that damage the environment	Pollution can ____.
environment	en-VY-run-ment	the natural world around us	The environment is affected when ____.
exploration	eks-plur-AY-shun	the act of traveling to learn about new places	Exploration led to ____.
influence	IN-floo-uhns	the power to change or affect something	Columbus's arrival had an influence on ____.
conflict	KON-flikt	a serious disagreement or struggle	A conflict developed when ____.
missionaries	MISH-uh-nair-eez	people who travel to teach a religion	Missionaries traveled to ____.
expedition	eks-puh-DISH-un	a journey taken for a special purpose	An expedition is ____.



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 2 passages. "The Energy We Use Everyday" is a nonfiction text about renewable resources (wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals) and nonrenewable resources (coal, oil, and natural gas), and the advantages and limitations of each. "Columbus's Arrival" is a nonfiction text about Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage, his claim of land for Spain, the spread of Christianity, and the lasting effects of his arrival on Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 2 modules; the text grows in length, sentence complexity, detail, vocabulary, evidence density, and conceptual depth from module to module. In Module 1 (Low Stamina), students focus on the core ECR habit: reading the prompt as a statement, marking the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue, building a thesis (central idea), and growing it with evidence and explanation. The heart of the module is that an ECR grows like a tree, and every branch must connect back to the trunk.

Module 1 — Materials and Teacher Preparation



Anchor Charts to Create

- ECR Tree Diagram: Roots = Passage + Prompt; Trunk = Thesis (Central Idea); Branch 1 = Reason/Way; Branch 2 = Evidence; Branch 3 = Explanation
- Prompt Shapes and Colors: Red Circle = Noun of Importance (NOI); Blue Box = Verb of Importance (VOI); Green Triangle = Clue Words (why/how)
- SCR vs. ECR Chart: SCR = Question; ECR = Statement; ECR Types = WHY / HOW

Post for Students

- Subordinating Conjunctions: because, since, although, while, after, before, if, when
- Common Prepositions: in, on, at, by, with, about, between, under, over, through

Materials

- "Pencil Guy" markers (game pieces)
- Tree cards labeled: Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, Explanation
- BOOM BOOM GRAB sentence cards
- Prompt cards (from The Energy We Use Everyday and Columbus's Arrival passages)
- Spinner or dice
- Interactive notebooks
- Colored pencils (red, blue, green)

Quick Teacher Reference (Cluster 2)

- ECR = WHY or HOW only
- Prompt = statement, not a question
- Students must identify: NOI (what it's about), VOI (what they must do), and clue words (why/how)
- Writing follows the TREE structure

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 — Growing the ECR Tree

Teacher Script

"Today, we are not just answering questions - we are growing trees. And not just any trees - thinking trees that start in the ground and grow all the way to powerful ideas."

The ECR Tree

An Extended Constructed Response grows like a tree.

Tree Part	ECR Part
Roots	Passage + Prompt (everything starts here)
Trunk	Thesis (Central Idea) (your main answer / central idea)
Branch 1	Reason or Way
Branch 2	Evidence
Branch 3	Explanation

Have the class say it together: "Roots... Trunk... Branches!" Every branch must connect back to the trunk.

SCR vs. ECR

SCR	ECR
Comes from a question	Comes from a statement
Short response	Extended response
One main idea, briefly supported	A thesis (central idea) grown with reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation

ECR has only TWO TYPES: WHY and HOW.

Reading the Prompt: Shapes and Colors

- Red Circle = NOI (Noun of Importance): what the prompt is about.
- Blue Box = VOI (Verb of Importance): what you must do.
- Green Triangle = Clue Words: the WHY or HOW that tells you the ECR type.

Teacher Script

"ECR prompts are NOT questions - they are statements. Watch: 'Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways.' and 'Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions.' Do you see how those are statements?"

Module 1 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students build a response, they read "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. This helps students gather the exact words they will use as evidence on the branches of their tree.

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 grow on the branches of our ECR tree.”

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 3 — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth.

[2] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[3] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. However, they also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[4] Other resources are known as nonrenewable. These include coal, oil, and natural gas, which form deep underground over millions of years. Because they take so long to develop, they cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.

[5] Nonrenewable resources provide a large and steady supply of energy, which makes them useful.

[6] However, their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage. In addition, these resources are limited and may eventually be used up.

[7] Understanding the advantages and disadvantages helps build responsibility when making decisions about energy use.

Student Annotation Guide — The Energy We Use Everyday**T — Time**

over millions of years

R — Reactions

lead to pollution and environmental damage

A — Actions

can be used to generate electricity

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Renewable resources

K — Key Knowledge

coal, oil, and natural gas

S — Scenery/Setting

natural resources found on Earth

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth.

[2] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[3] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. However, they also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[4] Other resources are known as nonrenewable. These include coal, oil, and natural gas, which form deep underground over millions of years. Because they take so long to develop, they cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.

[5] Nonrenewable resources provide a large and steady supply of energy, which makes them useful.

[6] However, their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage. In addition, these resources are limited and may eventually be used up.

[7] Understanding the advantages and disadvantages helps build responsibility when making decisions about energy use.

PASSAGE 4 — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

[2] By claiming the land, Columbus helped Spain begin to explore and settle in the Americas. This was important because it led to more Spanish expeditions and the growth of Spain's influence in the region.

[3] Columbus and his crew also brought their beliefs with them. They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met. Over time, missionaries traveled to the Americas to teach Native Americans about this religion. This changed many traditions and ways of life.

[4] At first, some Native American groups, like the Taino, showed friendliness toward Columbus and his crew by trading and cooperating with them. However, these relationships did not always stay peaceful. Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control. The Carib were known for resisting the Spanish, which led to fighting between the groups.

[5] Today, Columbus's journey is remembered and retold in different ways. Columbus Day recognizes his voyage, but many people also think about how his arrival affected Native Americans.

[6] Columbus's actions had lasting effects on land, culture, and the people who lived in the Americas.

Student Annotation Guide — Columbus's Arrival

T — Time

In 1492

R — Reactions

the growth of Spain's influence in the region

A — Actions

he claimed the land for Spain

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Christopher Columbus

K — Key Knowledge

spread Christianity to the people they met

S — Scenery/Setting

islands in the Caribbean

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

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[5] Today, Columbus's journey is remembered and retold in different ways. Columbus Day recognizes his voyage, but many people also think about how his arrival affected Native Americans.

[6] Columbus's actions had lasting effects on land, culture, and the people who lived in the Americas.

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)(B)(i)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction
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 the parts of the ECR tree by listening and sketching, then reveal that an ECR grows from roots (passage + prompt) to a trunk (thesis (central idea)) to branches (reason/way, evidence, explanation).

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Listen and Sketch the ECR Tree

Pencils down first. Listen to the whole explanation. Then sketch: ROOTS = passage + prompt, TRUNK = thesis (central idea), BRANCH 1 = reason/way, BRANCH 2 = evidence, BRANCH 3 = explanation. Add one arrow showing that every branch must connect back to the trunk.

Teacher Script: "Do not try to copy my words. Listen for the structure. When I pause, draw only the parts that help your brain remember how the response grows."

Answer Key / Expected Sketch: a tree with Passage + Prompt at the roots, Thesis (Central Idea) on the trunk, and Reason/Way, Evidence, and Explanation on three branches. Arrows or lines should show that the parts connect.

Fresh Recall: Students cover the sketch and orally name the roots, trunk, and three branches from memory.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Listen and Sketch the ECR Tree)

Write on the board: ROOTS = passage + prompt - TRUNK = thesis (central idea) - BRANCH 1 = reason/way - BRANCH 2 = evidence - BRANCH 3 = explanation. Add one arrow showing that every branch connects back to the trunk.

 Teacher Script

"Today, we are not just answering questions... we are growing TREES! And not just any trees - thinking trees that start in the ground and grow all the way to powerful ideas. Turn and tell your partner - what happens if a tree has no roots?"

 Daily Deck Slide (Listen and Sketch the ECR Tree) (cont.)

- Possible Student Responses: "It falls over." / "It can't grow."
- Teacher Response: "Exactly! And in writing, if we don't understand the passage and the prompt, our writing falls apart too!"

R — Reveal: Build the Thinking Tree Together

Display the ECR Tree chart and the SCR vs. ECR chart (see the Growing the ECR Tree page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- Roots = Passage + Prompt. "Everything starts here."
- Trunk = Thesis (Central Idea). "This is your main answer."
- Branches = Reason/Way, Evidence, Explanation.
- "Say it with me - ROOTS... TRUNK... BRANCHES!"

 Teacher Script

"Now listen carefully - this is BIG. ECR prompts are NOT questions... they are STATEMENTS."

- Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways.
- Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions.

 Teacher Script

"Also, ECR only has TWO TYPES: WHY and HOW. Say it with me - WHY or HOW!"

 Daily Deck Slide (ECR Tree + Prompt Habits)

Write on the board: ROOTS = Passage + Prompt - TRUNK = Thesis (Central Idea) - BRANCHES = Reason/Way, Evidence, Explanation. ECR prompts are statements/commands. Look for NOI (red circle), VOI (blue box), and the WHY/HOW clue (green triangle).

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "The roots of an ECR are ___, the trunk is ___, and the branches are ___."

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 the game BOOM BOOM GRAB - Tree Style: they hear a sentence, grab the matching tree card (Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, or Explanation), and justify the choice.

★ Daily Deck Slide (BOOM BOOM GRAB — Directions)

Write on the board: Place Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation cards between partners. Listen to the sentence. Grab the matching part. Be ready to justify your choice. The first person to grab the correct tree card wins a point.

BOOM BOOM GRAB — Directions

Activity: BOOM BOOM GRAB - Tree Style. Work with a partner. Between you, place three tree cards: Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, Explanation. Teacher Script: "I will read a sentence. The FIRST person to grab the correct tree wins a point!" Reminder to Students: "Add these examples to your Interactive Notebook. These will help you review anytime!"

Set A — Columbus's Arrival

Sentence	Answer
"Columbus's arrival changed the lives of Native Americans."	Thesis (Central Idea)
"The text says Columbus claimed land for Spain."	Evidence
"This shows that Spain wanted control over new land."	Explanation

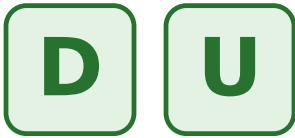
Set B — The Energy We Use Everyday

Sentence	Answer
"Energy choices are shaped by the advantages and limitations of different resources."	Thesis (Central Idea)
"The passage states, 'Renewable energy sources are not always available.'"	Evidence
"This shows communities must plan carefully when some renewable sources are not always available."	Explanation

Day 2 Closing

Record the sorted sets in your interactive notebook. Say aloud why each card is a thesis (central idea), evidence, or explanation.

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 makes an ECR tree strong, then independently build an ECR tree for an informative prompt and run a conventions sweep.

D — Discuss: What Makes the Tree Strong?

Ask: Why is evidence not enough by itself? What happens if we skip the thesis (central idea)? Why do ECR prompts require WHY/HOW thinking?

- "Why is evidence not enough by itself?" Student: "It doesn't explain anything." Teacher: "Exactly! Evidence shows - but explanation GROWS the idea."
- "What would happen if we skipped the thesis (central idea)?" Student: "No main idea." Teacher: "Right - no trunk, no tree!"
- "Why do we only use WHY or HOW in ECR?" Student: "So we explain more." Teacher: "Yes! ECR is about thinking deeply - not just answering quickly."

Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How do the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR work together to build a strong informative response?"

U — Use Again: Independent Tree Builder

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use. Directions: Turn to a new page in your Interactive Notebook. Draw a tree with roots, trunk, and three branches. Then mark the prompt and fill in the branches.

- Circle the NOI (renewable and nonrenewable resources)
- Box the VOI (affect)
- Triangle the clue word (how)
- Add a thesis (central idea), one evidence detail, and one explanation.

Answer Key:

- NOI: renewable and nonrenewable resources
- VOI: affect
- Clue: how
- Thesis (Central Idea) (example): Renewable and nonrenewable resources both affect energy decisions because each has advantages and limitations.
- Evidence (example): The text states, "Renewable energy sources are not always available."
- Explanation (example): This shows that people must plan carefully and weigh advantages and limitations when they choose an energy resource.

Standards Application Check — Module 1 (90-Second Response Quality Check)

Choose one sentence from your ECR work. Revise it for clearer sentence structure and stronger word choice. Then check subject-verb agreement, an irregular past-tense verb if used, singular/plural/common/proper nouns, spelling patterns, and high-frequency words.

- Teacher Model: "Columbus claimed land for Spain." Revision example: "Columbus's arrival changed control of the land when he claimed it for Spain."
- Look-Fors: complete sentence, clear subject-verb agreement, precise word choice, accurate capitalization of Columbus/Spain, and correct spelling.



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 the thesis (central idea) on the trunk and star the branch that connects most clearly back to it.

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 growing ECR tree and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Give yourself credit for growing your tree today.

- I built a thesis (central idea) on the trunk.
- I marked the NOI, VOI, and clue in the prompt.
- I connected evidence to my thesis (central idea).
- I explained what my evidence proves.

Ideas: "Tree Grower Badge"; draw a leaf on your tree for each correct part. Partner high-five chant: "Roots strong! Trunk tall! Branches growing - I've got it all!"

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award + Target)

Write on the board: AWARD - What did you do well today? TARGET - Which part needs more practice: prompt analysis, thesis (central idea), evidence, or explanation?
Complete: "One part of my ECR Tree that is growing strong is ___ because ___."

T — Target

Choose a precise next goal. Which part needs more practice: prompt analysis, thesis (central idea), evidence, or explanation? Write one specific goal. Curiosity Questions: "Why might two people answer the same prompt differently?" "How do stronger explanations make writing more powerful?" "What happens when evidence is weak?"

Day 4 Closing

Complete the sentence: "My next ECR-tree 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 one part of the ECR tree, proving their understanding by explaining what it is, why it matters, and giving an example.

E — Turn and Teach

Teach one ECR Tree part to your partner. You must say: what it is; why it matters; and one example from today.

Sentence Frame: "The ___ of an ECR is ___. It matters because ___. For example, ___."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How does understanding the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR help us build a strong informative response?

Understanding the passage and prompt gives the response strong roots, while knowing the ECR parts gives the writer a structure for turning a clear thesis (central idea) into reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation.

✓ Daily Deck Slide (Answer the Overarching Question)

Write on the board: Understanding the passage and prompt gives the response strong roots, while knowing the ECR parts gives the writer a structure for turning a clear thesis (central idea) into reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation. Finish: "One part of the ECR tree I can teach someone else is ___ because ___."

Teacher Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"You did something powerful today - you didn't just answer... you BUILT thinking. Every time you write, your tree will grow stronger, taller, and clearer. And guess what? The stronger your roots... the stronger your thinking."

Module 1 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use. Build an ECR with a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that connects back to the thesis (central idea).

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "Energy comes from resources. The text says there are renewable and nonrenewable ones. This is important." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student names the topic and points toward the text.
- Teacher Notes: There is no clear thesis (central idea), the evidence is not exact, and the explanation ("this is important") does not prove anything.
- What Needs Improvement: Add a thesis (central idea) on the trunk, quote exact words as evidence, and explain how the evidence connects to energy decisions.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "Renewable and nonrenewable resources affect energy decisions. The text states, 'Renewable energy sources are not always available.' This shows renewable energy has a limitation." (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: A thesis (central idea), one exact quote, and a beginning explanation.
- Teacher Notes: The response stops at one branch and does not connect the explanation fully back to the thesis (central idea) about decisions.
- What Needs Improvement: Connect the explanation back to the central idea - that people must weigh advantages and limitations when they decide.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "Renewable and nonrenewable resources both affect energy decisions because each has advantages and limitations. The text states, 'Renewable energy sources are not always available,' and it explains that nonrenewable resources 'cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.' This shows people must plan carefully and weigh advantages against limitations when they choose an energy resource." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: A clear thesis (central idea) on the trunk, two exact pieces of evidence, and an explanation that connects both branches back to the central idea.
- Teacher Notes: Every branch connects back to the trunk - exactly what a strong ECR tree looks like.

Module 1 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can identify the parts of an ECR, mark a prompt, and build a thesis (central idea) with evidence and explanation.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two passages, ECR Tree and Prompt Shapes charts, BOOM BOOM GRAB cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(12)(B)(i) compose informational texts using a clear central idea; (11)(B)(i) develop drafts with purposeful structure, including an introduction
Task	Students perform a formative check in BOOM BOOM GRAB and an independent task by building an ECR tree.
Expected Response	Students sort thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation, mark the NOI/VOI/clue, and grow a thesis (central idea) with evidence and explanation.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe BOOM BOOM GRAB and Listen and Sketch. Note whether students can justify why a card is a thesis (central idea), evidence, or explanation and whether their sketch shows all three tree parts connecting.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Independent Tree Builder serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Roots (Prompt)	Must mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue correctly.
Trunk (Thesis (Central Idea))	Must state a clear, accurate central idea that fits the prompt.
Branch (Evidence)	Must quote the author's exact words.
Branch (Explanation)	Must explain what the evidence proves and connect it back to the thesis (central idea).

Prompt Part	Correct Answer
NOI	renewable and nonrenewable resources
VOI	affect
Clue	how

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 name the roots, trunk, and branches of an ECR.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Grab and Justify: In BOOM BOOM GRAB, students grab the matching tree card and name why it is a thesis (central idea), evidence, or explanation.
- Written — Discuss/Use — One-Branch Build: Students write one thesis (central idea) and grow one branch (evidence or explanation) that connects back to it.

Assessment Option

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

- Listen — assess through student discussion and defended card choices.
- Look — observe a Listen-and-Sketch tree or a marked prompt.
- Collect — have students produce an ECR tree you can examine.

Intervention — Module 1

Build-A-Tree Matching

Students match simplified thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation cards, using simplified sentences from the passages.

Steps: match the Thesis (Central Idea) card, the Evidence card, and the Explanation card that go together; read the completed set aloud; and point to the connection that shows the branch grows from the trunk.

Support Frame: "My thesis (central idea) is _____. My evidence is _____. This shows _____."

Teacher Support: "Let's read this together - what is it mostly saying?"

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

Module 1 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to name the parts of the ECR tree.	Students name roots, trunk, and branches.	Students think a longer answer is a stronger tree.	Point to the branches connecting back to the trunk, not the length.
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 evidence mean? Add that."
Ask students to mark a prompt.	Students circle the NOI, box the VOI, triangle the clue.	Students focus only on the noun and skip the verb.	Ask, "What must you DO? That is the VOI."

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Restates instead of explaining	Use the Build-A-Tree Matching cards.
Cannot find the thesis (central idea)	Return to the trunk of the ECR Tree chart and ask for the main answer.
Treats the prompt like a question	Reread it as a statement and mark the WHY/HOW clue.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 1 enrichment (Grow a Forest).

Enrichment — Module 1

Grow a Forest

Challenge: Create two different theses for the same prompt.

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use.

Then: write TWO different theses for the same prompt; provide different evidence for each; and explain how the two responses grow from different thinking.

Push thinking: "How can one idea grow in different ways?"

Teacher Look-For: Students should show two genuinely different central ideas with matching evidence, not the same thesis (central idea) reworded. Advanced challenge: explain why both theses can be correct.

Module 1 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Build an ECR Tree

Writing Prompt

Choose one prompt below, mark it, then build an ECR tree with a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.

- Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use.
- Explain why Columbus's arrival had lasting effects on the people of the Americas.

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that an ECR grows like a tree. Now mark the prompt (NOI, VOI, clue), build a thesis (central idea) on the trunk, and grow the branches with evidence and explanation.

Planning Support

1. Mark the prompt: circle the NOI, box the VOI, triangle the WHY/HOW clue.
2. Write a clear thesis (central idea) (your central idea and answer to the prompt).
3. Choose the author's exact words as evidence.
4. Explain what the evidence proves and connect it back to the thesis (central idea).

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Roots	Mark the NOI, VOI, and clue in the prompt.
Step 2: Trunk	Write your clear thesis (central idea).
Step 3: Branches	Add evidence, then explain how it connects back to the thesis (central idea).

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My ECR has a marked prompt, a thesis (central idea), evidence, and an explanation.
- My evidence is the author's exact words.
- Every branch connects back to the trunk.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your response aloud. Improve one sentence's structure or word choice so the thinking is clearer.

Edit

Run the Conventions Sweep: subject-verb agreement, singular/plural/common/proper nouns, irregular past tense, spelling patterns, and high-frequency spelling.

Module 1 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Listen and Sketch.

Purpose: Students listen for the structure of an ECR and create a quick visual memory cue instead of copying every word the teacher says.

Listening Target: Listen for what belongs in the roots, trunk, and branches of the ECR Tree.

Student Materials: interactive notebook; pencil (down until the sketch begins).



Teacher Script

“Do not try to copy my words. Listen for the structure. When I pause, draw only the parts that help your brain remember how the response grows.”

Tree Part	What Students Sketch
Roots	Passage + Prompt
Trunk	Thesis (Central Idea)
Branch 1	Reason / Way
Branch 2	Evidence
Branch 3	Explanation

Add one arrow showing that every branch must connect back to the trunk.

Answer Key / Expected Sketch: a tree with Passage + Prompt at the roots, Thesis (Central Idea) on the trunk, and Reason/Way, Evidence, and Explanation on three branches, with arrows or lines showing that the parts connect.

Fresh Recall: Students cover the sketch and orally name the roots, trunk, and three branches 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 — Roots First

Stop and think: What is the passage, and what is the prompt asking? The roots come before the tree can grow.

|| Pause Point — Read the Prompt

Stop and think: What is the NOI (what it's about)? What is the VOI (what I must do)? Is the clue WHY or HOW?

|| Pause Point — Evidence vs. Explanation

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

|| Pause Point — Connect Back to the Trunk

Stop and think: Does this branch connect back to my thesis (central idea)? If it does not connect, the tree cannot stand.

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
Name the roots, trunk, and branches of an ECR.			
Mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue in a prompt.			
Write a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt.			
Support my thesis (central idea) with evidence and explanation.			
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 understanding the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR help us build a strong informative response. Now we can answer it: understanding the passage and prompt gives our response strong roots, and knowing the ECR parts gives us a structure for turning a clear thesis (central idea) into reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation.”

Module Overarching Question — Answered

How does understanding the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR help us build a strong informative response? Understanding the passage and prompt gives the response strong roots, while knowing the ECR parts gives the writer a structure for turning a clear thesis (central idea) into reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation.

Teacher Reflection - Module 1

Which students can tell evidence from explanation?

Which students can mark a prompt's NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue?

Which students still treat an ECR prompt like a question?

Who is ready for Module 2, building strong thesis (central idea) statements for informative 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. For Listen and Sketch, keep cameras on and have students sketch the ECR tree on paper or a drawing tool, then hold it up or photograph it so you can see the roots, trunk, and branches. Post the ECR Tree chart, the Prompt Shapes chart, and the SCR vs. ECR chart in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run BOOM BOOM GRAB with an all-participant poll or chat: read a sentence and have students type "Thesis (Central Idea)," "Evidence," or "Explanation," then call on one student to justify the choice. For the Independent Tree Builder, students draw and mark the prompt in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "What must you DO in this prompt?" rather than marking it for them. Collect the Conventions Sweep as a one-photo or typed submission of the single checked sentence.

MODULE

2

**Writing Thesis (Central Idea)
Statements**

Week 2 • Medium Stamina

Module 2: Writing Thesis (Central Idea) Statements

Week 2 - Medium Stamina - Cluster 2 (ECR Informative)

We Are Thesis (Central Idea) Builders, Not Thesis (Central Idea) Guessers



Teacher Script

"You are teaching them to build the sentence that will hold their whole response together."

Overarching Question

How can the words in an ECR prompt guide us to build a strong thesis (central idea) statement?

Today We Will Look For

- the Noun of Importance and the Verb of Importance in a prompt
- the WHY / HOW clue that decides the sentence type
- how the student's own answer completes the thesis (central idea)
- informational relationships: cause/effect, comparison, advantage/limitation

Student reminder: Noun, verb, answer - a strong thesis (central idea) has three pieces.

Why This Module Matters

Students learned in Module 1 that the thesis (central idea) is the trunk of the ECR Tree. This module zooms in on the trunk: a strong ECR thesis (central idea) has three pieces - the Noun of Importance (from the prompt), the Verb of Importance (from the prompt), and the Answer (from the student). Using the two Cluster 2 passages at Medium Stamina, students learn that WHY prompts need a complex sentence with a subordinator and HOW prompts need a simple sentence with a preposition, and they notice cause/effect, comparison, and advantages/limitations.

Module Passage Set — Medium Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 2 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "The Energy We Use Everyday" (nonfiction) and "Columbus's Arrival" (nonfiction). This module uses the Medium Stamina versions.

Module Independent Product

Build thesis (central idea) statements from three pieces: find the Noun of Importance and Verb of Importance in a prompt, decide WHY or HOW, add your own answer, and write the thesis (central idea) 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 main-idea sentence of a response) from three pieces - the Noun of Importance, the Verb of Importance, and the student's own Answer.
- The clue words: WHY (a "because" reason sentence) and HOW (a "through/by" method sentence).
- The two reading passages: "The Energy We Use Everyday" (renewable and nonrenewable resources) and "Columbus's Arrival" (Columbus's 1492 voyage).

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"What is the topic - and what is your own answer about it, in one clear sentence?"

One Way to Help

When your child answers a question, ask them to say a full sentence that keeps the topic word and adds their own idea. That is the thesis (central idea)-building habit we practice this week.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child continues Cluster 2 of our 4th-grade writing curriculum with Module 2, "Writing Thesis (Central Idea) Statements." A thesis (central idea) is the main-idea sentence that begins a response. Your child is learning that a strong thesis (central idea) has three pieces: the Noun of Importance (the topic, from the prompt), the Verb of Importance (what to explain, from the prompt), and the Answer (from your child's own thinking). WHY questions get a "because" sentence; HOW questions get a "through" or "by" sentence.

We are still reading "The Energy We Use Everyday," about renewable and nonrenewable resources, and "Columbus's Arrival," about Columbus's 1492 voyage and its effects.

Please try this at home: When your child answers a question, ask them to keep the topic word and add their own idea in one clear sentence - and for a "why" question, to add a reason with "because." That is 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 2 de nuestro currículo de escritura de cuarto grado con el Módulo 2, "Writing Thesis (Central Idea) Statements." Una tesis es la oración de idea principal que comienza una respuesta. Su hijo o hija está aprendiendo que una tesis fuerte tiene tres partes: el Sustantivo de Importancia (el tema, de la indicación), el Verbo de Importancia (qué explicar, de la indicación) y la Respuesta (del pensamiento de su hijo o hija). Las preguntas de POR QUÉ reciben una oración con "porque"; las de CÓMO reciben una oración con "a través de" o "por medio de."

Seguimos leyendo "The Energy We Use Everyday," sobre los recursos renovables y no renovables, y "Columbus's Arrival," sobre el viaje de Colón en 1492 y sus efectos.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija responda una pregunta, pídale que conserve la palabra del tema y agregue su propia idea en una oración clara, y para una pregunta de "por qué," que agregue una razón con "porque." Ese es 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)?
- Why can't a thesis (central idea) just copy the question?
- What is the difference between a WHY sentence and a HOW sentence?
- What is a cause-and-effect relationship in one of our two passages?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Keep the Topic, Add Your Idea

Ask a "why" question ("Why is recycling helpful?"). Have your child keep the topic word and add a "because" reason in one sentence.

Family Activity - Why or How

Take turns asking WHY and HOW questions. Notice that 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 2. Students learn to build a thesis (central idea) from three pieces - Noun of Importance + Verb of Importance + Answer - and to match sentence structure to the prompt type (WHY = complex with a subordinator; HOW = simple with a preposition). Using "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" at Medium Stamina, students notice informational relationships, transform prompts into thesis (central idea) statements, and run a conventions sweep.

BIG Goal: Students will build a strong ECR thesis (central idea) with a Noun of Importance, a Verb of Importance, and their own answer in the matching sentence structure.

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 2 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

- Thesis (Central Idea) instruction directly develops the introduction to the ECR and requires a clear central idea that answers the prompt.
- Students revise thesis (central idea) sentence structure and word choice as they distinguish WHY and HOW sentence habits.
- The Module 2 conventions sweep applies the distributed Cluster 2 editing expectations inside students' own thesis (central idea) sentences.

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

These are the standards listed for Cluster 2 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(B)(i) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction

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-ii) revise drafts to improve sentence structure and word choice

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(x), (xxxiii), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; past tense of irregular verbs; singular, plural, common, and proper nouns; and correct spelling using grade-appropriate orthographic patterns and high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Editing

- 4(A)(i) apply relationships between sounds and letters of the English language to represent sounds when writing [Teacher only]
- 4(B)(i)–(ii) write text following conventional spelling patterns and 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)(i)–(ii) write content-area-specific text using conventions and 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 for the Relationship, students hear a thesis (central idea) and label it WHY or HOW.
Speaking	Students name the noun, verb, and answer aloud and teach a partner the three pieces.
Reading	Students reread the passages for cause/effect, comparison, and details that support a thesis (central idea).
Writing	Students build thesis (central idea) statements and run a conventions sweep on their own sentences.

Module 2 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can use the prompt to build a complete thesis (central idea) with the noun, the verb, and my answer.
- I can find the Noun of Importance and the Verb of Importance in a prompt.
- I can decide whether a prompt is WHY or HOW and use the matching sentence type.
- I can add my own answer to complete a strong thesis (central idea).

I Will Statements

- I will use the passage, speak about my thinking, and record my work.
- I will explain how my choices strengthen the response.
- I will keep the noun and verb from the prompt and add my own answer.
- I will notice informational relationships such as cause and effect.

Success Criteria

- I can point to the noun, verb, and answer in my thesis (central idea).
- I can tell WHY and HOW prompts apart and match the sentence type.
- I can build a thesis (central idea) that does more than copy the prompt.
- I can run the conventions sweep on my thesis (central idea).

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail responses (correct noun, verb, type, and answer).
- The Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Foldable (thesis (central idea) statements for WHY and HOW prompts).
- 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 "What a Thesis (Central Idea) Needs" chart, the WHY/HOW charts, the relationship-clues chart, and sentence frames. You may provide oral rehearsal. You may not choose the student's answer for them, decide WHY or HOW for them, or write their thesis (central idea). The student must still find the noun and verb, choose the sentence type, and add their own answer.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Find the Noun of Importance and Verb of Importance in a prompt.	Supported. The teacher may reread the prompt.	The student marks the noun and verb.
Inferential	Decide WHY or HOW and choose the matching sentence type.	Guided early, independent by Use.	The student labels the type and picks the structure.
Evaluative	Add an answer that supports a full response and build the thesis (central idea).	Independent by the Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Foldable.	The student writes a thesis (central idea) with all three pieces.

Educator Insight

Students often think a thesis (central idea) is just a copied prompt with one extra word added, so listen for responses that sound almost identical to the original prompt. Another common misconception is that students may know the answer but forget to keep the noun and verb from the prompt. Some students will mix up why and how, which you can spot quickly if they use the wrong sentence type. Others may write a sentence fragment after a subordinator, especially in why responses. Some students also struggle to create an answer that is broad enough to support a full essay. To fix these misunderstandings, keep modeling the three parts aloud and have students physically point to each part in their sentences.

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.

The Three Pieces and Two Types

Piece	Where It Comes From
Noun of Importance	the prompt - what it is about
Verb of Importance	the prompt - what to explain
Answer	the student's own thinking

Prompt Type	Sentence Habit	Clue Words
WHY	Complex sentence with a subordinator	because, since, although, while, after, before, when, if
HOW	Simple sentence with a preposition	by, through, with, during, across, in

Challenge: Rebuild a WHY thesis (central idea) as a HOW thesis (central idea) (or the reverse). Notice how the sentence structure changes.

 Teacher Script

"Strong word choice can make your thesis (central idea) more precise. Upgrade vocabulary to match your thinking."

Oral-Rehearsal Frame: Noun, Verb, Answer **Teacher Script**

"My noun of importance is _____. My verb of importance is _____. My answer is _____. This is a _____ (WHY/HOW) thesis (central idea), so I used a _____ sentence. On the state writing assessment, a strong thesis (central idea) will hold your whole response together."

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 informational relationships - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
noun	a person, place, thing, or idea	The noun of importance is ____.
verb	an action or state word	The verb of importance is ____.
answer	your response to the prompt	My answer is ____.
ask	to put a question	The prompt asks me to ____.
build	to make part by part	I build my thesis (central idea) by ____.
word	a unit of language	A stronger word here is ____.
reason	why something is true	One reason is ____.
way	how something happens	One way is ____.
cause	what makes something happen	The cause was ____.
effect	what happens because of a cause	The effect was ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
thesis (central idea)	the clear central idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.
prompt	the statement that tells you what to write about	The prompt asks me to ____.
analyze	to look closely at parts to understand the whole	I analyze the prompt by ____.
response	the writing you build to answer the prompt	My response begins with ____.
complex sentence	a sentence with a subordinator	A complex sentence uses ____.
simple sentence	a sentence with one complete thought	A simple sentence states ____.
subordinator	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.
noun of importance	the main topic word in the prompt	The noun of importance is ____.
verb of importance	the word that tells what to explain	The verb of importance is ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
renewable	rih-NOO-uh-buhl	able to be replaced over time and used again	A renewable resource is ____.
nonrenewable	non-rih-NOO-uh-buhl	not able to be replaced quickly once it is used	A nonrenewable resource is ____.
resource	REE-sorss	a material or supply that people use	One resource we use is ____.
pollution	puh-LOO-shun	harmful materials that damage the environment	Pollution can ____.
environment	en-VY-run-ment	the natural world around us	The environment is affected when ____.
Columbus	kuh-LUM-bus	the explorer who sailed to the Americas in 1492	Columbus ____.
exploration	eks-plur-AY-shun	traveling to learn about new places	Exploration led to ____.
missionaries	MISH-uh-nair-eez	people who travel to teach a religion	Missionaries traveled to ____.
influence	IN-floo-uhns	the power to change or affect something	The influence of the voyage was ____.
conflict	KON-flikt	a serious disagreement or struggle	A conflict developed when ____.

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 2 passages at Medium Stamina. "The Energy We Use Everyday" is a nonfiction text about renewable resources (wind, water, sunlight, plants, animals) and nonrenewable resources (coal, oil, natural gas), with their advantages and limitations. "Columbus's Arrival" is a nonfiction text about Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage, his claim of land for Spain, the spread of Christianity, and the lasting effects on Native American groups.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 2 modules; the text grows in length, sentence complexity, detail, vocabulary, evidence density, and conceptual depth from module to module. In Module 2 (Medium Stamina), students zoom in on the trunk of the ECR Tree - the thesis (central idea). The heart of the module is that a strong thesis (central idea) keeps the Noun of Importance and Verb of Importance from the prompt and adds the student's own answer, matching the sentence type to WHY or HOW.

Module 2 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Anchor Charts to Create

- What a Thesis (Central Idea) Needs: Noun of Importance; Verb of Importance; Student Answer
- Why Prompt = Complex Sentence: must include a subordinator (Because / Since / Although...)
- How Prompt = Simple Sentence: must include a preposition (through, by, with, during, across, in)
- Informational Relationship Clues: cause; effect; comparison; advantage / limitation
- Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Transformation: read the prompt; find the noun of importance; find the verb of importance; decide WHY or HOW; add your answer; build the thesis (central idea)

Post for Students

- WHY subordinators: because, since, although, while, after, before, when, if
- HOW prepositions: by, through, with, during, across, in

Materials

- Passage copies (Medium Stamina), interactive notebooks, glue, scissors, crayons or colored pencils
- Sentence strips, a spinner labeled Noun / Verb / Answer / Type, a gameboard and game pieces, "Pencil Guy" markers
- Thesis (Central Idea) cards, prompt cards, intervention sorting cards, enrichment challenge cards, sticky notes

Quick Teacher Reference for This Cluster

In Cluster 2, students move from recognizing parts of a response to intentionally building an informative ECR. Module 1 introduced the ECR Tree; this module zooms in on the trunk - the thesis (central idea). Across the two passages, students notice cause/effect, comparison, advantages/limitations, and the impact of choices. Return often to the idea that the thesis (central idea) is the sentence that holds the whole response together.

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 — A Thesis (Central Idea) Has Three Pieces

Teacher Script

"Today, we are going to become thesis (central idea) builders. Not thesis (central idea) guessers. Not thesis (central idea) hidiers. Thesis (Central Idea) builders. A thesis (central idea) must answer the prompt, but it does not copy the prompt only. It must include three pieces."

The Three Pieces

Piece	What It Is
Noun of Importance	what the prompt is mostly about (from the prompt)
Verb of Importance	what the writer must explain (from the prompt)
Answer	the student's own thinking

Two pieces come from the prompt, but the answer must come from you.

WHY and HOW

There are two types of ECR prompts in this cycle: WHY and HOW.

- WHY prompts must be answered with a complex sentence with a subordinator: because, since, although, while, after, before, when, if. A subordinator helps explain a reason.
- HOW prompts must be answered with a simple sentence with a preposition: by, through, with, during, across, in. A preposition shows the way something happened.

Model Thesis (Central Idea) Statements

- Prompt: "Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways." Noun = Columbus's arrival; Verb = affected; Answer = because it changed land, culture, and relationships. Thesis (Central Idea) (WHY, complex): "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways."
- Prompt: "Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions." Noun = renewable and nonrenewable resources; Verb = shape; Answer = through differences in availability, replacement, and environmental effects. Thesis (Central Idea) (HOW, simple): "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, replacement, and environmental effects."

Informational Relationships

When we write a thesis (central idea) about Columbus's arrival or energy resources, we also think about cause/effect, comparison, advantage/limitation, and problem/solution. These relationships help us explain what the details mean - we are not just restating facts, we are showing how the facts connect and why those connections matter.



Teacher Script

"Refer to your Thinking Levels Charts to help you differentiate and upgrade your thinking as you build stronger thesis (central idea) statements."

Module 2 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students build a thesis (central idea), they reread "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. At Medium Stamina the passages are longer, so there is more evidence and more informational relationships to notice.

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. The exact words we highlight - and the cause/effect and comparison relationships we notice - become the material we use to build a strong thesis (central idea) and, later, our evidence and explanation.”

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 3 — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, watch television, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth. Energy is an important part of daily life. People use it at home, at school, and at work. Without energy, many of the things we depend on each day would not be possible.

[2] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[3] People use renewable resources in many ways. Solar panels collect energy from sunlight and turn it into electricity. Wind turbines use moving air to generate power. Water flowing through dams can also be used to produce electricity. Farmers grow plants that can be used for food, fuel, and other products. Because these resources can be replaced naturally, many people believe they are important for the future.

[4] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. However, they also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[5] Imagine a town that relies mostly on solar energy. On bright, sunny days, plenty of electricity may be produced. However, during cloudy weather, less energy may be available. The same challenge can occur with wind energy. If the wind is not blowing, wind turbines cannot produce as much electricity. Because of this, communities often use several different energy sources to meet their needs.

[6] Other resources are known as nonrenewable. These include coal, oil, and natural gas, which form deep underground over millions of years. Because they take so long to develop, they cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.

[7] Nonrenewable resources provide a large and steady supply of energy, which makes them useful. Many homes, businesses, and vehicles rely on these resources every day. Coal has been used for many years to generate electricity. Oil is used to make fuels such as gasoline, and natural gas is commonly used for heating and cooking.

[8] However, the use of nonrenewable resources can also create challenges. Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage. In addition, these resources are limited and may eventually be used up. Once a nonrenewable resource is gone, it cannot be replaced within a human lifetime.

[9] Scientists, engineers, and community leaders continue to study ways to use energy wisely. Many people look for methods that reduce pollution while still providing enough energy for homes and businesses. Some communities use a combination of renewable and nonrenewable resources to meet their energy needs.

[10] Understanding the advantages and disadvantages helps build responsibility when

making decisions about energy use. Learning about renewable and nonrenewable resources can help people make informed choices that protect Earth's resources for future generations.

Student Annotation Guide — The Energy We Use Everyday

T — Time

over millions of years

R — Reactions

lead to pollution and environmental damage

A — Actions

Solar panels collect energy from sunlight

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Renewable resources

K — Key Knowledge

coal, oil, and natural gas

S — Scenery/Setting

natural resources found on Earth

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, watch television, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth. Energy is an important part of daily life. People use it at home, at school, and at work. Without energy, many of the things we depend on each day would not be possible.

[2] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[3] People use renewable resources in many ways. Solar panels collect energy from sunlight and turn it into electricity. Wind turbines use moving air to generate power. Water flowing through dams can also be used to produce electricity. Farmers grow plants that can be used for food, fuel, and other products. Because these resources can be replaced naturally, many people believe they are important for the future.

[4] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. However, they also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[5] Imagine a town that relies mostly on solar energy. On bright, sunny days, plenty of electricity may be produced. However, during cloudy weather, less energy may be available. The same challenge can occur with wind energy. If the wind is not blowing, wind turbines cannot produce as much electricity. Because of this, communities often use several different energy sources to meet their needs.

[6] Other resources are known as nonrenewable. These include coal, oil, and natural gas, which form deep underground over millions of years. Because they take so long to develop, they cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.

[7] Nonrenewable resources provide a large and steady supply of energy, which makes them useful. Many homes, businesses, and vehicles rely on these resources every day. Coal has been used for many years to generate electricity. Oil is used to make fuels such as gasoline, and natural gas is commonly used for heating and cooking.

[8] However, the use of nonrenewable resources can also create challenges. Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage. In addition, these resources are limited and may eventually be used up. Once a nonrenewable resource is gone, it cannot be replaced within a human lifetime.

[9] Scientists, engineers, and community leaders continue to study ways to use energy wisely. Many people look for methods that reduce pollution while still providing enough energy for homes and businesses. Some communities use a combination of renewable and nonrenewable resources to meet their energy needs.

[10] Understanding the advantages and disadvantages helps build responsibility when

making decisions about energy use. Learning about renewable and nonrenewable resources can help people make informed choices that protect Earth's resources for future generations.

PASSAGE 4 — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

[2] At the time, many European countries were looking for faster trade routes. Traveling to Asia by land could be difficult and costly. Columbus believed that sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean would be a quicker way to reach Asia. Although he did not arrive in Asia, his voyage connected Europe and the Americas in new ways.

[3] By claiming the land, Columbus helped Spain begin to explore and settle in the Americas. This was important because it led to more Spanish expeditions and the growth of Spain's influence in the region. Other European countries soon became interested in exploring the Americas as well.

[4] As more explorers arrived, Spain established settlements in different areas. Ships traveled back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean carrying people, goods, and ideas. These voyages helped increase trade and allowed European countries to expand their influence in the Americas.

[5] Columbus and his crew also brought their beliefs with them. They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met. Over time, missionaries traveled to the Americas to teach Native Americans about this religion. This changed many traditions and ways of life.

[6] The arrival of Europeans introduced new customs, languages, and technologies. Some Native American groups adopted certain European practices, while others worked to keep their own traditions. As different cultures came into contact, many changes took place throughout the Americas.

[7] At first, some Native American groups, like the Taino, showed friendliness toward Columbus and his crew by trading and cooperating with them. They exchanged goods and shared information about the area. These early interactions helped both groups learn about one another.

[8] However, these relationships did not always stay peaceful. Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control. The Carib were known for resisting the Spanish, which led to fighting between the groups. As more Europeans arrived, disagreements often became more common.

[9] The arrival of Europeans affected Native American communities in many ways. Some groups lost control of their land, while others experienced changes to their cultures and daily lives. These effects were different from place to place, but they often had lasting results.

[10] Today, Columbus's journey is remembered and retold in different ways. Columbus Day recognizes his voyage, but many people also think about how his arrival affected Native Americans. Historians study different perspectives to better understand the events that followed his journey.

[11] People continue to discuss the impact of Columbus's voyage because it marked an

important turning point in history. His journey opened the door to further exploration, settlement, and cultural exchange between Europe and the Americas.

[12] Columbus's actions had lasting effects on land, culture, and the people who lived in the Americas. His voyage remains one of the most significant events in world history because of the changes it set into motion.

Student Annotation Guide — Columbus's Arrival

T — Time

In 1492

R — Reactions

changed many traditions and ways of life

A — Actions

he claimed the land for Spain

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Christopher Columbus

K — Key Knowledge

spread Christianity to the people they met

S — Scenery/Setting

islands in the Caribbean

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

[2] At the time, many European countries were looking for faster trade routes. Traveling to Asia by land could be difficult and costly. Columbus believed that sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean would be a quicker way to reach Asia. Although he did not arrive in Asia, his voyage connected Europe and the Americas in new ways.

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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 labeling thesis (central idea) statements as WHY or HOW, then reveal the three thesis (central idea) pieces and the sentence type that matches each prompt.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Listen for the Relationship

After each thesis (central idea), label the relationship: WHY = reason relationship; HOW = method/means relationship. Finish: "The thesis (central idea) works because ___ connects ___ to ___."

Teacher Read-Aloud Set and Answer Key:

- "Renewable resources are important for the future because they can be replaced over time." Answer: WHY; because connects the importance of renewable resources to the reason.
- "Columbus influenced the Americas through exploration, land claims, and cultural change." Answer: HOW; through connects the influence to the ways it happened.
- "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability and environmental effects." Answer: HOW; through shows the method/relationship.

Fresh Recall: Students close notes and tell a partner one clue that usually signals WHY and one clue that usually signals HOW.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Thesis (Central Idea) = Noun + Verb + Answer)

Write on the board: A Thesis (Central Idea) Has 3 Pieces - Noun of Importance (what the prompt is about), Verb of Importance (what the prompt asks you to explain), and Answer (your thinking). WHY = complex sentence with a subordinator. HOW = simple sentence with a preposition.

R — Reveal: Build a Strong Trunk

Display the "What a Thesis (Central Idea) Needs" chart and the WHY/HOW charts (see the Three Pieces page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- The noun of importance tells what the prompt is mostly about; the verb of importance tells what the writer must explain; the answer comes from the student.
- WHY subordinators: because, since, although, while, after, before, when, if. HOW prepositions: by, through, with, during, across, in.
- Model WHY (prompt "Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways"): "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways."
- Model HOW (prompt "Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions"): "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, replacement, and environmental effects."

★ Daily Deck Slide (Noun, Verb, Answer)

Write on the board: renewable and nonrenewable resources / shape / energy decisions. Those are the three pieces that build a strong thesis (central idea). Two come from the prompt; the answer comes from YOU.

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "A thesis (central idea) has three pieces: ___, ___, and ___, 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 Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail: spin Noun, Verb, Answer, or Type and complete the matching part of a thesis (central idea) from a prompt card.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail — Directions)

Write on the board: Spin Noun, Verb, Answer, or Type. Pull a prompt card. Complete the part you spun. If you spin Noun, identify the noun of importance; Verb, the verb of importance; Answer, create your own answer; Type, decide WHY or HOW and name the sentence type. Correct answer = move one space; extra-strong academic language = move two.

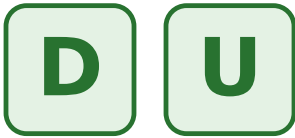
Card	Prompt	Noun / Verb / Type	Sample Answer Part
1	Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways.	Columbus's arrival / affected / WHY (complex)	because it led to changes in culture, religion, and control
2	Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions.	renewable and nonrenewable resources / shape / HOW (simple)	through differences in availability, replacement, and environmental effects
3	Explain how Columbus influenced the lives of Native Americans.	Columbus / influenced / HOW	through claiming land, spreading beliefs, and causing conflict
4	Explain why renewable resources are important for the future.	renewable resources / are important / WHY	because they can be replaced over time and often cause less environmental damage
5	Explain how Columbus's voyage changed the Americas.	Columbus's voyage / changed / HOW	through exploration, settlement, and cultural change
6	Explain why nonrenewable resources require careful use.	nonrenewable resources / require careful use / WHY	because they cannot be replaced quickly and their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage



Day 2 Closing

Interactive Notebook Reminder: "Place your thesis (central idea) helper chart in your Interactive Notebook. Use the games and activities to review the ECR concepts whenever you have free time."

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)(viii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including plural nouns
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 thesis (central idea) cannot copy the prompt, then independently transform prompts into thesis (central idea) statements and run a conventions sweep.

D — Discuss the Thesis (Central Idea)

Ask: Why can't a thesis (central idea) just copy the prompt? Why does a WHY thesis (central idea) need a complex sentence with a subordinator? Why does a HOW thesis (central idea) use a simple sentence with a preposition? What does cause and effect add to a thesis (central idea)?

- Student: "Because the answer part has to come from the student." / "A why thesis (central idea) needs a reason connection." / "A preposition points to the path or means."

Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How do the words in the prompt guide the thesis (central idea)?"

U — Use Again: Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Foldable

Fold a page into four flaps: Prompt, Noun + Verb, Type, Thesis (Central Idea). Under each flap, complete the work.

- Prompt A: "Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways." Noun + Verb: Columbus's arrival / affected. Type: WHY. Thesis (Central Idea): "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, beliefs, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways."
- Prompt B: "Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions." Noun + Verb: renewable and nonrenewable resources / shape. Type: HOW. Thesis (Central Idea): "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply."
- Prompt C: "Explain how Columbus influenced Native American groups." Noun + Verb: Columbus / influenced. Type: HOW. Thesis (Central Idea): "Columbus influenced Native American groups through exploration, land claims, and conflict."
- Prompt D: "Explain why renewable resources are valuable for long-term energy planning." Noun + Verb: renewable resources / are valuable. Type: WHY. Thesis (Central Idea): "Renewable resources are valuable for long-term energy planning because they can be replaced over time and often cause less environmental damage."

Teacher Script

"Accept alternate responses that keep the noun and verb, match the prompt type, include a reasonable answer, and use correct sentence form."

Standards Application Check — Module 2 Thesis (Central Idea) Quality Check

Underline the NOI, box the VOI, bracket your answer, label WHY or HOW, revise one word or phrase for precision, and check conventions and spelling.

- Teacher Model: "Renewable resources are important for the future because they can be replaced over time." Look-Fors: complete sentence, correct sentence type, clear noun/verb/answer, accurate plural/common nouns, and correct spelling.

Day 3 Closing

Students underline the part of their thesis (central idea) that came from THEM.

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

Underline the part of your thesis (central idea) that came from YOU. Complete: "My thesis (central idea) is strong because ___."

- Draw a tree trunk and write one strong thesis (central idea) across it. Class cheer: "Noun! Verb! Answer too! Strong thesis (central idea) thinkers coming through!"

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award + Target)

Write on the board: AWARD - Underline the part of your thesis (central idea) that came from YOU. TARGET - choose one: find the NOI, find the VOI, identify WHY/HOW, build the sentence, strengthen word choice.

T — Target

Choose one target: find the noun of importance, find the verb of importance, identify WHY/HOW, build the sentence, or strengthen word choice. Curiosity Questions: "How can one prompt lead to more than one good thesis (central idea)?" "Why might two students answer the same prompt differently but still be correct?" "What happens to the rest of the essay if the thesis (central idea) is weak?"

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 three pieces, proving their understanding of the formula.

E — Teach the Three Pieces

Teach your partner: what the three pieces are; how to know whether the prompt is WHY or HOW; and one example thesis (central idea) from today.

Sentence Frames: "The noun of importance is ____." "The verb of importance is ____." "The answer comes from ____." "A WHY thesis (central idea) uses ____." "A HOW thesis (central idea) uses ____." "An example from Columbus is ____." "An example from the energy passage is ____."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How can the words in an ECR prompt guide us to build a strong thesis (central idea) statement?

The prompt gives us the noun of importance, the verb of importance, and the WHY/HOW clue. Those parts tell us what to answer and which sentence structure will make the thesis (central idea) clear.

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: The prompt gives the noun of importance, the verb of importance, and the WHY/HOW clue. Those parts tell us what to answer and which sentence structure makes the thesis (central idea) clear. Finish: "One piece of a thesis (central idea) I can teach is ____."

Teacher Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today you learned how to turn thinking into a clear thesis (central idea). You are not just writing a sentence - you are building the sentence that holds your whole response together. Keep going. Strong roots grow strong writers."

Module 2 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways. Build a WHY thesis (central idea) with all three pieces.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student keeps the noun and verb from the prompt.
- Teacher Notes: The thesis (central idea) copies the prompt and adds no answer of the student's own; it is not a complex WHY sentence.
- What Needs Improvement: Add the student's own answer and a "because" reason to match the WHY prompt.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "Columbus's arrival affected people because he came to the Americas." (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: A WHY sentence with a subordinator and the noun and verb from the prompt.
- Teacher Notes: The answer ("he came to the Americas") repeats the topic rather than explaining the effect.
- What Needs Improvement: Sharpen the answer to name what changed (land, culture, relationships).

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: A complete WHY thesis (central idea) - the noun (Columbus's arrival), the verb (affected), and the student's own 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 noun and verb of importance 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 thesis (central idea) charts, Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail 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 Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail and an independent task with the Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Foldable.
Expected Response	Students keep the noun and verb, add an answer, and match the sentence type to WHY or HOW.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail and Listen for the Relationship. Note whether students keep the noun and verb, add their own answer, and choose the correct sentence type.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Foldable serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Noun of Importance	Must name the topic word from the prompt.
Verb of Importance	Must name what the prompt asks to explain.
Answer	Must add the student's own thinking.
Sentence Type	Must match WHY (complex) or HOW (simple with a preposition).

Answer Key — Two Types

WHY = complex sentence with a subordinator (because, since, although...). HOW = simple sentence with a preposition (through, by, with...).

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 WHY/HOW: As you read a thesis (central idea), students hold up WHY or HOW and name the clue word.
- Written — Discuss/Use — One-Thesis (Central Idea) Build: Students write one thesis (central idea) with the noun, verb, and their own answer.

Assessment Option

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

- Listen — assess through Listen for the Relationship and discussion.
- Look — observe a Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail response or a marked NOI/VOI/answer.
- Collect — have students produce a Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) thesis (central idea) you can examine.

Intervention — Module 2

Sort Before You Write

For students who need extra practice, slow the work into smaller, clear habits. First sort the parts; do not write the whole thesis (central idea) yet.

Step 1 — Sort the Cards into noun of importance, verb of importance, and answer.

- Example set: Columbus's arrival / affected / because it changed culture and control.
- Example set: renewable and nonrenewable resources / shape / through differences in availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply.

Step 2 — Use Sentence Frames.

- WHY frame: "Because [answer], [noun] [verb]..." Example: "Because it changed culture and relationships, Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways."
- HOW frame: "[Noun] [verb]... through [answer]." Example: "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply."

Step 3 — Read Aloud and Check: Did I keep the noun? the verb? Did I add my own answer? Did I use the right sentence type?

Extra Support: give students one passage at a time and use oral rehearsal - "Say it first. Then write it."

Module 2 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to find the noun and verb.	Students name the topic word and the explain word.	Students copy the whole prompt.	Point to the noun and the verb separately.
Ask students to add their answer.	Students give their own thinking.	Students repeat the topic.	Ask, "What is YOUR idea about it?"
Ask students to name the type.	Students say WHY or HOW and the sentence type.	Students confuse WHY and HOW.	Ask, "Is there a reason (because) or a method (through)?"

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Copies the prompt	Require an answer piece from their own thinking.
Writes a fragment after a subordinator	Rebuild the WHY sentence with a full second clause.
Confuses WHY and HOW	Post the subordinators and prepositions side by side.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 2 enrichment (Relationship Thesis (Central Idea) Challenge).

Enrichment — Module 2

Relationship Thesis (Central Idea) Challenge

Build thesis (central idea) statements that not only answer the prompt but also show deep cause and effect.

Directions: create one thesis (central idea) about Columbus and one thesis (central idea) about energy resources, then revise each to make it more precise and thoughtful.

Challenge Prompt Options: "Columbus's actions influenced the Americas." / "Energy resource differences shape community decisions."

Requirements: identify the prompt type; build the thesis (central idea) correctly; add cause-and-effect language; and explain how the thesis (central idea) became stronger after revision.

Sample Enriched Responses: "Because Columbus's actions brought control, cultural change, and conflict to the Americas, they influenced the region in lasting ways." / "Energy resource differences shape community decisions through availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply." Reflection: "How does your word choice reveal your understanding of the relationship among ideas?"

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

Writing Prompt

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

- Explain why renewable resources are important for the future.
- Explain how Columbus's voyage changed the Americas.

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that a strong thesis (central idea) keeps the noun and verb from the prompt and adds your own answer. Now build the thesis (central idea) in the matching sentence type.

Planning Support

1. Find the Noun of Importance (the topic word).
2. Find the Verb of Importance (what to explain).
3. Decide WHY or HOW.
4. Add your own answer and build the thesis (central idea) in the matching sentence structure.

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Noun + Verb	Mark the noun of importance and the verb of importance.
Step 2: Type	Decide WHY (complex) or HOW (simple with a preposition).
Step 3: Thesis (Central Idea)	Add your answer in the matching sentence structure.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My thesis (central idea) keeps the noun and verb from the prompt.
- My thesis (central idea) adds my own answer.
- My sentence type matches WHY or HOW.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your thesis (central idea) aloud. Improve one word or phrase for precision so the relationship is clear.

Edit

Run the Conventions Sweep: complete sentence, subject-verb agreement, singular/plural/common/proper nouns, and grade-appropriate spelling patterns.

Module 2 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Listen for the Relationship.

Purpose: Students listen for the relationship a thesis (central idea) must express - a reason for WHY or a method for HOW - rather than merely listening for isolated vocabulary.

Listening Target: Listen for the relationship between the prompt and the student answer.

Student Materials: interactive notebook; WHY / HOW response cards or two hand signals.



Teacher Script

"After each thesis (central idea), label the relationship: WHY = reason relationship; HOW = method/means relationship. Finish the thought: 'The thesis (central idea) works because ___ connects ___ to ___.'"

Thesis (Central Idea) (read aloud)	Answer
"Renewable resources are important for the future because they can be replaced over time."	WHY — because connects the importance to the reason.
"Columbus influenced the Americas through exploration, land claims, and cultural change."	HOW — through connects the influence to the ways it happened.
"Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability and environmental effects."	HOW — through shows the method/relationship.

Fresh Recall: Students close notes and tell a partner one clue that usually signals WHY and one clue that usually signals HOW.

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 Noun and Verb

Stop and think: What is the Noun of Importance (the topic), and what is the Verb of Importance (what to explain)?

|| Pause Point — WHY or HOW?

Stop and think: Is this a WHY prompt (needs a reason) or a HOW prompt (needs a method)?

|| Pause Point — Add Your Answer

Stop and think: What is MY answer? Two pieces come from the prompt, but the answer comes from me.

|| Pause Point — Match the Sentence

Stop and think: Does my sentence type match - complex for WHY, simple with a preposition for HOW?

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 Noun of Importance in a prompt.			
Find the Verb of Importance in a prompt.			
Decide WHY or HOW and match the sentence type.			
Add my own answer to build a thesis (central idea).			
Check my thesis (central idea) 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 words in an ECR prompt guide us to build a strong thesis (central idea). Now we can answer it: the prompt gives us the noun of importance, the verb of importance, and the WHY/HOW clue - and our own thinking gives the answer.”

Module Overarching Question — Answered

How can the words in an ECR prompt guide us to build a strong thesis (central idea) statement? The prompt gives us the noun of importance, the verb of importance, and the WHY/HOW clue. Those parts tell us what to answer and which sentence structure will make the thesis (central idea) clear.

Teacher Reflection - Module 2

Which students can find the noun and verb of importance?

Which students match sentence structure to WHY and HOW?

Which students still copy the prompt instead of adding an answer?

Who is ready for Module 3, growing reasons or ways that support the thesis (central idea)?

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 for the Relationship, read each thesis (central idea) aloud with cameras on and have students type WHY or HOW in the chat, then call on one student to name the clue word. Post the "What a Thesis (Central Idea) Needs" chart and the WHY/HOW charts in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run Thesis (Central Idea) Builder Trail on a shared slide: give each group a prompt and boxes for Noun, Verb, Type, and Answer, and require the sentence type to match. For the Prompt-to-Thesis (Central Idea) Foldable, students draft in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "Where is the noun of importance?" and "What is YOUR answer?" rather than writing the thesis (central idea) for them. Collect the Thesis (Central Idea) Quality Check as a one-photo or typed submission of the single marked thesis (central idea).

GRADE 4 • CLUSTER 2 • ECR - INFORMATIONAL

M O D U L E

3

Organizing Reasons and Ways

Week 3 • High Stamina

Module 3: Organizing Reasons and Ways

Week 3 - High Stamina - Cluster 2 (ECR Informative)

Grow the First Big Branch

Teacher Script

"Students who can sort, narrow, and connect ideas are better prepared to write with confidence."

Overarching Question

How can organizing reasons or ways into different groups help us build focused, nonrepetitive body paragraphs?

Today We Will Look For

- the Reason/Way branch: a reason tells WHY, a way tells HOW
- the four Magnifying steps: Brainstorm, Sort, Choose, Narrow
- buckets or baskets that hold like ideas (and an off-topic basket)
- reasons or ways from different baskets so each body paragraph is different

Student reminder: Brainstorm wide, sort with care, choose from different baskets.

Why This Module Matters

After building a strong thesis (central idea) (the trunk), students grow the first major branch of the ECR Tree: the Reason/Way branch. A reason tells why the thesis (central idea) is true; a way tells how. Using the two Cluster 2 passages at High Stamina, students learn the Magnifying Process - brainstorm many ideas, sort them into buckets or baskets, choose one strong idea from each, and narrow to two or three separate baskets - so their body paragraphs come from different angles and stay connected to the thesis (central idea).

Module Passage Set — High Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 2 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "The Energy We Use Everyday" (nonfiction) and "Columbus's Arrival" (nonfiction). This module uses the High Stamina versions.

Module Independent Product

Magnify a thesis (central idea): brainstorm connected ideas, sort them into buckets (with an off-topic basket), choose one strong idea from each, and narrow to two or three reasons or ways from different baskets.

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: organizing reasons (WHY) and ways (HOW) into groups - "buckets" or "baskets" - so a response has different, non-repetitive body paragraphs.
- The habit: the Magnifying Process - brainstorm, sort, choose one from each group, and narrow to two or three.
- The two reading passages: "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival," now at a longer, richer level.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"If you had to give three reasons, could you make them about three different things - not the same idea three times?"

One Way to Help

When your child gives reasons, help them group similar ones together and pick the strongest from each group. Sorting before choosing is this week's habit.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child continues Cluster 2 with Module 3, "Organizing Reasons and Ways." After writing a strong thesis (central idea), writers must grow reasons (which tell WHY) and ways (which tell HOW). Your child is learning the Magnifying Process: brainstorm many ideas, sort them into groups (we call them buckets or baskets), choose one strong idea from each group, and narrow to two or three - so each body paragraph develops a different part of the thesis (central idea).

We are still reading "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival," now at a longer, more detailed level.

Please try this at home: When your child lists reasons for something, help them sort the reasons into groups of "like" ideas, then pick the strongest one from each group. Grouping before choosing keeps thinking organized - exactly this week's habit.

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 2 con el Módulo 3, "Organizing Reasons and Ways." Después de escribir una tesis fuerte, los escritores deben desarrollar razones (que dicen POR QUÉ) y maneras (que dicen CÓMO). Su hijo o hija está aprendiendo el Proceso de Ampliar: pensar en muchas ideas, ordenarlas en grupos (los llamamos cubetas o canastas), elegir una idea fuerte de cada grupo y reducir a dos o tres, para que cada párrafo desarrolle una parte diferente de la tesis.

Seguimos leyendo "The Energy We Use Everyday" y "Columbus's Arrival," ahora a un nivel más largo y detallado.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija dé razones para algo, ayúdele a ordenar las razones en grupos de ideas "parecidas" y luego elegir la más fuerte de cada grupo. Agrupar antes de elegir mantiene el pensamiento organizado, exactamente el hábito de 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 a reason and a way?
- What are the four steps of the Magnifying Process?
- Why is it helpful to have an "off-topic" basket?
- Why should three reasons come from three different groups?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Sort the Ideas

Pick a topic ("Why exercise is good"). Brainstorm many reasons together, then sort them into a few groups and pick the strongest one from each.

Family Activity - Different Angles

Name one opinion, then give three reasons that are each about a different thing (not the same idea said three ways).

Module 3 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 3 continues Cluster 2. Students grow the Reason/Way branch of the ECR Tree and learn the Magnifying Process - brainstorm, sort into buckets/baskets, choose one from each, and narrow to two or three separate groups. Using "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" at High Stamina, students develop diverse reasons or ways from different baskets, add and delete ideas for coherence, and edit modifiers.

BIG Goal: Students will magnify a thesis (central idea) into two or three strong, distinct reasons or ways from different baskets.

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 2 scope and sequence, not paraphrased or abbreviated.

TEKS	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS breakout)
(11)(B)(iv)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by developing an engaging idea with relevant details
(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)(iii)	revise drafts by adding ideas for coherence
(11)(C)(iv)	revise drafts by deleting ideas for coherence
(11)(D)(xi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adjectives, including their comparative forms
(11)(D)(xii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adjectives, including their superlative forms
(11)(D)(xiii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adverbs that convey frequency
(11)(D)(xiv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adverbs that convey degree

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Students develop an engaging idea with relevant reasons/ways, then add and delete ideas as they sort, narrow, and remove off-topic material for coherence.
- Students use informational organization and craft to create distinct body-paragraph directions rather than repetitive reasons.
- The Module 3 conventions sweep requires students to edit comparative/superlative adjectives and adverbs of frequency/degree in meaningful content-area sentences.

Module 3 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 2 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 2 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(B)(i) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction

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-ii) revise drafts to improve sentence structure and word choice

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(x), (xxxiii), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; past tense of irregular verbs; singular, plural, common, and proper nouns; and correct spelling using grade-appropriate orthographic patterns and high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Editing

- 4(A)(i) apply relationships between sounds and letters of the English language to represent sounds when writing [Teacher only]
- 4(B)(i)–(ii) write text following conventional spelling patterns and 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)(i)–(ii) write content-area-specific text using conventions and grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students listen, sort, 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 Number, students hear the four Magnifying steps and put them in order.
Speaking	Students name each basket and teach a partner the four steps.
Reading	Students reread the passages to gather reasons/ways and notice which details belong together.
Writing	Students sort ideas into baskets, narrow to two or three, and add/delete for coherence.

Module 3 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can brainstorm, sort, and narrow reasons or ways that directly support my thesis (central idea).
- I can tell a reason (WHY) from a way (HOW).
- I can sort ideas into buckets or baskets, including an off-topic basket.
- I can choose reasons or ways from different baskets so my paragraphs are not repetitive.

I Will Statements

- I will use the passage, speak about my thinking, and record my work.
- I will explain how my choices strengthen the response.
- I will brainstorm freely before I narrow.
- I will keep only ideas that prove the thesis (central idea).

Success Criteria

- I can name the four Magnifying steps in order.
- I can sort ideas into like groups and spot off-topic ideas.
- I can choose two or three reasons or ways from different baskets.
- I can add and delete ideas for coherence.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The Bucket Sort game result (sorted baskets with keepers from different groups).
- The Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea) page (two or three reasons or ways from different baskets).
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of the four Magnifying steps.

Module 3 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the ECR Tree chart, the Reason/Way chart, the Magnifying chart, and pre-labeled baskets. You may provide oral rehearsal. You may not brainstorm the ideas for the student, sort the baskets for them, or choose the keepers. The student must still brainstorm, sort, choose, and narrow.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Tell a reason (WHY) from a way (HOW) and brainstorm ideas.	Supported. The teacher may reread a section.	The student lists reasons/ways from the passage.
Inferential	Sort ideas into like baskets, including an off-topic basket.	Guided early, independent by Use.	The student groups ideas by meaning and removes off-topic ones.
Evaluative	Choose two or three reasons/ways from different baskets.	Independent by Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea).	The student narrows to distinct, thesis (central idea)-proving reasons.

Educator Insight

Students often think brainstorming means writing random facts instead of ideas that connect directly to the thesis (central idea). Another common misconception is that students may sort ideas by how they sound rather than by what kind of meaning group they belong to. Some students will try to keep too many ideas because they are afraid to let go of anything. Others may choose all their final reasons from one bucket, which leads to repetitive body paragraphs later. Model the four-step Magnifying process repeatedly and have students name each step aloud as they work. When needed, physically color-code buckets so students can see that each final reason should come from a different group.

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 Magnifying Process

Step	What Writers Do
1 — Brainstorm	List many connected ideas without judging.
2 — Sort	Group like ideas into buckets or baskets (and an off-topic basket).
3 — Choose	Keep one strong idea from each basket.
4 — Narrow	Use ideas from only two or three different baskets.

A reason tells WHY the thesis (central idea) is true; a way tells HOW. Each reason or way must prove the thesis (central idea).

Challenge: Prove the same thesis (central idea) from three different angles (baskets) instead of three ideas from one basket.

 Teacher Script

"Different baskets lead to deeper, more diverse writing. If every reason comes from one basket, the body paragraphs sound the same."

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

"My thesis (central idea) is _____. I brainstormed many ideas, then sorted them into baskets like _____ and _____. I chose _____ from different baskets. On the state writing assessment, organized reasons make your whole response focused and clear."

Module 3 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“Before we begin, let’s preview the words we will use to talk about reasons, ways, and the Magnifying Process - everyday words, academic words, and words from our two passages.”

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
reason	why something is true	One reason is ____.
way	how something happens	One way is ____.
sort	to put into groups	I sort my ideas by ____.
group	a set of things that are alike	This group holds ____.
choose	to pick on purpose	I choose ____ because ____.
keep	to hold onto	I keep this idea because ____.
idea	a thought about something	One idea is ____.
wide	broad; covering a lot	I brainstorm wide by ____.
strong	powerful and clear	A strong reason is ____.
connect	to link two things together	This reason connects to the thesis (central idea) because ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
thesis (central idea)	the clear central idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.
organize	to arrange in order	I organize my ideas by ____.
categorize	to put into categories	I categorize these as ____.
classify	to sort by type	I classify this idea as ____.
brainstorm	to think of many ideas quickly	When I brainstorm, I ____.
narrow	to reduce to the best few	I narrow my ideas to ____.
topic sentence	the sentence that starts a body paragraph	My topic sentence is ____.
relevant	closely connected to the point	A relevant idea is ____.
magnify	to organize ideas into groups before choosing	I magnify my reasons by ____.
coherence	how well ideas fit and flow together	I improve coherence by ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
renewable	rih-NOO-uh-buhl	able to be replaced over time and used again	A renewable resource is ____.
nonrenewable	non-rih-NOO-uh-buhl	not able to be replaced quickly once it is used	A nonrenewable resource is ____.
resource	REE-sorss	a material or supply that people use	One resource we use is ____.
pollution	puh-LOO-shun	harmful materials that damage the environment	Pollution can ____.
environment	en-VY-run-ment	the natural world around us	The environment is affected when ____.
Columbus	kuh-LUM-bus	the explorer who sailed to the Americas in 1492	Columbus ____.
Taino	TY-noh	a Native American people of the Caribbean	The Taino ____.
Carib	KAIR-ib	a Native American people known for resisting the Spanish	The Carib ____.
missionaries	MISH-uh-nair-eez	people who travel to teach a religion	Missionaries traveled to ____.
hydroelectric	hy-droh-ih-LEK-trik	making electricity from moving water	A hydroelectric dam ____.



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 2 passages at High Stamina. "The Energy We Use Everyday" is a longer nonfiction text about renewable and nonrenewable resources, their advantages and limitations, availability and reliability, environmental effects, and the need for careful planning. "Columbus's Arrival" is a longer nonfiction text about Columbus's 1492 voyage, Spanish settlement, the spread of Christianity, early cooperation and later conflict with the Taino and Carib, and the lasting effects of his arrival.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 2 modules; at High Stamina they carry more detail and more informational relationships. That density is the point of this module: with many possible ideas, students must Magnify - brainstorm, sort, choose, and narrow - so their reasons and ways come from different angles. The passages' structures (cause/effect and impact in Columbus's Arrival; compare/contrast and advantages/limitations in The Energy We Use Everyday) give students natural baskets.

Module 3 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Anchor Charts to Create

- The ECR Tree: Roots = Passage + Prompt; Trunk = Thesis (Central Idea); Branch 1 = Reason/Way; Branch 2 = Evidence; Branch 3 = Explanation
- Reason/Way Branch: a reason tells WHY; a way tells HOW; each reason or way must prove the thesis (central idea)
- Magnifying Reasons into Buckets/Baskets: Step 1 Brainstorm; Step 2 Organize into like groups; Step 3 Choose one from each group; Step 4 Narrow to 2-3 separate groups
- Passage Relationships: Columbus's Arrival - cause/effect, actions and impact, competing perspectives, cultural change; The Energy We Use Everyday - compare/contrast, advantages/limitations, availability/reliability, environmental effects
- Topic Sentence Connection: Thesis (Central Idea) - Reasons/Ways - Topic Sentences

Post for Students

- A reason tells WHY. A way tells HOW. Every reason or way must prove the thesis (central idea).

Materials

- Passage copies (High Stamina), interactive notebooks, scissors, glue, crayons or colored pencils
- Task cards, game cards, basket or bucket labels, sorting cards, dice, a spinner
- Chart paper, sentence strips, sticky notes, intervention cut-up idea strips, enrichment challenge cards

Quick Teacher Reference for This Cluster

Module 1 introduced the ECR Tree; Module 2 taught the thesis (central idea); Module 3 grows the first major branch by developing strong reasons or ways. Students learn the Magnifying Process to organize brainstorming into buckets or baskets before selecting their strongest ideas. This matters because students will later need different evidence in different body paragraphs. Continue connecting the two passages through cause/effect, comparison, advantages/limitations, and impact.

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 — The Reason/Way Branch and the Magnifying Process

Teacher Script

"Yesterday we built the trunk of the ECR Tree with the thesis (central idea). Today we grow the first big branch - the Reason/Way branch. A strong thesis (central idea) needs strong reasons or ways to prove it."

The Reason/Way Branch

- A reason tells WHY the thesis (central idea) is true.
- A way tells HOW the thesis (central idea) is true.
- Every reason or way must prove the thesis (central idea). If the thesis (central idea) is the trunk, the reasons or ways are the first strong branches that hold up the rest of the writing.

The Magnifying Process

Magnifying helps us take a big idea and organize it into smaller, clearer parts.

Step	What to Do
1 — Brainstorm	After you write your thesis (central idea), list as many connected ideas as you can. Do not judge yet.
2 — Sort	Organize your ideas into buckets or baskets of like ideas. Make an off-topic basket if an idea does not prove the thesis (central idea).
3 — Choose	Keep only one strong idea from each basket.
4 — Narrow	Use ideas from only two or three different baskets. Those become your topic sentences.

Why Magnify?

Choosing from entirely different baskets gives a more in-depth and diverse list of ideas - and that leads to more diverse evidence later. If we kept choosing ideas from the same basket, our body paragraphs would start sounding the same.

Model (Columbus)

- Thesis (Central Idea): "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways."
- Baskets: Land and Power (claimed land for Spain, Spain gained influence, control); Religion and Culture (brought Christianity, missionaries came, changed traditions); Relationships and Conflict (traded with the Taino, conflict developed, Carib resisted); Off-Topic (ocean, boats).

- Final keepers (different baskets): claimed land for Spain; brought Christianity; conflict developed.

**Teacher Script**

"A fact can be true in the passage and still not be useful for this exact thesis (central idea) - that is why an off-topic basket can be helpful."

Module 3 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students magnify reasons and ways, they reread "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. At High Stamina there are many possible ideas, so TRACKS helps students gather them - and Magnifying helps them sort and choose.

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. The details we highlight become the ideas we brainstorm, sort into baskets, and narrow into our strongest reasons or ways.”

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 3 — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, watch television, use a computer, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth. Energy is an important part of daily life. People use it at home, at school, and at work. Without energy, many of the things we depend on every day would not be possible.

[2] Natural resources are materials found in nature that people use to meet their needs. Some natural resources provide food, while others provide energy. The energy people use comes from both renewable and nonrenewable resources. Understanding the difference between these resources helps people make informed decisions about how energy is produced and used.

[3] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[4] People use renewable resources in many different ways. Solar panels collect energy from sunlight and turn it into electricity. Wind turbines use moving air to generate power. Water flowing through dams can also be used to produce electricity. Farmers grow plants that can be used for food, fuel, and other products. Because these resources can be replaced naturally, many people believe they are important for the future.

[5] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. Since sunlight, wind, and water are continually renewed by natural processes, people can use them again and again. This makes renewable resources valuable sources of energy for communities around the world.

[6] Another advantage of renewable resources is that they often produce less pollution. Solar panels and wind turbines generate electricity without burning fuel. This helps reduce the amount of harmful gases released into the air. Many people support the use of renewable resources because they can help protect the environment while still providing energy.

[7] However, renewable resources also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[8] Imagine a town that relies mostly on solar energy. On bright, sunny days, plenty of electricity may be produced. However, during cloudy weather, less energy may be available. The same challenge can occur with wind energy. If the wind is not blowing, wind turbines cannot produce as much electricity. Because of this, communities often use several different energy sources to meet their needs.

[9] Water power also has limitations. Hydroelectric dams depend on a steady supply of water. During droughts, rivers and reservoirs may contain less water than usual. When this happens, less electricity can be generated. Even though water is a renewable resource, changes in weather can affect how much energy it provides.

[10] Other resources are known as nonrenewable. These include coal, oil, and natural gas, which form deep underground over millions of years. These resources were created from the remains of ancient plants and animals that were buried beneath Earth's surface. Heat and pressure slowly transformed these materials into the fuels people use today.

[11] Because nonrenewable resources take so long to develop, they cannot be replaced quickly once they are used. Although new deposits may still be forming underground, the process takes millions of years. As a result, people must carefully manage these resources because the supply is limited.

[12] Nonrenewable resources provide a large and steady supply of energy, which makes them useful. Many homes, businesses, and vehicles rely on these resources every day. Coal has been used for many years to generate electricity. Oil is used to make fuels such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel. Natural gas is commonly used for heating homes, cooking food, and producing electricity.

[13] One reason nonrenewable resources remain popular is that they can provide energy whenever it is needed. Unlike solar panels or wind turbines, which depend on weather conditions, coal, oil, and natural gas can be used at any time. This reliability makes them important energy sources in many areas.

[14] However, the use of nonrenewable resources can also create challenges. Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage. When fossil fuels are burned, gases and particles are released into the atmosphere. These pollutants can affect air quality and contribute to environmental problems.

[15] Mining and drilling for nonrenewable resources can also affect ecosystems. Land may be disturbed when coal is mined, and oil spills can harm plants and animals. Because of these risks, many people believe it is important to find ways to reduce environmental damage while still meeting energy needs.

[16] In addition, nonrenewable resources are limited and may eventually be used up. As populations grow and more energy is needed, supplies of coal, oil, and natural gas may decrease. This is one reason why scientists continue to search for new technologies and energy sources.

[17] Scientists, engineers, and community leaders study ways to use energy more efficiently. Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same task. For example, energy-efficient light bulbs use less electricity than older bulbs while producing the same amount of light. Efficient appliances and vehicles can also reduce energy use.

[18] Many communities use a combination of renewable and nonrenewable resources. This approach helps provide a steady supply of energy while also reducing dependence on limited resources. A city might use electricity from solar panels during the day while relying on natural gas when renewable energy is unavailable.

[19] People can also help conserve resources through everyday actions. Turning off lights when leaving a room, using less water, recycling materials, and choosing energy-efficient products can reduce the demand for energy. Small actions by many people can make a big difference over time.

[20] Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of renewable and nonrenewable

resources helps people make informed decisions about energy use. Both types of resources play important roles in meeting society's needs. Renewable resources can be replenished naturally, while nonrenewable resources provide dependable energy supplies. Learning about these resources helps people understand how energy choices affect the environment, communities, and future generations.

[21] As technology continues to improve, people will likely discover new ways to produce and use energy. By carefully managing Earth's resources and making thoughtful decisions, communities can help ensure that energy remains available for many years to come.

Student Annotation Guide — The Energy We Use Everyday

T — Time

over millions of years

R — Reactions

lead to pollution and environmental damage

A — Actions

Solar panels collect energy from sunlight

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Renewable resources

K — Key Knowledge

coal, oil, and natural gas

S — Scenery/Setting

natural resources found on Earth

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, watch television, use a computer, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth. Energy is an important part of daily life. People use it at home, at school, and at work. Without energy, many of the things we depend on every day would not be possible.

[2] Natural resources are materials found in nature that people use to meet their needs. Some natural resources provide food, while others provide energy. The energy people use comes from both renewable and nonrenewable resources. Understanding the difference between these resources helps people make informed decisions about how energy is produced and used.

[3] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[4] People use renewable resources in many different ways. Solar panels collect energy from sunlight and turn it into electricity. Wind turbines use moving air to generate power. Water flowing through dams can also be used to produce electricity. Farmers grow plants that can be used for food, fuel, and other products. Because these resources can be replaced naturally, many people believe they are important for the future.

[5] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. Since sunlight, wind, and water are continually renewed by natural processes, people can use them again and again. This makes renewable resources valuable sources of energy for communities around the world.

[6] Another advantage of renewable resources is that they often produce less pollution. Solar panels and wind turbines generate electricity without burning fuel. This helps reduce the amount of harmful gases released into the air. Many people support the use of renewable resources because they can help protect the environment while still providing energy.

[7] However, renewable resources also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[8] Imagine a town that relies mostly on solar energy. On bright, sunny days, plenty of electricity may be produced. However, during cloudy weather, less energy may be available. The same challenge can occur with wind energy. If the wind is not blowing, wind turbines cannot produce as much electricity. Because of this, communities often use several different energy sources to meet their needs.

[9] Water power also has limitations. Hydroelectric dams depend on a steady supply of water. During droughts, rivers and reservoirs may contain less water than usual. When this happens, less electricity can be generated. Even though water is a renewable resource, changes in weather can affect how much energy it provides.

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PASSAGE 4 — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

[2] Columbus was born in Italy, but he sailed for Spain. During this time, many European countries were interested in finding faster ways to trade with Asia. Goods such as spices, silk, and other valuable products came from Asia, but reaching those places often required long and difficult journeys. Columbus believed he could reach Asia more quickly by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean.

[3] Many people doubted his plan because they believed the journey would be too long. However, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to support the voyage. They provided ships, supplies, and crew members. Columbus set sail with three ships called the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María.

[4] The journey across the Atlantic Ocean was not easy. The crew spent weeks at sea without seeing land. Some sailors became worried and wanted to turn back. They were unsure if they would ever reach their destination. Columbus encouraged them to continue sailing. Finally, after many days at sea, land was spotted in October of 1492.

[5] Although Columbus believed he had reached islands near Asia, he had actually arrived in the Caribbean. He did not realize that two large continents stood between Europe and Asia. Even though he had not reached his intended destination, his voyage became one of the most important events in history.

[6] By claiming the land, Columbus helped Spain begin to explore and settle in the Americas. This was important because it led to more Spanish expeditions and the growth of Spain's influence in the region. News of Columbus's voyage spread quickly throughout Europe. Other countries became interested in exploring lands across the Atlantic Ocean.

[7] Soon, explorers from Spain and other European nations traveled to the Americas. They searched for land, resources, and opportunities to expand their countries. Over time, settlements were established in many areas. These settlements became places where Europeans lived, worked, and traded.

[8] Ships regularly crossed the Atlantic Ocean carrying people and goods between Europe and the Americas. Crops, animals, tools, and other products moved between the two regions. This exchange changed the lives of people on both sides of the ocean. New foods became available in different parts of the world, and trade increased between continents.

[9] Columbus and his crew also brought their beliefs with them. They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met. Over time, missionaries traveled to the Americas to teach Native Americans about this religion. Churches and missions were built in many places. Some Native Americans accepted Christianity, while others continued following their traditional beliefs.

[10] The arrival of Europeans introduced new customs, languages, and technologies. People encountered different ways of farming, building, and living. Some Native American

groups adopted certain European practices, while others worked to keep their own traditions. As different cultures came into contact, many changes took place throughout the Americas.

[11] At first, some Native American groups, like the Taino, showed friendliness toward Columbus and his crew by trading and cooperating with them. They exchanged goods and shared information about the area. These early interactions helped both groups learn about one another. The Taino introduced Europeans to local foods and resources, while Europeans shared items they had brought from across the ocean.

[12] The Taino lived throughout parts of the Caribbean. They built villages, farmed crops, and fished in nearby waters. Their communities had existed long before Columbus arrived. Like many Native American groups, they had their own traditions, languages, and ways of life.

[13] However, relationships between Europeans and Native Americans did not always stay peaceful. Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control. As more Europeans arrived, they wanted access to valuable resources and additional land for settlements. Native American groups often wanted to protect their homes and communities.

[14] The Carib were known for resisting the Spanish. They fought to defend their land and way of life. This resistance led to conflicts between the groups. Over time, fighting became more common in some areas. These conflicts affected both Europeans and Native Americans.

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[17] The effects of Columbus's voyage continued for many years. Exploration increased, new settlements were established, and trade expanded. The movement of people, goods, and ideas connected different parts of the world in ways that had never happened before.

[18] Today, Columbus's journey is remembered and retold in different ways. Columbus Day recognizes his voyage, but many people also think about how his arrival affected Native Americans. Historians study different perspectives to better understand the events that followed his journey.

[19] Some people focus on Columbus's role in opening the door to exploration and increased trade. Others focus on the challenges and hardships that Native American groups experienced after Europeans arrived. Looking at different viewpoints helps people gain a fuller understanding of history.

[20] People continue to discuss the impact of Columbus's voyage because it marked an important turning point in history. His journey connected Europe and the Americas and led to changes that affected millions of people. The events that followed shaped the

development of countries, cultures, and communities throughout the Western Hemisphere.

[21] Columbus's actions had lasting effects on land, culture, and the people who lived in the Americas. His voyage remains one of the most significant events in world history because of the changes it set into motion. More than five hundred years later, people still study his journey to understand how it influenced the world we live in today.

Student Annotation Guide — Columbus's Arrival

T — Time

In 1492

R — Reactions

led to more Spanish expeditions

A — Actions

he claimed the land for Spain

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Christopher Columbus

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TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Columbus's Arrival

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Day 1 - Gather and Reveal



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(B)(iv)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by developing an engaging idea with relevant details
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 ordering the four Magnifying steps, then reveal the Reason/Way branch and how to magnify ideas into buckets or baskets.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — Listen and Number the Magnifying Process

Number these steps 1-4 after the teacher explains them: ___ Choose one strong idea from each basket; ___ Brainstorm many connected ideas; ___ Narrow to 2-3 separate baskets; ___ Sort like ideas into baskets.

- Answer Key: 1 Brainstorm many connected ideas; 2 Sort like ideas into baskets; 3

Choose one strong idea from each basket; 4 Narrow to 2-3 separate baskets.

Teacher Script: "Hear the complete process first. Then number the steps. Your job is to follow the relationship among the steps, not wait for one word to copy." Fresh Recall: Students cover the numbered list and teach the four steps to a partner in order.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Reason/Way = First Major Branch)

Write on the board: A reason tells WHY the thesis (central idea) is true. A way tells HOW the thesis (central idea) is true. Every reason or way must prove the thesis (central idea). Magnify: Brainstorm to Sort to Choose to Narrow.

R — Reveal: Grow the First Branch by Magnifying

Display the ECR Tree chart, the Reason/Way chart, and the Magnifying chart (see the Reason/Way page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- The thesis (central idea) is the trunk; the reason/way is the first major branch. A reason tells why; a way tells how.
- Magnify: (1) Brainstorm many connected ideas; (2) Sort into buckets/baskets of like ideas (with an off-topic basket); (3) Choose one strong idea from each; (4) Narrow to two or three different baskets.
- Model (Columbus thesis (central idea) "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways"): baskets = Land and Power / Religion and Culture / Relationships and Conflict / Off-Topic. Final keepers from different baskets: claimed land for Spain; brought Christianity; conflict developed.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Today's Big Idea)

Write on the board: A strong thesis (central idea) needs strong reasons or ways to prove it. Writers magnify their ideas by sorting them into buckets or baskets, then choosing from different baskets.

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "The four Magnifying steps are ___, and choosing from different baskets helps because ___."

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)(iv)	revise drafts by deleting ideas for coherence
ELPS 4(D)(iii)	write content-area texts using a variety of transition words

Day 2 Purpose

Students attempt the module skill through Bucket Sort: brainstorm, sort idea cards into baskets, make an off-topic basket, choose one keeper from each, and narrow to two or three.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Bucket Sort — Directions)

Write on the board: Read the thesis (central idea). Spread the idea cards. Add ideas. Sort like ideas. Create an off-topic basket. Choose one keeper from each. Narrow to 2-3 baskets. Turn the final ideas into topic-sentence beginnings.

Thesis (Central Idea) Set A — "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways."

Idea cards: claimed land for Spain; Spain gained influence; settlements grew; control; missionaries came; brought Christianity; changed traditions; traded with the Taino; conflict developed; Carib resisted; islands; sailing; boats.

- Bucket 1 Land and Power: claimed land for Spain; Spain gained influence; settlements grew; control.
- Bucket 2 Religion and Culture: missionaries came; brought Christianity; changed traditions.
- Bucket 3 Relationships and Conflict: traded with the Taino; conflict developed; Carib resisted.
- Off-Topic: islands; sailing; boats.
- Possible Final Keepers: claimed land for Spain; brought Christianity; conflict developed.

Thesis (Central Idea) Set B — "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply."

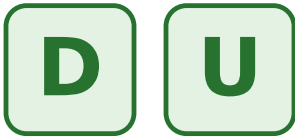
Idea cards: renewable resources can be replaced over time; nonrenewable resources cannot be replaced quickly; renewable sources are not always available; steady supply from nonrenewable resources; pollution; environmental damage; weather conditions; advantages and disadvantages; future generations; careful planning; energy demand; television; charge a device.

- Bucket 1 Replacement and Long-Term Supply: renewable resources can be replaced over time; nonrenewable resources cannot be replaced quickly.
- Bucket 2 Availability and Reliability: renewable sources are not always available; steady supply from nonrenewable resources; weather conditions.
- Bucket 3 Environmental Effects: pollution; environmental damage.
- Bucket 4 Planning and Responsibility: advantages and disadvantages; future generations; careful planning.
- Off-Topic: television or charge a device.
- Possible Final Keepers: renewable resources can be replaced over time; renewable sources are not always available; pollution.

Day 2 Closing

Interactive Notebook Reminder: "Glue your sorted basket page into your Interactive Notebook. Use the games and activities to review the ECR concepts whenever you have free time."

Day 3 - Discuss and Use Again



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(iii)	revise drafts by adding ideas for coherence
TEKS (11)(D)(xi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adjectives, including their comparative forms
TEKS (11)(D)(xiii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adverbs that convey frequency
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 organized thinking helps, then independently magnify a thesis (central idea) and run an add/delete-plus-modifier conventions sweep.

D — Discuss Organized Thinking

Ask: Why brainstorm wide first? Why sort? Why keep an off-topic basket? Why choose from different baskets?

- Student: "Brainstorming helps our thinking grow before we narrow." / "Writers need organized thinking before organized writing." / "A fact can be true in the passage and still not prove this thesis (central idea)." / "Different baskets lead to deeper, more diverse writing."

Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How does grouping ideas help us build focused, nonrepetitive body paragraphs?"

U — Use Again: Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea)

Write one thesis (central idea). Draw four baskets. Brainstorm connected ideas, sort them into baskets (make one off-topic if needed), choose one strong idea from each, and narrow to two or three from different baskets.

- Option A: "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways." Final reasons (example): Columbus affected the Americas by claiming land for Spain; by bringing religious and cultural change; by creating conflict with Native American groups.
- Option B: "Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply." Final ways (example): Energy choices are shaped by how quickly resources can be replaced; by availability and reliability; by the environmental effects of different resources.

Teacher Script

"Accept alternate responses whose final reasons/ways come from different baskets and clearly prove the thesis (central idea)."

Standards Application Check — Module 3 (Add/Delete for Coherence + Modifier Check)

Look at one basket. ADD one idea that makes the category clearer. DELETE one weak or off-topic idea. Then edit one content sentence to use a comparative or superlative adjective and one adverb of frequency or degree accurately.

- Teacher Examples: "Renewable resources are often cleaner than some nonrenewable resources." (comparative adjective = cleaner; frequency adverb = often.) "A community may choose the most useful combination of sources for its needs." (superlative adjective = most useful.) "Nonrenewable resources can be very useful, but they are limited." (degree adverb = very.)

Day 3 Closing

Students star their strongest basket and complete: "This basket will make a strong body paragraph because ____."

Day 4 - Award and Target



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(D)(xii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adjectives, including their superlative forms
TEKS (11)(D)(xiv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adverbs that convey degree
ELPS 4(C)(i)	write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary

Day 4 Purpose

Students recognize the organized thinking they did and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Draw two or three baskets and place a star in the one you think was your strongest. Complete: "One idea I organized well today was ____."

- Earn a Branch Builder Badge. Class cheer: "Brainstorm wide! Sort with care! Strong ideas are growing there!"

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award Your Organization)

Write on the board: Star your strongest basket. Complete: "This basket will make a strong body paragraph because ____."

T — Target

Choose one target: brainstorm more, sort by meaning, remove off-topic ideas, choose different angles, or write clearer topic sentences. Curiosity Questions: "Why does organized thinking usually lead to stronger writing?" "What might happen if all of our paragraphs come from the same basket?" "Why is it important to narrow ideas before we start writing body paragraphs?"

★ Daily Deck Slide (Target Your Organization Habit)

Write on the board: Choose one target - brainstorm more, sort by meaning, remove off-topic ideas, choose different angles, or write clearer topic sentences.

Day 4 Closing

Complete the sentence: "My next organizing 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 four Magnifying steps and why choosing from different baskets creates stronger body paragraphs.

E — Teach the Four Magnifying Steps

Teach your partner the four steps in order: what each step is, why each step matters, and one example from Columbus or the energy passage.

Sentence Frames: "Step one is ____." "In step two, we ____." "One basket I made was ____." "An off-topic idea might be ____." "The reason we choose from different baskets is ____." "One strong reason about Columbus is ____." "One strong way from the energy passage is ____."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How can organizing reasons or ways into different groups help us build focused, nonrepetitive body paragraphs?

Grouping ideas helps us see which ideas are alike, remove weak or off-topic ideas, and choose reasons or ways from different categories so each body paragraph develops a different part of the thesis (central idea).

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: Grouping ideas helps us see which are alike, remove weak or off-topic ideas, and choose reasons or ways from different categories so each body paragraph develops a different part of the thesis (central idea). Finish: "One Magnifying step I can teach is ____."

Teacher Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today you did the hard and beautiful work of organizing your thoughts before writing. Students who can sort, narrow, and connect ideas are ready to write with confidence. Keep building branch by branch."

Module 3 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Magnify the thesis (central idea) "Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways" into strong reasons.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "Reasons: claimed land for Spain, Spain gained influence, settlements grew." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student lists ideas connected to the thesis (central idea).
- Teacher Notes: All three reasons come from the same basket (Land and Power), so the body paragraphs would repeat.
- What Needs Improvement: Choose reasons from different baskets so each paragraph develops a different part of the thesis (central idea).

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "Reasons: claimed land for Spain (Land and Power); brought Christianity (Religion and Culture); Spain gained influence (Land and Power)." (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: The student uses two different baskets and labels them.
- Teacher Notes: Two reasons still come from the same basket, so the response is not yet fully diverse.
- What Needs Improvement: Replace the repeated Land-and-Power reason with one from a third basket (Relationships and Conflict).

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "Reasons from different baskets: Columbus affected the Americas by claiming land for Spain (Land and Power); by bringing religious and cultural change (Religion and Culture); by creating conflict with Native American groups (Relationships and Conflict)." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: Three reasons, each from a different basket, each proving the thesis (central idea) from a distinct angle.
- Teacher Notes: This magnified set will grow into three focused, non-repetitive body paragraphs.

Module 3 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can magnify a thesis (central idea) into distinct reasons or ways from different baskets.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two High Stamina passages, the Reason/Way and Magnifying charts, Bucket Sort cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(11)(B)(iv) develop an engaging idea with relevant details; (11)(C)(iv) revise by deleting ideas for coherence
Task	Students complete the Bucket Sort game and an independent Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea) page.
Expected Response	Students brainstorm, sort into baskets, choose one from each, and narrow to two or three from different baskets.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe Bucket Sort and Listen and Number. Note whether students sort by meaning, use an off-topic basket, and choose from different baskets.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea) page serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Brainstorm	Must list several connected ideas.
Sort	Must group like ideas into baskets, including an off-topic basket.
Choose	Must keep one strong idea from each basket.
Narrow	Must select two or three reasons/ways from different baskets.

Answer Key — The Four Steps

1 Brainstorm; 2 Sort into buckets/baskets; 3 Choose one from each; 4 Narrow to two or three separate baskets.

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 four Magnifying steps.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Sort and Show: In Bucket Sort, students place a card in a basket and name why it belongs there.
- Written — Discuss/Use — Two From Two: Students write two reasons or ways from two different baskets.

Assessment Option

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

- Listen — assess through Listen and Number and discussion.
- Look — observe a Bucket Sort or a labeled basket page.
- Collect — have students produce a Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea) page you can examine.

Intervention — Module 3

Pre-Sorted Baskets

For students who need the thinking slowed down and made concrete, provide the baskets already labeled. The student's job is to place each strip where it belongs, then circle one keeper in each and narrow to two or three.

Habit: "Say it, sort it, choose it, write it."

Columbus Set - Baskets: Land and Power; Religion and Culture; Relationships and Conflict; Off Topic. Strips: claimed land for Spain; missionaries came; conflict developed; Carib resisted; sailing; brought Christianity; Spain gained influence; traded with the Taino.

Energy Resources Set - Baskets: Replacement and Long-Term Supply; Availability and Reliability; Environmental Effects; Off Topic. Strips: renewable resources can be replaced over time; nonrenewable resources cannot be replaced quickly; renewable sources are not always available; steady supply from nonrenewable resources; pollution and environmental damage; weather conditions; television.

Follow-Up: circle one strong idea from each basket, keep only two or three baskets, and say your reasons or ways aloud before writing them.

Module 3 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to brainstorm.	Students list ideas connected to the thesis (central idea).	Students list random facts.	Ask, "Does this idea help prove your thesis (central idea)?"
Ask students to sort.	Students group by meaning.	Students group by how ideas sound.	Ask, "What kind of idea is this - land, culture, or conflict?"
Ask students to narrow.	Students choose from different baskets.	Students choose all from one basket.	Point out that same-basket reasons make paragraphs repeat.

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Brainstorms random facts	Return to the thesis (central idea) and ask which ideas prove it.
Keeps too many ideas	Require one keeper per basket.
Chooses from one basket	Use color-coded baskets to show different groups.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 3 enrichment (Three Different Angles).

Enrichment — Module 3

Three Different Angles

Prove the same thesis (central idea) from three different angles.

Directions: choose one thesis (central idea); brainstorm at least 10 ideas; sort them into at least 4 baskets; choose 3 different baskets; write one topic sentence from each; and under each, explain the cause/effect, comparison, or informational relationship it represents.

Sample (Columbus): Topic Sentence 1 - "Columbus affected the Americas by claiming land for Spain." (shows a change in control of land). Topic Sentence 2 - "Columbus affected the Americas by bringing religious and cultural changes." (shows a change in beliefs and traditions). Topic Sentence 3 - "Columbus affected the Americas by contributing to conflict with Native American groups." (shows a cause/effect between competing control and conflict).

Sample (Energy): Topic Sentence 1 - "Energy choices are shaped by how quickly resources can be replaced." (compares replacement rate). Topic Sentence 2 - "Energy choices are shaped by the availability and reliability of different resources." (weather and steady supply). Topic Sentence 3 - "Energy choices are shaped by environmental effects." (compares advantages and limitations).

Module 3 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Magnify a Thesis (Central Idea)

Writing Prompt

Choose one thesis (central idea) below and magnify it into two or three reasons or ways from different baskets.

- Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways.
- Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability, environmental effects, and long-term supply.

Connection to This Module

This week you learned to grow the Reason/Way branch by Magnifying. Now brainstorm, sort, choose, and narrow to two or three reasons or ways from different baskets.

Planning Support

1. Brainstorm many connected ideas.
2. Sort them into buckets or baskets (with an off-topic basket).
3. Choose one strong idea from each basket.
4. Narrow to two or three from different baskets.

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Brainstorm	List many ideas that connect to the thesis (central idea).
Step 2: Sort + Choose	Group like ideas; keep one from each basket.
Step 3: Narrow	Choose two or three from different baskets.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My reasons or ways prove the thesis (central idea).
- My final reasons or ways come from different baskets.
- I removed off-topic ideas.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your baskets aloud. ADD one idea that makes a category clearer, and DELETE one weak or off-topic idea.

Edit

Run the Conventions Sweep: edit one sentence to use a comparative or superlative adjective and one adverb of frequency or degree accurately.

Module 3 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Listen and Number.

Purpose: Students listen for the logical sequence of the four Magnifying steps and reconstruct the process rather than transcribing the teacher's explanation.

Listening Target: Listen for what must happen first, next, and last when writers magnify reasons or ways.

Student Materials: interactive notebook; a numbering strip 1-4.



Teacher Script

"Hear the complete process first. Then number the steps. Your job is to follow the relationship among the steps, not wait for one word to copy."

Step to Order	Correct Number
Choose one strong idea from each basket	3
Brainstorm many connected ideas	1
Narrow to 2-3 separate baskets	4
Sort like ideas into baskets	2

Fresh Recall: Students cover the numbered list and teach the four steps to a partner in order.

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 — Reason or Way?

Stop and think: Does this idea tell WHY the thesis (central idea) is true (a reason) or HOW it is true (a way)?

|| Pause Point — Which Basket?

Stop and think: What meaning group does this idea belong to? Is it off-topic for this thesis (central idea)?

|| Pause Point — One From Each

Stop and think: Have I kept only one strong idea from each basket?

|| Pause Point — Different Angles

Stop and think: Do my final reasons come from different baskets, or from the same one?

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 a reason from a way.			
Brainstorm ideas that connect to the thesis (central idea).			
Sort ideas into baskets, including off-topic.			
Choose reasons or ways from different baskets.			
Add and delete ideas for coherence.			

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 organizing reasons or ways into different groups helps us build focused, nonrepetitive body paragraphs. Now we can answer it: grouping ideas helps us see which are alike, remove weak or off-topic ideas, and choose reasons or ways from different categories so each body paragraph develops a different part of the thesis (central idea).”

Module Overarching Question — Answered

How can organizing reasons or ways into different groups help us build focused, nonrepetitive body paragraphs? Grouping ideas helps us see which ideas are alike, remove weak or off-topic ideas, and choose reasons or ways from different categories so each body paragraph develops a different part of the thesis (central idea).

Teacher Reflection - Module 3

Which students sort ideas by meaning rather than by sound?

Which students choose reasons or ways from different baskets?

Which students still keep too many ideas or choose from one basket?

Who is ready for Module 4, finding the evidence that supports each reason or way?

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 Listen and Number, read the four Magnifying steps aloud with cameras on and have students type the order (1-4) in the chat, then call on one student to explain the sequence. Post the ECR Tree chart, the Reason/Way chart, and the Magnifying chart in the class stream so students can glue printed copies or keep a digital version. Run Bucket Sort on a shared slide: give each group a thesis (central idea) and labeled basket boxes to drag idea cards into, plus an off-topic box, and require final keepers from different baskets. For Magnify My Thesis (Central Idea), students draft in a shared or private doc with four boxes; use private comments to ask "Which basket does this belong to?" and "Are your final reasons from different baskets?" rather than sorting for them. Collect the add/delete-plus-modifier check as a one-photo or typed submission.

GRADE 4 • CLUSTER 2 • ECR - INFORMATIONAL

M O D U L E

4

Choosing Evidence

Week 4 • Very High Stamina

Module 4: Choosing Evidence

Week 4 - Very High Stamina - Cluster 2 (ECR Informative)

Good Writers Do Not Just Say It - They Prove It

Teacher Script

"When students learn how to support their thinking well, they begin to trust their own voices as writers and thinkers."

Overarching Question

How can we choose evidence that truly proves each reason or way in an informative ECR?

Today We Will Look For

- the Evidence Branch: evidence is proof from the passage
- the CSI habit: Connect the reason/way, Support with text, Infer what it shows
- what counts as strong evidence (specific, relevant, from the text)
- how evidence reveals cause/effect, comparison, advantages, and limitations

Student reminder: Connect it, support it, infer it.

Why This Module Matters

Students grow the next major branch of the ECR Tree: the Evidence Branch. Evidence is the proof that supports each reason or way - not just any interesting fact. Using the two Cluster 2 passages at Very High Stamina, students learn to use CSI naturally: Connect the evidence to the reason or way, Support the idea with a specific detail from the passage, and Infer what the evidence shows. This completes the reason-evidence part of the ECR.

Module Passage Set — Very High Stamina

Two selections anchor Cluster 2 and return across all four modules at rising stamina: "The Energy We Use Everyday" (nonfiction) and "Columbus's Arrival" (nonfiction). This module uses the Very High Stamina versions.

Module Independent Product

Build an Evidence Branch: choose a reason or way, find two supporting details, circle the strongest, complete Connect-Support-Infer, and name the relationship the evidence reveals.

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: choosing STRONG evidence - a specific detail from the text that truly proves a reason - and using CSI (Connect, Support, Infer).
- The habit: match the evidence to the reason, quote the exact detail, and explain what it shows.
- The two reading passages: "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival," now at the longest, richest level.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

"You gave me a reason - now what exact detail proves it, and what does that detail show?"

One Way to Help

When your child makes a point, ask them to prove it with an exact detail (not just a summary) and then say what the detail shows. That is the CSI habit we practice this week.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child finishes Cluster 2 with Module 4, "Choosing Evidence." Your child now knows how to write a thesis (central idea) and grow reasons or ways. This week they add the proof: evidence. Evidence is a specific detail from the passage that truly supports a reason. Your child is learning a habit called CSI - Connect the evidence to the reason, Support the idea with an exact detail, and Infer what that detail shows.

We are still reading "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival," now at the longest, most detailed level.

Please try this at home: When your child shares a reason, ask them to prove it with an exact detail and then say what it shows - "What exactly proves that, and what does it tell us?" Choosing precise proof, not just any fact, 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 termina el Grupo 2 con el Módulo 4, "Choosing Evidence." Su hijo o hija ya sabe escribir una tesis y desarrollar razones o maneras. Esta semana agrega la prueba: la evidencia. La evidencia es un detalle específico del pasaje que realmente apoya una razón. Su hijo o hija está aprendiendo un hábito llamado CSI: Conectar la evidencia con la razón, Apoyar la idea con un detalle exacto e Inferir lo que ese detalle muestra.

Seguimos leyendo "The Energy We Use Everyday" y "Columbus's Arrival," ahora al nivel más largo y detallado.

Por favor, intente esto en casa: Cuando su hijo o hija comparta una razón, pídale que la demuestre con un detalle exacto y luego diga lo que muestra: "¿Qué lo demuestra exactamente y qué nos dice?" Elegir una prueba precisa, no cualquier hecho, 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 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 is the difference between a reason and the evidence that supports it?
- What does CSI stand for, and how does it help you use evidence?
- Can a true detail still be weak evidence? Why?
- What does it mean to "infer" what a detail shows?

Simple Family Activities

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

Family Activity - Prove It, Then Explain It

Make a claim ("Our garden is doing well"). Then give one exact detail that proves it and say what the detail shows.

Family Activity - Which Detail Fits?

Give a reason, then two possible details - one that fits and one that is off-topic. Have your child pick the one that proves the reason and explain why.

Module 4 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 4 completes Cluster 2. Students grow the Evidence Branch and use CSI - Connect, Support, Infer - to choose evidence that truly proves each reason or way. Using "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" at Very High Stamina, students distinguish strong from weak evidence, match evidence to reasons, complete CSI, and run a cumulative ECR quality check.

BIG Goal: Students will choose precise text evidence for a reason or way and use CSI to show what it proves.

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 2 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
(11)(B)(iv)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by developing an engaging idea with relevant details
(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)(C)(iii)	revise drafts by adding ideas for coherence
(11)(C)(iv)	revise drafts by deleting ideas for coherence
(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)(xi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adjectives, including their comparative forms
(11)(D)(xii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adjectives, including their superlative forms
(11)(D)(xiii)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adverbs that convey frequency
(11)(D)(xiv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including adverbs that convey degree
(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

- The CSI work requires students to select precise supporting evidence and explain what it proves.
- The cumulative standards sweep revisits sentence structure, word choice, adding/deleting for coherence, nouns, verbs, modifiers, spelling, and conventions in the ECR students have built.

Module 4 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 2 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 2 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

- (11)(B)(i) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction

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-ii) revise drafts to improve sentence structure and word choice

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(x), (xxxiii), (xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — complete simple sentences with subject-verb agreement; past tense of irregular verbs; singular, plural, common, and proper nouns; and correct spelling using grade-appropriate orthographic patterns and high-frequency words

ELPS — Cluster 2 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Editing

- 4(A)(i) apply relationships between sounds and letters of the English language to represent sounds when writing [Teacher only]
- 4(B)(i)–(ii) write text following conventional spelling patterns and 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)(i)–(ii) write content-area-specific text using conventions and grammatical structures

Language Domains

This module builds all four language domains as students listen, match, 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 for What Is Missing, students hear a response and name the missing CSI part.
Speaking	Students justify each evidence match and teach a partner Connect, Support, and Infer.
Reading	Students reread the passages to find precise details that support a reason or way.
Writing	Students complete CSI frames and run a cumulative ECR quality check.

Module 4 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can choose precise text evidence and use CSI to show what it proves.
- I can tell strong evidence from weak evidence.
- I can Connect evidence to a reason or way, Support it with a text detail, and Infer what it shows.
- I can name the relationship (cause/effect, comparison, advantage, limitation) the evidence reveals.

I Will Statements

- I will use the passage, speak about my thinking, and record my work.
- I will explain how my choices strengthen the response.
- I will choose evidence that matches the reason, not just any interesting fact.
- I will quote the important part of a detail accurately.

Success Criteria

- I can point to evidence and explain why it fits the reason.
- I can complete Connect, Support, and Infer for a piece of evidence.
- I can tell why a true detail might still be weak evidence.
- I can run the cumulative ECR quality check.

Evidence That Will Demonstrate Mastery

- The CSI Evidence Match-Up recording (reason matched to the strongest evidence, with CSI).
- The Evidence Branch Builder (a completed CSI frame plus a relationship sentence).
- The Turn-and-Teach explanation of Connect, Support, and Infer.

Module 4 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

You may read a passage aloud, reread it, and let students use the CSI chart, the "What Counts as Strong Evidence" chart, and the signal-phrase chart. You may provide oral rehearsal and sentence frames. You may not choose the student's evidence, complete CSI for them, or write their inference. The student must still match the evidence, support it with an exact detail, and infer what it shows.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level of Thinking	What Students Must Do	Expected Degree of Independence	Evidence of the Thinking
Literal	Find a detail from the passage that connects to a reason.	Supported. The teacher may reread the sentence.	The student quotes a matching detail.
Inferential	Choose the strongest of several details and complete CSI.	Guided early, independent by Use.	The student explains Connect, Support, and Infer.
Evaluative	Judge why a true detail might still be weak evidence.	Independent by the Evidence Branch Builder.	The student defends why the chosen evidence fits best.

Educator Insight

Students often believe any interesting fact from the passage counts as evidence, even if it does not directly support the reason or way. Another common misconception is that copying a sentence from the text automatically means they have used evidence well. Some students can find evidence but cannot explain what it shows, which is where CSI becomes especially helpful. Others may choose vague details because they sound familiar instead of choosing the most precise support. Model the habit of asking, "What exactly does this prove?" every time evidence is selected.

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.

CSI for Evidence

Letter	Question
C — Connect	Which reason or way does this evidence go with?
S — Support	What sentence or detail from the passage supports it?
I — Infer	What does this evidence show?

What Counts as Strong Evidence: comes from the text; matches the reason/way; is specific; is not off topic; helps prove the thesis (central idea).

Challenge: Prove one reason with two different details, then compare what each one reveals.

 Teacher Script

"A true detail is not always the best supporting evidence for a particular reason. Ask, 'What exactly does this prove?'"

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

"My reason is about _____. The passage says, '_____.' This shows _____. On the state writing assessment, evidence that passes CSI will prove your reasons and prepare your explanations."

Module 4 — Vocabulary

Vocabulary — Teacher Script

Teacher Script

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

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
proof	something that shows an idea is true	My proof is ____.
detail	a small, specific piece of information	One detail is ____.
match	to go together correctly	This evidence matches the reason because ____.
choose	to pick on purpose	I choose this detail because ____.
show	to make something known	This detail shows ____.
quote	the exact words from a text	My quote is ____.
reason	why something is true	My reason is ____.
fit	to belong or match	This detail fits because ____.
prove	to show something is true	This evidence proves ____.
strong	powerful and clear	Strong evidence ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
evidence	proof from the text	My evidence is ____.
support	to back up an idea with proof	This detail supports ____.
connect	to link the evidence to the reason	This connects to my reason because ____.
infer	to figure out what a detail shows	I infer that ____.
relevant	closely connected to the point	A relevant detail is ____.
precise	exact and specific	A precise detail here is ____.
justify	to give a good reason for a choice	I justify my evidence by ____.
cite	to show where the words came from	I cite the text by ____.
analyze	to look closely at parts to understand the whole	I analyze the evidence by ____.
thesis (central idea)	the clear central idea a response will prove	My thesis (central idea) is ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage-Specific Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
renewable	rih-NOO-uh-buhl	able to be replaced over time and used again	A renewable resource is ____.
nonrenewable	non-rih-NOO-uh-buhl	not able to be replaced quickly once it is used	A nonrenewable resource is ____.
resource	REE-sorss	a material or supply that people use	One resource we use is ____.
pollution	puh-LOO-shun	harmful materials that damage the environment	Pollution can ____.
environment	en-VY-run-ment	the natural world around us	The environment is affected when ____.
Columbus	kuh-LUM-bus	the explorer who sailed to the Americas in 1492	Columbus ____.
Taino	TY-noh	a Native American people of the Caribbean	The Taino ____.
Carib	KAIR-ib	a Native American people known for resisting the Spanish	The Carib ____.
missionaries	MISH-uh-nair-eez	people who travel to teach a religion	Missionaries traveled to ____.
hydroelectric	hy-droh-ih-LEK-trik	making electricity from moving water	A hydroelectric dam ____.



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 2 passages at Very High Stamina - the longest and most detailed versions. "The Energy We Use Everyday" is a full nonfiction text about renewable and nonrenewable resources: their advantages and limitations, availability and reliability, environmental effects, energy efficiency, and conservation. "Columbus's Arrival" is a full nonfiction text about Columbus's 1492 voyage, Spanish settlement, the spread of Christianity, cooperation and conflict with the Taino and Carib, the exchange of plants and animals, and the lasting effects of his arrival.

More Background for the Teacher

Both passages stay the same across the four Cluster 2 modules; at Very High Stamina they carry the most detail and the most possible evidence. That richness is the point of this module: with many true details available, students must choose the one that best proves a given reason. The habit to build is CSI - Connect, Support, Infer - so students move from finding evidence to using it thoughtfully, and so evidence reveals cause/effect, comparison, advantages, and limitations rather than simply repeating facts.

Module 4 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Anchor Charts to Create

- The ECR Tree: Roots = Passage + Prompt; Trunk = Thesis (Central Idea); Branch 1 = Reason/Way; Branch 2 = Evidence; Branch 3 = Explanation
- CSI and Evidence: Connect = which reason/way does this evidence go with?; Support = what sentence or detail supports it?; Infer = what does this evidence show?
- What Counts as Strong Evidence: comes from the text; matches the reason/way; is specific; is not off topic; helps prove the thesis (central idea)
- Relationships Through Evidence: what action or event does the Columbus detail describe? what advantage, limitation, availability issue, or decision-making factor does the energy detail show? what relationship does the evidence reveal?
- Evidence Sentence Frames: The text states...; The passage explains...; One detail that supports this is...; The author shows...; This evidence reveals...

Post for Students

- Evidence is proof from the passage. Good writers do not just say it - they support it.

Materials

- Passage copies (Very High Stamina), interactive notebooks, scissors, glue, highlighters, colored pencils or crayons
- Evidence game cards, task cards, matching cards, dice, a spinner, sticky notes, sentence strips
- CSI sorting cards, intervention evidence strips, enrichment challenge cards

Quick Teacher Reference for This Cluster

Module 1 introduced the ECR Tree; Module 2 taught the thesis (central idea); Module 3 taught reasons/ways and Magnifying; Module 4 teaches students how to find the evidence that supports each reason or way. Students should understand that evidence is the proof branch, not just any interesting fact from the passage. This module helps students use CSI naturally by connecting a reason, supporting it with text, and inferring what that text shows.

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 Evidence Branch and CSI

Teacher Script

"Imagine I told you a bag was full of treasure - but I never opened it, never showed it, and never proved it. Would you believe me? Writers need proof too. Your thesis (central idea) may sound strong and your reasons smart, but without evidence, your reader is left saying, 'Prove it.'"

Evidence = Proof from the Passage

Evidence is not just any sentence from the passage. Strong evidence:

- comes from the text,
- matches the reason or way you are trying to prove,
- is specific,
- is not off topic, and
- helps prove the thesis (central idea).

If your reason is about Columbus bringing cultural change, your evidence must support cultural change. If your way is about energy decisions being shaped by environmental effects, your evidence must support an environmental effect.

CSI for Evidence

When writers use evidence well, they do three things.

Letter	What Writers Do
C — Connect	Connect the evidence to the reason or way.
S — Support	Support the idea with a specific detail from the passage.
I — Infer	Infer what that evidence shows.

Model (Columbus)

- Reason: "Columbus affected the Americas by bringing religious and cultural change."
- Connect: my reason is about religious and cultural change. Support: "They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met." Infer: this shows Columbus and his crew brought new beliefs that changed traditions and ways of life.

Model (Energy)

- Way: "Energy choices are shaped by environmental effects."
- Connect: my way is about environmental effects. Support: "Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage." Infer: this shows communities must consider environmental costs when choosing energy sources.

**Teacher Script**

“Evidence does not just prove a fact. It can also reveal a cause, an effect, a comparison, an advantage, or a limitation. Use the signal phrases - The text states..., The passage explains..., This evidence reveals... - to announce your proof.”

Module 4 — TRACKS: Reading the Passages for Evidence

Before students choose evidence, they reread "The Energy We Use Everyday" and "Columbus's Arrival" and TAP the TRACKS to find the six kinds of measurable evidence. At Very High Stamina there are many true details, so TRACKS helps students gather possible evidence - and CSI helps them choose the strongest for each reason.

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 detail is the strongest evidence for a given reason. Highlighting finds possible evidence; CSI chooses and explains 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 3 — The Energy We Use Everyday

[1] Have you ever wondered where the energy you use each day comes from? When you turn on lights, charge a device, watch television, use a computer, or travel in a car, you are using energy produced from natural resources found on Earth. Energy is an important part of daily life. People use it at home, at school, and at work. Without energy, many of the things we depend on every day would not be possible.

[2] Natural resources are materials found in nature that people use to meet their needs. Some natural resources provide food, while others provide energy. The energy people use comes from both renewable and nonrenewable resources. Understanding the difference between these resources helps people make informed decisions about how energy is produced and used.

[3] Some of these resources are called renewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again. Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals. The sun provides energy each day, and wind can be used to generate electricity. In addition, plants and animals can be grown and replaced through careful management.

[4] People use renewable resources in many different ways. Solar panels collect energy from sunlight and turn it into electricity. Wind turbines use moving air to generate power. Water flowing through dams can also be used to produce electricity. Farmers grow plants that can be used for food, fuel, and other products. Because these resources can be replaced naturally, many people believe they are important for the future.

[5] Renewable resources have several advantages. They do not run out easily, and they often cause less damage to the environment. Since sunlight, wind, and water are continually renewed by natural processes, people can use them again and again. This makes renewable resources valuable sources of energy for communities around the world.

[6] Another advantage of renewable resources is that they often produce less pollution. Solar panels and wind turbines generate electricity without burning fuel. This helps reduce the amount of harmful gases released into the air. Many people support the use of renewable resources because they can help protect the environment while still providing energy.

[7] Communities around the world are increasing their use of renewable resources. Some schools have installed solar panels on rooftops to help lower electricity costs. Certain cities have built wind farms that contain dozens or even hundreds of wind turbines. These projects demonstrate how renewable resources can be used on both small and large scales.

[8] However, renewable resources also have limitations. Renewable energy sources are not always available. For example, solar energy depends on sunlight, and wind energy depends on weather conditions. This can cause mismanagement of energy resources if people do not plan carefully.

[9] Imagine a town that relies mostly on solar energy. On bright, sunny days, plenty of electricity may be produced. However, during cloudy weather, less energy may be available. The same challenge can occur with wind energy. If the wind is not blowing, wind turbines cannot produce as much electricity. Because of this, communities often use

several different energy sources to meet their needs.

[10] Water power also has limitations. Hydroelectric dams depend on a steady supply of water. During droughts, rivers and reservoirs may contain less water than usual. When this happens, less electricity can be generated. Even though water is a renewable resource, changes in weather can affect how much energy it provides.

[11] Storage can also be a challenge for some renewable resources. Energy produced by solar panels and wind turbines is often stored in batteries for later use. Scientists continue to develop better storage systems so renewable energy can be used even when the sun is not shining or the wind is not blowing.

[12] Other resources are known as nonrenewable. These include coal, oil, and natural gas, which form deep underground over millions of years. These resources were created from the remains of ancient plants and animals that were buried beneath Earth's surface. Heat and pressure slowly transformed these materials into the fuels people use today.

[13] Because nonrenewable resources take so long to develop, they cannot be replaced quickly once they are used. Although new deposits may still be forming underground, the process takes millions of years. As a result, people must carefully manage these resources because the supply is limited.

[14] Nonrenewable resources provide a large and steady supply of energy, which makes them useful. Many homes, businesses, and vehicles rely on these resources every day. Coal has been used for many years to generate electricity. Oil is used to make fuels such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel. Natural gas is commonly used for heating homes, cooking food, and producing electricity.

[15] One reason nonrenewable resources remain popular is that they can provide energy whenever it is needed. Unlike solar panels or wind turbines, which depend on weather conditions, coal, oil, and natural gas can be used at any time. This reliability makes them important energy sources in many areas.

[16] Many products people use every day are connected to nonrenewable resources. Plastic containers, certain clothing materials, and many household products are made using substances that come from petroleum. This means nonrenewable resources are used for more than just producing energy.

[17] However, the use of nonrenewable resources can also create challenges. Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage. When fossil fuels are burned, gases and particles are released into the atmosphere. These pollutants can affect air quality and contribute to environmental problems.

[18] Mining and drilling for nonrenewable resources can also affect ecosystems. Land may be disturbed when coal is mined, and oil spills can harm plants and animals. Because of these risks, many people believe it is important to find ways to reduce environmental damage while still meeting energy needs.

[19] In addition, nonrenewable resources are limited and may eventually be used up. As populations grow and more energy is needed, supplies of coal, oil, and natural gas may decrease. This is one reason why scientists continue to search for new technologies and energy sources.

[20] Scientists, engineers, and community leaders study ways to use energy more efficiently. Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same task. For example, energy-efficient light bulbs use less electricity than older bulbs while producing the same amount of light. Efficient appliances and vehicles can also reduce energy use.

[21] Many communities use a combination of renewable and nonrenewable resources. This approach helps provide a steady supply of energy while also reducing dependence on limited resources. A city might use electricity from solar panels during the day while relying on natural gas when renewable energy is unavailable.

[22] People can also help conserve resources through everyday actions. Turning off lights when leaving a room, using less water, recycling materials, and choosing energy-efficient products can reduce the demand for energy. Small actions by many people can make a big difference over time.

[23] Students can help conserve resources as well. Walking or riding a bicycle when possible, recycling paper and plastic, and remembering to unplug unused devices are simple ways to reduce energy use. Learning about resources today can help students become responsible decision-makers in the future.

[24] Scientists continue to develop new technologies that may improve how energy is produced and stored. Advances in solar panels, batteries, and other systems may help communities rely more on renewable resources in the future. Researchers are constantly searching for ways to provide energy while protecting the environment.

[25] Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of renewable and nonrenewable resources helps people make informed decisions about energy use. Both types of resources play important roles in meeting society's needs. Renewable resources can be replenished naturally, while nonrenewable resources provide dependable energy supplies. Learning about these resources helps people understand how energy choices affect the environment, communities, and future generations.

[26] As technology continues to improve, people will likely discover new ways to produce and use energy. By carefully managing Earth's resources and making thoughtful decisions, communities can help ensure that energy remains available for many years to come. The choices people make today will influence how resources are used tomorrow, making energy conservation and responsible planning important goals for everyone.

Student Annotation Guide — The Energy We Use Everyday**T — Time**

over millions of years

R — Reactions

lead to pollution and environmental damage

A — Actions

Solar panels collect energy from sunlight

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Renewable resources

K — Key Knowledge

coal, oil, and natural gas

S — Scenery/Setting

natural resources found on Earth

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Energy We Use Everyday

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PASSAGE 4 — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

[2] Columbus was born in Italy, but he spent many years working as a sailor. From a young age, he was interested in ships, travel, and geography. He learned about trade routes and heard stories about valuable goods coming from Asia. At that time, products such as spices, silk, and precious metals were highly desired in Europe. Many merchants and leaders wanted easier ways to reach Asian markets.

[3] During the late 1400s, traveling to Asia was difficult. Ships often had to follow long routes around Africa or use trade networks that crossed large areas of land. These journeys could take months or even years. They were expensive and sometimes dangerous. Columbus believed there was another way. He thought that by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean, he could reach Asia more quickly.

[4] Many people doubted Columbus's idea. Some believed the ocean was too large to cross. Others thought the trip would take too long or be too risky. Columbus spent years asking leaders to support his plan. Finally, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to help. They provided money, ships, supplies, and sailors for the voyage.

[5] Columbus set sail with three ships called the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María. The crew packed food, water, tools, and other supplies needed for a long journey. As the ships traveled farther from Europe, many sailors became nervous. Week after week passed without seeing land. Some crew members worried they would never return home.

[6] Life aboard the ships was not comfortable. Sailors worked long hours and had very little space. Food often became stale, and fresh water had to be carefully rationed. Storms and rough seas could make traveling even more difficult. Despite these challenges, the ships continued westward across the Atlantic Ocean.

[7] After more than two months at sea, land was finally spotted on October 12, 1492. The crew celebrated because they knew their long journey had come to an end. Columbus believed he had reached islands near Asia. However, he had actually arrived in the Caribbean, a region that was already home to many Native American groups.

[8] The islands Columbus reached were not empty. Native American communities had lived there for generations. These groups had their own governments, traditions, languages, and cultures. They farmed crops, fished in coastal waters, traded with neighboring groups, and built thriving communities.

[9] One of the first groups Columbus encountered was the Taino. The Taino lived on several islands throughout the Caribbean. They grew crops such as corn, cassava, and sweet potatoes. They built villages and developed systems for sharing resources within their communities. Their daily lives were closely connected to the land and sea around them.

[10] When Columbus arrived, he claimed the land for Spain. This was a common practice

among European explorers. European countries often believed that claiming land would allow them to expand their power and influence. However, Native Americans already lived on these lands and considered them their homes.

[11] By claiming the land, Columbus helped Spain begin to explore and settle in the Americas. His voyage encouraged other explorers to travel across the Atlantic Ocean. News of his discoveries spread quickly throughout Europe. Many people became excited about the opportunities that might exist in these newly encountered lands.

[12] Spain soon sent additional expeditions to the Americas. Explorers searched for resources, trade opportunities, and places to establish settlements. Over time, Spain built colonies throughout parts of North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

[13] Other European countries also became interested in exploration. Nations such as England, France, and Portugal sponsored voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. As explorers returned with stories about new lands, competition between European countries increased. Each nation hoped to gain wealth, resources, and influence.

[14] As exploration expanded, more people traveled between Europe and the Americas. Ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean carrying settlers, sailors, merchants, missionaries, and government officials. These journeys helped connect regions that had previously been separated by vast distances.

[15] Trade also grew between Europe and the Americas. Goods moved in both directions across the ocean. European products were brought to the Americas, while resources from the Americas were transported to Europe. This exchange affected economies and daily life in many different places.

[16] Columbus and his crew also brought their beliefs with them. They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met. Over time, missionaries traveled throughout the Americas to teach Native Americans about this religion. Churches and missions were established in many communities.

[17] Some Native Americans accepted Christianity and combined certain Christian practices with their own traditions. Others chose to continue following the beliefs that had guided their communities for generations. The spread of Christianity became one of the many cultural changes that occurred after European arrival.

[18] The arrival of Europeans introduced new languages as well. Spanish became widely spoken in many areas. As Europeans settled in different regions, communication between groups often required learning new languages. These interactions influenced the development of cultures throughout the Americas.

[19] European settlers also introduced new tools, technologies, and farming methods. Native American groups sometimes adopted useful innovations, while Europeans learned valuable skills from Native Americans. The exchange of knowledge worked in both directions.

[20] At first, some Native American groups, like the Taino, showed friendliness toward Columbus and his crew by trading and cooperating with them. They exchanged goods and shared information about local resources. These early interactions helped both groups

learn about one another.

[21] The Taino taught Europeans about foods and crops that grew in the Caribbean. They shared knowledge about fishing, farming, and local geography. Europeans introduced metal tools, clothing, and other items they had brought from Europe. These exchanges allowed both groups to experience new products and ideas.

[22] However, relationships between Europeans and Native Americans did not always stay peaceful. As more explorers and settlers arrived, disagreements began to develop. Land, resources, and power became sources of conflict.

[23] European settlements often required large areas of land. Native American groups sometimes found their traditional hunting grounds, villages, or farmland being claimed by newcomers. As a result, tensions increased in many regions.

[24] The Carib were known for resisting Spanish efforts to control their lands. They fought to protect their communities and maintain their independence. This resistance led to conflicts between the groups. Similar conflicts occurred in other parts of the Americas as European settlement expanded.

[25] Competition over resources also contributed to disagreements. Both Europeans and Native Americans depended on land, water, and natural resources to support their communities. When multiple groups wanted access to the same resources, conflicts sometimes followed.

[26] The arrival of Europeans affected Native American communities in many ways. Some groups lost control of land that had belonged to their ancestors for generations. Others experienced major changes to their cultures, traditions, and daily routines.

[27] At the same time, the movement of people and goods between Europe and the Americas introduced new plants and animals. Horses, cattle, pigs, and sheep were brought from Europe. These animals changed transportation, farming, and food production in many areas.

[28] New crops also moved between continents. Foods that originated in the Americas, such as corn, potatoes, tomatoes, and cacao, became important in Europe and other parts of the world. Likewise, crops from Europe were introduced to the Americas. These exchanges changed diets and agriculture around the globe.

[29] The effects of Columbus's voyage continued for many years. Exploration increased. Colonies expanded. Trade networks grew larger. The movement of people, products, and ideas connected different parts of the world in ways that had never happened before.

[30] Historians often describe Columbus's voyage as a turning point in history because it led to lasting global changes. The connections established between Europe and the Americas influenced economics, culture, government, and society.

[31] Today, Columbus's journey is remembered and retold in different ways. Columbus Day recognizes his voyage and its role in history. At the same time, many people also reflect on how European arrival affected Native American communities.

[32] Historians study documents, artifacts, and other evidence to better understand what happened after Columbus arrived. They examine multiple perspectives because different groups experienced these events in different ways. Looking at several viewpoints helps

create a more complete picture of history.

[33] Some people focus on Columbus's role in opening the door to exploration, trade, and cultural exchange. Others focus on the challenges Native Americans faced as European settlement expanded. Both perspectives help explain why Columbus remains an important historical figure.

[34] People continue to discuss the impact of Columbus's voyage because its effects can still be seen today. Languages, traditions, governments, and cultures throughout the Americas were influenced by the events that followed his arrival.

[35] More than five hundred years later, students and historians continue to study Columbus and the world he helped change. His voyage connected Europe and the Americas and led to events that shaped the future of entire continents.

[36] Columbus's actions had lasting effects on land, culture, and the people who lived in the Americas. His journey remains one of the most significant events in world history because of the changes it set into motion. Understanding his voyage helps people better understand how the modern world developed and why different perspectives are important when studying history.

Student Annotation Guide — Columbus's Arrival

T — Time

In 1492

R — Reactions

spread Christianity to the people they met

A — Actions

he claimed the land for Spain

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Christopher Columbus

K — Key Knowledge

Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib

S — Scenery/Setting

islands in the Caribbean

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Columbus's Arrival

[1] In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a new route to Asia. Instead, he reached islands in the Caribbean. When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain, even though Native American groups such as the Taino and the Carib already lived there.

[2] Columbus was born in Italy, but he spent many years working as a sailor. From a young age, he was interested in ships, travel, and geography. He learned about trade routes and heard stories about valuable goods coming from Asia. At that time, products such as spices, silk, and precious metals were highly desired in Europe. Many merchants and leaders wanted easier ways to reach Asian markets.

[3] During the late 1400s, traveling to Asia was difficult. Ships often had to follow long routes around Africa or use trade networks that crossed large areas of land. These journeys could take months or even years. They were expensive and sometimes dangerous. Columbus believed there was another way. He thought that by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean, he could reach Asia more quickly.

[4] Many people doubted Columbus's idea. Some believed the ocean was too large to cross. Others thought the trip would take too long or be too risky. Columbus spent years asking leaders to support his plan. Finally, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to help. They provided money, ships, supplies, and sailors for the voyage.

[5] Columbus set sail with three ships called the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María. The crew packed food, water, tools, and other supplies needed for a long journey. As the ships traveled farther from Europe, many sailors became nervous. Week after week passed without seeing land. Some crew members worried they would never return home.

[6] Life aboard the ships was not comfortable. Sailors worked long hours and had very little space. Food often became stale, and fresh water had to be carefully rationed. Storms and rough seas could make traveling even more difficult. Despite these challenges, the ships continued westward across the Atlantic Ocean.

[7] After more than two months at sea, land was finally spotted on October 12, 1492. The crew celebrated because they knew their long journey had come to an end. Columbus believed he had reached islands near Asia. However, he had actually arrived in the Caribbean, a region that was already home to many Native American groups.

[8] The islands Columbus reached were not empty. Native American communities had lived there for generations. These groups had their own governments, traditions, languages, and cultures. They farmed crops, fished in coastal waters, traded with neighboring groups, and built thriving communities.

[9] One of the first groups Columbus encountered was the Taino. The Taino lived on several islands throughout the Caribbean. They grew crops such as corn, cassava, and sweet potatoes. They built villages and developed systems for sharing resources within their communities. Their daily lives were closely connected to the land and sea around them.

[10] When Columbus arrived, he claimed the land for Spain. This was a common practice

among European explorers. European countries often believed that claiming land would allow them to expand their power and influence. However, Native Americans already lived on these lands and considered them their homes.

[11] By claiming the land, Columbus helped Spain begin to explore and settle in the Americas. His voyage encouraged other explorers to travel across the Atlantic Ocean. News of his discoveries spread quickly throughout Europe. Many people became excited about the opportunities that might exist in these newly encountered lands.

[12] Spain soon sent additional expeditions to the Americas. Explorers searched for resources, trade opportunities, and places to establish settlements. Over time, Spain built colonies throughout parts of North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

[13] Other European countries also became interested in exploration. Nations such as England, France, and Portugal sponsored voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. As explorers returned with stories about new lands, competition between European countries increased. Each nation hoped to gain wealth, resources, and influence.

[14] As exploration expanded, more people traveled between Europe and the Americas. Ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean carrying settlers, sailors, merchants, missionaries, and government officials. These journeys helped connect regions that had previously been separated by vast distances.

[15] Trade also grew between Europe and the Americas. Goods moved in both directions across the ocean. European products were brought to the Americas, while resources from the Americas were transported to Europe. This exchange affected economies and daily life in many different places.

[16] Columbus and his crew also brought their beliefs with them. They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met. Over time, missionaries traveled throughout the Americas to teach Native Americans about this religion. Churches and missions were established in many communities.

[17] Some Native Americans accepted Christianity and combined certain Christian practices with their own traditions. Others chose to continue following the beliefs that had guided their communities for generations. The spread of Christianity became one of the many cultural changes that occurred after European arrival.

[18] The arrival of Europeans introduced new languages as well. Spanish became widely spoken in many areas. As Europeans settled in different regions, communication between groups often required learning new languages. These interactions influenced the development of cultures throughout the Americas.

[19] European settlers also introduced new tools, technologies, and farming methods. Native American groups sometimes adopted useful innovations, while Europeans learned valuable skills from Native Americans. The exchange of knowledge worked in both directions.

[20] At first, some Native American groups, like the Taino, showed friendliness toward Columbus and his crew by trading and cooperating with them. They exchanged goods and shared information about local resources. These early interactions helped both groups

learn about one another.

[21] The Taino taught Europeans about foods and crops that grew in the Caribbean. They shared knowledge about fishing, farming, and local geography. Europeans introduced metal tools, clothing, and other items they had brought from Europe. These exchanges allowed both groups to experience new products and ideas.

[22] However, relationships between Europeans and Native Americans did not always stay peaceful. As more explorers and settlers arrived, disagreements began to develop. Land, resources, and power became sources of conflict.

[23] European settlements often required large areas of land. Native American groups sometimes found their traditional hunting grounds, villages, or farmland being claimed by newcomers. As a result, tensions increased in many regions.

[24] The Carib were known for resisting Spanish efforts to control their lands. They fought to protect their communities and maintain their independence. This resistance led to conflicts between the groups. Similar conflicts occurred in other parts of the Americas as European settlement expanded.

[25] Competition over resources also contributed to disagreements. Both Europeans and Native Americans depended on land, water, and natural resources to support their communities. When multiple groups wanted access to the same resources, conflicts sometimes followed.

[26] The arrival of Europeans affected Native American communities in many ways. Some groups lost control of land that had belonged to their ancestors for generations. Others experienced major changes to their cultures, traditions, and daily routines.

[27] At the same time, the movement of people and goods between Europe and the Americas introduced new plants and animals. Horses, cattle, pigs, and sheep were brought from Europe. These animals changed transportation, farming, and food production in many areas.

[28] New crops also moved between continents. Foods that originated in the Americas, such as corn, potatoes, tomatoes, and cacao, became important in Europe and other parts of the world. Likewise, crops from Europe were introduced to the Americas. These exchanges changed diets and agriculture around the globe.

[29] The effects of Columbus's voyage continued for many years. Exploration increased. Colonies expanded. Trade networks grew larger. The movement of people, products, and ideas connected different parts of the world in ways that had never happened before.

[30] Historians often describe Columbus's voyage as a turning point in history because it led to lasting global changes. The connections established between Europe and the Americas influenced economics, culture, government, and society.

[31] Today, Columbus's journey is remembered and retold in different ways. Columbus Day recognizes his voyage and its role in history. At the same time, many people also reflect on how European arrival affected Native American communities.

[32] Historians study documents, artifacts, and other evidence to better understand what happened after Columbus arrived. They examine multiple perspectives because different groups experienced these events in different ways. Looking at several viewpoints helps

create a more complete picture of history.

[33] Some people focus on Columbus's role in opening the door to exploration, trade, and cultural exchange. Others focus on the challenges Native Americans faced as European settlement expanded. Both perspectives help explain why Columbus remains an important historical figure.

[34] People continue to discuss the impact of Columbus's voyage because its effects can still be seen today. Languages, traditions, governments, and cultures throughout the Americas were influenced by the events that followed his arrival.

[35] More than five hundred years later, students and historians continue to study Columbus and the world he helped change. His voyage connected Europe and the Americas and led to events that shaped the future of entire continents.

[36] Columbus's actions had lasting effects on land, culture, and the people who lived in the Americas. His journey remains one of the most significant events in world history because of the changes it set into motion. Understanding his voyage helps people better understand how the modern world developed and why different perspectives are important when studying history.

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 (11)(B)(iv)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by developing an engaging idea with relevant details
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 missing CSI part, then reveal that evidence is proof from the passage and how CSI works.

G — Gather: Auditory Engagement — What Is Missing from CSI?

Hear the response. Hold up C, S, or I for the missing part. Then supply the missing thinking.

- Round 1: "My reason is about cultural change. The passage says, 'They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met.'" Missing: INFER. Repair: "This shows Columbus and his crew brought beliefs that changed traditions and ways of life."
 - Round 2: "Energy choices are shaped by environmental effects. This shows communities must think about the environmental costs of their choices." Missing: SUPPORT. Repair: add "The passage says, 'Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage.'"
 - Round 3: "The passage says, 'Renewable energy sources are not always available.' This shows communities may need more than one source to meet their needs." Missing: CONNECT. Repair: "This way is about availability and reliability."
- Fresh Recall: Without looking, students say what Connect, Support, and Infer each do.

★ Daily Deck Slide (Evidence = Proof from the Passage)

Write on the board: Strong evidence comes from the text, matches the reason/way, is specific, is not off topic, and helps prove the thesis (central idea). CSI: CONNECT the evidence, SUPPORT with text, INFER what it shows.

R — Reveal: Grow the Evidence Branch with CSI

Display the ECR Tree chart, the CSI chart, and the signal-phrase chart (see the Evidence Branch page). Glue the charts into interactive notebooks.

- The roots are the passage and prompt; the trunk is the thesis (central idea); the first branch is the reason/way; now we add the Evidence Branch. Evidence is proof from the passage.
- CSI: Connect the evidence to the reason/way; Support the idea with a specific detail; Infer what it shows.
- Model (Columbus, reason "bringing religious and cultural change"): Connect - religion and culture; Support - "They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met"; Infer - this shows Columbus's crew brought new beliefs that changed traditions.
- Model (Energy, way "shaped by environmental effects"): Connect - environmental effects; Support - "Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage"; Infer - communities must consider environmental costs.

★ Daily Deck Slide (CSI for Evidence)

Write on the board: Connect the reason/way. Support it with a text detail. Infer what it shows. Good writers do not just say it - they support it.

Day 1 Closing

Partner completion: "Evidence is ___, and CSI means Connect, ___, and ___."

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 Match-Up: match each reason or way to the strongest evidence and complete Connect, Support, Infer.

★ Daily Deck Slide (CSI Evidence Match-Up — Directions)

Write on the board: Read the reason/way. Compare the evidence choices. Choose the strongest match. Complete Connect/Support/Infer. Check the answer key.

Set A — Columbus

Reason/Way	Evidence Choices	Answer
Columbus affected the Americas by claiming land for Spain.	A. "He reached islands in the Caribbean." / B. "When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain." / C. "Columbus Day recognizes his voyage."	B
Columbus affected the Americas by bringing religious and cultural change.	A. "They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met." / B. "The Carib were known for resisting the Spanish." / C. "Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean."	A
Columbus affected the Americas by creating conflict with Native American groups.	A. "At first, some Native American groups traded and cooperated..." / B. "Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control." / C. "Many people also think about how his arrival affected Native Americans."	B

Set B — The Energy We Use Everyday

Reason/Way	Evidence Choices	Answer
Energy decisions are shaped by how quickly resources can be replaced.	A. "Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again." / B. "Energy is an important part of daily life." / C. "People use it at home, at school, and at work."	A
Energy choices are shaped by environmental effects.	A. "Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage." / B. "The sun provides energy each day." / C. "Energy is an important part of daily life."	A
Energy choices are shaped by availability and reliability.	A. "Renewable energy sources are not always available." / B. "Examples include wind, water, sunlight, plants, and animals." / C. "Energy is an important part of daily life."	A

CSI Examples (one per card)

- Card 1: Connect - this reason is about land and power. Support - "When he arrived, he claimed the land for Spain." Infer - this shows Columbus took control and helped Spain expand its influence.

- Card 2: Connect - this reason is about religion and culture. Support - "They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met." Infer - this shows Columbus and his crew brought beliefs that changed traditions and ways of life.
- Card 3: Connect - this reason is about conflict. Support - "Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control." Infer - this shows Columbus's arrival led to tension and fighting.
- Card 4: Connect - this way is about replacement and long-term supply. Support - "Renewable resources can be replaced over time and used again." Infer - this shows replacement rate is an important difference between energy resources and affects long-term planning.
- Card 5: Connect - this way is about environmental effects. Support - "Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage." Infer - this shows environmental consequences are part of responsible energy decision-making.
- Card 6: Connect - this way is about availability and reliability. Support - "Renewable energy sources are not always available." Infer - this shows communities must plan for times when some renewable sources cannot produce as much energy.

Day 2 Closing

Interactive Notebook Reminder: "Glue your CSI evidence sheet into your Interactive Notebook. Use the games and activities to review the ECR concepts whenever you have free time."

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)(iii)	revise drafts by adding ideas for coherence
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 makes evidence strong, then independently build an Evidence Branch with CSI and run a cumulative ECR quality check.

D — Discuss Strong Evidence

Ask: Can a true detail still be weak evidence? How does CSI stop us from just copying? What makes evidence precise and relevant?

- Student: "It matches the reason." / "True information is not always the best supporting evidence for that particular reason." / "CSI helps us move from finding evidence to using it thoughtfully."

Teacher Script

"Connect to the Overarching Question: How do we choose evidence that truly proves each reason or way?"

U — Use Again: Evidence Branch Builder

Choose one reason or way. Find two details from the passage that connect to it. Circle the strongest. Complete the CSI frame, then add one sentence naming the relationship the evidence reveals.

Student CSI Frame (fill in the blanks):

- Connect: This reason/way is about _____.
- Support: The passage says, "_____."
- Infer: This shows _____.
- Option A (Columbus) - Reason: "Columbus affected the Americas by bringing religious and cultural change." Answer key - Connect: religion and culture. Support: "They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met." Infer: this shows Columbus and his crew brought beliefs that changed traditions and ways of life.
- Option B (Energy) - Way: "Energy choices are shaped by availability and reliability." Answer key - Connect: availability and reliability. Support: "Renewable energy sources are not always available." Infer: this shows communities must plan for times when some renewable sources cannot produce as much energy.

Relationship sentence (example): "This evidence reveals a cause/effect relationship between Columbus's actions and lasting changes in the Americas."

Standards Application Check — Module 4 Cumulative ECR Quality Check

Check the response you have built: introduction/thesis (central idea), a relevant reason/way, precise evidence, and a clear CSI inference. Revise sentence structure and word choice. Add or delete for coherence. Edit nouns, irregular verbs, comparative/superlative adjectives, adverbs of frequency/degree, spelling patterns, and high-frequency words.

- Look-Fors: revisions improve meaning rather than merely making the response longer; evidence remains accurate; added ideas are relevant; deleted ideas are weak/off-topic; conventions support readability.

Day 3 Closing

Students write their strongest evidence on an "evidence leaf" and complete: "This is strong evidence because ____."

Day 4 - Award and Target



TEKS and ELPS for Today

Standard	Student Expectation (verbatim breakout)
TEKS (11)(C)(iv)	revise drafts by deleting ideas for coherence
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 proof they chose and set a precise next goal.

A — Award

Draw a tree branch and place one "evidence leaf" on it with your strongest text detail. Complete: "One piece of evidence I chose well today was ____."

- Earn an Evidence Expert Badge. Class cheer: "Connect it! Support it! Infer it too! Strong evidence is what we do!"

★ Daily Deck Slide (Award Your Proof)

Write on the board: Write your strongest evidence on an "evidence leaf." Complete: "This is strong evidence because ____."

T — Target

Choose one target: connect more directly, quote accurately, choose more specific evidence, or infer more deeply. Curiosity Questions: "Why is the strongest evidence not always the longest sentence?" "How does good evidence prepare us for writing better explanations?" "Why would weak or off-topic evidence make an essay feel less convincing?"

★ Daily Deck Slide (Target Your Evidence Habit)

Write on the board: Choose one target - connect more directly, quote accurately, choose more specific evidence, or infer more deeply.

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 how to use CSI with evidence, proving they can move from finding evidence to using it.

E — Teach CSI

Teach your partner how to use CSI with evidence. You must include: what strong evidence is; what Connect means; what Support means; what Infer means; and one example from Columbus or the energy passage.

Sentence Frames: "Strong evidence is ____." "Connect means ____." "Support means ____." "Infer means ____." "An example from Columbus is ____." "An example from the energy passage is ____." "This evidence shows that ____."

✓ Module Overarching Question — Answer

How can we choose evidence that truly proves each reason or way in an informative ECR?

We choose strong evidence by checking that it connects directly to the reason or way, comes from the passage, is specific, and helps us infer exactly what the evidence proves.

★ Daily Deck Slide (We Can Answer Our Question)

Write on the board: We choose strong evidence by checking that it connects directly to the reason or way, comes from the passage, is specific, and helps us infer exactly what it proves. Finish: "One thing CSI helps me do is ____."

Teacher Closing Encouragement

Teacher Script

"Today you took an important step from having ideas to proving them. Strong writing grows when you support what you say with care and confidence. You are becoming readers who notice, writers who support, and thinkers who infer. Keep building this tree branch by branch."

Module 4 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: For the reason "Columbus affected the Americas by creating conflict with Native American groups," choose strong evidence and complete CSI.

Low Exemplar

- Student Response: "Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean." (Level 1)
- What Is Working: The student picks a true detail from the passage.
- Teacher Notes: The detail is true but does not connect to conflict - it is off topic for this reason.
- What Needs Improvement: Choose a detail that matches conflict, then complete Connect, Support, and Infer.

Medium Exemplar

- Student Response: "Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control. This is about conflict." (Level 2-3)
- What Is Working: The evidence matches the reason and connects to conflict.
- Teacher Notes: The Infer step only restates the topic; it does not yet say what the evidence shows.
- What Needs Improvement: Add an inference that tells what the conflict led to.

High Exemplar

- Student Response: "Connect: this reason is about conflict. Support: 'Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control.' Infer: this shows Columbus's arrival led to tension and fighting over control of land and resources." (Level 3-4)
- What Is Working: The evidence matches the reason, the exact detail supports it, and the inference explains what the evidence shows.
- Teacher Notes: A complete CSI response - the student moved from finding evidence to using it.

Module 4 — Assessment Opportunities

Field	Detail
Purpose	Determine whether students can choose precise evidence for a reason and complete CSI.
Who Administers It	The classroom teacher during the lesson.
Materials Needed	The two Very High Stamina passages, the CSI and evidence charts, CSI Evidence Match-Up cards, and student notebooks.
Related TEKS Breakout	(11)(B)(iv) develop an engaging idea with relevant details; (12)(B)(iii) compose informational texts using craft
Task	Students complete the CSI Evidence Match-Up game and an independent Evidence Branch Builder.
Expected Response	Students match evidence to a reason and complete Connect, Support, and Infer.

Informal Assessment

During the lesson, observe CSI Evidence Match-Up and Listen for What Is Missing. Note whether students choose the detail that matches the reason and complete all three CSI steps.

Formative Assessment

The Day 3 Evidence Branch Builder serves as the formative check.

Formative Check Rubric/Scaffolding

Component	Student Requirement
Connect	Must connect the evidence to the reason or way.
Support	Must quote a specific detail from the passage.
Infer	Must tell what the evidence shows.
Relationship	Must name the cause/effect or comparison the evidence reveals.

Answer Key — What Counts as Strong Evidence

Comes from the text; matches the reason/way; is specific; is not off topic; helps prove the thesis (central idea). A true detail is not automatically strong evidence for a given reason.

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 — Missing Part: Students hold up C, S, or I to name the missing CSI part in a response.
- Visual/Physical — Attempt — Match It: In CSI Evidence Match-Up, students match a reason to the strongest evidence and name why.
- Written — Discuss/Use — One CSI Frame: Students complete Connect, Support, and Infer for one piece of evidence.

Assessment Option

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

- Listen — assess through Listen for What Is Missing and discussion.
- Look — observe a CSI Evidence Match-Up decision or an evidence leaf.
- Collect — have students produce an Evidence Branch Builder CSI frame you can examine.

Intervention — Module 4

Which Detail Fits?

For students who need extra practice deciding which text details actually support a reason or way. Slow the work down and focus on one habit: choosing the detail that truly fits.

Habit: "Say the reason. Read the detail. Ask: Does it fit?"

Sample Set 1 (Columbus) - Reason: "Columbus affected the Americas by creating conflict."
Detail Strips: "Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control." / "Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean..." / "Columbus Day recognizes his voyage..." Correct: "Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control." (Why: it directly talks about conflict.)

Sample Set 2 (Energy) - Way: "Energy choices are shaped by availability and reliability."
Detail Strips: "Renewable energy sources are not always available." / "Energy is an important part of daily life." / "The sun provides energy each day." Correct: "Renewable energy sources are not always available." (What it shows: communities must plan for times when some renewable sources are not available.)

Students then glue the matched cards into their Interactive Notebook and underline the strongest evidence.

Module 4 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Embedded Checks for Understanding

Teacher Move	Expected Response	Common Misconception	Teacher Response
Ask students to match evidence.	Students choose the detail that fits the reason.	Students pick any interesting fact.	Ask, "Does this detail prove THIS reason?"
Ask students to support.	Students quote a specific detail.	Students paraphrase or generalize.	Point to the signal phrases and quotation habit.
Ask students to infer.	Students tell what the evidence shows.	Students restate the quote.	Ask, "What exactly does this prove?"

Student Support Quick Reference

If a student...	Support to Provide
Picks an off-topic detail	Use the "Which Detail Fits?" strips.
Restates the quote as the inference	Ask, "What does this show beyond the words?"
Chooses a vague detail	Require a specific, matching detail.
Masters quickly	Route to Module 4 enrichment (Two Pieces, Two Angles).

Enrichment — Module 4

Two Pieces, Two Angles

Prove one reason or way with two different pieces of evidence, then compare what each one reveals.

Directions: choose one reason or way; find two different supporting details; write a CSI response for each; then explain how each detail proves the idea from a slightly different angle; and add one sentence about the cause/effect, comparison, advantage, or limitation the evidence reveals.

Sample (Columbus, reason "creating conflict"): Evidence 1 - "Conflicts developed over land, resources, and control" (shows fighting and tension). Evidence 2 - "The Carib were known for resisting the Spanish" (shows a group's reaction). Comparison: the first shows the cause of the conflict; the second shows a group's reaction to it. Relationship: together, these details show that Columbus's arrival was connected to tension and resistance over land, resources, and control.

Sample (Energy, way "availability and environmental effects"): Evidence 1 - "Renewable energy sources are not always available" (an availability challenge). Evidence 2 - "Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage" (an environmental cost). Comparison: one shows an availability challenge, the other an environmental cost; together they show why energy choices require trade-offs.

Module 4 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Build an Evidence Branch

Writing Prompt

Choose one reason or way below, then choose strong evidence and complete CSI.

- Columbus affected the Americas by claiming land for Spain.
- Energy choices are shaped by environmental effects.

Connection to This Module

This week you learned that evidence is proof from the passage. Now choose the detail that best matches your reason and use CSI to show what it proves.

Planning Support

1. Find two details from the passage that connect to your reason or way.
2. Circle the strongest.
3. Complete Connect, Support, and Infer.
4. Add one sentence naming the relationship the evidence reveals.

Step	Planning Guide
Step 1: Connect	Name which reason/way the evidence goes with.
Step 2: Support	Quote the exact detail from the passage.
Step 3: Infer	Tell what the evidence shows.

Drafting Space

Success Criteria

- My evidence matches the reason and comes from the text.
- I completed Connect, Support, and Infer.
- I named the relationship the evidence reveals.

Additional Writing Opportunity: Revise and Edit

Revise

Read your CSI response aloud. Improve the inference so it says what the evidence shows, not just what it says.

Edit

Run the Cumulative Sweep: sentence structure, word choice, add/delete for coherence, nouns, irregular verbs, comparative/superlative adjectives, adverbs of frequency/degree, spelling patterns, and high-frequency words.

Module 4 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Approach: Listen for What Is Missing.

Purpose: Students evaluate the completeness of evidence reasoning by identifying the missing CSI component.

Listening Target: Listen for whether the response is missing Connect, Support, or Infer.

Student Materials: interactive notebook; C, S, and I cards or three hand signals.



Teacher Script

"Hear the response. Hold up C, S, or I for the missing part. Then supply the missing thinking."

Round	Response (read aloud)	Missing / Repair
1	"My reason is about cultural change. The passage says, 'They wanted to spread Christianity to the people they met.'"	INFER — "This shows Columbus and his crew brought beliefs that changed traditions and ways of life."
2	"Energy choices are shaped by environmental effects. This shows communities must think about the environmental costs of their choices."	SUPPORT — add "The passage says, 'Their use can lead to pollution and environmental damage.'"
3	"The passage says, 'Renewable energy sources are not always available.' This shows communities may need more than one source."	CONNECT — "This way is about availability and reliability."

Fresh Recall: Without looking, students say what Connect, Support, and Infer each do.

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 — Does It Match?

Stop and think: Does this detail actually prove THIS reason, or is it just an interesting fact?

|| Pause Point — Support with Text

Stop and think: What exact detail from the passage supports my reason? Did I quote the important part?

|| Pause Point — What Does It Show?

Stop and think: What does this evidence show? (Infer - do not just restate the quote.)

|| Pause Point — What Relationship?

Stop and think: Does this evidence reveal a cause/effect, a comparison, an advantage, or a limitation?

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 strong evidence from weak evidence.			
Match evidence to a reason or way.			
Complete Connect, Support, and Infer.			
Name the relationship the evidence reveals.			
Run the cumulative ECR quality check.			

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 we can choose evidence that truly proves each reason or way. Now we can answer it: we choose strong evidence by checking that it connects directly to the reason or way, comes from the passage, is specific, and helps us infer exactly what it proves.”

Module Overarching Question — Answered

How can we choose evidence that truly proves each reason or way in an informative ECR? We choose strong evidence by checking that it connects directly to the reason or way, comes from the passage, is specific, and helps us infer exactly what the evidence proves.

Teacher Reflection - Module 4

Which students choose evidence that matches the reason?

Which students complete all three CSI steps?

Which students still choose off-topic or vague details?

Which students can now build a full ECR: thesis (central idea), reason/way, and evidence with CSI?

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 Listen for What Is Missing, read each response aloud with cameras on and have students type C, S, or I in the chat, then call on one student to supply the missing thinking. Post the ECR Tree 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 Match-Up on a shared slide: give each group reason cards and evidence choices to match, then a CSI recording line to complete. For the Evidence Branch Builder, students draft in a shared or private doc; use private comments to ask "Does this detail match your reason?" and "What does it show?" rather than choosing the evidence for them. Collect the cumulative ECR quality check as a one-photo or typed submission of the built response.