

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

A SUBSIDIARY OF TEACH BIG®

GRADE



Cluster 4

*Extended Constructed Response - Opinion and
Argument (CREATURES)*

TEACHER LESSON PLAN GUIDE

Grade 4 • Cluster 4

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Statement of Purpose

Cluster 4 moves students into opinion and argument writing. Its foundation is a clear claim supported by logical reasons and relevant evidence, organized with the CREATURES framework.

Across four modules students build the argument from the ground up - establishing the CREATURES foundation, turning facts into a coherent case, understanding other points of view and rebuttal, and finishing with significance and a full response. Stamina grows from Low to Very High.

Abstract

Module 1, CREATURES Foundation, establishes the claim, reasons, and evidence structure. Module 2, From Facts to a Coherent Case, teaches students to connect evidence into an argument.

Module 3, Understanding Others and Rebuttal, adds the opposing view and the response to it, and Module 4 completes the argument with its ending and significance. 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 4. 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
4.12C	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.

GRADE 4 • CLUSTER 4 • ECR - OPINION

M O D U L E

1

CREATURES Foundation

Week 1 • Low Stamina

Module 1: CREATURES Foundation

Week 1 - Low Stamina - Cluster 4 (ECR Opinion/Argumentative)

Reading Focus

Solution, Reaction, Resolution, and Defensible Choices

Writing Focus

CREATURES Foundation: C — Claim, R — Reasons, E — Evidence

Teacher Inspiration Quote



Teacher Script

"A strong argument begins when a writer chooses a position and gives the reader reasons and proof worth trusting."

Module Overarching Question

How do a clear claim, logical reasons, and relevant evidence create the foundation of a strong argumentative response?



Daily Deck Slide (M1-01)

Write on the board: Cluster 4 - ECR Opinion/Argumentative - Module 1 - Low Stamina passages

Overarching Question: How do a clear claim, logical reasons, and relevant evidence create the foundation of a strong argumentative response?

I can: build the C, R, and E foundation of CREATURES by writing a defensible claim, logical reasons, and relevant evidence.

I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response.

Module 1 — Family Communication

This Week at a Glance

- Students meet CREATURES, the roadmap for argumentative writing.
- This module focuses deeply on C — Claim, R — Reasons, and E — Evidence.
- Students read “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.”
- Students decide which positions the passages can support and build clear C -> R -> E chains.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

“What claim can you defend, and which detail from the text proves your reason?”

One Way to Help

Ask your child to state a position, give a reason it makes sense, and name evidence that directly supports that reason. Then ask, “Does that evidence prove this exact reason?”

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child begins the CREATURES roadmap for argumentative writing. CREATURES stands for Claim, Reasons, Evidence, Argument, Thinking, Understanding Others, Rebuttal, Ending, and Significance. In Module 1, students concentrate on the foundation: C — Claim (“Take a side you can defend”), R — Reasons (“Tell why your side makes sense”), and E — Evidence (“Prove it from the text”).

Students will use “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure” to practice choosing a defensible position, giving logical reasons, and matching each reason with relevant passage evidence. At home, invite your child to explain a claim and ask which exact detail proves it.

With appreciation, Your child’s teacher — The Writing Academy LLC

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija comienza la guía CREATURES para la escritura argumentativa. CREATURES representa Afirmación, Razones, Evidencia, Argumento, Pensamiento, Comprensión de otros, Refutación, Final y Significado. En el Módulo 1, los estudiantes se concentran en la base: C — Claim o afirmación (“Toma una posición que puedas defender”), R — Reasons o razones (“Explica por qué tu posición tiene sentido”) y E — Evidence o evidencia (“Pruébalo con el texto”).

Los estudiantes usarán “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” y “Four Regions, One Big Adventure” para practicar cómo elegir una posición defendible, dar razones lógicas y relacionar cada razón con evidencia relevante del pasaje. En casa, invite a su hijo o hija a explicar una afirmación y pregúntele qué detalle exacto la demuestra.

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

Module 1 — Family Conversation Starters

- What is the difference between a topic and a claim?
- How can you tell whether a claim is defensible?
- Why can a true detail still be weak evidence?
- Which evidence from either passage most strongly supports a reason you chose?

Family Activity — C, R, or E?

One person states a position, a reason, or a piece of proof. The other person labels its job C, R, or E and explains the clue that supports the label.

Family Activity — Prove the Reason

Choose a detail your child remembers from one passage. Name a reason the detail can prove, then explain why the match is direct.

Module 1 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 1 introduces CREATURES as the complete argumentative-writing roadmap while teaching the first three pieces deeply: C — Claim, R — Reasons, and E — Evidence. Students should understand that an argumentative response is not simply an opinion. A defensible claim must answer the argument of the prompt, reasons must logically support that claim, and evidence must come from the text and directly prove a reason.

The remaining letters are previewed so students can see where the writing is headed: A — Argument, T — Thinking, U — Understanding Others, R — Rebuttal, E — Ending, and S — Significance. Do not require mastery of all nine parts yet. The goal is for students to see the whole creature while learning to build its strong foundation.

Module Passage Set — Low Stamina

Required stamina level for Module 1: Low Stamina. The same two Cluster 4 passages increase in length, detail, evidence density, and conceptual demand across the four modules.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-02)

Write on the board: As you read, mark choices, results, and details that could help a writer take a position about leadership or regional opportunity. Label possible proof with E for Evidence.

Independent Product

Write one clear claim, two distinct logical reasons, and one strong piece of passage evidence for each reason. Label each part C, R, and E, then explain why each evidence choice fits.

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

These are the standards listed for Cluster 4 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 4 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Writing Genre

- (12)(C)(i) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
- (12)(C)(ii) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i-v) revise drafts to improve sentence structure, word choice, and coherence (adding, deleting, and combining ideas)

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(xvi), (xxxiii)–(xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — sentence and subject-verb agreement; irregular verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and prepositional phrases; and grade-appropriate spelling

ELPS — Cluster 4 (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)–(xvi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content, style, register, and conventions for purpose and audience

Revising

- 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(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures
- 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

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

Language Domains

Listening

Listen for the job each sentence performs and distinguish Claim, Reason, and Evidence.

Speaking

Defend a C, R, or E label with a clue and explain why an evidence choice fits its reason.

Reading

Mark choices, results, and details in both passages that could support a defensible position.

Writing

Build and revise a labeled C -> R -> E chain using accurate passage evidence and precise academic language.

Module 1 — Learning Destination

I Can

- I can write a clear claim that directly answers an argumentative prompt.
- I can give distinct, logical reasons that support my claim.
- I can choose accurate, relevant evidence that proves each exact reason.
- I can explain whether a C -> R -> E chain is defensible from the passage.

I Will

- I will take a side I can defend.
- I will tell why my side makes sense with logical reasons.
- I will prove each reason with evidence from the text.
- I will revise a claim when the available evidence cannot support it.

Success Criteria

My claim is direct and defensible. My reasons are logical and do not repeat. My evidence is accurate, relevant, and directly connected to the reason it proves.

Module 1 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Educator Insight

Fourth graders often confuse a topic with a claim, a detail with a reason, and any quotation with strong evidence. Keep the distinction visible. A topic names what the writing is about. A claim takes a defensible position. A reason explains why that position makes sense. Evidence proves the reason. If students cannot find evidence for a claim, the claim may be too broad, too vague, or not defensible from the passage.

Claim Test

Direct? Defensible? Evidence available?

Evidence Test

Does it connect? Does it strongly support? Is it important enough to prove the reason?

Module 1 — Thinking Levels

Identify

Label sentences as Claim, Reason, or Evidence.

Explain

Tell how a claim differs from a topic and why a reason supports a claim.

Analyze

Match reasons and evidence, reject distractors, and explain why a true detail may still be weak evidence.

Evaluate and Create

Compare defensible claims, determine which has stronger evidence available, and create a complete C -> R -> E foundation.

Module 1 — Vocabulary

Tier 1 — Everyday Words

Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
side	/sīd/	one position in a disagreement
choice	/chois/	a decision between possibilities
idea	/ī-DEE-uh/	a thought a writer can express
fact	/fakt/	information that is true
match	/mach/	to connect things that belong together
strong	/strong/	able to do its job well
clear	/kleer/	easy to understand
true	/troo/	accurate or correct
prove	/proov/	to show that an idea is supported
text	/tekst/	the passage a reader uses

Tier 2 — Vocabulary — 10 Words

Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
claim	/klām/	a clear position that directly answers the argumentative prompt
defensible	/dih-FEN-suh-buhl/	able to be supported with logical reasons and evidence
reason	/REE-zuhn/	a logical idea that explains why the claim should be accepted
evidence	/EV-uh-duhns/	accurate information from the text used as proof
relevant	/REL-uh-vuhnt/	directly connected to the claim or reason being proved
argument	/AR-gyuh-muhnt/	a connected case built from a claim, reasons, evidence, and thinking
position	/puh-ZISH-uhn/	the side or conclusion a writer chooses to defend
support	/suh-PORT/	information or reasoning that makes an idea stronger
trade	/trād/	the exchange of goods, a major source of Mali's growth
region	/REE-juhn/	an area with shared geographic features, such as one of the four Texas regions

Tier 3 — Argumentative-Writing Words

Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
CREATURES	/KREE-churz/	the nine-part argumentative-writing roadmap
rebuttal	/rih-BUHT-uhl/	a response that answers another position
significance	/sig-NIF-ih-kuhns/	why an issue matters beyond the paper
coherence	/koh-HEER-uhns/	the way ideas connect and flow clearly
distractor	/dih-STRAK-ter/	a choice that does not do the required job
paraphrase	/PAIR-uh-frāz/	to restate text accurately in new words
commerce	/KOM-ers/	the exchange of goods through trade
resource	/REE-sors/	something available that people can use
resolution	/rez-uh-LOO-shuhn/	the way a problem or conflict is settled
conventions	/kuhn-VEN-shuhnz/	agreed rules for correct written language

Module 1 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

Students read for solution, reaction, resolution, and defensible choices. In “The Wealth of Mansa Musa,” they consider the results of protecting trade and supporting learning. In “Four Regions, One Big Adventure,” they consider how regional features connect to work opportunities. Keep every argumentative example anchored to the wording and details of these two passages.

Teacher Script

“A strong argumentative response begins with a choice the writer can defend. CREATURES gives us a memory path so we do not forget an important part of the case.”

Module 1 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Materials List

- Copies of both stamina-level passages
- Interactive notebooks
- Pencils
- Highlighters
- Sentence strips
- CREATURES reference cards
- Recording sheets
- Chart paper or board space
- Scissors and glue
- Optional gameboard and Pencil Guy markers
- Claim/Reason/Evidence sorting cards
- Three-column sorting mats labeled C, R, E

Anchor Charts to Create

- CREATURES Roadmap: display all nine letters and the student memory cues from the cluster chart.
- C — Claim: “Take a side you can defend.” A claim directly answers the argumentative prompt and can be supported with text evidence.
- R — Reasons: “Tell why your side makes sense.” Strong reasons are distinct, logical, and connected to the claim.
- E — Evidence: “Prove it from the text.” Evidence must be accurate, relevant, and strong enough to support the exact reason.
- Claim Test: Direct? Defensible? Evidence available?
- Evidence Test: Does it connect? Does it strongly support? Is it important enough to prove the reason?

Module 1 — The DOT Reading HABIT

Use the DOT HABIT when a word blocks understanding: Dot the unfamiliar word, discover its meaning from context or a resource, and drop the dot after you can explain it. Apply the HABIT to CREATURES vocabulary and to words in both passages. The goal is to understand the language well enough to choose an accurate claim, reason, or piece of evidence.

Module 1 — Meet CREATURES

The Full CREATURES Roadmap

Letter	Move	Memory Cue
C	Claim	Take a side you can defend.
R	Reasons	Tell why your side makes sense.
E	Evidence	Prove it from the text.
A	Argument	Build the connected case.
T	Thinking	Explain how and why the proof matters.
U	Understanding Others	Show that you understand another view.
R	Rebuttal	Answer the other view.
E	Ending	Close the argument on purpose.
S	Significance	Give the Bluebird Moment — why the issue matters beyond this paper.

This module builds the foundation: C + R + E.

C — Claim

Take a side you can defend. A claim directly answers the argumentative prompt and can be supported with text evidence. Test it: Direct? Defensible? Evidence available?

R — Reasons

Tell why your side makes sense. Strong reasons are distinct, logical, and connected to the claim. A reason is not another version of the claim and is not merely a passage detail.

E — Evidence

Prove it from the text. Evidence must be accurate, relevant, and strong enough to support the exact reason. Test it: Does it connect? Does it strongly support? Is it important enough to prove the reason?

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-03)

Write on the board: C Claim - R Reasons - E Evidence - A Argument - T Thinking - U Understanding Others - R Rebuttal - E Ending - S Significance

Today we build the foundation: C + R + E.

Remember: S = the Bluebird Moment — why the issue matters beyond this paper.

Module 1 — TRACKS: Reading for Argument Evidence

Use TRACKS to locate measurable evidence in both passages, then test whether each marked detail is relevant to the exact reason being proved.

Letter	Evidence Type	Reading Move
T	Time	Mark dates, eras, and historical details.
R	Reactions	Mark reactions, solutions, resolutions, and effects.
A	Actions	Mark actions, problems, conflicts, and causes.
C	Character, Concept, Creature	Mark people, names, and central concepts.
K	Key Knowledge	Mark other information necessary to meaning.
S	Scenery / Setting	Mark setting details noticed through the senses.



Teacher Script

"A marked detail becomes evidence only when it directly proves the reason in your C -> R -> E chain."

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 7 — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was Mansa Musa. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it controlled important trade routes. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] Mansa Musa made smart choices that helped his kingdom grow. He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali. As a result, cities like Timbuktu became busy and important places. Timbuktu was also known for learning, where people studied subjects like math, science, and religion.

[3] One of the most famous parts of Mansa Musa's life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. During this journey, he gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. His actions made many people notice how wealthy Mali was.

[4] Because of the choices he made, Mali became known as a powerful and important kingdom. People still talk about Mansa Musa today when they learn about African history and how trade and education helped kingdoms grow.

Student Annotation Guide — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

T — Time

in the early 1300s

R — Reactions

brought more people and goods into Mali

A — Actions

He made sure traders could move safely

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Mansa Musa

K — Key Knowledge

controlled important trade routes

S — Scenery/Setting

the hot Sahara Desert

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was **Mansa Musa**. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it **controlled important trade routes**. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] **Mansa Musa** made smart choices that helped his kingdom grow. **He made sure traders could move safely**, which brought more people and goods into Mali. As a result, cities like Timbuktu became busy and important places. Timbuktu was also known for learning, where people studied subjects like math, science, and religion.

[3] One of the most famous parts of **Mansa Musa's** life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. During this journey, he gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. His actions made many people notice how wealthy Mali was.

[4] Because of the choices he made, Mali became known as a powerful and important kingdom. People still talk about **Mansa Musa** today when they learn about African history and how trade and education helped kingdoms grow.

PASSAGE 8 — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] "Road trip!" Xavier shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions.

[2] Their first stop was the Mountains and Basins in far West Texas. Xavier noticed tall, rocky mountains and dry land. "It's really hot here," he said. There were only a few plants, like cacti. His mom explained that people in this region often work in mining and oil because of the natural resources found underground.

[3] Next, they traveled to the Great Plains. The land looked wide and flat with rolling hills. The weather was still dry, but not as hot. Xavier saw ranches and fields. "This must be where people raise cattle," he said. His dad nodded and added that farming is also common here.

[4] After that, they reached the North Central Plains. "Everything looks greener and more colorful!" Xavier said. There were more trees and grass, and the land had gentle hills. The climate was milder, and people raised livestock and grew crops.

[5] Finally, they arrived at the Coastal Plains near the Gulf of Mexico. It was humid, and Xavier could feel the warm, moist air. There were rivers, forests, and even beaches. "This region has a lot of different jobs," his mom said, "like farming, fishing, and working in big cities."

[6] As they headed home, Xavier rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Student Annotation Guide — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

T — Time

As they headed home

R — Reactions

all were important parts of Texas

A — Actions

driving across Texas to learn about its different regions

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Zavier

K — Key Knowledge

people in this region often work in mining and oil

S — Scenery/Setting

tall, rocky mountains and dry land

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] "Road trip!" Xavier shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions.

[2] Their first stop was the Mountains and Basins in far West Texas. Xavier noticed tall, rocky mountains and dry land. "It's really hot here," he said. There were only a few plants, like cacti. His mom explained that people in this region often work in mining and oil because of the natural resources found underground.

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[6] As they headed home, Xavier rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Day 1 — Gather and Reveal

G

R

G — Gather Their Attention

AUDITORY ENGAGEMENT — ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Approach: Listen, Label, and Defend

Listening Target: Listen for the job each sentence performs. Decide whether it is a Claim, Reason, or Evidence sentence, then defend the label with one clue.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-04)

Write on the board: Hold up C, R, or E after each sentence. Then say the clue that proves your choice.

- “Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali.” -> C
- “Safe routes brought more merchants and goods into Mali.” -> R
- “The passage says he made sure traders could move safely.” -> E

Fresh Recall: With notes covered, explain the difference among C, R, and E in 20 seconds.

Teacher Script

“Writers, today we are building the first three parts of a CREATURES argument. Listen closely. I am going to read three sentences. Your job is not to copy them. Your job is to decide the job each sentence is doing.”

Teacher Script

“A claim takes a position. A reason tells why that position makes sense. Evidence proves the reason from the text. When those three jobs are clear, the argument has a strong foundation.”

R — Reveal the Background Knowledge

Teacher Script

“A strong argumentative response begins with a choice the writer can defend. CREATURES gives us a memory path so we do not forget an important part of the case.”

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-05)

Write on the board: C — Claim: the position you will defend.

R — Reasons: the strongest logical supports for the claim.

E — Evidence: exact or accurately paraphrased proof from the text.

Test every piece: Does it match the prompt? Does it support the claim? Can the passage prove it?

Teacher Model — Passage 7

Argument Prompt Statement: Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater impact on Mali. Use evidence from the passage to support your position.

C — Claim: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali because safe routes increased trade, wealth, and opportunity.

R — Reason 1: Safe routes encouraged more merchants to travel to Mali.

E — Evidence: The passage states that Mansa Musa “made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali.”

R — Reason 2: Strong trade helped cities such as Timbuktu become busy and important.

E — Evidence: The passage explains that increased trade helped Timbuktu become an important place for commerce and learning.

Teacher Model — Passage 8

Argument Prompt Statement: Argue which Texas region offers the strongest combination of work opportunities based on the passage. Use evidence to support your position.

C — Claim: The Coastal Plains offer the strongest combination of work opportunities because the region supports farming, fishing, and jobs in large cities.

R — Reason: The region’s water, forests, farms, and cities create different kinds of work.

E — Evidence: The passage explains that jobs in the Coastal Plains include “farming, fishing, and working in big cities.”

Day 2 — Attempt

A

A — Attempt the Activity Directions

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-06)

Write on the board: 1. Draw one Claim card.

- Choose the Reason cards that logically support it.
- Match the strongest Evidence card to each reason.
- Reject distractors and explain why they do not belong.
- Read the completed C -> R -> E chain aloud.

Whole Group / Small Group Game: Build the Creature

Students work in teams with mixed Claim, Reason, Evidence, and distractor cards. Each team must assemble a defensible argument foundation and justify every match.

Sample Card Set A — Mansa Musa

- Claim Card: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali.
- Reason Card: Safe routes encouraged merchants to visit Mali.
- Reason Card: More trade brought goods and wealth into the kingdom.
- Evidence Card: “He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali.”
- Evidence Card: Timbuktu became a busy and important place as trade grew.
- Distractor: Mansa Musa traveled to Mecca. This is true, but it does not directly prove this specific claim unless the writer connects it to reputation or generosity.

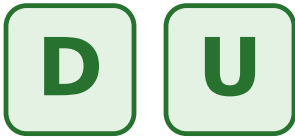
Sample Card Set B — Texas Regions

- Claim Card: The Coastal Plains provide the widest variety of job opportunities.
- Reason Card: Water and coastal resources support fishing and transportation-related work.
- Reason Card: Farms, forests, and large cities create several different kinds of jobs.
- Evidence Card: The passage names farming, fishing, and working in big cities as Coastal Plains jobs.
- Distractor: The Mountains and Basins are hot and dry. This is accurate but does not directly prove the Coastal Plains claim.

🔑 Attempt Activity Answer Key

Accept different defensible claims when the reasons logically match and the evidence directly supports the selected reason. Reject matches that are merely true facts but do not prove the exact claim. Require students to explain the connection aloud before a team earns credit.

Day 3 — Discuss and Use Again



D — Discuss and Ask Questions

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-07)

Write on the board: How is a claim different from a topic?
 What makes one reason stronger than another?
 Why can a true detail still be weak evidence?
 What should a writer do when a claim has little evidence available?

🔊 Teacher Script

“Let’s talk about the matches that were easy and the ones that made you stop and think. Strong writers do not grab the first fact they see. They ask whether the proof actually does the job.”

Possible Student Responses and Teacher Follow-Up

- “A claim takes a side; a topic only names the subject.” Teacher: “Exactly. A claim can be defended.”
- “A strong reason gives us something important to prove.” Teacher: “Yes. It moves the case forward.”
- “A true detail can be weak if it does not match the reason.” Teacher: “That is the difference between information and evidence.”
- “We might revise the claim if the text cannot support it.” Teacher: “That is what real writers do.”

U — Use the Knowledge Again

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-08)

Write on the board: Prompt: Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater impact on Mali.
 Write: C — one defensible claim - R — two logical reasons - E — one strong piece of evidence for each reason.
 Then explain in one sentence why each evidence choice fits its reason.

Independent Interactive Notebook Activity: CREATURES Foundation Builder

Student Directions

- Read the argument prompt statement.
- Write one clear claim that takes a defensible position.
- Write two distinct reasons that logically support the claim.
- Choose one piece of passage evidence for each reason.
- Under each evidence choice, write: “This fits because...”
- Label each part C, R, E.

Teacher Answer Key / Exemplar

C — Claim: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali because safe travel increased commerce and helped the kingdom grow.

R — Reason 1: Safe routes encouraged more merchants to travel to Mali.

E — Evidence 1: “He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali.”

Fit Explanation: This evidence directly shows that safer routes increased the movement of merchants and goods.

R — Reason 2: More trade helped important cities become busier and stronger.

E — Evidence 2: The passage explains that Timbuktu became busy and important as trade increased.

Fit Explanation: This evidence connects protected trade to the growth of an important city.

Simple Scoring Rubric — 0-3

- 3 — Claim is clear and defensible; reasons are distinct and logical; evidence accurately and directly supports each reason.
- 2 — Claim is clear; at least one reason/evidence match is strong; another part needs more precision or support.
- 1 — Position is vague or reasons repeat; evidence is weak, inaccurate, or loosely connected.
- 0 — Response is missing, off-topic, or does not attempt the C/R/E structure.

STANDARDS APPLICATION CHECK — MODULE 1

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-09)

Write on the board: Revise one C/R/E chain for sentence structure and word choice. ADD one idea that strengthens coherence. DELETE one idea that distracts. COMBINE repeated ideas when useful.

Edit the assigned Cluster 4 conventions and make sure proper nouns such as Mansa Musa, Mali, Timbuktu, Sahara, Texas, and Coastal Plains are capitalized.

Teacher Model / Answer Key: Weak — “Mansa Musa was good and trade was good.”

Revised — “Protecting trade was one of Mansa Musa’s strongest leadership choices because safe routes brought more merchants and goods into Mali.” Add a relevant detail about safe travel; delete unrelated pilgrimage detail if it does not serve the reason; combine repeated statements about merchants and goods.

Day 4 — Award and Target



A — Award Yourself for a Job Well Done

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-10)

Write on the board: Star your strongest C/R/E chain.

Complete: “My argument foundation is stronger because ____.”

Name the evidence choice you are proudest of and explain why it fits.

Teacher Script

“You built the part of the argument everything else depends on. A writer cannot explain, rebut, or conclude well if the claim, reasons, and evidence are shaky. Notice what you did well.”

T — Target Their Goals

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-11)

Write on the board: Choose one target: clearer claim - less repeated reasons - stronger evidence - more direct match to the prompt - more precise academic language.

Reflection Prompts

- My strongest CREATURES letter today was...
- The letter I still need to strengthen is...
- One evidence choice I would replace is... because...
- Next time I will make my claim more defensible by...

Day 5 — Explain to Others

E

E — Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-12)

Write on the board: Partner A teaches the difference among Claim, Reason, and Evidence without reading notes.
Partner B gives one example from either passage.
Switch roles. End by saying the full CREATURES acronym together.

Teacher Script

“Teach the foundation as if your partner has never seen CREATURES. If you can explain the job of each part, you are beginning to own the process.”

Teacher Closing Words of Encouragement

Teacher Script

“Writers, today you gave your argument a backbone. You learned that a claim must be defensible, reasons must make sense, and evidence must truly prove the reason. Keep the creature strong from the very beginning.”

Module 1 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt: Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater impact on Mali. Use evidence from the passage to support your position.

Low Exemplar

Student Response: “Mansa Musa was good and trade was good.”

What Is Working: The response names Mansa Musa and trade.

What Needs Improvement: State a defensible claim, add a logical reason, and use relevant evidence from the passage to prove the reason.

Medium Exemplar

Student Response: “Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali. Safe routes helped trade. Mansa Musa made sure traders could move safely.”

What Is Working: The response takes a position and includes a relevant passage detail.

What Needs Improvement: Make the reason more precise, identify the detail as evidence, and explain how the evidence directly proves the reason.

High Exemplar

Student Response: “Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali because safe travel increased commerce and helped the kingdom grow. Safe routes encouraged more merchants to travel to Mali. The passage states that Mansa Musa ‘made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali.’”

What Is Working: The claim is clear and defensible, the reason is logical, and the evidence accurately and directly supports the reason.

Module 1 — Assessment Opportunities

Formative Task

Students complete the CREATURES Foundation Builder: one defensible claim, two distinct logical reasons, one strong piece of evidence for each reason, and a fit explanation for each evidence choice.

Simple Scoring Rubric — 0-3

- 3 — Claim is clear and defensible; reasons are distinct and logical; evidence accurately and directly supports each reason.
- 2 — Claim is clear; at least one reason/evidence match is strong; another part needs more precision or support.
- 1 — Position is vague or reasons repeat; evidence is weak, inaccurate, or loosely connected.
- 0 — Response is missing, off-topic, or does not attempt the C/R/E structure.

Teacher Look-Fors

Listen for students who distinguish a topic from a claim, reject true but irrelevant details, and explain the connection between a reason and its proof.

Check the Learning

Verbal Check

Students hold up C, R, or E after hearing a sentence and defend the label with one clue.

Visual Check

Students assemble a C -> R -> E chain from cards and remove any distractor.

Written Check

Students write one claim, two logical reasons, and one relevant evidence choice for each reason, then complete “This fits because...”

Standards Application Check

Students revise one C/R/E chain for sentence structure and word choice; add, delete, and combine ideas for coherence; and edit the assigned Cluster 4 conventions.

Intervention — Module 1

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-13)

Write on the board: Start with one provided claim. Choose between two reasons. Then choose between two evidence options. Explain why the stronger match works. Use one claim card, two reason cards, and two evidence cards. Read choices aloud. Students point to the stronger reason, then the stronger evidence. Gradually remove choices until students generate the reason independently. Intervention Answer Key Example: Claim — “The Coastal Plains offer many work opportunities.” Strong reason — “The region supports several industries.” Strong evidence — “The passage names farming, fishing, and working in big cities.”

Module 1 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

If a student...	Teacher support
gives a topic instead of a claim	Ask: "What position will you defend?"
repeats the claim as a reason	Ask: "Why does your side make sense?"
selects any true detail as evidence	Ask: "Does this prove the exact reason?"
cannot find enough evidence	Revisit the claim test and revise the claim if needed.
is ready for greater challenge	Compare two defensible claims and decide which has stronger evidence available.

Enrichment — Module 1

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-14)

Write on the board: Write two different defensible claims for the same passage prompt.

Build one R/E chain for each.

Decide which claim has stronger evidence available and defend your choice.

Challenge students to discover that argumentative writing can have more than one defensible position. The stronger response is not the position the teacher prefers; it is the position the writer can support more logically and accurately with the available evidence.

Module 1 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Build the CREATURES Foundation

Prompt

Argue which Texas region offers the strongest combination of work opportunities based on the passage. Use evidence to support your position.

Planning Guide

1. Write one clear, defensible C — Claim.
2. Write two distinct R — Reasons that tell why the claim makes sense.
3. Add one accurate, relevant E — Evidence choice for each reason.
4. Explain why each evidence choice fits its reason.
5. Label every part C, R, or E.

Success Criteria

- My claim directly answers the prompt.
- My reasons are logical and distinct.
- My evidence comes from the passage and proves the exact reason.
- My C -> R -> E chain forms a strong argumentative foundation.

Drafting Space

Module 1 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Listen, Label, and Defend

Listening Target: Listen for the job each sentence performs. Decide whether it is a Claim, Reason, or Evidence sentence, then defend the label with one clue.

Teacher Script

“Writers, today we are building the first three parts of a CREATURES argument. Listen closely. I am going to read three sentences. Your job is not to copy them. Your job is to decide the job each sentence is doing.”

1. “Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali.” -> C
2. “Safe routes brought more merchants and goods into Mali.” -> R
3. “The passage says he made sure traders could move safely.” -> E

Fresh Recall: With notes covered, explain the difference among C, R, and E in 20 seconds.

Pause Points

|| Pause Point — Claim or Topic?

Does the sentence take a side that can be defended, or does it only name the subject?

|| Pause Point — Logical Reason?

Does this reason tell why the claim makes sense without repeating the claim?

|| Pause Point — Relevant Evidence?

Is the detail merely true, or does it directly prove this exact reason?

|| Pause Point — Evidence Available?

If the passage cannot support the claim, how should the claim be revised?

Module 1 — My Progress Tracker

Directions: Mark your current level after each lesson and choose one next CREATURES move.

I Can...	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Write a clear, defensible claim.			
Give distinct, logical reasons.			
Choose relevant evidence from the text.			
Explain why evidence fits a reason.			
Reject a true detail that does not prove the claim.			
Teach the full CREATURES acronym to a partner.			

My strongest CREATURES letter today was: _____

My next target is: _____

Module 1 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

✓ OVERARCHING QUESTION — ANSWER

Question: How do a clear claim, logical reasons, and relevant evidence create the foundation of a strong argumentative response?

Answer: A clear claim tells the reader exactly what position the writer will defend. Logical reasons explain why that position makes sense, and relevant evidence proves each reason with accurate text support. Together, C, R, and E give the argument a strong foundation that the rest of CREATURES can build upon.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M1-15)

Write on the board: C tells the position. R gives logical support. E proves the reasons. A strong CREATURES response begins with a foundation the writer can actually defend.

Teacher Reflection

Which students write claims that directly answer the prompt?

Which students give distinct reasons and match relevant evidence?

Which students still select details that are true but do not prove the exact reason?

What support or extension comes next?

Module 1 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Post the C/R/E sorting cards on a shared slide or collaborative board so students can drag cards into three labeled zones. Use reaction icons or chat letters C, R, and E during Listen, Label, and Defend. Place students in breakout pairs for the Teach C + R + E task and require each pair to submit one completed chain. For intervention, screen-share two choices at a time and use polls to select the stronger reason or evidence. For independent work, have students type into a three-part digital organizer labeled C, R, E and highlight the exact evidence used.

GRADE 4 • CLUSTER 4 • ECR - OPINION

MODULE

2

From Facts to a Coherent Case

Week 2 • Medium Stamina

Module 2: From Facts to a Coherent Case

Week 2 - Medium Stamina - Cluster 4 (ECR Opinion/Argumentative)

Teacher Inspiration Quote

Teacher Script

"Evidence becomes persuasive only when the writer connects it into a case and explains why it matters."

Reading and Writing Focus

- Reading Focus: Cause, Effect, Method, and Relationships Among Ideas
- Writing Focus: CREATURES Development: A — Argument and T — Thinking

Module Overarching Question

How do Argument and Thinking turn separate reasons and evidence into one coherent case for a claim?

Module Passage Set — Medium Stamina

Required stamina level for Module 2: Medium Stamina. The same two Cluster 4 passages increase in length, detail, evidence density, and conceptual demand across the four modules.

Module Independent Product

Build one claim with two R/E/T chains. Use transitions to connect the chains into one coherent A — Argument, and underline each T — Thinking sentence.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-01)

Write on the board: Cluster 4 - ECR Opinion/Argumentative - Module 2 - Medium Stamina passages Overarching Question: How do Argument and Thinking turn separate reasons and evidence into one coherent case for a claim? I can: connect my reasons and evidence into a coherent line of argument and explain how the evidence supports my claim. I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-02)

Write on the board: As you read, trace relationships among choices, conditions, and outcomes. Mark details that can be connected with words such as because, therefore, through, as a result, and this shows.

Module 2 — Family Communication

This Week at a Glance

- The reading focus is Cause, Effect, Method, and Relationships Among Ideas.
- The writing focus is CREATURES Development: A — Argument and T — Thinking.
- A — Argument is the coherent path the whole case follows.
- T — Thinking makes the writer's reasoning visible by explaining how and why evidence supports a reason and claim.
- Students will use “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.”

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

“How does that evidence support your claim?”

One Way to Help

Ask your child to explain a fact from either passage, then add, “This matters because...” to make the thinking visible.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is developing two parts of the CREATURES argumentative-writing roadmap: A — Argument and T — Thinking. Students will connect claims, reasons, evidence, explanations, and transitions so a response reads as one coherent case rather than a list of facts. They will also explain how and why each piece of evidence supports the reason and strengthens the claim.

The class will use “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” At home, ask, “What does that evidence prove?” or “Why does that detail matter to your claim?” These questions help your child make T — Thinking visible while strengthening A — Argument.

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija está desarrollando dos partes de la guía CREATURES para la escritura argumentativa: A — Argumento y T — Pensamiento. Los estudiantes conectarán afirmaciones, razones, evidencia, explicaciones y transiciones para que una respuesta se lea como un caso coherente en vez de una lista de hechos. También explicarán cómo y por qué cada evidencia apoya la razón y fortalece la afirmación.

La clase usará “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” y “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” En casa, pregunte: “¿Qué demuestra esa evidencia?” o “¿Por qué importa ese detalle para tu afirmación?” Estas preguntas ayudan a su hijo o hija a hacer visible el pensamiento y fortalecer el argumento.

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

Module 2 — Family Conversation Starters

- What makes an argument sound like one connected case instead of a list?
- How is T — Thinking different from repeating evidence?
- Which transition could show cause, effect, method, or another relationship?
- How did safer trade routes affect Mali?
- How do natural resources connect to work opportunities across Texas?

Family Activity — Evidence or Thinking?

One person states a passage detail. The other explains what the detail proves by beginning, “This supports the claim because...”

Family Activity — Connect the Chain

Give C -> R -> E -> T from memory. Explain how A connects each chain back to the central claim.

Module 2 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Module 2 spirals C, R, and E while adding A — Argument and T — Thinking. Students organize reasons, evidence, transitions, and ideas into a coherent line of argument and explain how and why each piece of evidence supports the reason and claim. The WHY/HOW distinction remains inside CREATURES: WHY explains reasons, and HOW explains method, path, or relationship; neither replaces the central C — Claim.

Writing TEKS for This Module

TEKS	Student Expectation (verbatim TEKS breakout)
(11)(B)(ii)	develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including transitions
(12)(C)(i)	compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
(12)(C)(ii)	compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, 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)(C)(v)	revise drafts by combining ideas for coherence
(11)(D)(xv)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including prepositions
(11)(D)(xvi)	edit drafts using standard English conventions, including prepositional phrases

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Students organize reasons and evidence into a coherent line of argument, directly practicing purposeful structure and transitions rather than producing a disconnected list.
- Students explain how and why each piece of evidence supports the claim, making T — Thinking visible in writing and discussion.
- Students revise for precise word choice, clear sentence structure, prepositions/prepositional phrases, and transitions that show relationships among ideas.

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

These are the standards listed for Cluster 4 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 4 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Writing Genre

- (12)(C)(i) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
- (12)(C)(ii) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i-v) revise drafts to improve sentence structure, word choice, and coherence (adding, deleting, and combining ideas)

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(xvi), (xxxiii)–(xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — sentence and subject-verb agreement; irregular verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and prepositional phrases; and grade-appropriate spelling

ELPS — Cluster 4 (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)–(xvi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content, style, register, and conventions for purpose and audience

Revising

- 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(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures
- 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

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

Language Domains

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students hear broken argument chains and identify a missing reason, evidence, thinking sentence, or transition.
Speaking	Students explain how evidence supports a reason and how A connects each chain to the claim.
Reading	Students trace cause, effect, method, and relationships among ideas in both Medium Stamina passages.
Writing	Students build and revise coherent C/R/E/T chains with visible T — Thinking.

Module 2 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can: connect my reasons and evidence into a coherent line of argument and explain how the evidence supports my claim.
- I can build C -> R -> E -> T chains that stay connected to one central claim.
- I can explain how and why evidence supports a reason instead of repeating the evidence.
- I can use transitions to show cause, effect, method, and relationships among ideas.

I Will Statements

- I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response.
- I will organize two reason/evidence/thinking chains so they build one coherent argument.
- I will revise a jump in logic and make my T — Thinking visible.
- I will use WHY to explain reasons and HOW to explain method or relationship while keeping C as my central claim.

Success Criteria

- My claim takes a defensible position.
- Each reason and evidence choice connects to the same claim.
- Each T sentence explains what the evidence proves.
- My transitions show how ideas relate.

Module 2 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

Teachers may reread either passage, provide oral rehearsal, display the CREATURES roadmap, and color-code C/R/E/T cards. Students must still select relevant evidence, explain the proof, and organize a coherent case.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level	Student Work	Evidence of Thinking
Literal	Identify cause, effect, method, and stated relationships.	The student locates an accurate passage detail.
Inferential	Explain how evidence supports a reason.	The student writes a T sentence that interprets rather than repeats.
Evaluative	Build and revise two connected chains.	The student defends the order and transitions that make A coherent.

Educator Insight

Students may believe that adding more facts automatically creates a stronger argument. Teach the opposite: every fact must have a job. The writer should be able to point from evidence to reason and from reason to claim. If the student cannot explain the connection, T — Thinking is missing. If several good ideas appear but do not connect in a logical order, A — Argument needs revision.

Module 2 — Thinking Levels

Level	Color	Thinking Stage	A + T Evidence
Level 1	Red	Foundational	Lists a fact without a clear claim connection.
Level 2	Orange	Emergent	Gives a reason and evidence but repeats instead of explains.
Level 3	Yellow	Visible	Adds a T sentence that explains how the evidence supports the reason.
Level 4	Green	Independent	Connects two R/E/T chains with accurate transitions.
Level 5	Blue	Reflective	Revises order, transitions, and thinking to make the full case more persuasive.

Challenge: Draw an arrow from each T sentence to the evidence and reason it explains, then trace both chains back to C.

Module 2 — Vocabulary

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition
connect	kuh-NEKT	to join ideas so they make sense together
choice	CHOYS	a decision
result	ri-ZULT	what happens because of a choice or condition
show	SHOH	to make something clear
explain	ik-SPLAYN	to tell how or why something works
order	OR-der	the arrangement of ideas
link	LINK	a connection between ideas
prove	PROOV	to support an idea with evidence
matter	MAT-er	to be important
strong	STRAWNG	clear and well supported

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition
coherent	koh-HEER-uhnt	organized so ideas connect and make sense together
argument	AR-gyuh-muhnt	a connected line of reasoning that supports a claim
thinking	THINK-ing	the explanation of how and why evidence supports the claim
transition	tran-ZISH-uhn	a word or phrase that shows how ideas relate
relationship	ri-LAY-shuhn-ship	the way two ideas, events, or conditions connect
cause	KAWZ	something that helps make an event or result happen
effect	ih-FEKT	a result that happens because of a cause
method	METH-uhd	the way something happens or is done
influence	IN-floo-uhns	the power to affect a result or decision
opportunity	op-er-TOO-nuh-tee	a useful chance or possibility created by conditions or choices

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Passage and Framework Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition
claim	KLAYM	the defensible position at the center of an argument
reason	REE-zuhn	a point that explains why a claim makes sense
evidence	EV-uh-duhns	accurate proof from the text
commerce	KOM-ers	the buying, selling, and movement of goods
economy	ih-KON-uh-mee	the system of work, trade, and money in a place
climate	KLY-mit	the usual weather of a place
resources	REE-sor-siz	useful materials found in a place
vegetation	vej-uh-TAY-shuhn	the plants growing in an area
Timbuktu	tim-buk-TOO	a city known for trade and learning
Coastal Plains	KOH-stuhl PLAYNZ	a Texas region with rivers, forests, beaches, farms, fishing, and large cities

Module 2 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

Teacher Script

“The Wealth of Mansa Musa” presents relationships among protected trade routes, increased commerce, learning in Timbuktu, and Mali’s growth and reputation. “Four Regions, One Big Adventure” presents relationships among landforms, climate, natural resources, vegetation, jobs, and daily life across Texas. Students use the Medium Stamina versions injected by the renderer. All passage-dependent prompts, models, activities, examples, intervention, enrichment, and answer keys align to those two passages and the CREATURES argumentative framework.”

Module 2 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Teacher Preparation

Module 2 spirals C, R, and E while adding A — Argument and T — Thinking. Students learn that a strong argumentative response cannot sound like a list of unrelated facts. A describes the coherent line of argument across the response. T is the writer's reasoning—the explanation of how and why the evidence supports the reason and strengthens the claim.

Preserve the useful WHY/HOW distinction from earlier instruction, but place it inside CREATURES. WHY language often helps students explain reasons. HOW language often helps students explain method or relationship. Neither replaces the claim. In argumentative writing, students still take a defensible position and then use WHY/HOW thinking to make the case coherent.

Anchor Charts to Create

- A — Argument: Claim -> Reason -> Evidence -> Thinking -> next connected reason. The response should sound like one case, not a pile of facts.
- T — Thinking: “This evidence matters because...” / “This supports the claim by...” / “This shows that...” / “Therefore...”
- The Argument Chain: C sets direction. R gives a point. E proves it. T explains the proof. A connects every chain back to C.
- WHY = reason. HOW = method/path/relationship. Use both kinds of thinking when they help the argument.
- Transition Bank: first, another reason, for example, because, therefore, as a result, however, most importantly, together.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-03)

Write on the board: A — Argument = the connected line of reasoning across the whole response. T — Thinking = how and why the evidence proves the reason and supports the claim. C -> R -> E -> T -> connect back to C.

Materials List

- Copies of both stamina-level passages
- Interactive notebooks
- Pencils and highlighters
- Sentence strips and CREATURES reference cards
- Recording sheets and chart paper or board space
- Scissors and glue
- Optional gameboard and Pencil Guy markers
- Argument-chain cards, transition cards, and broken-chain practice strips

Module 2 — The DOT Reading HABIT

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 unfamiliar word.
O — Discover	Discover the meaning as the class learns together.
T — Drop	Erase the dot when the meaning is known.

As students reread, trace relationships among choices, conditions, and outcomes. Mark cause/effect and method/relationship language that can support an argument chain. DOT remains a reading HABIT; in CREATURES, T always means Thinking.

Module 2 — The CREATURES Argumentative-Writing Roadmap

The Full Nine-Letter Memory Path

Letter	Move	Student Memory Cue
C	Claim	Take a defensible position.
R	Reasons	Organize logical support.
E	Evidence	Prove the reasons.
A	Argument	Make the whole case coherent.
T	Thinking	Explain how and why the evidence works.
U	Understanding Others	Represent another viewpoint accurately.
R	Rebuttal	Respond with reasoning and evidence.
E	Ending	Reinforce and synthesize.
S	Significance	Give the Bluebird Moment: why it matters beyond the paper.

CREATURES is the architecture of the full argumentative response, not a demand for exactly nine sentences. C is the central claim. R, E, and T can repeat across body paragraphs. A is the coherent path the entire case follows. U and the second R provide respectful viewpoint practice. The final E and S close the response. S is the Bluebird Moment—the place where the writer explains why the issue matters beyond the paper. CREATURES T always means Thinking.

This Module's Deep Focus: A + T

A — Argument is bigger than one sentence. It is the connected line of reasoning across the response: C sets direction, R gives a point, E proves it, T explains the proof, and A connects every chain back to C.

T — Thinking makes the writer's mind visible. It explains how and why evidence supports the reason and strengthens the claim. Repeating evidence is not thinking.

WHY and HOW Inside CREATURES

WHY explains reasons. HOW explains method, path, or relationship. Both can deepen T and clarify A, but neither replaces the central C — Claim.

Module 2 — TRACKS: Trace Relationships in the Argument

Use the existing Module 2 TRACKS cards while rereading both passages. Trace each selected detail through the argument chain:

1. Identify the central C — Claim.
2. Name the R — Reason the detail can prove.
3. Record the E — Evidence accurately.
4. Add T — Thinking that explains how and why the proof works.
5. Check A — Argument: connect the chain to the next reason and back to C.

Teacher Prompt: “Does this detail merely belong to the topic, or can you explain exactly how it supports this reason and claim?”

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 7 — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was Mansa Musa. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it controlled important trade routes. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] Trade was very important to the people of Mali. Merchants traveled long distances across the desert to exchange goods with people from many different places. These journeys could take weeks or even months. Traders used camels because they could carry heavy loads and travel through the hot, dry desert with little water. Along the trade routes, merchants traded not only gold and salt but also cloth, tools, spices, and other useful items. As trade increased, Mali became richer and more powerful.

[3] Mansa Musa made smart choices that helped his kingdom grow. He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali. Soldiers protected many of the trade routes, making travelers feel safe as they crossed the desert. Because people trusted that the roads were safe, more merchants chose to visit Mali. This helped the kingdom earn even more wealth through trade.

[4] As a result, cities like Timbuktu became busy and important places. People from many different regions visited the city to buy and sell goods. Timbuktu was also known for learning, where people studied subjects like math, science, and religion. Students and teachers gathered to share ideas and learn from one another. Many books were copied by hand so that knowledge could be passed from one generation to the next. This made Timbuktu one of the most respected centers of learning in Africa.

[5] One of the most famous parts of Mansa Musa's life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. This journey covered thousands of miles and included a large group of travelers. Along the way, Mansa Musa stopped in many cities. During this journey, he gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. His actions made many people notice how wealthy Mali was. Stories about his kindness and great wealth spread to places far from Africa.

[6] People who met Mansa Musa told others about the rich kingdom of Mali. Travelers, merchants, and mapmakers shared stories about the kingdom's gold, busy cities, and successful trade. As more people learned about Mali, they became interested in visiting and trading with the kingdom. These stories helped Mali become known throughout parts of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

[7] Because of the choices he made, Mali became known as a powerful and important kingdom. Mansa Musa supported both trade and education, helping his people succeed in many ways. His leadership showed that a strong ruler could improve a kingdom by protecting trade, encouraging learning, and helping others. People still talk about Mansa Musa today when they learn about African history and how trade and education helped kingdoms grow. His story reminds us that wise decisions and strong leadership can leave a lasting impact for many years.

Student Annotation Guide — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

T — Time

in the early 1300s

R — Reactions

Mali became richer and more powerful

A — Actions

Soldiers protected many of the trade routes

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Mansa Musa

K — Key Knowledge

Many books were copied by hand

S — Scenery/Setting

the hot, dry desert

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was **Mansa Musa**. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it controlled important trade routes. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] Trade was very important to the people of Mali. Merchants traveled long distances across the desert to exchange goods with people from many different places. These journeys could take weeks or even months. Traders used camels because they could carry heavy loads and travel through the hot, dry desert with little water. Along the trade routes, merchants traded not only gold and salt but also cloth, tools, spices, and other useful items. As trade increased, **Mali became richer and more powerful**.

[3] **Mansa Musa** made smart choices that helped his kingdom grow. He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali. **Soldiers protected many of the trade routes**, making travelers feel safe as they crossed the desert. Because people trusted that the roads were safe, more merchants chose to visit Mali. This helped the kingdom earn even more wealth through trade.

[4] As a result, cities like Timbuktu became busy and important places. People from many different regions visited the city to buy and sell goods. Timbuktu was also known for learning, where people studied subjects like math, science, and religion. Students and teachers gathered to share ideas and learn from one another. **Many books were copied by hand** so that knowledge could be passed from one generation to the next. This made Timbuktu one of the most respected centers of learning in Africa.

[5] One of the most famous parts of **Mansa Musa's** life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. This journey covered thousands of miles and included a large group of travelers. Along the way, **Mansa Musa** stopped in many cities. During this journey, he gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. His actions made many people notice how wealthy Mali was. Stories about his kindness and great wealth spread to places far from Africa.

[6] People who met **Mansa Musa** told others about the rich kingdom of Mali. Travelers, merchants, and mapmakers shared stories about the kingdom's gold, busy cities, and successful trade. As more people learned about Mali, they became interested in visiting and trading with the kingdom. These stories helped Mali become known throughout parts of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

[7] Because of the choices he made, Mali became known as a powerful and important kingdom. **Mansa Musa** supported both trade and education, helping his people succeed in many ways. His leadership showed that a strong ruler could improve a kingdom by protecting trade, encouraging learning, and helping others. People still talk about **Mansa Musa** today when they learn about African history and how trade and education helped kingdoms grow. His story reminds us that wise decisions and strong leadership can leave a lasting impact for many years.

PASSAGE 8 — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] “Road trip!” Xavier shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions. Instead of only reading about them in books, Xavier would get to see each region with his own eyes. He packed a notebook so he could write down interesting facts and compare what made each place special. His parents told him that every region had its own landforms, climate, plants, and jobs.

[2] Their first stop was the Mountains and Basins in far West Texas. Xavier noticed tall, rocky mountains and dry land. “It’s really hot here,” he said. There were only a few plants, like cacti. His mom explained that people in this region often work in mining and oil because of the natural resources found underground. As they drove through the area, Xavier spotted steep cliffs and long stretches of open land. He realized that the dry climate made it difficult for many plants to grow, but the region still had valuable resources that helped many people earn a living.

[3] Next, they traveled to the Great Plains. The land looked wide and flat with rolling hills. The weather was still dry, but not as hot. Xavier saw ranches and fields. “This must be where people raise cattle,” he said. His dad nodded and added that farming is also common here. They passed large herds of cattle grazing in grassy pastures. Xavier also noticed fields where crops were growing. He learned that the open land and wide spaces make this region a good place for both ranching and farming.

[4] After that, they reached the North Central Plains. “Everything looks greener and more colorful!” Xavier said. There were more trees and grass, and the land had gentle hills. The climate was milder, and people raised livestock and grew crops. The family stopped at a small park to stretch their legs. Birds chirped from nearby trees while a cool breeze moved through the grass. Xavier noticed that this region looked very different from the dry land they had visited earlier. He wrote in his notebook that the North Central Plains had more vegetation because it received more rainfall.

[5] Finally, they arrived at the Coastal Plains near the Gulf of Mexico. It was humid, and Xavier could feel the warm, moist air. There were rivers, forests, and even beaches. “This region has a lot of different jobs,” his mom said, “like farming, fishing, and working in big cities.” As they explored, they saw boats along the water and busy highways leading into large cities. Xavier enjoyed watching the waves and listening to seabirds flying overhead. He understood why so many people lived and worked in this region.

[6] On the drive home, Xavier looked through the notes he had written during the trip. He thought about how each region had its own climate, landforms, plants, and types of jobs. Although they were all part of Texas, each one offered something different. He realized that learning about the regions from a textbook was helpful, but seeing them in person made the information easier to remember.

[7] As they headed home, Xavier rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Student Annotation Guide — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

T — Time

On the drive home

R — Reactions

seeing them in person made the information easier to remember

A — Actions

He packed a notebook

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Zavier

K — Key Knowledge

the open land and wide spaces make this region a good place for both ranching and farming

S — Scenery/Setting

Birds chirped from nearby trees while a cool breeze moved through the grass

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] “Road trip!” **Zavier** shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions. Instead of only reading about them in books, **Zavier** would get to see each region with his own eyes. **He packed a notebook** so he could write down interesting facts and compare what made each place special. His parents told him that every region had its own landforms, climate, plants, and jobs.

[2] Their first stop was the Mountains and Basins in far West Texas. **Zavier** noticed tall, rocky mountains and dry land. “It’s really hot here,” he said. There were only a few plants, like cacti. His mom explained that people in this region often work in mining and oil because of the natural resources found underground. As they drove through the area, **Zavier** spotted steep cliffs and long stretches of open land. He realized that the dry climate made it difficult for many plants to grow, but the region still had valuable resources that helped many people earn a living.

[3] Next, they traveled to the Great Plains. The land looked wide and flat with rolling hills. The weather was still dry, but not as hot. **Zavier** saw ranches and fields. “This must be where people raise cattle,” he said. His dad nodded and added that farming is also common here. They passed large herds of cattle grazing in grassy pastures. **Zavier** also noticed fields where crops were growing. He learned that the open land and wide spaces make this region a good place for both ranching and farming.

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[6] On the drive home, **Zavier** looked through the notes he had written during the trip. He thought about how each region had its own climate, landforms, plants, and types of jobs. Although they were all part of Texas, each one offered something different. He realized that learning about the regions from a textbook was helpful, but seeing them in person made the information easier to remember.

[7] As they headed home, **Zavier** rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Day 1 - Gather and Reveal

Approach: Hear the Broken Chain

Listening Target: Listen for the place where an argument stops making sense. Identify whether the missing or weak link is Reason, Evidence, Thinking, or a transition.

SLIDE M2-04 — HEAR THE BROKEN CHAIN

Listen to each chain. Show R, E, T, or TRANSITION for the part that is missing or weak. Example: “Protecting trade mattered. The passage says traders moved safely. Timbuktu was important.” -> T is missing; the writer never explains how the evidence supports the point.

Fresh Recall: Say C -> R -> E -> T from memory and explain how A connects the chain.

Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“Today your ears are going to catch broken arguments. A response can have a claim and good evidence and still feel weak if the writer never explains how the proof works. That explanation is T — Thinking.”

R — Reveal the Background Knowledge

SLIDE M2-05 — THE ARGUMENT CHAIN

C: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali. R: Safe travel encouraged more merchants. E: “He made sure traders could move safely...” T: This supports the claim because safer routes increased trade and brought more people and goods into Mali. A: The chain stays connected to the same claim and leads logically to the next reason.

Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“The A in CREATURES is bigger than one sentence. A is the path your whole case follows. The T is where your mind becomes visible. T tells the reader why the proof matters.”

Model — Mansa Musa

C — Claim: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali. R — Reason: Safe travel encouraged more merchants to visit the kingdom. E — Evidence: “He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali.” T — Thinking: This supports the claim because safety did more than protect travelers; it increased the movement of goods and people, which strengthened the kingdom’s economy. A — Argument Connection: Another reason protected trade mattered is that growing commerce helped cities such as Timbuktu become busier and more influential.

Model — Texas Regions

C — Claim: Natural resources have a greater influence than climate on work opportunities across Texas. R — Reason: Natural resources directly shape several important jobs. E — Evidence: The passage explains that people in the Mountains and Basins work in mining and oil because valuable resources are found underground. T — Thinking: This evidence supports the claim because the resource itself creates the work opportunity, showing a direct connection between what the land contains and how people earn a living.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-05)

Write on the board: C: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali. R: Safe travel encouraged more merchants. E: “He made sure traders could move safely...” T: This supports the claim because safer routes increased trade and brought more people and goods into Mali. A: The chain stays connected to the same claim and leads logically to the next reason.

Day 2 - Attempt

SLIDE M2-06 — ARGUMENT CHAIN RELAY

1. Build C -> R -> E -> T in the correct order.
2. Add a transition that connects to the next reason.
3. Read the chain aloud. If it sounds like a jump or list, revise A — the Argument.
4. Explain which T sentence makes the reasoning clearest.

Teams receive mixed cards containing claims, reasons, evidence, thinking, transitions, and distractors. They race to assemble coherent argument chains, but speed does not count unless the chain makes logical sense.

Sample Relay Set — Answer Key

- C: Supporting learning had the greater long-term impact on Mali.
- R: Education helped Timbuktu become respected for knowledge as well as trade.
- E: The passage explains that students and teachers gathered to study and share ideas.
- T: This supports the claim because education created knowledge that could continue helping people after a single trade transaction ended.
- Transition to next reason: In addition, learning helped Mali become known beyond its wealth.

Broken-Chain Challenge

Weak Chain: “The Coastal Plains have rivers. People fish there. Texas has four regions. Natural resources matter.” Revised Chain: “Natural resources strongly influence work in the Coastal Plains. The passage describes rivers, beaches, forests, farms, and fishing jobs. This evidence supports the claim because the region’s resources directly create several kinds of work and economic opportunity.”

Daily Deck Slide (M2-06)

- Write on the board: 1. Build C -> R -> E -> T in the correct order.
- Add a transition that connects to the next reason.
 - Read the chain aloud. If it sounds like a jump or list, revise A — the Argument.
 - Explain which T sentence makes the reasoning clearest.

Day 3 - Discuss and Use Again

SLIDE M2-07 — DISCUSS A + T

What makes a line of argument coherent? How is T — Thinking different from repeating the evidence? When does a transition improve A — Argument? How can WHY and HOW thinking both help an argumentative response?

Teacher Script

Teacher Script

“A strong response should feel like every sentence knows where it belongs. Thinking is the bridge between proof and claim. If the bridge is missing, the reader has to do the writer’s job.”

- Possible response: “Thinking explains what the evidence proves.” Teacher: “Exactly. It interprets the proof.”
- Possible response: “Transitions show how one idea relates to the next.” Teacher: “Yes. They support the A — Argument structure.”
- Possible response: “WHY can explain reasons, and HOW can explain the path or method.” Teacher: “Both can strengthen T when they stay connected to the claim.”

U — Use the Knowledge Again

SLIDE M2-08 — INDEPENDENT — BUILD TWO ARGUMENT CHAINS

Prompt: Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas. Write one C, two R/E/T chains, and transitions that make the argument flow. Underline each T sentence. Draw an arrow from every T back to the reason it explains.

Student Directions

- Take a defensible position.
- Write two distinct reasons.
- Select evidence for each reason.
- After each piece of evidence, write a T — Thinking sentence that explains how/why the evidence supports the reason.
- Use transitions so the second reason grows from the first instead of sounding disconnected.
- Read the response aloud and revise any jump in logic.

Teacher Exemplar

C — Claim: Natural resources have the greater influence on how Texans live and work because resources directly create many job opportunities across regions. R1 — Reason: Underground resources create specialized work in the Mountains and Basins. E1 — Evidence: The passage explains that people often work in mining and oil because of resources found underground. T1 — Thinking: This supports the claim because the jobs exist specifically because the resources are present in the land. Transition: Another example appears in the Coastal Plains, where several resources support different kinds of work. R2 — Reason: Coastal resources support farming, fishing, and city-based work. E2 — Evidence: The passage names farming, fishing, rivers, forests, beaches, and large cities. T2 — Thinking: Together, these details show that resources can shape multiple parts of a region's economy and daily life.

Simple Scoring Rubric — 0-3

- 3 — Argument flows logically; each T sentence clearly explains how evidence supports the reason and claim; transitions show relationships among ideas.
- 2 — Most parts connect, but one chain or transition needs stronger explanation.
- 1 — Response contains facts and reasons but reads mostly like a list; thinking is limited or repetitive.
- 0 — Response is missing, off-topic, or does not attempt an argument chain.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-07)

Write on the board: What makes a line of argument coherent? How is T — Thinking different from repeating the evidence? When does a transition improve A — Argument? How can WHY and HOW thinking both help an argumentative response?

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-08)

Write on the board: Prompt: Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas. Write one C, two R/E/T chains, and transitions that make the argument flow. Underline each T sentence. Draw an arrow from every T back to the reason it explains.

Day 4 - Award and Target

SLIDE M2-10 — AWARD YOUR THINKING

Highlight the T sentence that makes your reasoning most visible. Complete: “My argument became more coherent when I ____.”

Teacher Script



Teacher Script

“Today you made your thinking visible. That is a powerful writing skill. Evidence is important, but readers also need you to explain what the evidence proves.”

T — Target Their Goals

SLIDE M2-11 — TARGET A + T

Choose one target: smoother transitions - stronger evidence explanation - clearer link back to claim - less listing - more precise cause/effect language.

- One place my argument jumps is...
- One T sentence I can deepen is...
- One transition I want to use more accurately is...
- My next argument will feel more connected if I...

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-10)

Write on the board: Highlight the T sentence that makes your reasoning most visible. Complete: “My argument became more coherent when I ____.”

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-11)

Write on the board: Choose one target: smoother transitions - stronger evidence explanation - clearer link back to claim - less listing - more precise cause/effect language.

- One place my argument jumps is...
- One T sentence I can deepen is...
- One transition I want to use more accurately is...
- My next argument will feel more connected if I...

Day 5 - Explain to Others

SLIDE M2-12 — TEACH THE ARGUMENT CHAIN

Teach $C \rightarrow R \rightarrow E \rightarrow T$ to a partner. Explain how A is the line connecting every chain into one case. Give one example of a sentence that is evidence and one that is thinking.

Teacher Script



Teacher Script

"If your partner can hear the difference between proof and thinking after you teach it, you have made the creature stronger."

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-12)

Write on the board: Teach $C \rightarrow R \rightarrow E \rightarrow T$ to a partner. Explain how A is the line connecting every chain into one case. Give one example of a sentence that is evidence and one that is thinking.

Module 2 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt

Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas.

Low Exemplar

Natural resources matter. The Coastal Plains have rivers. People fish there. Texas has four regions.

Improvement Note: The response names facts but does not build a coherent chain. Add a clear claim, connect the evidence to a reason, and explain what the evidence proves with T — Thinking.

Medium Exemplar

Natural resources have a greater influence on work across Texas. People in the Mountains and Basins work in mining and oil because valuable resources are found underground. This shows that natural resources help create jobs.

Improvement Note: The claim, evidence, and thinking connect. Add a second distinct R/E/T chain and a transition so A — Argument develops across the whole response.

High Exemplar

Natural resources have the greater influence on how Texans live and work because resources directly create many job opportunities across regions. Underground resources create specialized work in the Mountains and Basins. The passage explains that people often work in mining and oil because of resources found underground. This supports the claim because the jobs exist specifically because the resources are present in the land. Another example appears in the Coastal Plains, where several resources support different kinds of work. The passage names farming, fishing, rivers, forests, beaches, and large cities. Together, these details show that resources can shape multiple parts of a region's economy and daily life.

Module 2 — Assessment Opportunities

Formative Evidence

- Student identifies the missing or weak R, E, T, or transition in an oral chain.
- Student assembles C -> R -> E -> T in a logical order.
- Student explains why one T sentence makes reasoning clearest.
- Student revises a jump in logic and one vague word.

Independent Interactive Notebook Activity

Prompt: Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas.

Write one C, two R/E/T chains, and transitions that make the argument flow. Underline each T sentence. Draw an arrow from every T back to the reason it explains.

Simple Scoring Rubric — 0-3

- 3 — Argument flows logically; each T sentence clearly explains how evidence supports the reason and claim; transitions show relationships among ideas.
- 2 — Most parts connect, but one chain or transition needs stronger explanation.
- 1 — Response contains facts and reasons but reads mostly like a list; thinking is limited or repetitive.
- 0 — Response is missing, off-topic, or does not attempt an argument chain.

Check the Learning

Standards Application Check — Module 2

SLIDE M2-09 — COHERENCE + TRANSITION CHECK

Underline transitions. Circle the claim. Box each evidence phrase. Put a T beside each reasoning sentence. Revise one jump in logic, one vague word, and one sentence that repeats instead of explains. Edit prepositions/prepositional phrases and sentence completeness. Teacher Model: Weak — “Mansa Musa helped trade. He protected routes. Timbuktu was busy.” Stronger — “Mansa Musa strengthened Mali through protected trade routes. Because merchants could travel more safely, more people and goods entered the kingdom. This shows that security supported economic growth and helped important cities become busier.”

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-09)

Write on the board: Underline transitions. Circle the claim. Box each evidence phrase. Put a T beside each reasoning sentence. Revise one jump in logic, one vague word, and one sentence that repeats instead of explains. Edit prepositions/prepositional phrases and sentence completeness. Teacher Model: Weak — “Mansa Musa helped trade. He protected routes. Timbuktu was busy.” Stronger — “Mansa Musa strengthened Mali through protected trade routes. Because merchants could travel more safely, more people and goods entered the kingdom. This shows that security supported economic growth and helped important cities become busier.”

Intervention — Module 2

SLIDE M2-13 — INTERVENTION — EVIDENCE OR THINKING?

Sort sentence strips into E or T. Then pair one E sentence with the T sentence that explains it. Example: E — “The passage says traders could move safely.” T — “This supports the claim because safer travel encouraged more commerce.” Begin with color-coded E and T cards. Remove color support after two successful rounds. Have students orally complete the stem “This matters because...” before writing independently.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-13)

Write on the board: Sort sentence strips into E or T. Then pair one E sentence with the T sentence that explains it. Example: E — “The passage says traders could move safely.” T — “This supports the claim because safer travel encouraged more commerce.”

Module 2 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

During Reading

Ask students to mark a cause/effect relationship and a method/path/relationship. Prompt: “How could this detail become evidence for a reason?”

During Writing

Color-code C, R, E, and T. Draw an arrow from T to the evidence and reason it explains. Ask students to orally complete “This matters because...” before writing.

Gradual Release

Begin with color-coded evidence and thinking cards. Remove color support after two successful rounds. Keep the central claim visible so every chain can be checked against C.

Enrichment — Module 2

SLIDE M2-14 — ENRICHMENT — REBUILD THE ARGUMENT

Take a response that contains strong facts but weak organization. Reorder the parts, add transitions, and write deeper T sentences. Explain which revision most improved A — Argument. Advanced students should justify not only what they changed but why the new order creates a more persuasive line of argument.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-14)

Write on the board: Take a response that contains strong facts but weak organization. Reorder the parts, add transitions, and write deeper T sentences. Explain which revision most improved A — Argument.

Module 2 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Protecting Trade or Supporting Learning?

Prompt

Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater impact on Mali.

Directions

1. Write a defensible C — Claim.
2. Build two distinct R/E/T chains from “The Wealth of Mansa Musa.”
3. Use transitions to connect the chains into one coherent A — Argument.
4. Underline each T sentence and explain how it interprets the evidence instead of repeating it.

Teacher Model for One Chain

C — Claim: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali. R — Reason: Safe travel encouraged more merchants to visit the kingdom. E — Evidence: “He made sure traders could move safely, which brought more people and goods into Mali.” T — Thinking: This supports the claim because safety did more than protect travelers; it increased the movement of goods and people, which strengthened the kingdom’s economy. A — Argument Connection: Another reason protected trade mattered is that growing commerce helped cities such as Timbuktu become busier and more influential.

Module 2 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

Hear the Broken Chain

Listening Target: Listen for the place where an argument stops making sense. Identify whether the missing or weak link is Reason, Evidence, Thinking, or a transition.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M2-04)

Write on the board: Listen to each chain. Show R, E, T, or TRANSITION for the part that is missing or weak. Example: “Protecting trade mattered. The passage says traders moved safely. Timbuktu was important.” -> T is missing; the writer never explains how the evidence supports the point. Fresh Recall: Say C -> R -> E -> T from memory and explain how A connects the chain.

🔊 Teacher Script

“Today your ears are going to catch broken arguments. A response can have a claim and good evidence and still feel weak if the writer never explains how the proof works. That explanation is T — Thinking.”

Pause Points

|| Pause Point 1 — After Reading

Can the student identify a cause, effect, method, or relationship supported by the passage?

|| Pause Point 2 — After the First Chain

Can the student distinguish evidence from thinking and explain what the evidence proves?

|| Pause Point 3 — After the Second Chain

Do the order and transitions make the response sound like one coherent argument rather than a list?

|| Pause Point 4 — Before Submission

Does every R/E/T chain connect back to the central C — Claim?

Module 2 — My Progress Tracker

Rate each skill from 1 (not yet) to 4 (independent).

CREATURES Skill	Beginning	End	Evidence / Next Step
I keep one defensible C — Claim at the center.	—	—	_____
I connect reasons and evidence into a coherent A — Argument.	—	—	_____
I write T — Thinking that explains how and why the proof works.	—	—	_____
I use transitions to show relationships among ideas.	—	—	_____
I can explain WHY as reason and HOW as method/relationship without replacing C.	—	—	_____

My next A + T target: _____

Module 2 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closing Words of Encouragement

Teacher Script

“Writers, you moved from collecting facts to building a case. Your argument became stronger because you connected the proof and showed the reader your thinking. That is the A and T of CREATURES working together.”

Overarching Question — Answer

Question: How do Argument and Thinking turn separate reasons and evidence into one coherent case for a claim?

Answer: A — Argument organizes reasons, evidence, transitions, and ideas so they build one connected case instead of a disconnected list. T — Thinking explains how and why each piece of evidence supports the reason and strengthens the claim. Together, A and T make the writer’s logic visible to the reader.

Daily Deck Slide (M2-15)

Write on the board: A connects the whole case. T explains how the proof works. When Argument and Thinking are strong, the reader never has to guess why a detail matters.

Teacher Reflection — Module 2

Which students build a coherent line of argument?

Which students explain rather than repeat evidence?

Which students use transitions to show relationships accurately?

Who is ready to add the next CREATURES moves?

Teacher Notes

Module 2 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Use a shared digital slide with draggable C/R/E/T cards for the Argument Chain Relay. Ask students to type E or T in chat during the auditory sorting rounds, and use annotation arrows to connect T sentences back to the evidence and reason they explain. Place pairs in breakout rooms to read argument chains aloud and identify any jump in logic. For intervention, use a two-column poll or form labeled Evidence / Thinking and provide immediate answer reveals. Keep the central claim visible throughout so students can check that each reason, evidence choice, thinking sentence, and transition contributes to one coherent argument.

MODULE

3

Understanding Others and
Rebuttal

Week 3 • High Stamina

Module 3: Understanding Others and Rebuttal

Week 3 - High Stamina - Cluster 4 (ECR Opinion/Argumentative)

Reading Focus

Perspective, Choice, Fair Representation, and Response

Writing Focus

CREATURES Perspective: U — Understanding Others and R — Rebuttal

Teacher Inspiration Quote



Teacher Script

"An argument becomes more credible when a writer can represent another viewpoint fairly and respond to it with evidence instead of dismissing it."

Module Overarching Question

How can accurately understanding another viewpoint help us write a stronger and more respectful rebuttal?

Module Passage Set — High Stamina

Required stamina level for Module 3: High Stamina. The same two Cluster 4 passages increase in length, detail, evidence density, and conceptual demand across the four modules.



Daily Deck Slide (M3-01)

Write on the board: Cluster 4 - ECR Opinion/Argumentative - Module 3 - High Stamina passages

MODULE LAUNCH

Overarching Question: How can accurately understanding another viewpoint help us write a stronger and more respectful rebuttal? I can: acknowledge another viewpoint accurately and respond with reasoning and evidence that defends or refines my claim. I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response. MODULE PASSAGE SET — HIGH STAMINA Required stamina level for Module 3: High Stamina. The same two Cluster 4 passages increase in length, detail, evidence density, and conceptual demand across the four modules.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-02)

Write on the board: As you read, collect evidence that could support more than one reasonable position. Mark places where two readers could interpret importance or impact differently.

READING PURPOSE

Module 3 — Family Communication

This Week at a Glance

- The big skills: U — Understanding Others and R — Rebuttal in the CREATURES roadmap.
- The readings: “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.”
- The student product: a fair statement of another viewpoint followed by a respectful, evidence-based rebuttal.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

“How can you show that you understand another viewpoint before you respond to it?”

One Way to Help

Ask your child to share a fair viewpoint sentence and then a rebuttal that answers the exact point with reasoning or evidence. Listen for respectful words such as “That point is reasonable; however...”

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child is learning two CREATURES writing moves: U — Understanding Others and R — Rebuttal. Fourth-grade writers practice stating another reasonable viewpoint accurately and respectfully before answering that exact point with reasoning and evidence. The goal is fairness and thoughtful response, not attacking a person or writing an advanced counterargument essay.

We will use “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” At home, ask your child why listening carefully can make an argument more credible. Your child can practice the frame “Some readers may argue...” and respond with “That point is reasonable; however...”

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija aprenderá dos movimientos de escritura de CREATURES: U — Comprender a los Demás y R — Refutación. Los escritores de cuarto grado practican presentar otro punto de vista razonable con exactitud y respeto antes de responder a ese punto preciso con razonamiento y evidencia. La meta es la imparcialidad y una respuesta reflexiva, no atacar a una persona ni escribir un ensayo avanzado de contraargumentación.

Usaremos “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” y “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” En casa, pregunte a su hijo o hija por qué escuchar con atención puede hacer que un argumento sea más creíble. Puede practicar la frase “Algunos lectores podrían argumentar...” y responder “Ese punto es razonable; sin embargo...”

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

Module 3 — Family Conversation Starters

- What makes a statement of another viewpoint fair and accurate?
- How is rebutting an idea different from attacking a person?
- Why can acknowledging a reasonable point strengthen a writer's credibility?
- When might another viewpoint help a writer refine a claim?

Family Activity — Hear, Then Respond

Read this viewpoint: “Some readers may argue that supporting learning had the greater impact because Timbuktu became a respected center of study.” Then respond: “That point is reasonable; however, protected trade affected the kingdom more broadly by bringing more merchants, goods, and wealth into Mali.” Explain how the response answers the actual point respectfully.

Module 3 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Students learn U — Understanding Others by representing another reasonable viewpoint accurately, respectfully, and specifically. They then learn R — Rebuttal by responding to that exact viewpoint with reasoning and evidence that defends or refines the claim. The practice is intentionally gentle and age-appropriate for Grade 4.

BIG Goal: Students will listen for another view accurately and answer it with an evidence-based response.

Passage and Product Sequence

Students collect evidence from “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure” that could support more than one reasonable position. Across the GRADUATE cycle, they hear, compare, build, revise, and explain fair U/R pairs.

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Students arrange broad-to-specific ideas for coherence and practice accurately representing a different viewpoint before defending their own claim.
- Students revise and rearrange ideas so the U — Understanding Others and R — Rebuttal section strengthens rather than interrupts the argument.
- Students edit the reflexive-pronoun and capitalization categories named in the Cluster 4 scope and sequence while maintaining argumentative genre characteristics and craft.

Module 3 — TEKS and ELPS (Cluster 4 · from the Scope & Sequence)

These are the standards listed for Cluster 4 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 4 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Writing Genre

- (12)(C)(i) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
- (12)(C)(ii) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i-v) revise drafts to improve sentence structure, word choice, and coherence (adding, deleting, and combining ideas)

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(xvi), (xxxiii)–(xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — sentence and subject-verb agreement; irregular verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and prepositional phrases; and grade-appropriate spelling

ELPS — Cluster 4 (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)–(xvi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content, style, register, and conventions for purpose and audience

Revising

- 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(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures
- 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

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

MODULE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT — GRADE 4 TEKS & ELPS The following breakouts are drawn from the Grade 4 Cluster 4 scope and sequence and the Grade 4 TEKS–ELPS crosswalk. Each breakout is written in full rather than listed only by code. The standards application check in this module makes the claimed student action visible. TEKS Breakouts Addressed in This Module — Full Language

- (11)(B)(ii) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including transitions
- (12)(C)(i) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
- (12)(C)(ii) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using craft
- (11)(C)(vi) revise drafts by rearranging ideas for coherence
- (11)(D)(xvii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including pronouns, including reflexive
- (11)(D)(xxi) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of historical periods
- (11)(D)(xxii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of historical events
- (11)(D)(xxiii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of historical documents
- (11)(D)(xxiv) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of titles of books
- (11)(D)(xxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of titles of stories
- (11)(D)(xxvi) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of titles of essays

- (11)(D)(xxvii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of languages
- (11)(D)(xxviii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of races
- (11)(D)(xxix) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of nationalities

ELPS Breakouts Addressed in This Module — Full Language

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(i) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths
- 4(D)(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence types
- 4(D)(iii) write content-area texts using a variety of transition words
- 4(E)(i) write content-area specific text using conventions
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area specific text using grammatical structures
- 4(F)(i) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(ii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(iii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate register for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(iv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate conventions for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(v) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(vi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(vii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate register for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(viii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate conventions for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(ix) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(x) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(xi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate register for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(xii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate conventions for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(xiii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific audience

- 4(F)(xiv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(xv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate register for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(xvi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate conventions for [a] specific audience

Language Domains

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students listen for whether a speaker represents another viewpoint fairly and whether the response uses reasoning or evidence.
Speaking	Students take turns as the Viewpoint Voice and Rebuttal Builder, then explain why a response is fair.
Reading	Students collect passage evidence that could support more than one reasonable position.
Writing	Students write a claim, a reason/evidence/thinking chain, a fair U viewpoint, and an evidence-based R rebuttal.

Module 3 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can: acknowledge another viewpoint accurately and respond with reasoning and evidence that defends or refines my claim.
- I can represent another viewpoint accurately, respectfully, and specifically.
- I can write a rebuttal that answers the actual point with reasoning and evidence.
- I can explain when another reasonable view helps me refine my claim.

I Will Statements

- I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response.
- I will use a fair frame such as “Some readers may argue...” before responding.
- I will respect the idea and answer it with reasoning instead of attacking the person.
- I will check whether my rebuttal defends or refines my central claim.

Success Criteria

- The other viewpoint would agree that I represented the idea accurately.
- My wording is respectful and specific.
- My rebuttal directly answers the point with reasoning or evidence.
- My original claim remains clear or becomes more precise.

Module 3 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

Teachers may read cards aloud, display fair viewpoint and rebuttal frames, allow oral rehearsal, and model one U/R pair. Students must still choose the fairest representation, respond to the actual point, use reasoning or evidence, and explain whether the original claim should remain or be refined.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level	Student Thinking	Evidence
Literal	Identify fair and unfair representations of another viewpoint.	An accurate FAIR/UNFAIR sort.
Inferential	Explain why a rebuttal answers the point rather than merely repeating the claim.	A connected U/R pair with evidence.
Evaluative	Decide whether another viewpoint reveals a weakness in the claim.	A defended choice to keep or refine the claim.

Educator Insight

Educator Insight Students may think rebuttal means proving another person wrong or “winning.” Reframe it as evidence-based response. Sometimes the other viewpoint contains a valid point, and a strong writer can acknowledge that point while still defending the claim. The most important Grade 4 habit is accurate representation: students should be able to hear the other side say, “Yes, that is what I meant.”

Module 3 — Thinking Levels

Level	Thinking Stage	U — Understanding Others and R — Rebuttal Work
Level 1	Foundational	Names another view vaguely or dismissively.
Level 2	Emergent	States a fair view but gives a general response.
Level 3	Visible	Represents another viewpoint accurately and responds to the actual point.
Level 4	Independent	Uses respectful wording plus reasoning or evidence to defend the claim.
Level 5	Reflective	Acknowledges a valid point and refines the claim when needed.

Challenge: Write a fair U and a strong R, then explain whether the other viewpoint gives you a reason to narrow the original claim.

Module 3 — Vocabulary

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
listen	LIS-uhn	to pay attention to what another person says	I listen for ____.
hear	HEER	to receive and understand spoken words	I heard the viewpoint say ____.
fair	FAIR	treating an idea honestly and without twisting it	This sentence is fair because ____.
side	SYDE	one position in a disagreement	Another side may say ____.
point	POYNT	one idea used to explain a position	The point I must answer is ____.
answer	AN-ser	to respond directly	I answer the point by ____.
agree	uh-GREE	to share or accept an idea	I can agree that ____ while still claiming ____.
choose	CHOOZ	to select after thinking	I choose this rebuttal because ____.
change	CHAYNJ	to make something different	I may change my claim by ____.
strong	STRAWNG	able to support a position well	This response is strong because ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
viewpoint	VYOO-poynt	the way a person sees or understands an issue	One viewpoint is ____.
counterpoint	KOWN-ter-poynt	a different idea or position that challenges part of an argument	A counterpoint to my claim is ____.
understanding	un-der-STAN-ding	accurately recognizing what another viewpoint is saying	I show understanding when ____.
rebuttal	ri-BUT-uhl	a reasoned response to another viewpoint	My rebuttal answers ____.
acknowledge	ak-NOL-ij	to recognize an idea fairly before responding	I acknowledge the point by ____.
accurate	AK-yuh-rut	correct and faithful to the text or viewpoint	My sentence is accurate because ____.
respectful	ri-SPEKT-fuhl	responding to ideas without insulting or misrepresenting people	I sound respectful when ____.
refine	ri-FYNE	to improve or make a claim more precise after considering another idea	I can refine my claim by ____.
perspective	per-SPEK-tiv	a particular way of viewing an event or issue	From this perspective, ____.
credibility	kred-uh-BIL-uh-tee	the quality of being believable or trustworthy	Fairness builds credibility because ____.

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Domain Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
Understanding Others	un-der-STAN-ding UTH-erz	the CREATURES move that states another viewpoint accurately, respectfully, and specifically	My U sentence fairly says ____.
evidence-based response	EV-uh-duhns bayst ri-SPONS	a response supported by text evidence or specific reasoning	My evidence-based response uses ____.
fair viewpoint frame	FAIR VYOO-poynt FRAYM	an opening such as “Some readers may argue...” that introduces another view respectfully	My fair viewpoint frame is ____.
rebuttal frame	ri-BUT-uhl FRAYM	wording that respectfully begins the answer to another view	I begin my rebuttal with ____.
central claim	SEN-truhl KLAYM	the main position the writer defends	My rebuttal connects to the central claim by ____.
straw-man response	STRAW man ri-SPONS	an unfair response to a weakened or twisted version of another view	I avoid a straw-man response by ____.
intellectual fairness	in-tuh-LEK-choo-uhl FAIR-nis	representing an idea accurately before answering it	Intellectual fairness requires ____.
reasoning	REE-zuh-ning	thinking that explains how evidence supports a position	My reasoning shows ____.
claim refinement	KLAYM ri-FYNE-muhnt	making a claim more precise after considering another viewpoint	Claim refinement helps when ____.
CREATURES roadmap	KREE-churz ROHD-map	the nine-part memory architecture for a complete argumentative response	The CREATURES roadmap helps me ____.

Module 3 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

TEACHER PREPARATION Module 3 introduces U — Understanding Others and the second R — Rebuttal. Formal counterargument expectations come in later grade levels, so Grade 4 practice should be age-appropriate: students learn to listen for another reasonable viewpoint, represent it accurately, and respond respectfully with reasoning and evidence. The goal is intellectual fairness, not a lengthy counterargument paragraph. Students continue to spiral C, R, E, A, and T. A rebuttal cannot stand alone. It must connect back to the writer's claim. Teach students to avoid straw-man responses such as "Some people think something silly." Instead, use fair frames such as "Some readers may argue..." followed by an accurate reason, then "However..." and evidence-based reasoning. Connection to the earlier Get SET routine: if teachers wish to retain it as an introduction craft HABIT, use it only as an optional way to arrange an opening. CREATURES remains the argumentative architecture. C is the claim, and CREATURES T always means Thinking.

Module 3 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Materials List

- Copies of both stamina-level passages
- Interactive notebooks
- Pencils
- Highlighters
- Sentence strips
- CREATURES reference cards
- Recording sheets
- Chart paper or board space
- Scissors and glue
- Optional gameboard and Pencil Guy markers
- Viewpoint cards
- Fair / Unfair representation cards
- Rebuttal sentence stems
- Perspective-switch recording sheets

Module 3 — The DOT Reading HABIT

Use DOT while reading both High Stamina passages to locate places where evidence could support more than one reasonable position.

DOT Move	Student Action
D — Discover	Mark evidence connected to impact, importance, work, or opportunity.
O — Organize	Group evidence beneath the reasonable position it could support.
T — Think	Decide whether each position is represented fairly and which evidence best answers it.

The reading HABIT supplies accurate evidence; CREATURES organizes the argumentative writing.

Module 3 — The CREATURES Roadmap

The Full Argumentative-Writing Memory Architecture

CREATURES is the architecture of the full argumentative response. The letters are not always one sentence each. C usually appears as the central claim. R, E, and T can repeat across body paragraphs. A describes the coherence of the entire line of argument. U and the second R are introduced gently in Grade 4 as respectful viewpoint practice. The final E and S close the response, with S serving as the Bluebird Moment—the place where the writer explains why the issue matters beyond the paper.

Letter	CREATURES Move	Student Memory Cue
C	Claim	Take a side you can defend.
R	Reasons	Tell why your side makes sense.
E	Evidence	Prove it from the text.
A	Argument	Build one clear, connected line of argument.
T	Thinking	Explain how and why the evidence supports the reason and claim.
U	Understanding Others	State the other viewpoint accurately, respectfully, and specifically.
R	Rebuttal	Respond with reasoning and evidence that defends or refines the claim.
E	Ending	Bring the argument to a purposeful close.
S	Significance	Create the Bluebird Moment: explain why the issue matters beyond this paper.

Remember: C is the central claim, and CREATURES T always means Thinking. Get SET may remain only as an optional opening-arrangement craft routine; CREATURES remains the architecture.

This Module's Focus: U + R

Anchor Charts to Create

- U — Understanding Others: State the other viewpoint accurately, respectfully, and specifically.
- R — Rebuttal: Respond to that viewpoint using reasoning and evidence that defends or refines the claim.
- Fair Viewpoint Frames: “Some readers may argue that...” / “Another reasonable view is...” / “A reader could point out that...”

- Rebuttal Frames: “However, the stronger evidence shows...” / “That point matters, but...” / “Even though..., the passage more strongly supports...”
- Respect the idea, not attack the person. A rebuttal answers reasoning with reasoning.

★ **Daily Deck Slide (M3-03)**

Write on the board: U — Understanding Others: represent another viewpoint accurately.

U + R — HEAR THE OTHER SIDE, THEN RESPOND

R — Rebuttal: respond with reasoning and evidence. Grade 4 goal: respectful viewpoint awareness and a short evidence-based response—not a formal advanced counterargument essay.

Module 3 — TRACKS: Reading for More Than One Reasonable Position

Use the TRACKS tags printed with each High Stamina passage to return to exact language before building a U/R pair.

Letter	Reading Move	Question
T	Time	When does the event or idea occur?
R	Result	What outcome follows?
A	Action	What does a person do?
C	Character	Who is central?
K	Key Idea	Which exact phrase carries an important idea?
S	Setting	Where does the action or explanation occur?

Collect evidence that supports more than one reasonable position. Before rebutting a viewpoint, return to the passage and check that the U sentence represents its evidence accurately.

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 7 — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was Mansa Musa. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it controlled important trade routes. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] Trade was one of the most important parts of life in Mali. Long before airplanes, trains, or trucks, merchants traveled by camel across the Sahara Desert to exchange goods with people living far away. These trips could last for weeks or even months. The desert was hot during the day and cold at night, so the journey was not easy. Camels were helpful because they could carry heavy loads and travel long distances with very little water. Merchants packed supplies, food, and valuable goods before beginning their long trips.

[3] Gold was one of Mali's greatest natural resources. People wanted gold because it could be made into coins, jewelry, and decorations. Salt was just as important because it helped preserve food and keep people healthy. Some places had plenty of gold but little salt, while other places had salt but not much gold. This made trading useful for everyone. Merchants also traded cloth, tools, leather, spices, pottery, and other goods that people needed in their daily lives. As more trade took place, Mali's wealth continued to grow.

[4] Mansa Musa understood how important trade was to his kingdom. He made smart choices that helped merchants feel safe while traveling. Soldiers guarded many of the trade routes, and laws helped protect people and their goods. Because traders knew they could travel safely, more merchants visited Mali. Every new trade journey brought more people, more products, and more opportunities for the kingdom to grow stronger.

[5] As trade increased, cities throughout Mali became larger and busier. One of the most famous cities was Timbuktu. Merchants filled the marketplaces with colorful goods from many different places. People could find gold, salt, cloth, books, pottery, and other valuable items. Travelers speaking different languages met to buy, sell, and share ideas. The city became an important meeting place for people from across Africa.

[6] Timbuktu was known for much more than trade. It also became one of the greatest centers of learning during its time. Students traveled long distances to study with respected teachers. They learned subjects such as math, science, history, geography, and religion. Since printing presses had not yet been invented in the area, books were carefully copied by hand. These books were treated with great care because they contained valuable knowledge. Many families believed that education could help improve a person's future.

[7] Teachers in Timbuktu encouraged students to ask questions, solve problems, and continue learning throughout their lives. Libraries held many handwritten books, and scholars spent years studying them. Visitors were often surprised to see how much learning took place in the city. The success of Timbuktu showed that education could become just as valuable as trade.

[8] One of the most famous parts of Mansa Musa's life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. This journey covered thousands of miles and lasted many months. Mansa

Musa traveled with a large group of people that included family members, soldiers, workers, servants, and merchants. Hundreds of camels carried supplies for the long trip across deserts and through cities. The journey required careful planning because everyone needed enough food and water to safely reach each stop.

[9] During his pilgrimage, Mansa Musa gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. He wanted to help others and share the wealth of his kingdom. His generosity became famous wherever he traveled. Many people had never seen so much gold before. Stories about the wealthy king spread quickly from city to city as travelers shared what they had witnessed.

[10] After hearing these stories, people became curious about Mali. Merchants wanted to trade with the kingdom, while travelers hoped to visit its famous cities. Mapmakers even began including Mali on their maps because so many people had heard about its wealth. Although stories sometimes became exaggerated as they were passed along, they helped make Mali one of the best-known kingdoms of its time.

[11] Mansa Musa believed that wealth should also be used to improve his kingdom. He supported the building of mosques, schools, and other important buildings. Skilled workers and builders helped create places where people could gather, worship, and learn. These improvements made cities more beautiful and gave people more opportunities to study and work together.

[12] The kingdom continued to grow because many people worked together. Farmers raised crops that fed families and travelers. Craftspeople made tools, clothing, pottery, and jewelry. Merchants carried goods across trade routes, while teachers helped students gain new knowledge. Soldiers protected the kingdom, allowing trade and learning to continue. Every group played an important role in Mali's success.

[13] Life in Mali was busy because people depended on one another. Farmers relied on merchants to sell extra crops. Merchants depended on safe roads. Students depended on teachers, and families depended on workers who built homes, schools, and marketplaces. Each person's job helped the kingdom become stronger.

[14] Even after Mansa Musa's pilgrimage ended, people continued talking about him. His journey showed the world that Mali was rich, organized, and powerful. Travelers wrote about the kingdom, and these stories spread across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Although many years have passed, historians still study Mansa Musa because of the important role he played in African history.

[15] Today, people remember Mansa Musa not only because of his great wealth but also because of his leadership. He understood that protecting trade, encouraging education, and helping others could strengthen an entire kingdom. His choices allowed cities like Timbuktu to grow into places known for both business and learning. His story reminds us that wise leaders think about the future and make decisions that help many people.

[16] Because of the choices he made, Mali became known as a powerful and important kingdom. People still talk about Mansa Musa today when they learn about African history and how trade and education helped kingdoms grow. His life shows that wealth can be used to improve communities, support learning, and create opportunities for future generations. His lasting impact continues to teach students around the world about the

importance of leadership, trade, and education.

Student Annotation Guide — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

T — Time

in the early 1300s

R — Reactions

Mali's wealth continued to grow

A — Actions

made smart choices that helped merchants feel safe while traveling

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Mansa Musa

K — Key Knowledge

protecting trade, encouraging education, and helping others

S — Scenery/Setting

across the Sahara Desert

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was **Mansa Musa**. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it controlled important trade routes. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] Trade was one of the most important parts of life in Mali. Long before airplanes, trains, or trucks, merchants traveled by camel across the Sahara Desert to exchange goods with people living far away. These trips could last for weeks or even months. The desert was hot during the day and cold at night, so the journey was not easy. Camels were helpful because they could carry heavy loads and travel long distances with very little water. Merchants packed supplies, food, and valuable goods before beginning their long trips.

[3] Gold was one of Mali's greatest natural resources. People wanted gold because it could be made into coins, jewelry, and decorations. Salt was just as important because it helped preserve food and keep people healthy. Some places had plenty of gold but little salt, while other places had salt but not much gold. This made trading useful for everyone. Merchants also traded cloth, tools, leather, spices, pottery, and other goods that people needed in their daily lives. As more trade took place, **Mali's wealth continued to grow**.

[4] **Mansa Musa** understood how important trade was to his kingdom. He **made smart choices that helped merchants feel safe while traveling**. Soldiers guarded many of the trade routes, and laws helped protect people and their goods. Because traders knew they could travel safely, more merchants visited Mali. Every new trade journey brought more people, more products, and more opportunities for the kingdom to grow stronger.

[5] As trade increased, cities throughout Mali became larger and busier. One of the most famous cities was Timbuktu. Merchants filled the marketplaces with colorful goods from many different places. People could find gold, salt, cloth, books, pottery, and other valuable items. Travelers speaking different languages met to buy, sell, and share ideas. The city became an important meeting place for people from across Africa.

[6] Timbuktu was known for much more than trade. It also became one of the greatest centers of learning during its time. Students traveled long distances to study with respected teachers. They learned subjects such as math, science, history, geography, and religion. Since printing presses had not yet been invented in the area, books were carefully copied by hand. These books were treated with great care because they contained valuable knowledge. Many families believed that education could help improve a person's future.

[7] Teachers in Timbuktu encouraged students to ask questions, solve problems, and continue learning throughout their lives. Libraries held many handwritten books, and scholars spent years studying them. Visitors were often surprised to see how much learning took place in the city. The success of Timbuktu showed that education could become just as valuable as trade.

[8] One of the most famous parts of **Mansa Musa's** life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. This journey covered thousands of miles and lasted many months. Mansa

Musa traveled with a large group of people that included family members, soldiers, workers, servants, and merchants. Hundreds of camels carried supplies for the long trip across deserts and through cities. The journey required careful planning because everyone needed enough food and water to safely reach each stop.

[9] During his pilgrimage, **Mansa Musa** gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. He wanted to help others and share the wealth of his kingdom. His generosity became famous wherever he traveled. Many people had never seen so much gold before. Stories about the wealthy king spread quickly from city to city as travelers shared what they had witnessed.

[10] After hearing these stories, people became curious about Mali. Merchants wanted to trade with the kingdom, while travelers hoped to visit its famous cities. Mapmakers even began including Mali on their maps because so many people had heard about its wealth. Although stories sometimes became exaggerated as they were passed along, they helped make Mali one of the best-known kingdoms of its time.

[11] **Mansa Musa** believed that wealth should also be used to improve his kingdom. He supported the building of mosques, schools, and other important buildings. Skilled workers and builders helped create places where people could gather, worship, and learn. These improvements made cities more beautiful and gave people more opportunities to study and work together.

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importance of leadership, trade, and education.

PASSAGE 8 — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] “Road trip!” Xavier shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions. Instead of only reading about them in books, Xavier would get to see each region with his own eyes. He packed a notebook so he could write down interesting facts and compare what made each place special. His parents told him that every region had its own landforms, climate, plants, and jobs.

[2] Before they left, Xavier looked at a map of Texas. He noticed that the state was much larger than he had remembered. “Are we really going to see all four regions?” he asked.

[3] “We are,” his dad replied. “It will take some time, but by the end of the trip you’ll understand why each region is unique.”

[4] Xavier smiled as they loaded the last bags into the car. He wondered which region would become his favorite.

[5] Their first stop was the Mountains and Basins in far West Texas. Xavier noticed tall, rocky mountains and dry land. “It’s really hot here,” he said. There were only a few plants, like cacti. His mom explained that people in this region often work in mining and oil because of the natural resources found underground.

[6] As they drove through the area, Xavier saw steep cliffs, rocky hills, and wide stretches of open land. The sky seemed larger than anywhere he had ever been. Every now and then, he spotted a cactus growing beside the road.

[7] “There aren’t many trees,” Xavier noticed.

[8] “That’s because this region is very dry,” his mom explained. “Plants must be able to survive with very little rainfall.”

[9] The family stopped at a lookout where they could see miles across the desert landscape. The mountains rose high above the valleys below. Xavier thought the scenery looked different from anywhere else in Texas.

[10] “It almost feels like another state,” he said.

[11] His dad smiled. “That’s one reason learning about regions is important. Even though this is all Texas, the land can look very different.”

[12] As they continued driving, they passed signs for oil wells and mining areas. Xavier remembered what his mom had said about natural resources. He wrote in his notebook that the Mountains and Basins region is known for its mountains, desert climate, cacti, mining, and oil production.

[13] The next day, the family traveled into the Great Plains. The land looked wide and flat with rolling hills. The weather was still dry, but not as hot. Xavier saw ranches and fields.

[14] “This must be where people raise cattle,” he said.

[15] His dad nodded and added that farming is also common here.

[16] Soon they passed large groups of cattle grazing across grassy fields. Long fences stretched across the land, and barns stood near the ranch houses.

[17] "I've never seen so many cows," Xavier laughed.

[18] His sister pointed toward a field filled with crops. "Look! Farmers grow food here too."

[19] Their parents explained that the open grasslands make the region a good place for ranching. Farmers also grow crops because much of the land is useful for agriculture.

[20] The family stopped at a small roadside picnic area for lunch. As they ate, Xavier noticed the steady wind moving across the tall grass.

[21] "The land goes on forever," he said.

[22] "It does seem that way," his dad answered. "Wide-open spaces are one of the things people remember most about the Great Plains."

[23] Before leaving, Xavier added more notes to his notebook. He wrote that the Great Plains have rolling hills, wide grasslands, ranches, farms, cattle, and a dry climate.

[24] Later, they reached the North Central Plains.

[25] "Everything looks greener and more colorful!" Xavier said.

[26] There were more trees and grass, and the land had gentle hills. The climate was milder, and people raised livestock and grew crops.

[27] The family stopped at a small park to stretch their legs. Birds chirped from nearby trees while a cool breeze moved through the grass. Wildflowers grew along the walking trail, and butterflies floated from flower to flower.

[28] "This feels different already," Xavier said.

[29] His mom agreed. "This region usually receives more rainfall than the ones we've already visited."

[30] As they walked through the park, Xavier noticed ponds, trees, and green fields. He realized why so many farms were located nearby.

[31] "We've seen cattle in more than one region," he said.

[32] "That's true," his dad replied. "Some jobs can be found in more than one region, but the land and climate are still different."

[33] They visited a small farm where workers cared for animals and planted crops. Xavier enjoyed asking questions about what farmers grew each year. He learned that different crops grow well because of the region's soil and climate.

[34] Before getting back into the car, Xavier wrote that the North Central Plains have gentle hills, trees, grasslands, livestock, crops, and a milder climate.

[35] Finally, they arrived at the Coastal Plains near the Gulf of Mexico. It was humid, and Xavier could feel the warm, moist air. There were rivers, forests, and even beaches.

[36] "This region has a lot of different jobs," his mom said, "like farming, fishing, and working in big cities."

[37] As they explored, they saw fishing boats tied along the shore. People worked at marinas, while others loaded seafood onto trucks. They also drove through large cities filled with busy streets, tall buildings, stores, and neighborhoods.

[38] “This place has a little bit of everything,” Xavier said.

[39] His dad nodded. “Many people live in the Coastal Plains because there are so many different opportunities to work.”

[40] The family spent time walking along the beach. Xavier watched waves roll onto the shore while seabirds flew overhead. He noticed that the air felt much wetter than it had in the other regions.

[41] “The humidity makes it feel warmer,” his mom explained.

[42] Nearby, they crossed a bridge over a river flowing toward the Gulf. Thick forests surrounded parts of the highway, giving the region a very different look from the rocky mountains and open grasslands they had already visited.

[43] Xavier carefully added one more page to his notebook. He wrote that the Coastal Plains have rivers, forests, beaches, humid weather, farming, fishing, large cities, and many kinds of jobs.

[44] On the drive home, Xavier read through all of his notes. He compared the four regions one last time. The Mountains and Basins had tall mountains, deserts, and valuable natural resources. The Great Plains had wide grasslands, ranches, farms, and rolling hills. The North Central Plains had greener land, gentle hills, livestock, and crops. The Coastal Plains had forests, rivers, beaches, humid weather, and many different industries.

[45] His notebook was filled with facts, but the trip had taught him even more than he had written down. Seeing each region helped him understand why Texans live and work differently across the state. The climate, landforms, and natural resources all help shape the way people use the land.

[46] As they crossed back into their hometown, Xavier smiled.

[47] “I thought every part of Texas would look about the same,” he admitted.

[48] His dad laughed. “Now you know better.”

[49] “I do,” Xavier replied. “Each region has its own story.”

[50] As they headed home, Xavier rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Student Annotation Guide — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

T — Time

The next day

R — Reactions

Each region has its own story.

A — Actions

driving across Texas to learn about its different regions

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Zavier

K — Key Knowledge

climate, landforms, and natural resources

S — Scenery/Setting

near the Gulf of Mexico

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

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Day 1 — Gather and Reveal

GRADUATE Cycle: G + R

G — Gather Their Attention AUDITORY ENGAGEMENT — ACTIVE PARTICIPATION Approach: Two Voices, One Evidence Check Listening Target: Listen for whether the speaker represented the other viewpoint fairly and whether the rebuttal actually uses reasoning or evidence.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-04)

Write on the board: Round 1: “Some readers may argue supporting learning mattered most because knowledge can last for generations.” -> FAIR U

TWO VOICES, ONE EVIDENCE CHECK

Response: “That point is reasonable; however, safe trade brought people and goods into Mali and helped the kingdom grow immediately.” -> EVIDENCE-BASED R Round 2: “Some people think learning is dumb.” -> UNFAIR U Fresh Recall: Say one fair U frame and one respectful R frame from memory. Teacher Script “Argumentative writing is not about making the other side sound foolish. Today we are practicing a mature habit: understand the other view accurately, then answer it with evidence.” R — Reveal the Background Knowledge

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-05)

Write on the board: U: “Some readers may argue that supporting learning had the greater impact because Timbuktu became a respected center of study.”

FAIR U + STRONG R

R: “That point is important; however, protected trade affected the whole kingdom by bringing more merchants, goods, and wealth into Mali.” Notice: the rebuttal does not insult the other view. It answers it. Teacher Model — Mansa Musa C — Claim: Protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue that supporting learning mattered more because Timbuktu became known as an important center of study and knowledge. R — Rebuttal: That point is strong, but protected trade had a broader immediate effect because safe routes brought more merchants and goods into Mali and supported the kingdom’s overall growth. T — Thinking: This response acknowledges the value of learning while explaining why the evidence for protected trade better matches the claim about overall impact. Teacher Model — Texas Regions C — Claim: Natural resources have a greater impact than climate on work opportunities across Texas. U — Understanding Others: Another reasonable view is that climate matters most because temperature and rainfall affect vegetation and farming. R — Rebuttal: Climate clearly matters; however, the passage repeatedly connects specific resources to specific work, including mining, oil, fishing, farming, and city-based jobs. T — Thinking: The rebuttal accepts the climate connection but uses a wider range of job evidence to defend the original claim.

Day 2 — Attempt

GRADUATE Cycle: A

A — Attempt the Activity Directions

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-06)

Write on the board: 1. Draw a claim card.

PERSPECTIVE SWITCHBOARD

1. Draw two possible U viewpoint cards.
2. Choose the fairest, most accurate viewpoint.
3. Build a rebuttal using one piece of text evidence.
4. Partner checks: “Would the other side agree this represents the view fairly?”

Students work in pairs. One student is the Viewpoint Voice and one is the Rebuttal Builder. After each round, students switch roles so both practice accurate listening and evidence-based response. Sample Viewpoint Cards — Mansa Musa

- Supporting learning had the greater long-term impact because knowledge could continue helping future generations.
- Protecting trade had the greater impact because safe routes increased merchants, goods, and wealth.
- Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage mattered most because it increased Mali’s reputation beyond Africa.

Sample Viewpoint Cards — Texas Regions

- Climate has the greater influence because rainfall and temperature affect plants, farming, and daily conditions.
- Natural resources have the greater influence because resources create specific jobs and economic opportunities.
- Location has the greater influence in the Coastal Plains because access to water and cities supports many kinds of work.

Answer-Key Principle Multiple U/R pairs can be valid. A correct response must (1) represent the alternate viewpoint accurately, (2) use respectful language, (3) respond to the actual point raised, and (4) support the rebuttal with reasoning and evidence. Reject rebuttals that change the subject or simply repeat the claim.

Day 3 — Discuss and Use Again

GRADUATE Cycle: D + U

D — Discuss and Ask Questions

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-07)

Write on the board: What makes a viewpoint representation fair?

DISCUSS UNDERSTANDING + REBUTTAL

Why can acknowledging a good point make your own argument stronger? What is the difference between rebutting an idea and attacking a person? When might considering another view cause a writer to refine the claim? Teacher Script “A confident writer does not have to hide from another viewpoint. A confident writer can listen carefully, represent it fairly, and then explain what the evidence supports.”

- Possible response: “It is fair when the other side would agree that we said their idea correctly.” Teacher: “That is an excellent test.”
- Possible response: “A good point can make us explain our evidence better.” Teacher: “Yes. It can deepen T — Thinking.”
- Possible response: “Sometimes we might change our claim a little.” Teacher: “That is refinement, not weakness.”

U — Use the Knowledge Again

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-08)

Write on the board: Prompt: Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater long-term impact on Mali.

INDEPENDENT — U + R RESPONSE

Write C, one R/E/T chain, one fair U viewpoint, and one evidence-based R rebuttal. Underline the words that show respect for the other view. Student Directions

- Write a clear claim.
- Build one strong reason/evidence/thinking chain.
- Write one accurate “Some readers may argue...” sentence.
- Respond with “However...” or another respectful rebuttal frame.
- Use evidence or specific reasoning in the rebuttal.
- Read the U sentence as if you held that viewpoint; revise if it sounds unfair.

Teacher Exemplar C — Claim: Supporting learning had the greater long-term impact on Mali because knowledge could continue strengthening the kingdom for generations. R/E/T — Timbuktu became known for study in subjects such as math, science, and religion. This supports the claim because knowledge can be shared and passed on, extending its

influence beyond one moment. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue that protected trade mattered more because safe routes immediately increased merchants, goods, and wealth. R — Rebuttal: That economic impact was important; however, support for learning gave Mali a lasting intellectual reputation and created knowledge that could continue benefiting people after individual trade journeys ended. Simple Scoring Rubric — 0-3

- 3 — Other viewpoint is accurate and fair; rebuttal directly answers it with reasoning/evidence; original claim remains clear.
- 2 — Viewpoint is fair, but rebuttal is general or evidence is limited.
- 1 — Other view is oversimplified, rebuttal repeats the claim, or tone is dismissive.
- 0 — U/R work is missing, off-topic, or disrespectful.

STANDARDS APPLICATION CHECK — MODULE 3

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-09)

Write on the board: Read U and R together. Rearrange them if the order interrupts the argument.

PERSPECTIVE + COHERENCE CHECK

Revise one vague phrase so the other viewpoint is represented more accurately. Edit reflexive pronouns and the assigned capitalization categories from the Cluster 4 scope and sequence. Teacher Model: Weak U — “Some people think learning was better.” Revised U — “Some readers may argue that supporting learning had the greater long-term impact because Timbuktu became a respected center of study.” Weak R — “They are wrong.” Revised R — “That point is reasonable; however, protected trade affected the kingdom more broadly by bringing more merchants, goods, and wealth into Mali.”

Day 4 — Award and Target

GRADUATE Cycle: A + T

A — Award Yourself for a Job Well Done

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-10)

Write on the board: Put a star beside the sentence that represents another view most accurately.

AWARD YOUR FAIRNESS + RESPONSE

Complete: “My rebuttal became stronger when I ____.” Teacher Script “Today you practiced an advanced habit in an age-appropriate way: listening carefully before responding. That makes your writing more credible and your thinking more mature.” T — Target Their Goals

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-11)

Write on the board: Choose one target: more accurate viewpoint - more respectful wording - stronger rebuttal evidence - clearer response to the actual point - willingness to refine the claim.

TARGET U + R

- One phrase that helped me sound respectful was...
- One place my rebuttal needs more evidence is...
- The hardest part of representing another view fairly was...
- Next time I will respond to the exact point by...

Day 5 — Explain to Others

GRADUATE Cycle: E

E — Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-12)

Write on the board: Teach a partner why Understanding Others comes before Rebuttal.

TEACH U + R

Give one fair viewpoint sentence and one respectful evidence-based rebuttal. Explain why a rebuttal is not an insult or a repeated claim. Teacher Script “Teach your partner the difference between hearing another idea and surrendering your own claim. Strong writers can do both: listen accurately and still defend a position.”

Module 3 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt

Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater long-term impact on Mali.

Low Exemplar

Some people think learning is dumb.

What works: The sentence signals that another view exists.

What needs improvement: It misrepresents the viewpoint and uses dismissive wording. It does not explain the real reason that could support learning.

Medium Exemplar

Some people think learning was better. They are wrong.

What works: The response names learning as another position.

What needs improvement: The viewpoint is vague, and the rebuttal neither answers the point respectfully nor uses reasoning or evidence.

High Exemplar

Some readers may argue that supporting learning had the greater long-term impact because Timbuktu became a respected center of study. That point is reasonable; however, protected trade affected the kingdom more broadly by bringing more merchants, goods, and wealth into Mali.

What works: The viewpoint is accurate and specific, the response is respectful, and the rebuttal answers the actual point with passage evidence while keeping the original claim clear.

Module 3 — Assessment Opportunities

Formative Checks

- Listen for fair representation during Two Voices, One Evidence Check.
- Check each Perspective Switchboard pair against the four Answer-Key Principles.
- Review the independent U + R response for a clear claim, a reason/evidence/thinking chain, a fair viewpoint, and a direct rebuttal.
- Check the Standards Application work for coherence, precision, reflexive pronouns, and the assigned capitalization categories.

Independent Product

Students argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning had the greater long-term impact on Mali, then add one fair U viewpoint and one evidence-based R rebuttal.

Mastery Evidence

The other viewpoint is accurate and fair; the rebuttal directly answers it with reasoning or evidence; and the original claim remains clear or is thoughtfully refined.

Check the Learning

Quick Check

1. Which is fair? “Some people think learning is dumb.” or “Some readers may argue learning had a greater long-term impact because knowledge can continue helping future generations.”
2. Explain why “They are wrong” is not a strong rebuttal.
3. Explain why acknowledging a reasonable point can strengthen credibility.

Answer Key

- “Some readers may argue learning had a greater long-term impact because knowledge can continue helping future generations” is fair because it represents the actual reason accurately and respectfully.
- “They are wrong” does not answer the point with reasoning or evidence and sounds dismissive.
- Acknowledging a reasonable point shows that the writer listened accurately before answering it, so the rebuttal responds to a real idea rather than a weaker version.

Intervention — Module 3

Detailed Intervention Activity

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-13)

Write on the board: Sort viewpoint sentences as FAIR or UNFAIR representations.

INTERVENTION — FAIR OR UNFAIR?

Rewrite one unfair sentence so the other side would agree it is accurate. Choose from two rebuttals and defend the stronger one. Example: Unfair — “People who care about learning do not understand trade.” Fair — “Some readers may argue learning had a greater long-term impact because knowledge can continue helping future generations.”

Module 3 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

Before Writing U

Ask, “Would the other side agree this represents the view fairly?” Require students to name the specific reason behind the viewpoint.

Before Writing R

Ask students to underline the actual point they must answer. Then have them point to the reasoning or evidence in the rebuttal.

Language Support

Provide the source frames “Some readers may argue that...” / “Another reasonable view is...” / “A reader could point out that...” and “However, the stronger evidence shows...” / “That point matters, but...” / “Even though..., the passage more strongly supports...”

Tone Check

Students read the U sentence as if they held that viewpoint and revise if it sounds unfair. Remind them: respect the idea, do not attack the person.

Enrichment — Module 3

Enrichment Activity

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-14)

Write on the board: Write a fair U and a strong R.

ENRICHMENT — REFINE THE CLAIM

Then decide whether the other viewpoint reveals a weakness in your original claim. Revise the claim if needed and explain why refinement makes the argument stronger. Enrichment should reward intellectual flexibility. A sophisticated writer may keep the same position but narrow it—for example, changing “trade mattered most” to “protected trade had the greatest immediate economic impact.”

Module 3 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Perspective and Work Across Texas

Use this claim: “Natural resources have a greater impact than climate on work opportunities across Texas.” Write one fair U sentence for the climate viewpoint and one evidence-based R rebuttal that answers the actual point. Then decide whether the viewpoint gives you a reason to refine the claim.

Self-Check

- Another reader would agree that I represented the viewpoint accurately.
- I used respectful words.
- My rebuttal responds to the exact point.
- I used reasoning or evidence about mining, oil, fishing, farming, or city-based jobs.
- My claim remains clear or becomes more precise.

Module 3 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

G — Gather Their Attention AUDITORY ENGAGEMENT — ACTIVE PARTICIPATION Approach: Two Voices, One Evidence Check Listening Target: Listen for whether the speaker represented the other viewpoint fairly and whether the rebuttal actually uses reasoning or evidence.

Teacher Script



Teacher Script

“Argumentative writing is not about making the other side sound foolish. Today we are practicing a mature habit: understand the other view accurately, then answer it with evidence.”

Pause Points

|| Pause Point — Fair and Accurate?

Stop and think: Would a person who holds this viewpoint agree that I represented it correctly?

|| Pause Point — Respectful and Specific?

Stop and think: Did I name the real reason without insulting or weakening the other view?

|| Pause Point — Direct Response?

Stop and think: Does my rebuttal answer the actual point with reasoning or evidence?

|| Pause Point — Defend or Refine?

Stop and think: Does the evidence support my original claim, or should I make the claim more precise?

Module 3 — My Progress Tracker

Teacher Script

“Use this tracker to record what you can do independently and what you still need to practice.”

I Can...	Not yet	Getting there	I can do it
Explain U — Understanding Others and R — Rebuttal in CREATURES.			
Represent another viewpoint accurately, respectfully, and specifically.			
Answer the actual point with reasoning or evidence.			
Keep my central claim clear while writing a rebuttal.			
Refine my claim when another viewpoint reveals a weakness.			

One thing I am proud of:

One thing I want to strengthen:

Module 3 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closing Words of Encouragement “Writers, today you learned that listening and arguing are not opposites. Accurate understanding can make your rebuttal stronger because you are answering a real idea with real evidence. That is the U and second R of CREATURES.” OVERARCHING QUESTION — ANSWER Question: How can accurately understanding another viewpoint help us write a stronger and more respectful rebuttal? Answer: Understanding Others requires the writer to represent another viewpoint accurately before responding. When the writer acknowledges a reasonable point and then answers that exact point with reasoning and evidence, the rebuttal becomes more credible, respectful, and persuasive. Considering another view can also help the writer refine the original claim.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M3-15)

Write on the board: U proves we listened accurately. R proves we can respond with evidence.

✓ ANSWER THE OVERARCHING QUESTION

A strong rebuttal answers the real other viewpoint—not a weaker version of it.

Teacher Reflection

Which students can represent another viewpoint so the other side would agree it is accurate?

Which students answer the actual point with reasoning or evidence?

Which students still repeat the claim or use dismissive wording?

Who is ready to refine a claim after considering another reasonable view?

Module 3 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Use paired breakout rooms with assigned Viewpoint Voice and Rebuttal Builder roles, then switch roles. Use a poll for FAIR / UNFAIR viewpoint representations before students explain in chat. Ask students to highlight the exact words in a U sentence that accurately represent the other side. For rebuttal, students can record a 30-second audio response citing one piece of evidence. For intervention, screen-share one unfair viewpoint and revise it together using live annotation.

GRADE 4 • CLUSTER 4 • ECR - OPINION

M O D U L E

4

Ending, Significance, and the Full CREATURES ECR

Week 4 • Very High Stamina

Module 4: Ending, Significance, and the Full CREATURES ECR

Week 4 - Very High Stamina - Cluster 4 (ECR Opinion/Argumentative)

Reading Focus

Synthesis, Resolution, Lasting Impact, and Big-Picture Meaning

Writing Focus

CREATURES Completion: E — Ending and S — Significance + Full CREATURES ECR

Teacher Inspiration Quote

Teacher Script

“The strongest conclusion does more than stop the paper—it brings the reasoning together and shows why the argument matters beyond the page.”

Module Overarching Question

How do Ending and Significance complete a CREATURES argument and leave the reader with a meaningful Bluebird Moment?

Why This Module Matters

Students complete the argumentative roadmap by learning E — Ending and S — Significance. The Ending brings the reasoning together. Significance is the Bluebird Moment: the final big-picture idea that explains why the argument matters beyond the paper. Students then assemble a complete argumentative ECR with all nine CREATURES moves.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-01)

Write on the board: Cluster 4 - ECR Opinion/Argumentative - Module 4 - Very High Stamina passages

MODULE LAUNCH

Overarching Question: How do Ending and Significance complete a CREATURES argument and leave the reader with a meaningful Bluebird Moment? I can: write a purposeful ending, explain significance beyond the paper, and use the full CREATURES framework to produce a complete argumentative response. I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response. MODULE PASSAGE SET — VERY HIGH STAMINA Required stamina level for Module 4: Very High Stamina. The same two Cluster 4 passages increase in length, detail, evidence density, and conceptual demand across the four modules.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-02)

Write on the board: As you read, identify evidence that can support a final judgment about impact. Also mark details that suggest a larger lesson about leadership, opportunity, geography, community, or responsible choices.

READING PURPOSE

Module 4 — Family Communication

This Week at a Glance

- The big skills: writing E — Ending and S — Significance, then assembling a full CREATURES argumentative response.
- The two readings: “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.”
- The student product: a complete argumentative ECR that ends with a purposeful conclusion and a Bluebird Moment.

One Question to Ask at Home



Teacher Script

“How is an Ending different from a Significance sentence, and why is Significance called the Bluebird Moment?”

One Way to Help

Ask your child to teach the nine CREATURES moves in order. Then listen as your child explains how the Ending closes the case and how Significance carries its meaning beyond the paper.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your child completes the CREATURES roadmap for argumentative writing. Students will learn E — Ending, a purposeful conclusion that reinforces the claim and synthesizes the strongest reasoning, and S — Significance, the Bluebird Moment that explains why the issue matters beyond the paper. They will then use the full roadmap: Claim, Reasons, Evidence, Argument, Thinking, Understanding Others, Rebuttal, Ending, and Significance.

We will practice with “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” and “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” Please ask your child to explain why a strong Ending does more than repeat the claim and why a Bluebird Moment must grow from the argument.

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

Carta para las Familias

Estimadas familias:

Esta semana su hijo o hija completará la guía CREATURES para la escritura argumentativa. Los estudiantes aprenderán E — Ending, una conclusión intencional que refuerza la afirmación y sintetiza el razonamiento más sólido, y S — Significance, el Momento del Pájaro Azul que explica por qué el tema importa más allá del escrito. Después usarán la guía completa: afirmación, razones, evidencia, argumento, pensamiento, comprensión de otros, refutación, conclusión e importancia.

Practicaremos con “The Wealth of Mansa Musa” y “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” Pida a su hijo o hija que explique por qué una conclusión sólida hace más que repetir la afirmación y por qué el Momento del Pájaro Azul debe surgir del argumento.

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

Module 4 — Family Conversation Starters

- What does E — Ending do for the reader?
- Why is S — Significance called the Bluebird Moment?
- How can a writer reinforce a claim without copying it word for word?
- Why must the Bluebird Moment grow from the evidence and reasoning?
- Which CREATURES move helps a writer represent another viewpoint fairly?

Family Activity — Close or Lift?

Read these source sentences aloud. Decide which one closes this paper's case and which one lifts the idea into the world beyond the paper.

Teacher Script

"In the end, protected trade had the greater impact because it increased commerce and supported Mali's growth."

Teacher Script

"Leaders today can learn from this example that protecting systems people depend on can create opportunities far beyond one decision."

Module 4 — Lesson Overview and Standards

Lesson Overview

Students learn E — Ending and S — Significance deeply, distinguish closing the case from lifting its meaning, and write a complete argumentative response with the full CREATURES roadmap. MICE may support generation of the S sentence, but the finished sentence is labeled S — Significance.

BIG Goal: Students will write a purposeful Ending, create a meaningful Bluebird Moment, and assemble a coherent full CREATURES ECR.

Passage and Product Sequence

Students read both Very High Stamina passages, identify evidence for a judgment about impact, build a complete team CREATURES map, independently plan and draft a full ECR, revise it with the standards check, and reflect on a next-letter target.

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

Where the Standards Are Visible in This Module

- Students synthesize all CREATURES components into a complete argumentative response with a purposeful ending and significance statement.
- Students group evidence, use transitions, revise the line of argument for coherence, and edit the distributed Cluster 4 conventions in a final ECR.
- Students conclude by reinforcing the claim and explaining why the issue matters beyond the paper, making E — Ending and S — Significance visible and assessable.

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

These are the standards listed for Cluster 4 in the Teach BIG Scope and Sequence, in the same form the chart uses.

TEKS — Cluster 4 (from the Scope & Sequence)

Writing Process

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

Writing Genre

- (12)(C)(i) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
- (12)(C)(ii) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using craft

Revising

- (11)(C)(i-v) revise drafts to improve sentence structure, word choice, and coherence (adding, deleting, and combining ideas)

Editing

- (11)(D)(i), (vi)–(xvi), (xxxiii)–(xxxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions — sentence and subject-verb agreement; irregular verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and prepositional phrases; and grade-appropriate spelling

ELPS — Cluster 4 (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)–(xvi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details or supporting evidence using appropriate content, style, register, and conventions for purpose and audience

Revising

- 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(E)(ii) write content-area-specific text using grammatical structures
- 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

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

MODULE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT — GRADE 4 TEKS & ELPS The following breakouts are drawn from the Grade 4 Cluster 4 scope and sequence and the Grade 4 TEKS–ELPS crosswalk. Each breakout is written in full rather than listed only by code. The standards application check in this module makes the claimed student action visible. TEKS Breakouts Addressed in This Module — Full Language

- (11)(B)(ii) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including transitions
- (11)(B)(iii) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by organizing with purposeful structure, including a conclusion
- (12)(C)(i) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using genre characteristics
- (12)(C)(ii) compose argumentative texts, including opinion essays, using craft
- (11)(C)(vi) revise drafts by rearranging ideas for coherence
- (11)(D)(xvii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including pronouns, including reflexive
- (11)(D)(xxi) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of historical periods
- (11)(D)(xxii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of historical events
- (11)(D)(xxiii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of historical documents
- (11)(D)(xxiv) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of titles of books
- (11)(D)(xxv) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of titles of stories

- (11)(D)(xxvi) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of titles of essays
- (11)(D)(xxvii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of languages
- (11)(D)(xxviii) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of races
- (11)(D)(xxix) edit drafts using standard English conventions, including capitalization of nationalities

ELPS Breakouts Addressed in This Module — Full Language

- 4(C)(i) write using a combination of both high-frequency words and content-area vocabulary
- 4(D)(i) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence lengths
- 4(D)(ii) write content-area texts using a variety of sentence types
- 4(D)(iii) write content-area texts using a variety of transition words
- 4(E)(i) write content-area specific text using conventions
- 4(E)(ii) write content-area specific text using grammatical structures
- 4(F)(i) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(ii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(iii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate register for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(iv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate conventions for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(v) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate content for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(vi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate style for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(vii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate register for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(viii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting details using appropriate conventions for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(ix) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(x) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(xi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate register for [a] specific purpose
- 4(F)(xii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate conventions for [a] specific purpose

- 4(F)(xiii) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate content for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(xiv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate style for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(xv) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate register for [a] specific audience
- 4(F)(xvi) write to narrate, describe, explain, respond, or justify with supporting evidence using appropriate conventions for [a] specific audience

Language Domains

Domain	How this module builds it
Listening	Students listen for whether a sentence is E — Ending or S — Significance and explain the clue.
Speaking	Students discuss every CREATURES move, read a full argument aloud, and teach the roadmap to a partner.
Reading	Students identify evidence that supports final judgments and larger lessons in both Very High Stamina passages.
Writing	Students build a complete CREATURES map, draft a full ECR, and revise its Ending and Bluebird Moment.

Module 4 — Learning Destination

I Can Statements

- I can: write a purposeful ending, explain significance beyond the paper, and use the full CREATURES framework to produce a complete argumentative response.
- I can: reinforce my central claim and synthesize my strongest reasoning in E — Ending.
- I can: write S — Significance as a Bluebird Moment that grows from the argument and explains why it matters beyond the paper.
- I can: use all nine CREATURES moves to plan and produce a coherent argumentative ECR.

I Will Statements

- I will: read closely, speak about my thinking, use evidence accurately, and explain how each CREATURES move strengthens an argumentative response.
- I will: check that my Ending closes the case without copying the claim or adding a new reason.
- I will: connect my Significance sentence to the evidence and reasoning before lifting the idea into a larger world.
- I will: revise and edit a full CREATURES response for coherence, purposeful structure, and conventions.

Success Criteria

- My Ending reinforces the claim and synthesizes the strongest reasoning.
- My Significance sentence is a meaningful Bluebird Moment rooted in the argument.
- My planning shows C, R, E, A, T, U, R, E, and S, with T always meaning Thinking.
- My complete response is coherent, evidence-based, and purposeful.

Module 4 — Rigor and Misconceptions

Rigor Safeguard

Teachers may provide a labeled CREATURES organizer, sentence stems, oral rehearsal, and one-section-at-a-time support. Students must still choose a defensible claim, build evidence-based reasoning, represent another viewpoint fairly, respond to it, conclude purposefully, and connect Significance to the argument.

Rigor and Cognitive Demand

Level	Student Thinking	Evidence
Literal	Identify Ending and Significance and name every CREATURES move.	Accurate labels and sequence.
Inferential	Explain how the Ending synthesizes and how Significance grows from the evidence.	A connected E/S pair.
Evaluative	Diagnose and revise a complete argument for coherence, fairness, reasoning, and lasting meaning.	A full CREATURES ECR and justified revision.

Educator Insight

Educator Insight Students often end by repeating the claim word for word or by adding a brand-new reason that was never developed. Teach the difference between reinforcement and repetition. An ending should sound familiar but more mature because the body has supplied reasoning. Significance should not become an unrelated inspirational quote. It must grow from the argument. The Bluebird Moment flies beyond the paper, but it still leaves from the evidence nest.

Module 4 — Thinking Levels

Level	Ending, Significance, and Full-CREATURES Work
Level 1 — Foundational	Names Ending and Significance but repeats the claim or adds an unrelated idea.
Level 2 — Emergent	Closes the response and offers a general statement of importance.
Level 3 — Visible	Reinforces and synthesizes, then connects significance to the developed argument.
Level 4 — Independent	Builds a coherent full CREATURES response with a meaningful Bluebird Moment.
Level 5 — Reflective	Compares opposite complete cases and evaluates evidence, reasoning, rebuttal, and significance.

Challenge: Build two defensible arguments from opposite positions on the same source prompt, then use the CREATURES rubric to justify which case is more persuasive.

Module 4 — Vocabulary

Tier 1 Vocabulary — Everyday Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
end	END	the final part	At the end, I ____.
matter	MAT-er	to be important	This matters because ____.
close	KLOHZ	to bring something to an end	I close the case by ____.
choice	CHOYS	an act of deciding	This choice affects ____.
lesson	LES-uhn	an idea learned from experience	The larger lesson is ____.
world	WURLD	people and places beyond one paper	This idea reaches the world by ____.
strong	STRONG	effective or well supported	My strongest reasoning is ____.
fair	FAIR	accurate and respectful	The other viewpoint is fair because ____.
whole	HOHL	all parts considered together	The whole argument shows ____.
grow	GROH	to develop or become greater	My Bluebird Moment grows from ____.

Tier 2 Vocabulary — Academic Words

The source Vocabulary — 10 Words list is reproduced exactly below.

ending — the purposeful conclusion that reinforces the claim synthesize — combine the most important ideas into a new, concise understanding significance — the larger importance of an issue, idea, or position Bluebird Moment — the final big-picture idea that explains why the argument matters beyond the paper reinforce — strengthen an idea by returning to it with added understanding conclusion — the final section that closes the response legacy — a lasting effect left by a person, choice, or community impact — a strong effect or influence community — a group of people connected by place, interest, or shared life responsibility — the duty to make thoughtful choices and consider consequences

Tier 3 Vocabulary — Domain Words

Word	Pronunciation	Student-Friendly Definition	Oral Rehearsal Frame
CREATURES	KREE-churz	the nine-move roadmap for a complete argumentative response	CREATURES helps me ____.
central claim	SEN-truhl KLAYM	the defensible position at the center of an argument	My central claim is ____.
line of argument	LINE uhv AR-gyuh-muhnt	the connected reasoning that makes the whole case coherent	The line of argument moves from ____ to ____.
evidence-based	EV-uh-duhns BAYST	supported with proof from the text	My response is evidence-based because ____.
alternate viewpoint	AWL-ter-nit VYOO-point	another reasonable way to see the issue	The alternate viewpoint is ____.
rebuttal	ree-BUT-uhl	a reasoned response to another viewpoint	My rebuttal answers ____.
purposeful ending	PUR-puhs-fuhl EN-ding	a conclusion that reinforces and synthesizes	My purposeful ending ____.
significance statement	sig-NIF-uh-kuhns STAYT-muhnt	the sentence that explains why the issue matters beyond the paper	My significance statement shows ____.
Bluebird Moment	BLOO-burd MOH-muhnt	the final idea that lifts meaning beyond the paper	My Bluebird Moment leaves the reader with ____.
full ECR	FULL ee-see-AR	a complete extended constructed response	My full ECR includes ____.

Module 4 — Background Knowledge and Teacher Context

TEACHER PREPARATION Module 4 completes CREATURES with E — Ending and S — Significance, then asks students to build the full argumentative ECR. The Ending reinforces the claim and synthesizes the most important reasoning without simply copying the introduction. Significance is the Bluebird Moment: the writer explains why the issue, choice, or position matters beyond the immediate paper and connects the argument to the world around us. This module also gathers the strongest parts of prior Cluster 4 work. MICE may be used as an optional planning support for S: evidence found in the text plus a thoughtful connection can help students generate a meaningful significance statement. The completed writing, however, should be labeled S — Significance within CREATURES. Teachers may also retain Get SET as an optional introduction craft routine, but the full response is organized and assessed with CREATURES. Anchor Charts to Create

- E — Ending: reinforce the claim + synthesize the most important reasoning + close purposefully.
- S — Significance: explain why the issue or position matters beyond this paper. Ask: Who else should care? What larger lesson applies? Why does this matter in communities, leadership, decision-making, or real life?
- Bluebird Moment: the final idea that rises above the paper and leaves the reader with meaning.
- Full CREATURES: C Claim -> R Reasons -> E Evidence -> A Argument -> T Thinking -> U Understanding Others -> R Rebuttal -> E Ending -> S Significance.
- Remember: R/E/T may repeat across body paragraphs. A is the coherence of the whole case. U/R can be brief in Grade 4.

Educator Insight

Educator Insight Students often end by repeating the claim word for word or by adding a brand-new reason that was never developed. Teach the difference between reinforcement and repetition. An ending should sound familiar but more mature because the body has supplied reasoning. Significance should not become an unrelated inspirational quote. It must grow from the argument. The Bluebird Moment flies beyond the paper, but it still leaves from the evidence nest.

Module 4 — Materials and Teacher Preparation

Materials List

- Copies of both stamina-level passages
- Interactive notebooks
- Pencils
- Highlighters
- Sentence strips
- CREATURES reference cards
- Recording sheets
- Chart paper or board space
- Scissors and glue
- Optional gameboard and Pencil Guy markers
- Full CREATURES planning organizer
- Ending/Significance sentence cards
- Bluebird Moment reflection cards
- Final ECR rubric

Module 4 — The DOT Reading HABIT

Use DOT with both Very High Stamina passages before building the full CREATURES response.

DOT Move	Student Action
D — Discover	Identify evidence that supports a final judgment about impact and details that suggest a larger lesson.
O — Organize	Group support into logical R/E/T chains and locate evidence for a fair alternate viewpoint.
T — Think	Explain how and why the evidence works, then decide what lasting meaning can grow from the case.

DOT supports close reading. CREATURES remains the architecture of the argumentative response, and CREATURES T always means Thinking.

Module 4 — E/S and the Full CREATURES Roadmap

CREATURES — The Argumentative Writing Roadmap

Letter	Move	Student Memory Cue
C	Claim	Take a defensible position.
R	Reasons	Organize logical support.
E	Evidence	Prove the reasons.
A	Argument	Make the whole case coherent.
T	Thinking	Explain how and why the evidence works.
U	Understanding Others	Represent another viewpoint accurately.
R	Rebuttal	Respond with reasoning and evidence.
E	Ending	Reinforce and synthesize.
S	Significance	Create the Bluebird Moment: why it matters beyond the paper.

Memory Architecture

Teacher Script

“About the Architecture CREATURES is the architecture of the full argumentative response. The letters are not always one sentence each. C usually appears as the central claim. R, E, and T can repeat across body paragraphs. A describes the coherence of the entire line of argument. U and the second R are introduced gently in Grade 4 as respectful viewpoint practice. The final E and S close the response, with S serving as the Bluebird Moment—the place where the writer explains why the issue matters beyond the paper. Connections to Previously Taught Habits”

- MICE can remain a support strategy for generating the S — Significance sentence: students combine evidence with a thoughtful connection, but the completed sentence is labeled S in CREATURES.
- WHY and HOW prompt work still matters. It helps students understand what a prompt is asking, but an argumentative response must ultimately make and defend a position.
- Get SET may remain an optional introduction craft routine. CREATURES, however, is the larger argumentative architecture; C is the claim, and CREATURES T always means Thinking.

Deep Focus: Ending and Significance

Module 4 completes CREATURES with E — Ending and S — Significance, then asks students to build the full argumentative ECR. The Ending reinforces the claim and synthesizes the most important reasoning without simply copying the introduction. Significance is the Bluebird Moment: the writer explains why the issue, choice, or position matters beyond the immediate paper and connects the argument to the world around us. This module also gathers the strongest parts of prior Cluster 4 work. MICE may be used as an optional planning support for S: evidence found in the text plus a thoughtful connection can help students generate a meaningful significance statement. The completed writing, however, should be labeled S — Significance within CREATURES. Teachers may also retain Get SET as an optional introduction craft routine, but the full response is organized and assessed with CREATURES. Anchor Charts to Create

- E — Ending: reinforce the claim + synthesize the most important reasoning + close purposefully.
- S — Significance: explain why the issue or position matters beyond this paper. Ask: Who else should care? What larger lesson applies? Why does this matter in communities, leadership, decision-making, or real life?
- Bluebird Moment: the final idea that rises above the paper and leaves the reader with meaning.
- Full CREATURES: C Claim -> R Reasons -> E Evidence -> A Argument -> T Thinking -> U Understanding Others -> R Rebuttal -> E Ending -> S Significance.
- Remember: R/E/T may repeat across body paragraphs. A is the coherence of the whole case. U/R can be brief in Grade 4.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-03)

Write on the board: E — Ending: bring the case home.

FINISH THE CREATURE — E + S

S — Significance: show why it matters beyond this paper. S is the Bluebird Moment — the final idea that can fly into the world around us.

Module 4 — TRACKS: Reading for Final Judgment and Lasting Meaning

Use the TRACKS tags printed with each Very High Stamina passage to revisit exact source language before constructing CREATURES reasoning.

Letter	Reading Move	Question
T	Time	When does the event or idea occur?
R	Result	What outcome follows, and how might it shape a final judgment?
A	Action	What does a person do?
C	Character	Who is central?
K	Key Idea	Which exact phrase supports the claim or a larger lesson?
S	Setting	Where does the action or explanation occur?

After tagging, students organize evidence into R/E/T chains, build a fair U/R exchange, and use the developed case to write E — Ending and S — Significance.

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 7 — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

[1] A long time ago in West Africa, there was a strong and successful kingdom called Mali. One of its most well-known rulers was Mansa Musa. He became king in the early 1300s and is often remembered as one of the richest people in history. Mali became wealthy because it controlled important trade routes. Traders traveled across the hot Sahara Desert carrying gold and salt, which were very valuable.

[2] Trade was one of the most important parts of life in Mali. Long before airplanes, trains, or trucks, merchants traveled by camel across the Sahara Desert to exchange goods with people living far away. These trips could last for weeks or even months. The desert was hot during the day and cold at night, so the journey was not easy. Camels were helpful because they could carry heavy loads and travel long distances with very little water. Merchants packed supplies, food, and valuable goods before beginning their long trips.

[3] Traveling across the Sahara required careful planning. Merchants often traveled together in groups called caravans. Traveling with others made the journey safer because people could help one another if problems happened along the way. Caravan leaders knew where to find water and places to rest. They also understood the safest paths through the desert. Even with good planning, strong winds, blowing sand, and extreme temperatures could make every trip challenging.

[4] Gold was one of Mali's greatest natural resources. People wanted gold because it could be made into coins, jewelry, and decorations. Salt was just as important because it helped preserve food and keep people healthy. Before refrigerators existed, salt helped keep food from spoiling during long trips. Some places had plenty of gold but very little salt, while other places had large salt mines but little gold. This made trading useful for everyone. Merchants also traded cloth, leather, pottery, spices, beads, tools, and other valuable goods. As trade increased, Mali became wealthier each year.

[5] Many people earned their living through trade. Some mined gold, while others cut large blocks of salt from the ground. Craftspeople created beautiful items that merchants could sell in busy markets. Farmers raised crops that fed families, travelers, and workers throughout the kingdom. Every person's job helped Mali become stronger and more successful.

[6] Mansa Musa understood how important trade was to his kingdom. He made smart choices that helped merchants feel safe while traveling. Soldiers guarded many of the trade routes, and laws helped protect people and their goods. Because traders knew they could travel safely, more merchants visited Mali. Every new trade journey brought more people, more products, and more opportunities for the kingdom to grow stronger.

[7] The king also encouraged fairness in trade. Merchants wanted to visit places where they could buy and sell goods honestly. As more people trusted Mali's marketplaces, trade continued to increase. Visitors returned home with stories about the kingdom's wealth, safe roads, and busy cities. These stories encouraged even more travelers to visit Mali.

[8] As trade increased, cities throughout Mali became larger and busier. One of the most famous cities was Timbuktu. Merchants filled the marketplaces with colorful goods from many different places. People could find gold, salt, cloth, books, pottery, leather goods,

spices, and handmade jewelry. Travelers speaking different languages met to buy, sell, and share ideas. The city became an important meeting place for people from across Africa.

[9] Marketplaces were exciting places filled with activity. Merchants displayed their goods while customers compared prices and looked for the best products. The sounds of conversations, animals, and trading filled the air throughout the day. Children often watched their families work while learning how business was done. These busy markets helped people meet others from different cultures and regions.

[10] Timbuktu was known for much more than trade. It also became one of the greatest centers of learning during its time. Students traveled long distances to study with respected teachers. They learned subjects such as math, science, geography, history, astronomy, and religion. Since printing presses had not yet been invented in the area, books were carefully copied by hand. These books were treated with great care because they contained valuable knowledge. Many families believed that education could help improve a person's future.

[11] Teachers encouraged students to ask thoughtful questions and search for evidence to support their ideas. Lessons often included reading, writing, problem-solving, and discussions. Students worked hard because education opened doors to new opportunities. Scholars spent years studying important books and sharing what they learned with others. Their work helped spread knowledge across many regions.

[12] Libraries in Timbuktu became famous because they stored thousands of handwritten books. Families often protected these books for generations because they believed knowledge was valuable. Visitors from distant places were amazed by the city's dedication to learning. The success of Timbuktu showed that education could become just as important as trade in building a strong society.

[13] One of the most famous parts of Mansa Musa's life was his trip to Mecca, called a pilgrimage. This journey covered thousands of miles and lasted many months. Mansa Musa traveled with a large group that included family members, soldiers, workers, servants, merchants, and guides. Hundreds of camels carried supplies for the journey. Food, water, clothing, tents, and gold all had to be packed before leaving. Planning such a large trip required careful organization.

[14] As the group traveled from city to city, many people came to see the famous king. Some hoped to trade with his group, while others simply wanted to witness the enormous caravan passing through their town. The sight of so many travelers and camels impressed everyone who watched them. News about Mansa Musa spread quickly wherever he went.

[15] During his pilgrimage, Mansa Musa gave away large amounts of gold to people in need. He wanted to help others and share the wealth of his kingdom. His generosity became famous throughout the places he visited. Many people had never seen so much gold before. Some stories explained that he gave away so much gold that its value changed in certain cities for a period of time. Whether every story was completely accurate or not, people everywhere recognized his kindness and generosity.

[16] After hearing these stories, people became curious about Mali. Merchants wanted to trade with the kingdom, while travelers hoped to visit its famous cities. Writers recorded

stories about Mansa Musa, and mapmakers began including Mali on their maps because so many people had heard about its wealth. These stories spread across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, making Mali one of the most recognized kingdoms of its time.

[17] Mansa Musa believed that wealth should also be used to improve his kingdom. He supported the building of mosques, schools, libraries, and other important buildings. Skilled builders and workers created places where people could gather, worship, and learn. These improvements made cities more beautiful and gave people additional opportunities to study, teach, and work together.

[18] The kingdom continued to grow because many people worked together. Farmers raised crops that fed families and travelers. Craftspeople made tools, clothing, pottery, and jewelry. Merchants carried goods across trade routes, while teachers helped students gain new knowledge. Soldiers protected the kingdom, allowing trade and learning to continue without constant fear of attack. Every group played an important role in Mali's success.

[19] Life in Mali depended on teamwork. Farmers relied on merchants to sell extra crops. Merchants depended on safe roads and trustworthy trading partners. Students depended on teachers, and teachers depended on people who carefully copied books by hand. Builders created schools, homes, markets, and places of worship. Each person contributed something important to the kingdom, helping it remain successful for many years.

[20] Families also passed important skills from one generation to the next. Children learned how to farm, trade, build, or create useful goods by watching adults work. As they grew older, they practiced these skills themselves. This helped preserve knowledge and allowed the kingdom to continue growing.

[21] Even after Mansa Musa's pilgrimage ended, people continued talking about him. His journey showed the world that Mali was rich, organized, and powerful. Travelers wrote about the kingdom's wealth, successful trade routes, and centers of learning. Although stories sometimes became larger than life as they spread, they helped introduce many people to the kingdom of Mali.

[22] Today, historians continue studying Mansa Musa because his leadership changed the history of West Africa. His success shows that trade, education, and good leadership can help a kingdom grow stronger. Students around the world learn about Mali because it became one of the greatest trading empires in African history. The story of Timbuktu also reminds people that learning and education have always been valuable.

[23] Because of the choices he made, Mali became known as a powerful and important kingdom. Mansa Musa understood that protecting trade, encouraging education, and helping others could strengthen an entire nation. His leadership allowed cities like Timbuktu to become famous for both business and learning. People still talk about Mansa Musa today when they study African history and discover how trade routes connected different cultures. His life reminds us that wise decisions, strong leadership, and a commitment to learning can leave a lasting impact for generations. Even hundreds of years later, his story continues to inspire people to understand the importance of education, cooperation, and using resources wisely to help others.

Student Annotation Guide — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

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in the early 1300s

R — Reactions

more opportunities for the kingdom to grow stronger

A — Actions

supported the building of mosques, schools, libraries, and other important buildings

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Mansa Musa

K — Key Knowledge

protecting trade, encouraging education, and helping others

S — Scenery/Setting

across the hot Sahara Desert

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — The Wealth of Mansa Musa

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PASSAGE 8 — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] “Road trip!” Xavier shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions. Instead of only reading about them in books, Xavier would get to see each region with his own eyes. He packed a notebook so he could write down interesting facts and compare what made each place special. His parents told him that every region had its own landforms, climate, plants, and jobs.

[2] Before they left, Xavier spread a large map of Texas across the kitchen table. The state looked enormous. He traced their route with his finger and smiled.

[3] “It’s hard to believe one state can have so many different places,” he said.

[4] His dad nodded. “Texas is one of the largest states in the country. That means the land, weather, and resources can change a lot from one place to another.”

[5] “I wonder which region I’ll like best,” Xavier said.

[6] “You’ll have to wait until the end of the trip to decide,” his mom replied.

[7] As they drove west, Xavier watched the scenery outside the window slowly change. At first he saw neighborhoods, farms, and trees. After several hours, the trees became fewer, the ground looked drier, and rocky hills appeared in the distance.

[8] Their first stop was the Mountains and Basins in far West Texas. Xavier noticed tall, rocky mountains and dry land. “It’s really hot here,” he said. There were only a few plants, like cacti. His mom explained that people in this region often work in mining and oil because of the natural resources found underground.

[9] The family stopped at a scenic overlook where they could see for miles. High mountains rose above wide valleys, and the bright blue sky stretched across the horizon. The air felt dry, and the wind carried dust across the rocky ground.

[10] “I’ve never seen mountains this tall,” Xavier said quietly.

[11] His dad smiled. “This is one of the only places in Texas where you’ll find mountain ranges like these.”

[12] As they continued exploring, Xavier noticed that most of the plants were small and spread far apart. There were cacti, shrubs, and patches of dry grass.

[13] “Why aren’t there many trees?” he asked.

[14] “This region doesn’t get much rain,” his mom explained. “Only plants that can survive with very little water grow well here.”

[15] They passed signs showing oil wells and mining sites in the distance. His dad explained that valuable natural resources beneath the ground have helped create jobs for many people over the years. Xavier thought it was interesting that even though the land looked empty, it still provided important resources.

[16] Before leaving, the family stopped to take pictures of the mountains. Xavier realized that this region looked nothing like the places he had visited near home. Even though it was dry and rocky, it had its own kind of beauty.

[17] The next morning, the family headed toward the Great Plains. As the miles passed, the mountains slowly disappeared behind them. The land became flatter, and wide grasslands stretched toward the horizon.

[18] “The view changed again,” Xavier noticed.

[19] “It sure did,” his dad replied. “Every region has its own features.”

[20] The weather was still fairly dry, but it did not feel quite as hot. Soon they began passing large ranches surrounded by long fences.

[21] “This must be where people raise cattle,” Xavier said.

[22] His dad nodded and added that farming is also common here.

[23] They watched herds of cattle grazing across open fields while farmers drove tractors through nearby crops. The wide-open spaces seemed to go on forever.

[24] “I’ve never seen so much land,” Xavier said.

[25] “That space is one reason ranching works so well here,” his mom explained. “There is plenty of room for livestock to graze.”

[26] The family stopped for lunch at a small picnic area. As they ate, a steady breeze moved through the tall grass.

[27] “It feels windy,” Xavier said.

[28] “With fewer trees and lots of open land, the wind can travel easily across the plains,” his dad explained.

[29] After lunch they visited a ranch where a rancher answered questions about caring for cattle. Xavier learned that raising livestock requires hard work every day. The animals need food, water, and safe places to live.

[30] On the drive away from the ranch, Xavier looked out across the rolling hills and thought about how different this region was from the Mountains and Basins. There were still wide open spaces, but instead of rocky mountains, the land was covered with grass.

[31] Later that day, the family reached the North Central Plains.

[32] “Everything looks greener and more colorful!” Xavier said.

[33] There were more trees and grass, and the land had gentle hills. The climate was milder, and people raised livestock and grew crops.

[34] The family stopped at a community park filled with walking trails and tall shade trees. Birds sang from the branches while butterflies floated from flower to flower. A cool breeze made the afternoon feel comfortable.

[35] “This place feels different,” Xavier said.

[36] His mom smiled. “This region usually receives more rainfall than the ones we’ve already visited.”

[37] As they walked, Xavier noticed ponds, grassy fields, and trees growing in every direction. He realized why so many farms were nearby.

[38] They later visited a family farm where workers cared for animals and tended rows of

growing crops. One farmer explained that the climate and soil help many plants grow well in this region.

[39] “So weather can change what people grow?” Xavier asked.

[40] “It certainly can,” the farmer replied. “People often choose crops that grow best in the local climate.”

[41] While driving through nearby towns, Xavier noticed fields stretching beside country roads. Some farms raised cattle while others grew crops. He remembered seeing cattle in the Great Plains too, but the scenery here looked much greener.

[42] His dad reminded him that regions can share some similarities while still being different.

[43] “That’s why we study more than one characteristic,” he explained. “We look at the land, the weather, the plants, and the kinds of work people do.”

[44] Xavier thought about everything he had learned so far. Every region had something that made it easy to recognize.

[45] The next morning, they continued their trip toward the Coastal Plains near the Gulf of Mexico.

[46] As soon as they stepped out of the car, Xavier noticed the warm, sticky air.

[47] “It feels different here,” he said.

[48] His mom smiled.

[49] “That’s humidity. The air contains more moisture near the Gulf.”

[50] It was humid, and Xavier could feel the warm, moist air. There were rivers, forests, and even beaches. “This region has a lot of different jobs,” his mom said, “like farming, fishing, and working in big cities.”

[51] The family first visited a busy fishing harbor where boats lined the docks. Fishermen unloaded their catches while seabirds circled overhead.

[52] “I’ve never seen so many boats,” Xavier said.

[53] His dad explained that the Gulf of Mexico supports fishing, which provides jobs for many people.

[54] Later they drove through thick forests where tall trees shaded the highway. Soon they entered one of Texas’s large cities. Cars filled the roads, and tall buildings reached high into the sky.

[55] “There are so many people here,” Xavier said.

[56] “Large cities create many different kinds of jobs,” his mom explained. “People may work in schools, hospitals, stores, offices, factories, or many other places.”

[57] As they continued driving, Xavier realized that this region looked very different from every other place they had visited. It had beaches, forests, rivers, farms, neighborhoods, and busy cities all within the same region.

[58] The family spent the afternoon walking along the beach. Waves rolled onto the shore

while children played in the sand. Xavier watched pelicans glide over the water and listened to the sound of the surf.

[59] “I think this might be my favorite stop,” he said.

[60] His parents smiled.

[61] “Every region has something special,” his dad replied.

[62] On the drive home, Xavier looked through the pages of his notebook. He compared everything he had seen during the trip. The Mountains and Basins were dry with tall mountains and valuable natural resources. The Great Plains had wide grasslands, ranches, and farms. The North Central Plains were greener with gentle hills, crops, and livestock. The Coastal Plains had rivers, forests, beaches, humid weather, large cities, and many different industries.

[63] As the sun began to set, Xavier looked out the car window one last time.

[64] “I thought Texas would look the same everywhere,” he admitted.

[65] His dad smiled.

[66] “A lot of people think that until they travel across the state.”

[67] “I understand now,” Xavier replied. “The land changes from place to place, and that changes how people live and work.”

[68] His mom nodded proudly.

[69] “That's exactly what makes each region important.”

[70] As they headed home, Xavier rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Student Annotation Guide — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

T — Time

The next morning

R — Reactions

that changes how people live and work

A — Actions

driving across Texas to learn about its different regions

C — Character/Concept/Creature

Zavier

K — Key Knowledge

landforms, climate, plants, and jobs

S — Scenery/Setting

near the Gulf of Mexico

TRACKS EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTING — Four Regions, One Big Adventure

[1] “Road trip!” Xavier shouted as his family packed the car. They were driving across Texas to learn about its different regions. Instead of only reading about them in books, Xavier would get to see each region with his own eyes. He packed a notebook so he could write down interesting facts and compare what made each place special. His parents told him that every region had its own landforms, climate, plants, and jobs.

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[15] They passed signs showing oil wells and mining sites in the distance. His dad explained that valuable natural resources beneath the ground have helped create jobs for many people over the years. Xavier thought it was interesting that even though the land looked empty, it still provided important resources.

[16] Before leaving, the family stopped to take pictures of the mountains. Xavier realized that this region looked nothing like the places he had visited near home. Even though it was dry and rocky, it had its own kind of beauty.

[17] The next morning, the family headed toward the Great Plains. As the miles passed, the mountains slowly disappeared behind them. The land became flatter, and wide grasslands stretched toward the horizon.

[18] “The view changed again,” Xavier noticed.

[19] “It sure did,” his dad replied. “Every region has its own features.”

[20] The weather was still fairly dry, but it did not feel quite as hot. Soon they began passing large ranches surrounded by long fences.

[21] “This must be where people raise cattle,” Xavier said.

[22] His dad nodded and added that farming is also common here.

[23] They watched herds of cattle grazing across open fields while farmers drove tractors through nearby crops. The wide-open spaces seemed to go on forever.

[24] “I’ve never seen so much land,” Xavier said.

[25] “That space is one reason ranching works so well here,” his mom explained. “There is plenty of room for livestock to graze.”

[26] The family stopped for lunch at a small picnic area. As they ate, a steady breeze moved through the tall grass.

[27] “It feels windy,” Xavier said.

[28] “With fewer trees and lots of open land, the wind can travel easily across the plains,” his dad explained.

[29] After lunch they visited a ranch where a rancher answered questions about caring for cattle. Xavier learned that raising livestock requires hard work every day. The animals need food, water, and safe places to live.

[30] On the drive away from the ranch, Xavier looked out across the rolling hills and thought about how different this region was from the Mountains and Basins. There were still wide open spaces, but instead of rocky mountains, the land was covered with grass.

[31] Later that day, the family reached the North Central Plains.

[32] “Everything looks greener and more colorful!” Xavier said.

[33] There were more trees and grass, and the land had gentle hills. The climate was milder, and people raised livestock and grew crops.

[34] The family stopped at a community park filled with walking trails and tall shade trees. Birds sang from the branches while butterflies floated from flower to flower. A cool breeze made the afternoon feel comfortable.

[35] “This place feels different,” Xavier said.

[36] His mom smiled. “This region usually receives more rainfall than the ones we’ve already visited.”

[37] As they walked, Xavier noticed ponds, grassy fields, and trees growing in every direction. He realized why so many farms were nearby.

[38] They later visited a family farm where workers cared for animals and tended rows of

growing crops. One farmer explained that the climate and soil help many plants grow well in this region.

[39] “So weather can change what people grow?” Xavier asked.

[40] “It certainly can,” the farmer replied. “People often choose crops that grow best in the local climate.”

[41] While driving through nearby towns, Xavier noticed fields stretching beside country roads. Some farms raised cattle while others grew crops. He remembered seeing cattle in the Great Plains too, but the scenery here looked much greener.

[42] His dad reminded him that regions can share some similarities while still being different.

[43] “That’s why we study more than one characteristic,” he explained. “We look at the land, the weather, the plants, and the kinds of work people do.”

[44] Xavier thought about everything he had learned so far. Every region had something that made it easy to recognize.

[45] The next morning, they continued their trip toward the Coastal Plains near the Gulf of Mexico.

[46] As soon as they stepped out of the car, Xavier noticed the warm, sticky air.

[47] “It feels different here,” he said.

[48] His mom smiled.

[49] “That’s humidity. The air contains more moisture near the Gulf.”

[50] It was humid, and Xavier could feel the warm, moist air. There were rivers, forests, and even beaches. “This region has a lot of different jobs,” his mom said, “like farming, fishing, and working in big cities.”

[51] The family first visited a busy fishing harbor where boats lined the docks. Fishermen unloaded their catches while seabirds circled overhead.

[52] “I’ve never seen so many boats,” Xavier said.

[53] His dad explained that the Gulf of Mexico supports fishing, which provides jobs for many people.

[54] Later they drove through thick forests where tall trees shaded the highway. Soon they entered one of Texas’s large cities. Cars filled the roads, and tall buildings reached high into the sky.

[55] “There are so many people here,” Xavier said.

[56] “Large cities create many different kinds of jobs,” his mom explained. “People may work in schools, hospitals, stores, offices, factories, or many other places.”

[57] As they continued driving, Xavier realized that this region looked very different from every other place they had visited. It had beaches, forests, rivers, farms, neighborhoods, and busy cities all within the same region.

[58] The family spent the afternoon walking along the beach. Waves rolled onto the shore

while children played in the sand. Xavier watched pelicans glide over the water and listened to the sound of the surf.

[59] “I think this might be my favorite stop,” he said.

[60] His parents smiled.

[61] “Every region has something special,” his dad replied.

[62] On the drive home, Xavier looked through the pages of his notebook. He compared everything he had seen during the trip. The Mountains and Basins were dry with tall mountains and valuable natural resources. The Great Plains had wide grasslands, ranches, and farms. The North Central Plains were greener with gentle hills, crops, and livestock. The Coastal Plains had rivers, forests, beaches, humid weather, large cities, and many different industries.

[63] As the sun began to set, Xavier looked out the car window one last time.

[64] “I thought Texas would look the same everywhere,” he admitted.

[65] His dad smiled.

[66] “A lot of people think that until they travel across the state.”

[67] “I understand now,” Xavier replied. “The land changes from place to place, and that changes how people live and work.”

[68] His mom nodded proudly.

[69] “That's exactly what makes each region important.”

[70] As they headed home, Xavier rethought about what he had seen. Each region looked different, but all were important parts of Texas.

Day 1 — Gather and Reveal

GRADUATE Cycle: G + R

G — Gather Their Attention AUDITORY ENGAGEMENT — ACTIVE PARTICIPATION Approach: Ending or Bluebird? Listening Target: Listen for whether a sentence is E — Ending or S — Significance. Explain the clue that proves the label.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-04)

Write on the board: E: “In the end, protected trade had the greater impact because it increased commerce and supported Mali’s growth.”

ENDING OR BLUEBIRD?

S: “Leaders today can learn from this example that protecting systems people depend on can create opportunities far beyond one decision.” E: reinforces this paper’s claim. S: explains why the idea matters beyond this paper. Fresh Recall: Say the final four CREATURES letters in order: U -> R -> E -> S. Teacher Script “Listen for the difference between closing the paper and lifting the paper. The Ending closes our case. Significance lifts the idea into a larger world. That last lift is our Bluebird Moment.” R — Reveal the Background Knowledge

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-05)

Write on the board: C Claim — take a defensible position.

FULL CREATURES AT A GLANCE

R Reasons — organize logical support. E Evidence — prove the reasons. A Argument — make the whole case coherent. T Thinking — explain how/why the evidence works. U Understanding Others — represent another viewpoint accurately. R Rebuttal — respond with reasoning/evidence. E Ending — reinforce and synthesize. S Significance — Bluebird Moment: why it matters beyond the paper. Teacher Script “This is the first time in this cluster we are using the whole creature at once. Notice that the acronym is a memory path, not a demand for exactly nine sentences. Reasons, evidence, and thinking can repeat. Argument describes how everything connects.” Model Ending + Significance — Mansa Musa E — Ending: In the end, protecting trade had the greater impact on Mali because safer routes increased commerce and helped the kingdom grow stronger. S — Significance / Bluebird Moment: Mansa Musa’s example shows that leaders can create lasting opportunity when they protect the systems people rely on and make choices that help communities grow. Model Ending + Significance — Texas Regions E — Ending: Overall, natural resources have a greater influence on work opportunities because they directly support mining, oil, fishing, farming, and other industries across Texas. S — Significance / Bluebird Moment: Understanding how resources shape opportunity can help communities make thoughtful decisions about jobs, growth, and how they care for the land they depend on.

Day 2 — Attempt

GRADUATE Cycle: A

A — Attempt the Activity Directions

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-06)

Write on the board: Work in teams to build a complete CREATURES response map.

CREATURES BUILD CHALLENGE — DIRECTIONS

Every letter must have a job. R/E/T may repeat. U must be fair. Rebuttal must answer the actual viewpoint. E must conclude. S must show why the issue matters beyond the paper. Whole Group / Small Group Game: Build the Full CREATURES Case Team Prompt Statement: Argue whether protecting trade or supporting learning created the more important legacy for Mali. Use evidence from the passage to support your position and acknowledge another reasonable viewpoint. Game Procedure

- 1. Teams choose a defensible C — Claim.
- 2. Teams build two R/E/T chains.
- 3. Teams arrange the chains so A — Argument flows logically.
- 4. Teams draw one U viewpoint card and write an accurate representation.
- 5. Teams write a rebuttal that uses reasoning/evidence.
- 6. Teams write an E — Ending that reinforces the claim and synthesizes the best reasoning.
- 7. Teams write an S — Significance Bluebird Moment that explains why the issue matters beyond the paper.
- 8. Teams read the full argument aloud. Listeners identify any missing or weak CREATURES move.

Sample Team Answer Key C — Claim: Supporting learning created the more important legacy for Mali because knowledge could continue strengthening the kingdom across generations. R1 — Reason: Timbuktu became a respected center of learning. E1 — Evidence: Students and teachers gathered to study subjects such as math, science, history, geography, and religion. T1 — Thinking: This evidence supports the claim because education creates knowledge that can be shared and passed on. R2 — Reason: Support for schools, books, and scholars strengthened Mali's reputation beyond wealth. E2 — Evidence: The passage describes libraries, handwritten books, respected teachers, and visitors who noticed how much learning took place in Timbuktu. T2 — Thinking: These details show that Mali became known not only for gold and trade but also for ideas and scholarship. A — Argument: The two reasons move from the immediate learning community to the wider legacy of knowledge and reputation. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue protected trade created the stronger legacy because safe routes brought more merchants, goods, and wealth into Mali. R — Rebuttal: That economic growth was essential; however, knowledge could continue influencing people after

individual trade journeys ended, giving learning a longer-lasting legacy. E — Ending: Overall, support for learning created the more important legacy because it strengthened Timbuktu's reputation and helped knowledge continue across generations. S — Significance: Communities today can still learn from Mali that investing in knowledge creates opportunities that may continue long after one leader or one period of wealth has passed.

Day 3 — Discuss and Use Again

GRADUATE Cycle: D + U

D — Discuss and Ask Questions

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-07)

Write on the board: Which CREATURES letter was easiest to build? Which required the deepest thinking?

DISCUSS THE FULL CREATURE

How did U/R change or strengthen the claim? How is Ending different from Significance? Where did the argument need a transition or rearrangement to improve A? Teacher Script “A full argument is a system. Every part affects another part. When one letter is weak, the writer can diagnose the problem instead of simply saying, ‘My paper is bad.’ CREATURES gives us a way to name the next step.”

- Possible response: “S was hardest because it had to go beyond the paper without becoming random.” Teacher: “Exactly. The Bluebird must still come from the nest of evidence.”
- Possible response: “U/R made me see that the other side had good evidence too.” Teacher: “That can sharpen or refine a claim.”
- Possible response: “Ending summarizes the case; significance explains why it matters more broadly.” Teacher: “That distinction is the goal.”

U — Use the Knowledge Again

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-08)

Write on the board: Prompt: Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas.

INDEPENDENT — FULL CREATURES ECR

Plan with CREATURES, then write a complete response. Label the planning organizer, not necessarily the final essay, with C R E A T U R E S. Independent Student Directions

- Analyze the prompt and choose a defensible claim.
- Plan at least two logical reasons.
- Choose strong evidence for each reason.
- Arrange the reasons so the line of argument is coherent.
- Explain how and why the evidence supports the claim.
- Acknowledge one reasonable alternate viewpoint accurately.
- Write a rebuttal using reasoning and evidence.
- Conclude by reinforcing the claim and synthesizing the most important reasoning.

- Finish with a Bluebird Moment explaining why the issue matters beyond the paper.
- Revise and edit using the Cluster 4 standards check.

Full CREATURES Exemplar — Texas Regions C — Claim: Natural resources have the greater influence on how Texans live and work because resources directly shape many of the jobs and economic opportunities found across the state. R/E/T Chain 1: In the Mountains and Basins, resources underground support mining and oil work. The passage explains that people often work in those industries because of the natural resources found there. This supports the claim because the jobs are directly connected to what the land provides. R/E/T Chain 2: The Coastal Plains also show how resources create opportunity. The passage describes rivers, forests, beaches, farms, fishing, and large cities. These details show that a wide range of resources and locations can support several kinds of work at once. A — Argument: The first reason shows specialized work from underground resources, while the second expands the case to a region where water, land, and cities create many industries. Together, the reasons show a consistent pattern across different parts of Texas. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue climate has the greater influence because rainfall and temperature affect vegetation, farming, and how comfortable it is to live in a place. R — Rebuttal: Climate clearly affects daily conditions, but the passage connects natural resources more directly to a wider range of specific jobs, including mining, oil, fishing, farming, and city-based work. E — Ending: Overall, natural resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape what industries can grow in different Texas regions. S — Significance / Bluebird Moment: Understanding the relationship between resources and opportunity can help communities make wiser choices about jobs, growth, and how they use and protect the land that supports them. Final CREATURES Rubric — 0–3 Per Area

- C — Claim: 3 clear/defensible/direct; 2 clear but broad; 1 vague/weak; 0 missing/off-topic.
- R/E — Reasons & Evidence: 3 logical/distinct/strongly supported; 2 mostly strong; 1 repetitive or weakly supported; 0 missing.
- A/T — Argument & Thinking: 3 coherent line + deep explanation; 2 generally connected; 1 list-like or mostly summary; 0 missing.
- U/R — Understanding Others & Rebuttal: 3 fair/accurate + evidence-based response; 2 fair but general; 1 distorted or repeated claim; 0 missing.
- E/S — Ending & Significance: 3 reinforces/synthesizes + meaningful Bluebird; 2 closes but significance is general; 1 repeats or adds unrelated idea; 0 missing.
- Conventions: 3 meaning is clear with strong control; 2 minor errors; 1 frequent errors interfere; 0 not enough writing to assess.

Day 4 — Award and Target

GRADUATE Cycle: A + T

STANDARDS APPLICATION CHECK — MODULE 4

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-09)

Write on the board: Trace C -> R/E/T -> U/R -> E/S.

FINAL ARGUMENT + REVISION + EDITING CHECK

ADD a missing idea. DELETE a distraction. COMBINE repeated ideas. REARRANGE for stronger A — Argument. Revise word choice and sentence structure. Edit the assigned Cluster 4 conventions. Check that the Ending closes the case and the Significance Bluebird grows from the argument. Teacher Model: Weak conclusion — “So natural resources are important.” Stronger E — “Overall, natural resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape important industries across Texas.” S — “Communities can use this understanding to make thoughtful choices about jobs, growth, and how they protect the resources they depend on.” A — Award Yourself for a Job Well Done

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-10)

Write on the board: Color or check every CREATURES letter you successfully used.

AWARD YOUR FULL CREATURES RESPONSE

Star your Bluebird Moment. Complete: “The part of my argument that sounds most like a real writer is ___ because ___.” Teacher Script “You did not just write a paragraph today. You built a complete argumentative system. Celebrate the part you can now do independently and the part that shows the most growth.” T — Target Their Goals

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-11)

Write on the board: Choose one CREATURES target: C clarity - R distinction - E strength - A coherence - T depth - U fairness - R rebuttal - E ending - S significance.

TARGET YOUR NEXT ARGUMENT

- My strongest CREATURES letter is... because...
- My next-letter target is...
- One place I can make the argument more coherent is...
- My next Bluebird Moment will be stronger if I...

Day 5 — Explain to Others

GRADUATE Cycle: E

E — Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-12)

Write on the board: Partner A teaches C through T.

TEACH THE WHOLE CREATURE

Partner B teaches U through S. Then build one oral argument together from a passage prompt. Finish by explaining why S is called the Bluebird Moment. Teacher Script “Teaching the whole creature is your final memory test. Do not just recite the letters—explain the job each one does for the reader.”

Module 4 — Low, Medium, and High Exemplars

Prompt

Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas.

Low Exemplar

“So natural resources are important.”

What works: The sentence stays on the source topic.

What needs improvement: It does not reinforce the full claim, synthesize the developed reasoning, or create a Bluebird Moment.

Medium Exemplar

“Overall, natural resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape important industries across Texas.”

What works: The Ending reinforces the claim and closes the case purposefully.

What needs improvement: The response still needs S — Significance to lift the meaning beyond the paper.

High Exemplar

E — Ending: Overall, natural resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape what industries can grow in different Texas regions.

S — Significance / Bluebird Moment: Understanding the relationship between resources and opportunity can help communities make wiser choices about jobs, growth, and how they use and protect the land that supports them.

What works: The Ending reinforces and synthesizes the source-based case, and the Significance sentence grows from that reasoning to leave a meaningful Bluebird Moment.

Module 4 — Assessment Opportunities

Formative Checks

- Listen for accurate Ending-or-Bluebird labels and evidence-based explanations.
- Check each team's complete CREATURES response map against the source Sample Team Answer Key.
- Review the independent full CREATURES plan and ECR with the source rubric.
- Use the Standards Application Check to inspect revision, coherence, conclusion, and conventions.

Independent Product

Students respond to the Texas regions prompt with a complete argumentative ECR planned through all nine CREATURES moves and finished with E — Ending and S — Significance.

Mastery Evidence

A successful response presents a defensible central claim, builds coherent R/E/T support, represents and answers another view fairly, closes purposefully, and leaves a source-rooted Bluebird Moment.

Source Answer Key, Exemplar, Rubric, and Standards Application Check

Sample Team Answer Key C — Claim: Supporting learning created the more important legacy for Mali because knowledge could continue strengthening the kingdom across generations. R1 — Reason: Timbuktu became a respected center of learning. E1 — Evidence: Students and teachers gathered to study subjects such as math, science, history, geography, and religion. T1 — Thinking: This evidence supports the claim because education creates knowledge that can be shared and passed on. R2 — Reason: Support for schools, books, and scholars strengthened Mali’s reputation beyond wealth. E2 — Evidence: The passage describes libraries, handwritten books, respected teachers, and visitors who noticed how much learning took place in Timbuktu. T2 — Thinking: These details show that Mali became known not only for gold and trade but also for ideas and scholarship. A — Argument: The two reasons move from the immediate learning community to the wider legacy of knowledge and reputation. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue protected trade created the stronger legacy because safe routes brought more merchants, goods, and wealth into Mali. R — Rebuttal: That economic growth was essential; however, knowledge could continue influencing people after individual trade journeys ended, giving learning a longer-lasting legacy. E — Ending: Overall, support for learning created the more important legacy because it strengthened Timbuktu’s reputation and helped knowledge continue across generations. S — Significance: Communities today can still learn from Mali that investing in knowledge creates opportunities that may continue long after one leader or one period of wealth has passed. Full CREATURES Exemplar — Texas Regions C — Claim: Natural resources have the greater influence on how Texans live and work because resources directly shape many of the jobs and economic opportunities found across the state. R/E/T Chain 1: In the Mountains and Basins, resources underground support mining and oil work. The passage explains that people often work in those industries because of the natural resources found there. This supports the claim because the jobs are directly connected to what the land provides. R/E/T Chain 2: The Coastal Plains also show how resources create opportunity. The passage describes rivers, forests, beaches, farms, fishing, and large cities. These details show that a wide range of resources and locations can support several kinds of work at once. A — Argument: The first reason shows specialized work from underground resources, while the second expands the case to a region where water, land, and cities create many industries. Together, the reasons show a consistent pattern across different parts of Texas. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue climate has the greater influence because rainfall and temperature affect vegetation, farming, and how comfortable it is to live in a place. R — Rebuttal: Climate clearly affects daily conditions, but the passage connects natural resources more directly to a wider range of specific jobs, including mining, oil, fishing, farming, and city-based work. E — Ending: Overall, natural resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape what industries can grow in different Texas regions. S — Significance / Bluebird Moment: Understanding the relationship between resources and opportunity can help communities make wiser choices about jobs, growth, and how they use and protect the land that supports them. Final CREATURES Rubric — 0-3 Per Area - C — Claim: 3 clear/defensible/direct; 2 clear but broad; 1 vague/weak; 0 missing/off-topic. - R/E —

Reasons & Evidence: 3 logical/distinct/strongly supported; 2 mostly strong; 1 repetitive or weakly supported; 0 missing. - A/T — Argument & Thinking: 3 coherent line + deep explanation; 2 generally connected; 1 list-like or mostly summary; 0 missing. - U/R — Understanding Others & Rebuttal: 3 fair/accurate + evidence-based response; 2 fair but general; 1 distorted or repeated claim; 0 missing. - E/S — Ending & Significance: 3 reinforces/synthesizes + meaningful Bluebird; 2 closes but significance is general; 1 repeats or adds unrelated idea; 0 missing. - Conventions: 3 meaning is clear with strong control; 2 minor errors; 1 frequent errors interfere; 0 not enough writing to assess.

STANDARDS APPLICATION CHECK — MODULE 4

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-09)

Write on the board: Trace C -> R/E/T -> U/R -> E/S.

FINAL ARGUMENT + REVISION + EDITING CHECK

ADD a missing idea. DELETE a distraction. COMBINE repeated ideas. REARRANGE for stronger A — Argument. Revise word choice and sentence structure. Edit the assigned Cluster 4 conventions. Check that the Ending closes the case and the Significance Bluebird grows from the argument. Teacher Model: Weak conclusion — “So natural resources are important.” Stronger E — “Overall, natural resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape important industries across Texas.” S — “Communities can use this understanding to make thoughtful choices about jobs, growth, and how they protect the resources they depend on.”

Check the Learning

Quick Check

1. Explain how E — Ending differs from S — Significance.
2. State all nine CREATURES moves and explain why T always means Thinking.
3. Diagnose the source weak conclusion: “So natural resources are important.”
4. Explain why a Bluebird Moment must grow from the evidence nest.

Answer Key

- Ending reinforces the claim and synthesizes the strongest reasoning; Significance explains why the issue matters beyond the paper.
- Claim, Reasons, Evidence, Argument, Thinking, Understanding Others, Rebuttal, Ending, Significance. Thinking explains how and why the evidence supports the claim.
- The sentence is too general; it neither reinforces the complete claim nor synthesizes the developed reasoning.
- Significance reaches beyond the paper but must remain connected to its evidence and reasoning rather than becoming random.

Intervention — Module 4

Detailed Intervention Activity

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-13)

Write on the board: Build only one section at a time: C -> one R/E/T chain -> U/R -> E/S.

INTERVENTION — CREATURES CHECKPOINT PATH

Use sentence stems and choice cards, then remove support after success. Read the completed argument aloud so the student can hear the coherence.

- C stem: “___ had the greater impact because ___.”
- R stem: “One reason is ___.”
- E stem: “The passage states/explains ___.”
- T stem: “This supports the claim because ___.”
- U stem: “Some readers may argue ___ because ___.”
- R stem: “That point matters; however, ___.”
- E stem: “Overall, ___.”
- S stem: “This matters beyond the passage because ___.”

Module 4 — Embedded Checks and Student Support

During Listening

Ask students to identify whether each sentence closes this paper's claim or lifts its meaning beyond the paper. Require the clue that proves the label.

During Team Building

Check one section at a time: C, two R/E/T chains, A, U/R, and E/S. Require U to represent the actual viewpoint and require S to grow from the developed case.

During Independent Writing

Use the Final CREATURES Rubric and trace C -> R/E/T -> U/R -> E/S. Keep Argument visible as the coherence of the full case, not a mechanically added sentence.

Language Support

Allow oral rehearsal and sentence stems from the source intervention path. Remove supports after success and preserve every independent reasoning decision.

Enrichment — Module 4

Enrichment Activity

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-14)

Write on the board: Build two defensible arguments from opposite positions on the same prompt.

ENRICHMENT — TWO COMPLETE CREATURES CASES

Compare evidence strength, reasoning depth, rebuttal quality, and Bluebird Moments. Decide which case is more persuasive and justify your evaluation with the CREATURES rubric. This challenge helps students understand that strong argumentative writing is not about choosing the teacher's preferred side. It is about building the most defensible, coherent, evidence-based case.

Module 4 — Additional Writing Opportunity: Full CREATURES ECR

Use the source prompt and exemplar below to study how every move contributes to one coherent case. Then build the opposite defensible position using only evidence from “Four Regions, One Big Adventure.” Compare the two cases with the Final CREATURES Rubric.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-08)

Write on the board: Prompt: Argue whether climate or natural resources have the greater influence on how people live and work across Texas.

INDEPENDENT — FULL CREATURES ECR

Plan with CREATURES, then write a complete response. Label the planning organizer, not necessarily the final essay, with C R E A T U R E S. Independent Student Directions

- Analyze the prompt and choose a defensible claim.
- Plan at least two logical reasons.
- Choose strong evidence for each reason.
- Arrange the reasons so the line of argument is coherent.
- Explain how and why the evidence supports the claim.
- Acknowledge one reasonable alternate viewpoint accurately.
- Write a rebuttal using reasoning and evidence.
- Conclude by reinforcing the claim and synthesizing the most important reasoning.
- Finish with a Bluebird Moment explaining why the issue matters beyond the paper.
- Revise and edit using the Cluster 4 standards check.

Full CREATURES Exemplar — Texas Regions C — Claim: Natural resources have the greater influence on how Texans live and work because resources directly shape many of the jobs and economic opportunities found across the state. R/E/T Chain 1: In the Mountains and Basins, resources underground support mining and oil work. The passage explains that people often work in those industries because of the natural resources found there. This supports the claim because the jobs are directly connected to what the land provides. R/E/T Chain 2: The Coastal Plains also show how resources create opportunity. The passage describes rivers, forests, beaches, farms, fishing, and large cities. These details show that a wide range of resources and locations can support several kinds of work at once. A — Argument: The first reason shows specialized work from underground resources, while the second expands the case to a region where water, land, and cities create many industries. Together, the reasons show a consistent pattern across different parts of Texas. U — Understanding Others: Some readers may argue climate has the greater influence because rainfall and temperature affect vegetation, farming, and how comfortable it is to live in a place. R — Rebuttal: Climate clearly affects daily conditions, but the passage connects natural resources more directly to a wider range of specific jobs, including mining, oil, fishing, farming, and city-based work. E — Ending: Overall, natural

resources have the greater influence on work opportunities because they directly shape what industries can grow in different Texas regions. S — Significance / Bluebird Moment: Understanding the relationship between resources and opportunity can help communities make wiser choices about jobs, growth, and how they use and protect the land that supports them. Final CREATURES Rubric — 0-3 Per Area

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- Conventions: 3 meaning is clear with strong control; 2 minor errors; 1 frequent errors interfere; 0 not enough writing to assess.

Module 4 — Auditory Engagement (Active Participation)

G — Gather Their Attention AUDITORY ENGAGEMENT — ACTIVE PARTICIPATION Approach: Ending or Bluebird? Listening Target: Listen for whether a sentence is E — Ending or S — Significance. Explain the clue that proves the label.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-04)

Write on the board: E: “In the end, protected trade had the greater impact because it increased commerce and supported Mali’s growth.”

ENDING OR BLUEBIRD?

S: “Leaders today can learn from this example that protecting systems people depend on can create opportunities far beyond one decision.” E: reinforces this paper’s claim. S: explains why the idea matters beyond this paper. Fresh Recall: Say the final four CREATURES letters in order: U -> R -> E -> S. Teacher Script “Listen for the difference between closing the paper and lifting the paper. The Ending closes our case. Significance lifts the idea into a larger world. That last lift is our Bluebird Moment.”

Pause Points

|| Pause Point — Reinforce or Repeat?

Stop and think: Does the Ending return to the claim with stronger understanding, or merely copy it?

|| Pause Point — Evidence Nest

Stop and think: Does the Bluebird Moment grow from the evidence and reasoning already developed?

|| Pause Point — Whole Creature

Stop and think: Is any CREATURES job missing or weak? Remember that R/E/T may repeat and A is the coherence of the whole case.

|| Pause Point — Beyond the Paper

Stop and think: Who else should care, what larger lesson applies, and why does this matter in communities, leadership, decision-making, or real life?

Module 4 — My Progress Tracker

Teacher Script

“Use this tracker to record what you can do independently and what you still need to practice.”

I Can...	Not yet	Growing	I can do it
Reinforce my claim and synthesize my reasoning in E — Ending.			
Write S — Significance as a source-rooted Bluebird Moment.			
Explain every letter in the full CREATURES roadmap.			
Build two logical R/E/T chains and a coherent line of argument.			
Represent another viewpoint fairly and answer it with reasoning and evidence.			
Revise and edit a complete argumentative ECR.			

My strongest CREATURES letter is:

My next-letter target is:

My next Bluebird Moment will be stronger if:

Module 4 — Teacher Closure and Reflection

Teacher Closing Words of Encouragement “Writers, you now have a memory system for the whole argumentative response. CREATURES helps you diagnose what your writing needs: a clearer claim, stronger reasons, better evidence, a more coherent argument, deeper thinking, fair understanding of another view, a stronger rebuttal, a purposeful ending, or a Bluebird Moment that shows why it all matters. You do not have to guess what strong argumentative writing looks like—you can build it.” OVERARCHING QUESTION — ANSWER Question: How do Ending and Significance complete a CREATURES argument and leave the reader with a meaningful Bluebird Moment? Answer: E — Ending brings the argument to a purposeful close by reinforcing the claim and synthesizing the strongest reasoning. S — Significance then lifts the idea beyond the immediate paper by explaining why the issue or position matters to communities, leaders, decisions, or the world around us. The Ending closes the case; the Significance sentence becomes the Bluebird Moment that leaves the reader with a lasting idea.

★ Daily Deck Slide (M4-15)

Write on the board: E closes the case by reinforcing and synthesizing.

✓ ANSWER THE OVERARCHING QUESTION

S lifts the meaning beyond the paper. The Bluebird Moment is the final “why this matters” idea the reader carries away.

CLUSTER 4 — CREATURES FINAL TEACHER REFERENCE

Four-Module Progression

- Module 1 — C/R/E: build the defensible foundation.
- Module 2 — A/T: connect proof into a coherent case and make reasoning visible.
- Module 3 — U/R: represent another viewpoint fairly and respond with evidence.
- Module 4 — E/S + Full CREATURES: conclude, create the Bluebird Moment, and write a complete argumentative ECR.

Five Non-Negotiable Teacher Reminders

- A claim is not merely a topic or preference; it must be defensible from the text.
- Evidence does not explain itself. T — Thinking is where students show how and why the proof works.
- A — Argument is the coherence of the entire case, not an extra sentence students add mechanically.
- U/R in Grade 4 is respectful viewpoint practice. Accuracy and evidence matter more than formal counterargument length.

Teacher Reflection

Which students reinforce and synthesize rather than merely repeat?

Which students write a Bluebird Moment that grows from the argument?

Which students independently build a coherent full CREATURES ECR?

Which students need a next-letter target in C/R/E, A/T, U/R, or E/S?

Module 4 — Remote Learning



Virtual Classroom Adjustment for Remote Learners

Provide a digital CREATURES organizer with one labeled section for every letter and repeatable R/E/T rows. Use breakout teams for the Build the Full CREATURES Case game, with each student responsible for one or two letters before the group combines them. Let students self-highlight evidence of each CREATURES move with a shared rubric, record the Bluebird Moment as a short audio clip, and type the strongest version into the final response. For intervention, reveal the checkpoint path one sentence stem at a time. For enrichment, assign opposite positions to two breakout groups and hold a respectful evidence-based comparison of the complete cases.