

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

Assessment Companion

Grade 3 · Cluster 3

Connecting Two Texts

Passage: Why We Need Laws

Grade 3 Assessment Companion: Cluster 3

© 2026 The Writing Academy®, LLC. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The Writing Academy® is a registered trademark of The Writing Academy, LLC.

Module 1 · Notice the Message Find the poem's central idea

CLUSTER 3 · MODULE 1 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Identify the central idea of the poem: why communities need laws: and separate it from a single detail.
STANDARDS	3.12B(i) central idea 3.11B(iii) develop with details 3.11D(i) sentences + agreement
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Emergent : Visible: students NOTICE the poem's message.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a one-sentence statement of the poem's central message.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check: a fast grade of central-idea recognition.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes the poem's message in one sentence and names the detail that shows it.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may map, say, or write the message: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Collect the message sentence + one detail. Because Cluster 3 builds

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: noticing the poem's message about why we need laws.

Why We Need Laws

Text 1: Long ago people argued over land and things, Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings. Without clear rules to guide what should be done, Many small problems quickly grew to one. Some took more food while others had too little, Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle. Disagreements spread like storms across the town, And fairness often seemed to tumble down. So people gathered, searching for a way, To write fair rules that everyone would obey. With laws to guide what people say and do, Communities could grow more safe and true.

Text 2 ("The Lunchroom Discoveries"): NARRATOR: It is lunchtime in the school cafeteria. Two students, Alex and Jordan, are eating lunch and talking about something they learned in science class. (Alex opens a milk carton and looks at the label.) ALEX: Hey Jordan, did you know Louis Pasteur helped solve a huge problem with food and milk? JORDAN: Really? What kind of problem? ALEX: A long time ago, people got sick because germs in milk and food weren't destroyed. NARRATOR: The students remember learning about Pasteur's discovery in their science lesson. (Jordan points to the milk carton on the table.) JORDAN: Oh! That's why milk is pasteurized now, right? ALEX: Exactly! Pasteur figured out that heating liquids could kill harmful germs. JORDAN: So the milk we're drinking is safer because of his discovery. (Paired with "The Lunchroom Discoveries.")

Grade 3, Cluster 3 (Scope & Sequence). Students connect two texts into one clear informative response.

1. What is the central message of the poem?

- A. The town had a lot of land.
- B. People like to gather together.
- C. Problems are always small.
- D. Communities need laws because laws give people a fair way to solve problems.

2. Which line BEST shows why the people needed a solution?

- A. Across the town.
- B. Many small problems quickly grew to one.
- C. Land and things.
- D. A way to gather.

3. Which sentence would be the BEST central idea for an informational response?

- A. Laws help a community solve problems and live together fairly.
- B. I think laws are boring.
- C. Towns have streets.
- D. People have things.

4. Which sentence does NOT belong in a response about this poem?

- A. Small problems grew into a bigger one.
- B. People gathered to search for a way.
- C. My favorite game is on my tablet.
- D. The town had troubles over land.

5. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. Many problems grew across the town.
- B. Many problems grows across the town.
- C. Many problems grewed across the town.
- D. Many problems is grew across the town.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.12B(i): identifying the central message of the poem. Administration: ~10 minutes, independent. Scoring: 5 points (1 each); Answer Key & Error Analysis on the next page.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

Not just the right answer: what a wrong choice reveals, and what to do about it.

1. Central message

Correct: D

The message ties the growing problems to the need for laws. The others are single details or an over-general claim. Picking a single detail shows detail/central-idea confusion : reteach “what is the whole poem about?”

2. Line that shows the need

Correct: B

This line shows problems growing: the reason a solution (laws) was needed. The others are fragments/settings. Choosing a fragment shows the student isn't linking evidence to the idea : practice “which line proves it?”

3. Best central idea

Correct: A

A central idea states what laws DO for a community. The distractors are an opinion, an off-topic fact, and a vague statement. Picking the opinion signals opinion/informational confusion : contrast “I think...” with “Laws help...”.

4. Does not belong

Correct: C

A personal aside about a tablet doesn't inform about the poem. The others all connect to its message. Missing it shows the student isn't checking each sentence against the idea : model the “does it belong?” check.

5. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: A

“grew” (past tense) agrees with the plural subject “problems.” The others use wrong verb forms. Wrong verb form : practice matching plural subjects to correct past-tense verbs. central idea about the poem before drafting the ECR.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : more work stating a central idea about the poem before drafting the ECR.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “In one sentence, state the poem’s message about why communities need laws.” 3.12B(i) 3.12B(i)

4 “Communities need laws because when small problems grow, laws give everyone a fair way to solve them and live together.””

SECURE · clear message, broad enough to develop into an ECR · RPLD: Independent 3 “People need laws to help solve their problems.” · DEMONSTRATES · clear idea, slightly general · RPLD: Visible 2 “The town had problems and people gathered.” · DEVELOPING · retells details; no message stated · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “so what?”: why did it matter? 1 “Laws.” · BEGINNING · a topic word only · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model turning the topic into a message

Which rubric applies? This four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores every written central-idea response in Cluster 3. The Multiple-Choice Check uses its own 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“A poem still has a message. What is this poem telling us about WHY people need laws?”

SAY

SAY

“Don’t just retell what happened. Tell me the point: because problems grew, people needed laws to solve

► Read the excerpts aloud; ask “what problem grew, and what did people go searching for?” before students

“ ” = say word-for-word · ► = teacher direction (do not read aloud)

Module 2 · Choose Vivid, Precise Words Word choice and adjectives

CLUSTER 3 · MODULE 2 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Choose precise words and descriptive adjectives, and the details that best develop the message.
STANDARDS	3.11C(ii) word choice 3.11C(iv) adjectives 3.12B(ii) relevant details
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Visible: students CHOOSE precise, descriptive language.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one sentence improved with a precise word or adjective + one detail chosen to support the message.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on word choice, adjectives, and relevant details.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student adds a precise adjective or verb and picks a supporting detail from the poem.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may highlight, chart, or rewrite the word: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the revised word is more precise/descriptive and

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: choosing precise words, descriptive adjectives, and the

Why We Need Laws

Text 1: Long ago people argued over land and things, Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings. Without clear rules to guide what should be done, Many small problems quickly grew to one. Some took more food while others had too little, Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle. Disagreements spread like storms across the town, And fairness often seemed to tumble down. So people gathered, searching for a way, To write fair rules that everyone would obey. With laws to guide what people say and do, Communities could grow more safe and true.

Text 2 ("The Lunchroom Discoveries"): NARRATOR: It is lunchtime in the school cafeteria. Two students, Alex and Jordan, are eating lunch and talking about something they learned in science class. (Alex opens a milk carton and looks at the label.) ALEX: Hey Jordan, did you know Louis Pasteur helped solve a huge problem with food and milk? JORDAN: Really? What kind of problem? ALEX: A long time ago, people got sick because germs in milk and food weren't destroyed. NARRATOR: The students remember learning about Pasteur's discovery in their science lesson. (Jordan points to the milk carton on the table.) JORDAN: Oh! That's why milk is pasteurized now, right? ALEX: Exactly! Pasteur figured out that heating liquids could kill harmful germs. JORDAN: So the milk we're drinking is safer because of his discovery. (Paired with "The Lunchroom Discoveries.")

Grade 3, Cluster 3 (Scope & Sequence). Students connect two texts into one clear informative response.

1. Which word most precisely completes: "The small problems ____ into one big problem"?

- A. grew
- B. went
- C. did
- D. got

2. Which adjective best describes the problems in the poem?

- A. purple
- B. square
- C. growing
- D. sleepy

3. Which detail BEST develops the message that laws were needed?

- A. The town had streets.
- B. Poems can rhyme.
- C. People own things.
- D. People gathered together, searching for a way to solve the troubles.

4. Which sentence uses the most precise, informational language?

- A. Stuff happened in the town.
- B. Troubles over land grew across the whole town.
- C. There were things and problems and stuff.
- D. It was a thing about a place.

5. Which new detail keeps the message?

- A. Laws gave everyone a fair way to settle the troubles.
- B. The weather was cloudy.
- C. Some people have pets.
- D. Towns can be big or small.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.11C(ii)/(iv) / 3.12B(ii): precise word choice, adjectives, and relevant details.

Administration: ~10 minutes, independent. Scoring: 5 points (1 each); Answer Key & Error Analysis on the next page.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

Not just the right answer: what a wrong choice reveals, and what to do about it.

1. Precise verb

Correct: A

“grew” names exactly what the problems did; “went/did/got” are vague. Choosing a vague verb shows tolerance for imprecision : trade a general verb for an exact one.

2. Best adjective

Correct: C

“growing” describes the problems accurately; the others don’t fit the meaning. Choosing an unrelated adjective shows decoration over meaning : ask “does the describing word fit the idea?”

3. Best detail

Correct: D

The correct detail shows people acting to find a solution: support for the message. The others are off-topic. Choosing an off-topic detail : test each detail against the message it must prove.

4. Most precise language

Correct: B

The correct sentence uses exact words (“troubles over land,” “whole town”). The others rely on “stuff/things.” Tolerating “stuff/things” : highlight and replace every vague word.

5. Detail that keeps the message

Correct: A

The correct detail extends the point (laws bring fairness). The distractors drift off-topic. Choosing an unrelated fact shows drift : test additions against the central idea. adjective practice (11C(ii)/(iv)); Questions 3 or 5 : relevant-detail sorting.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1-2 missed widely : word-choice and adjective practice (11C(ii)/(iv)); Questions 3 or 5 : relevant-detail sorting.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Revise one plain sentence about the poem to use a precise word or a descriptive”

1 “*Things happened.*”

BEGINNING · no precise or descriptive language · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model naming exactly what happened

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this word-choice revision. The MC Check keeps its 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“Precise and vivid words do the work. Instead of ‘stuff happened,’ tell me exactly what grew and where.”

SAY

SAY

“Add one describing word that FITS: the ‘growing’ troubles: not just any adjective.”

► Model one swap (“stuff” : “growing troubles over land”); then students revise one sentence of their own.

“ ” = say word-for-word · ► = teacher direction (do not read aloud)

Module 3 · Show It: Structure & Coherence

Organize the informational response

CLUSTER 3 · MODULE 3 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Organize an informational response so ideas connect, combine short sentences, and edit nouns.
STANDARDS	3.11B(iii) develop with details 3.11C(i) combine 3.11D(vi)/(viii) nouns
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent: students SHOW and OWN structure and combining.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a short ordered plan (message : details : conclusion) + one combined sentence.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on organizing, combining, and editing nouns.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student orders the parts of a short response and combines two lines into one sentence.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may use strips, a chart, or writing: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the plan follows an informational shape and the

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: structure, combining, and noun editing.

Why We Need Laws

Text 1: Long ago people argued over land and things, Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings. Without clear rules to guide what should be done, Many small problems quickly grew to one. Some took more food while others had too little, Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle. Disagreements spread like storms across the town, And fairness often seemed to tumble down. So people gathered, searching for a way, To write fair rules that everyone would obey. With laws to guide what people say and do, Communities could grow more safe and true.

Text 2 ("The Lunchroom Discoveries"): NARRATOR: It is lunchtime in the school cafeteria. Two students, Alex and Jordan, are eating lunch and talking about something they learned in science class. (Alex opens a milk carton and looks at the label.) ALEX: Hey Jordan, did you know Louis Pasteur helped solve a huge problem with food and milk? JORDAN: Really? What kind of problem? ALEX: A long time ago, people got sick because germs in milk and food weren't destroyed. NARRATOR: The students remember learning about Pasteur's discovery in their science lesson. (Jordan points to the milk carton on the table.) JORDAN: Oh! That's why milk is pasteurized now, right? ALEX: Exactly! Pasteur figured out that heating liquids could kill harmful germs. JORDAN: So the milk we're drinking is safer because of his discovery. (Paired with "The Lunchroom Discoveries.")

Grade 3, Cluster 3 (Scope & Sequence). Students connect two texts into one clear informative response.

1. Which is the **BEST** order for an informational response about the poem?

- A. List random lines in any order.
- B. Start with the conclusion, then stop.
- C. State the message, give details from the poem, then conclude.
- D. Write only the title.

2. **Best way to combine: "Problems grew. People gathered."**

- A. When the problems grew, the people gathered to find a way.
- B. Problems grew people gathered.
- C. Problems. Grew. People. Gathered.
- D. No change is needed.

3. Which sentence best connects ideas with a transition?

- A. And then stuff about the town.
- B. Because the troubles kept growing, the people decided they needed laws.
- C. The town and also the laws.
- D. People gathered problems grew.

4. In "across the town," which word is a singular noun?

- A. across
- B. the
- C. things
- D. town

5. In "land and things," which statement is true?

- A. "land" is a proper noun.
- B. "and" is a noun.
- C. "land" and "things" are common nouns.
- D. "things" is a verb.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.11B(iii) / 3.11C(i) / 3.11D: organizing the response, combining, and editing nouns.

Administration: ~10 minutes, independent. Scoring: 5 points (1 each); Answer Key & Error Analysis on the next page.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

Not just the right answer: what a wrong choice reveals, and what to do about it.

1. Best order

Correct: C

Informational writing moves message : details : conclusion. The distractors are unordered, backwards, or too short. Choosing unordered shows list-writing : use a plan box before drafting.

2. Best combine

Correct: A

The correct answer joins the two lines with a connector and keeps them correct. The others are a run-on, fragments, or unchanged. Choosing “no change” means the student doesn’t see short lines as improvable : model “combine + keep correct.”

3. Best transition

Correct: B

“Because...” links a cause to a result. The distractors are vague or ungrammatical. Choosing a vague option : practice cause/result connectors.

4. Singular noun

Correct: D

“town” names one town. “across/the” aren’t nouns; “things” is plural. Choosing a function word shows noun confusion : sort words into noun vs. not-a-noun.

5. Common nouns

Correct: C

“land” and “things” name general things (common nouns), not a specific name or a verb. Choosing “proper noun” shows common/proper confusion : contrast a general word with a specific name. combining; Questions 4-5 : more noun practice before Module 4.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1-2 missed widely : reteach structure and combining; Questions 4-5 : more noun practice before Module 4.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Combine two lines from the poem into one clear sentence for your response.” 3.11C(i) 3.11C(i)

4 “When many small problems grew across the town, the people gathered together to search for a way to solve them.”

SECURE · one correct combined sentence that connects ideas · RPLD: Independent 3 “Problems grew, and the people gathered to find a way.” · DEMONSTRATES · correct combine, lighter structure · RPLD: Visible 2 “Problems grew people gathered.” · DEVELOPING · joins without a connector (run-on) · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add a connecting word 1 “Problems grew. People gathered.” · BEGINNING · leaves the lines uncombined · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model one combine aloud

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this revision artifact. Noun editing is scored on the Standards Sweep tracking sheet.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“You’re organizing now. Take two short lines and make one stronger sentence that shows how they connect.”

SAY

SAY

“A connecting word: ‘when,’ ‘because,’ ‘so’: turns two short lines into one smooth sentence.”

► Show one combine aloud, then have students combine a different pair and circle every noun.

“ ” = say word-for-word · ► = teacher direction (do not read aloud)

Module 4 · Own & Defend: Full ECR The independent extended response

C L U S T E R 3 · M O D U L E 4 · M O D U L E A S S E S S M E N T M A P

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Write a complete informational ECR about the poem: message, several supporting details, and a conclusion: then check spelling.
STANDARDS	3.12B(i-iii) informational ECR 3.11B(iii) develop with details 3.11D(xxxii) spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent : Reflective: students OWN and DEFEND an extended response.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Monthly-facing Module Evidence: the culminating ECR that shows the whole cluster target.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on organizing and finishing an extended response.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes the full ECR: the message, two or more details, and a conclusion.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may plan-then-write or dictate-then-write: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. This is the cluster's anchor evidence. Score the full ECR on the

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: organizing, concluding, and spelling in a full ECR.

Why We Need Laws

Text 1: Long ago people argued over land and things, Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings. Without clear rules to guide what should be done, Many small problems quickly grew to one. Some took more food while others had too little, Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle. Disagreements spread like storms across the town, And fairness often seemed to tumble down. So people gathered, searching for a way, To write fair rules that everyone would obey. With laws to guide what people say and do, Communities could grow more safe and true.

Text 2 ("The Lunchroom Discoveries"): NARRATOR: It is lunchtime in the school cafeteria. Two students, Alex and Jordan, are eating lunch and talking about something they learned in science class. (Alex opens a milk carton and looks at the label.) ALEX: Hey Jordan, did you know Louis Pasteur helped solve a huge problem with food and milk? JORDAN: Really? What kind of problem? ALEX: A long time ago, people got sick because germs in milk and food weren't destroyed. NARRATOR: The students remember learning about Pasteur's discovery in their science lesson. (Jordan points to the milk carton on the table.) JORDAN: Oh! That's why milk is pasteurized now, right? ALEX: Exactly! Pasteur figured out that heating liquids could kill harmful germs. JORDAN: So the milk we're drinking is safer because of his discovery. (Paired with "The Lunchroom Discoveries.")

Grade 3, Cluster 3 (Scope & Sequence). Students connect two texts into one clear informative response.

1. Which is the **BEST** concluding sentence for a response about this poem?

- A. And that's the end.
- B. This is why communities create laws: to give everyone a fair way to solve their problems.
- C. I hope you liked my writing.
- D. Laws is a word in the title.

2. Which sentence does **NOT** belong in an informational ECR about the poem?

- A. Problems grew across the town.
- B. People gathered to search for a way.
- C. Laws help people solve problems fairly.
- D. Laws are boring and nobody should have to follow them.

3. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. So people gatherd, searching for a way.
- B. So people gathered, serching for a way.
- C. So people gathered, searching for a way.
- D. So peple gathered, searching for a way.

4. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The problems grew until the town needed a solution.
- B. The problems grows until the town needed a solution.
- C. The problems is grew until the town needed a solution.
- D. The problems grewed until the town needed a solution.

5. Which order **BEST** organizes an informational ECR?

- A. Just a list of lines.
- B. One sentence only.
- C. The conclusion first, then random lines.
- D. A clear message, several supporting details from the poem, and a conclusion.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.12B(iii) / 3.11D(xxxii): organizing and finishing an extended informative response.

Administration: ~10 minutes, independent. Scoring: 5 points (1 each); Answer Key & Error Analysis on the next page.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

Not just the right answer: what a wrong choice reveals, and what to do about it.

1. Best conclusion**Correct: B**

The correct conclusion restates the message and closes it. The others stop, give an opinion, or state a fact about a word. Choosing “the end”/opinion shows stopping vs. concluding : model “conclusions finish the thinking.”

2. Does not belong**Correct: D**

The correct answer is an opinion, which doesn't belong in an informational ECR. The other three inform. Missing it : practice the opinion vs. informational check before the final draft.

3. Correct spelling**Correct: C**

This line spells the high-frequency words correctly; the others misspell “gathered,” “searching,” or “people.” Repeated misses : a high-frequency spelling sweep (11D(xxxii)).

4. Subject-verb agreement**Correct: A**

“grew” agrees with the plural “problems.” The others use wrong verb forms. Wrong verb form : return to agreement practice (11D(i)).

5. Best organization**Correct: D**

The ECR shape is message : several details : conclusion. The distractors are a list, a fragment, or backwards. Choosing a list : require a plan before drafting. on 1 or 5 : reteach organization/conclusion before the anchor ECR; miss on 3 : a spelling sweep.

If several students miss the same question, This is the pre-assessment check. Widespread misses on 1 or 5 : reteach organization/conclusion before the anchor ECR; miss on 3 : a spelling sweep.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “In several sentences, explain the poem’s message about why we need laws. Use details”

4 “The poem shows why communities need laws. It explains that many small problems grew until there were troubles across the town over land and things. So the people gathered, searching for a way to solve them. This is why we need laws: they give everyone a fair way to settle problems and live together.”
SECURE · message + several relevant details + conclusion (full ECR) · RPLD: Independent

3 “The poem is about why we need laws. Problems grew and people gathered to find a way, so they made laws.”
DEMONSTRATES · message + details, thin development for an ECR · RPLD: Visible

2 “There were problems in the town.”
DEVELOPING · one detail; no message or conclusion · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add the message + a conclusion

1 “Laws.”
BEGINNING · does not develop the prompt · RPLD: Foundational · Next: plan message + two details before writing

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this anchor ECR: the cluster’s strongest single piece of evidence, and the score to record if you take a Cluster 3 grade.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“This is your extended response. Tell me the poem’s message about laws, give two or more details from the

SAY

SAY

“Use your plan: message, then details, then a conclusion. Then reread for the words we practiced: ‘gathered,’ ‘searching,’ ‘people.’”

► Give a plan box (message / detail 1 / detail 2 / conclusion). Independent write; conference only after the draft

“ ” = say word-for-word · ► = teacher direction (do not read aloud)