

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

Assessment Companion

Grade 3 · Cluster 8

Research Capstone

Passage: A Place to Grow: How Geography Helps Build a Community

Grade 3 Assessment Companion: Cluster 8

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Module 1 · Central Idea From Research One idea the facts support

CLUSTER 8 · MODULE 1 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Build a clear central idea from the research facts: how geography helps a community: and separate it from a single fact.
STANDARDS	3.12B(i) clear central idea 3.11B(i) focused piece 3.11D(i) agreement
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Emergent : Visible: students NOTICE the idea the facts support.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a one-sentence central idea for the research topic.

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 a central-idea sentence and underlines the fact that best supports it.

Path C

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

Grade the target, not everything. Collect the central-idea sentence. In research, check that the idea

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: noticing the central idea the facts support.

A Place to Grow: How Geography Helps Build a Community

Every community begins in a place. That place might be beside a river, near a forest, across a wide plain, or close to a harbor. The land may be green and fertile, dry and rocky, cold and snowy, or warm and sunny. Wherever people live, the geography around them creates both opportunities and challenges. Throughout history, people have had to ask important questions before a community could grow. Where will we get water? How will we find or grow food? What materials can we use for homes? How will we travel? What can we do if our community does not have a resource we need? The answers have been different in different places, but one idea appears again and again: where people live affects how they live. Water is one of the first resources people need when deciding where to live. People need water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, farming, and caring for animals. Rivers can also provide fish and create routes for transportation. Ancient Egypt is one example. Much of Egypt was surrounded by hot, dry desert, but the Nile River flowed through the land. Most ancient Egyptians settled near the Nile because the river provided resources that were difficult to find in the surrounding desert. For thousands of years, the Nile flooded nearby land. After the floodwaters went down, fertile soil remained. Farmers used the rich soil to grow wheat, barley, vegetables, flax, and other crops. The river also provided fish, drinking water, and a way to move people and goods.

Grade 3, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question and organize information.

1. What is the central idea of the research topic?

- A. Rivers are wet.
- B. Some plains are wide.
- C. Harbors have boats.
- D. Geography helps build a community by giving people the resources they need.

2. Which fact BEST supports the central idea?

- A. Communities have people.
- B. People settle near rivers, forests, and harbors because those places provide resources.
- C. Places have names.
- D. Forests have trees and animals.

3. Which sentence would be the BEST central idea for a research paper?

- A. The geography of a place shapes how a community grows.
- B. I think forests are pretty.
- C. A river is a body of water.
- D. Communities are everywhere.

4. Which sentence does NOT belong in this research?

- A. Communities often begin near rivers.
- B. Forests provide wood and food.
- C. My favorite vacation was at the beach.
- D. Harbors help people trade goods.

5. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. A community grows where resources are found.
- B. A community grow where resources are found.
- C. A community growing where resources are found.
- D. A community were grow where resources are found.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Central idea

Correct: D

The central idea connects geography to a community's resources. The others are single facts. Picking a single fact shows detail/central-idea confusion : “what do all the facts add up to?”

2. Best supporting fact

Correct: B

The correct fact explains WHY places matter (resources). The others are true-but-narrow or generic. Choosing a generic fact : practice “Best Evidence Wins.”

3. Best central idea

Correct: A

A research central idea states how geography shapes a community. The distractors are an opinion, a definition, and a vague statement. Picking the opinion : contrast “I think...” with “The geography... shapes...”.

4. Does not belong

Correct: C

A personal vacation memory isn't research. The others are relevant facts. Missing it : model the “does it belong in research?” check.

5. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: A

“grows” agrees with the singular subject “community.” The others use wrong forms. Wrong verb : singular- subject agreement practice. a central idea from facts before the research paper.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : more work building a central idea from facts before the research paper.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Write a clear central idea for a research paper on how geography helps build a”

4 “*The geography of a place: its rivers, forests, plains, and harbors: helps build a community by giving people the resources they need to live and grow.*”

SECURE · clear research central idea, supported by facts · RPLD: Independent 3 “Geography helps a community grow by giving it resources.” · DEMONSTRATES · clear idea, slightly general · RPLD: Visible 2 “Communities are near rivers and forests.” · DEVELOPING · a fact; no controlling idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “what do these facts show?” 1 “Geography.” · BEGINNING · topic only · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model turning the topic into an idea

Which rubric applies? This four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores the research central idea. The Multiple-Choice Check uses its own 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“In research, your central idea is what all the facts add up to. What do rivers, forests, and harbors all give a

SAY

SAY

“‘Geography’ is a topic. ‘Geography gives a community the resources it needs’ is a central idea.”

► List a few facts (river, forest, harbor); ask “what do they have in common?” before students write.

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

Module 2 · Choose Relevant Facts Facts that prove the idea

C L U S T E R 8 · M O D U L E 2 · 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	Choose research facts that support the central idea, and use precise content-area words.
STANDARDS	3.12B(ii) support with facts 3.11C(ii) word choice
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Visible: students CHOOSE relevant facts and precise words.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one fact chosen to support the idea + one vague word made precise.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on choosing relevant facts and precise words.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student picks a fact that supports the central idea and revises a vague word.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may highlight, chart, or write the fact: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the fact supports the central idea: a true-but-

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: choosing relevant facts and precise research words.

A Place to Grow: How Geography Helps Build a Community

Every community begins in a place. That place might be beside a river, near a forest, across a wide plain, or close to a harbor. The land may be green and fertile, dry and rocky, cold and snowy, or warm and sunny. Wherever people live, the geography around them creates both opportunities and challenges. Throughout history, people have had to ask important questions before a community could grow. Where will we get water? How will we find or grow food? What materials can we use for homes? How will we travel? What can we do if our community does not have a resource we need? The answers have been different in different places, but one idea appears again and again: where people live affects how they live. Water is one of the first resources people need when deciding where to live. People need water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, farming, and caring for animals. Rivers can also provide fish and create routes for transportation. Ancient Egypt is one example. Much of Egypt was surrounded by hot, dry desert, but the Nile River flowed through the land. Most ancient Egyptians settled near the Nile because the river provided resources that were difficult to find in the surrounding desert. For thousands of years, the Nile flooded nearby land. After the floodwaters went down, fertile soil remained. Farmers used the rich soil to grow wheat, barley, vegetables, flax, and other crops. The river also provided fish, drinking water, and a way to move people and goods.

Grade 3, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question and organize information.

1. Which fact BEST supports the idea that geography gives a community resources?

- A. Rivers can be long.
- B. People live in houses.
- C. A community near a river has water for drinking and for growing crops.
- D. Some maps are colorful.

2. Which fact does NOT support the central idea?

- A. My aunt drives a blue car to work.
- B. Forests provide wood to build homes.
- C. Harbors let people trade by boat.
- D. Plains give room to farm.

3. Which word most precisely completes: “A harbor lets a community ____ goods by boat”?

- A. do
- B. have
- C. get
- D. trade

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

- A. A river does some stuff for people.
- B. A river gives a community fresh water and a way to travel.
- C. There is water and things nearby.
- D. It's a thing about a place.

5. Which new fact keeps the central idea?

- A. Some rivers freeze in winter.
- B. People enjoy boat rides.
- C. Maps use many colors.
- D. Communities without a resource may trade with other places to get it.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Best fact

Correct: C

The river fact shows a real resource (water for drinking and crops). The others are true-but-narrow or generic. Choosing a generic fact : test each fact against the idea it must prove.

2. Does not support

Correct: A

A blue car is unrelated to geography and resources. The others are relevant facts. Missing it : practice filtering relevant from irrelevant research facts.

3. Precise word

Correct: D

“trade” names exactly what a harbor lets a community do; “do/have/get” are vague. Choosing a vague verb : trade for a precise content word.

4. Most precise language

Correct: B

The correct sentence uses exact words (“fresh water,” “a way to travel”). The others rely on “stuff/things.” Tolerating “stuff/thing” : replace vague words.

5. Fact that keeps the idea

Correct: D

Trading for a missing resource extends the idea. The distractors drift off-topic. Choosing an unrelated fact : test additions against the central idea. Questions 3-4 : precise research word choice.

If several students miss the same question, Question 1 or 2 missed widely : relevant-fact practice; Questions 3-4 : precise research word choice.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Choose one fact that supports your central idea, and explain how it helps the”

4 “A community near a river has fresh water for drinking and for growing crops. This fact supports the idea that geography gives a community the resources it needs to live.”

SECURE · relevant fact + explains how it supports the idea · RPLD: Independent 3 “A river gives a community water, which helps it grow.” · DEMONSTRATES · relevant fact, light explanation · RPLD: Visible

2 “Rivers have water.”

DEVELOPING · a fact not connected to the idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “how does this help the community?” 1 “Rivers.” · BEGINNING · no chosen fact or explanation · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model choosing a fact on purpose

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores the fact + explanation. The MC Check keeps its 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“In research, pick the fact that PROVES your idea. A river gives water: how does that help a community?”

SAY

SAY

“A true fact isn’t enough. It has to support your central idea about resources.”

► Have students point to a fact, then finish “This helps the community because...” before writing.

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

Module 3 · Show It: Organize the Research Group facts that belong together

CLUSTER 8 · MODULE 3 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Organize research into a clear order, combine short facts, and edit nouns and proper nouns.
STANDARDS	3.11B(i) structured piece 3.11C(i) combine 3.11D(vi)/(ix) nouns
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent: students SHOW and OWN research organization.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a short ordered plan (idea : grouped facts : 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 groups related facts and combines two short facts into one sentence.

Path C

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

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether facts are grouped in a sensible order and the

Multiple-Choice Check

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

A Place to Grow: How Geography Helps Build a Community

Every community begins in a place. That place might be beside a river, near a forest, across a wide plain, or close to a harbor. The land may be green and fertile, dry and rocky, cold and snowy, or warm and sunny. Wherever people live, the geography around them creates both opportunities and challenges. Throughout history, people have had to ask important questions before a community could grow. Where will we get water? How will we find or grow food? What materials can we use for homes? How will we travel? What can we do if our community does not have a resource we need? The answers have been different in different places, but one idea appears again and again: where people live affects how they live. Water is one of the first resources people need when deciding where to live. People need water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, farming, and caring for animals. Rivers can also provide fish and create routes for transportation. Ancient Egypt is one example. Much of Egypt was surrounded by hot, dry desert, but the Nile River flowed through the land. Most ancient Egyptians settled near the Nile because the river provided resources that were difficult to find in the surrounding desert. For thousands of years, the Nile flooded nearby land. After the floodwaters went down, fertile soil remained. Farmers used the rich soil to grow wheat, barley, vegetables, flax, and other crops. The river also provided fish, drinking water, and a way to move people and goods.

Grade 3, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question and organize information.

1. Which is the BEST way to organize a research paper?

- A. State the central idea, group related facts, then conclude.
- B. List facts in the order you found them.
- C. Start with the conclusion, then stop.
- D. Write only the title.

2. Best way to combine: “A river gives water. A forest gives wood.”

- A. A river gives water a forest gives wood.
- B. River. Water. Forest. Wood.
- C. A river gives water, and a forest gives wood.
- D. No change is needed.

3. Which sentence groups related facts with a transition?

- A. And then stuff about places.
- B. Along with rivers, forests also give a community important resources.
- C. Rivers forests and also.
- D. Water wood community give.

4. In “a wide plain,” which word is a singular noun?

- A. wide
- B. a
- C. near
- D. plain

5. In “rivers and harbors,” what kind of nouns are these?

- A. Proper nouns: they name specific things.
- B. Verbs: they show action.
- C. Common nouns: they name general things.
- D. Adjectives: they describe.

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

Administration: 10 minutes, independent. Scoring: 5 points (1 each); Answer Key & Error Analysis on the next page. Cluster 8

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Best organization

Correct: A

Research moves central idea : grouped facts : conclusion. The distractors are unordered, backwards, or too short. Choosing “order you found them” : group facts by category before drafting.

2. Best combine

Correct: C

The correct answer joins the two facts with “and” and stays correct. The others are a run-on, fragments, or unchanged. Choosing “no change” : model “combine related facts.”

3. Grouping transition

Correct: B

“Along with rivers, forests also...” groups related facts. The distractors are vague or ungrammatical. Choosing a vague option : practice grouping transitions (along with, also, another).

4. Singular noun

Correct: D

“plain” names one landform. “wide” is an adjective; “a/near” aren’t nouns. Choosing a non-noun : sort words into noun vs. not-a-noun.

5. Common nouns

Correct: C

“rivers” and “harbors” name general things (common nouns), not specific names. Choosing “proper nouns” : common vs. proper practice. organization and combining; Questions 4-5 : noun practice before Module 4.

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

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Combine two research facts into one clear sentence for your paper.” 3.11C(i) 3.11C(i)

4 “Because a community needs resources to grow, people often settle near a river for water and a forest for wood and food.”

SECURE · one correct sentence that groups related facts · RPLD: Independent 3 “A river gives water, and a forest gives wood.” · DEMONSTRATES · correct combine, lighter connection · RPLD: Visible 2 “A river gives water a forest gives wood.” · DEVELOPING · joins without a connector (run-on) · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add a connecting word 1 “A river gives water. A forest gives wood.” · BEGINNING · leaves the facts 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

“Group facts that belong together. A river and a forest both give resources: combine them into one

SAY

SAY

“A connecting word: 'and,' 'because,' 'along with': turns two facts into one clear point.”

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

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

Module 4 · Own & Defend: Research Response The independent research paper

C L U S T E R 8 · 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 research response: a central idea, several relevant facts, and a conclusion: then check spelling.
STANDARDS	3.12B(i-iii) informational/research 3.11B(i-iii) develop 3.11D(xxxii) spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent : Reflective: students OWN and DEFEND a research response.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Monthly-facing Module Evidence: the culminating research paper (this cluster is the research capstone).

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on organizing and finishing a research response.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes the full research response with a central idea, two or more facts, 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 research

Multiple-Choice Check

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

A Place to Grow: How Geography Helps Build a Community

Every community begins in a place. That place might be beside a river, near a forest, across a wide plain, or close to a harbor. The land may be green and fertile, dry and rocky, cold and snowy, or warm and sunny. Wherever people live, the geography around them creates both opportunities and challenges. Throughout history, people have had to ask important questions before a community could grow. Where will we get water? How will we find or grow food? What materials can we use for homes? How will we travel? What can we do if our community does not have a resource we need? The answers have been different in different places, but one idea appears again and again: where people live affects how they live. Water is one of the first resources people need when deciding where to live. People need water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, farming, and caring for animals. Rivers can also provide fish and create routes for transportation. Ancient Egypt is one example. Much of Egypt was surrounded by hot, dry desert, but the Nile River flowed through the land. Most ancient Egyptians settled near the Nile because the river provided resources that were difficult to find in the surrounding desert. For thousands of years, the Nile flooded nearby land. After the floodwaters went down, fertile soil remained. Farmers used the rich soil to grow wheat, barley, vegetables, flax, and other crops. The river also provided fish, drinking water, and a way to move people and goods.

Grade 3, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question and organize information.

1. Which is the BEST conclusion for a research paper on geography and community?

- A. That is the end.
- B. Because geography gives people water, food, and ways to travel, it shapes where and how communities grow.
- C. I hope you liked my research.
- D. Geography is a word.

2. Which sentence does NOT belong in a research paper?

- A. Rivers give a community water.
- B. Forests provide wood and food.
- C. Harbors help people trade.
- D. Rivers are honestly the coolest thing ever and everyone loves them.

3. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. Every comunity begins in a place with resources.
- B. Every community begins in a plaice with resources.
- C. Every community begins in a place with resources.
- D. Every community beginns in a place with resorces.

4. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. Communities grow where resources are found.
- B. Communities grows where resources are found.
- C. Communities is grow where resources are found.
- D. Communities growing where resources are found.

5. Which order BEST organizes a research response?

- A. Just a list of facts.
- B. A central idea, several relevant facts, and a conclusion.
- C. One sentence only.
- D. The conclusion first, then random facts.

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 idea and gathers the facts. The others just stop or state a fact about a word. Choosing “the end” : model conclusions that wrap up the research.

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

The correct answer is an exaggerated opinion, not research. The other three are facts. Missing it : practice the opinion vs. fact check in research.

3. Correct spelling**Correct: C**

This sentence spells “community,” “place,” and “resources” correctly. The others misspell them. Repeated misses : a spelling sweep (11D(xxxii)).

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

“grow” agrees with the plural subject “Communities.” The others use wrong forms. Wrong verb : agreement practice (11D(i)).

5. Best organization**Correct: B**

The research shape is idea : facts : conclusion. The distractors are a list, a fragment, or backwards. Choosing a list : require a plan before drafting. on 1 or 5 : reteach research organization/conclusion; 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 research organization/conclusion; miss on 3 : a spelling sweep.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Explain how geography helps build a community. Use facts from the research and end”

4 “Geography helps build a community by giving people the resources they need. Communities often begin near a river, which provides fresh water for drinking and farming. Forests give wood to build homes, and harbors let people trade goods by boat. When a community does not have a resource, it can trade for it. Because geography provides water, food, and ways to travel, it shapes where and how communities grow.”
 SECURE · central idea + several relevant facts + conclusion (research) · RPLD: Independent

3 “Geography helps a community. Rivers give water and forests give wood. That is why communities grow near them.”
 DEMONSTRATES · idea + facts, thinner development · RPLD: Visible 2 “Communities are near rivers and forests.” ·
 DEVELOPING · facts; no controlling idea or conclusion · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add an idea + a conclusion 1
 “Geography.” · BEGINNING · does not develop the prompt · RPLD: Foundational · Next: plan idea + two facts before writing

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this anchor research response: the cluster's strongest single piece of evidence, and the score to record if you take a Cluster 8 grade.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“This is your research paper. State your central idea, give two or more facts about resources, and finish with

SAY

SAY

“Use your plan: idea, then grouped facts, then a conclusion. Then reread for the words we practiced: ‘community,’ ‘resources.’”

► Give a plan box (idea / fact 1 / fact 2 / conclusion). Independent write; conference after the draft is complete.

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