

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

Assessment Companion

Grade 4 · Cluster 1

Short Constructed Response (SCR)



Passage: A Promise Written Long Ago

Grade 4 Assessment Companion: Cluster 1

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Module 1 · Notice the Thesis The clear central idea of an SCR

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 1 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Identify the thesis (central idea) of an SCR and separate it from a single detail.
STANDARDS	4.12B(i) central idea 4.11A(i) plan a draft 4.11D(i) sentences + agreement
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Emergent : Visible: students NOTICE the thesis that controls the response.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a one-sentence thesis for the passage.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

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

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes a thesis for the passage and underlines the detail that best proves it.

Path C

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

Grade the target, not everything. Collect the thesis + one supporting detail. In an SCR, check the

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: noticing the thesis (central idea) of the response.

A Promise Written Long Ago

In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions. The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed. The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial. The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice. Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens. Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. (Paired with "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community.)

Grade 4, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). "Level Up Your Thinking": stronger thinking comes from precise word choice, not from writing more.

1. What is the central idea of "A Promise Written Long Ago"?

- A. The Magna Carta is old.
- B. Leaders have power.
- C. The Magna Carta was an early promise of fairness that still shapes our rights today.
- D. People write things down.

2. Which detail BEST supports the central idea?

- A. The Magna Carta recorded the idea that even powerful leaders must follow fair rules.
- B. It was written with a pen.
- C. Long ago was a long time ago.
- D. People lived in villages.

3. Which sentence would be the BEST thesis for an SCR?

- A. I think the Magna Carta is interesting.
- B. A promise is a kind of statement.
- C. History happened long ago.
- D. The Magna Carta introduced a lasting idea about fairness for everyone.

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

- A. The Magna Carta promised fairer rules.
- B. My grandfather collects old coins.
- C. It limited the power of leaders.
- D. Its ideas still shape our rights.

5. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The Magna Carta promises fairness to the people.
- B. The Magna Carta promise fairness to the people.
- C. The Magna Carta promising fairness to the people.
- D. The Magna Carta were promise fairness to the people.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Central idea

Correct: C

The thesis ties the Magna Carta to its lasting idea of fairness. The others are single facts. Picking a single fact shows detail/thesis confusion : reteach “what does the whole passage argue?”

2. Best supporting detail

Correct: A

The correct detail states the key idea (fair rules for powerful leaders). The others are trivial or off-topic. Choosing a trivial detail : practice “Best Evidence Wins.”

3. Best thesis

Correct: D

A thesis states a controlling idea a response can prove. The distractors are an opinion, a definition, and a vague statement. Picking the opinion : contrast “I think...” with “The Magna Carta introduced...”.

4. Does not belong

Correct: B

A note about coins isn't about the passage. The others all inform. Missing it : model the “does it belong?” check.

5. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: A

“promises” agrees with the singular subject “Magna Carta.” The others use wrong forms. Wrong verb : singular-subject agreement practice. thesis that answers the prompt before drafting the SCR.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : more work stating a thesis that answers the prompt before drafting the SCR.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Write a clear thesis for a Short Constructed Response about “A Promise Written Long”

4 “The Magna Carta was an early written promise that even powerful leaders must follow fair rules: an idea of fairness that still shapes our rights today.”

SECURE · a precise thesis that answers the prompt · RPLD: Independent 3 “The Magna Carta was a promise about fairness that still matters.” · DEMONSTRATES · clear thesis, slightly general · RPLD: Visible 2 “The Magna Carta is old and important.” · DEVELOPING · names the topic; no controlling idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “topic : thesis” frame 1 “The Magna Carta.” · BEGINNING · topic only · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model turning the topic into a thesis

Which rubric applies? This four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores every written thesis in Cluster 1. The Multiple-Choice Check uses its own 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“In an SCR, your thesis is the ONE idea you'll prove. What is this passage really saying about the Magna

SAY

SAY

“‘The Magna Carta’ is a topic. ‘The Magna Carta promised fairness that still shapes our rights’ is a thesis.”

► Point to the topic, then to the idea; give 60 seconds of think time before students write.

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

Module 2 · Level Up Your Words Precise language shows stronger thinking

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 2 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Upgrade evidence and explanation language with precise words: stronger thinking, not more words.
STANDARDS	4.11C(ii) word choice 4.12B(ii) support with evidence
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Visible: students CHOOSE precise words that raise the thinking level.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one vague sentence upgraded with precise evidence/explanation language.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on precise, upgraded language.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student upgrades a weak sentence (“it says,” “stuff”) with precise evidence/explanation words.

Path C

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

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the words are more precise and reveal stronger

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: leveling up the language so the thinking is stronger, not

A Promise Written Long Ago

In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions. The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed. The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial. The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice. Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens. Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. (Paired with "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community.)

Grade 4, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). "Level Up Your Thinking": stronger thinking comes from precise word choice, not from writing more.

1. Which word most precisely completes: “The passage ____ that leaders must follow fair rules”?

- A. says
- B. explains
- C. does
- D. goes

2. Which detail BEST develops the thesis about fairness?

- A. The passage is about history.
- B. Old documents can be hard to read.
- C. Kings wore crowns.
- D. The Magna Carta stated that even a king had to obey the law, which protected people's rights.

3. Which sentence shows the STRONGEST thinking with precise words?

- A. The Magna Carta introduced a lasting principle: fairness applies to everyone, even rulers.
- B. The Magna Carta did a thing about fairness.
- C. It was a paper about being fair and stuff.
- D. The old thing said stuff about rules.

4. Which revision UPGRADES the language in “It says leaders have rules”?

- A. It says leaders have some rules.
- B. It says leaders got rules.
- C. The passage explains that the Magna Carta required leaders to obey fair laws.
- D. It talks about leaders and rules.

5. Which new sentence keeps the thesis and raises the thinking?

- A. The document is very old.
- B. People used to write on scrolls.
- C. History has many events.
- D. This idea of fairness still influences the rights people have today.

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Precise verb

Correct: B

“explains” names exactly what the passage does; “says/does/goes” are flat. Choosing a flat verb : trade for a precise academic verb (explains, states, argues).

2. Best detail

Correct: D

The correct detail proves the fairness idea (even a king must obey the law). The others are vague or off-topic. Choosing a vague detail : test each detail against the thesis it must prove.

3. Strongest thinking

Correct: A

The correct sentence names a precise principle (fairness for everyone). The others use “stuff/thing.” Tolerating “stuff/thing” : replace vague words with exact ideas.

4. Upgraded language

Correct: C

“The passage explains that the Magna Carta required...” is precise. The others stay flat or vaguer. Choosing a flat option : read both aloud; the upgrade shows stronger thinking.

5. Raises the thinking

Correct: D

The correct sentence extends the thesis (fairness still influences rights). The distractors add unrelated facts. Choosing an unrelated fact : keep upgrades tied to the thesis. language (11C(ii)); Question 2 or 5 : relevant-evidence practice. Remember: stronger, not longer.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 4 missed widely : practice upgrading language (11C(ii)); Question 2 or 5 : relevant-evidence practice. Remember: stronger, not longer.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Upgrade one weak sentence about the passage using precise evidence and explanation”

4 “The passage explains that the Magna Carta required even powerful leaders to obey fair laws, which shows that fairness was meant to protect everyone.”

SECURE · precise verbs + a clear idea; stronger thinking, not longer · RPLD: Independent 3 “The passage says the Magna Carta made leaders follow fair rules.” · DEMONSTRATES · more precise, some flat words remain · RPLD: Visible 2 “It says leaders have rules and stuff.” · DEVELOPING · vague, flat language · RPLD: Emergent · Next: upgrade one word at a time

1 “It’s about rules.”

BEGINNING · no precise language · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model naming exactly what the passage explains

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this language upgrade. The MC Check keeps its 5-point key. The target: stronger thinking through precise words, not a longer answer.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“Words = Thinking Level. Instead of ‘it says stuff,’ tell me exactly: ‘the passage explains that...’.”

SAY

SAY

“Level up, don’t lengthen. One precise sentence can show stronger thinking than three vague ones.”

► Model one upgrade (“it says” : “the passage explains that...”); then students upgrade one sentence of their

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

Module 3 · Evidence + Explanation Prove the thesis, then explain it

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 3 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Support the thesis with text evidence AND an explanation that proves it; combine sentences and edit.
STANDARDS	4.12B(ii) evidence + explanation 4.11C(i) combine 4.11D(ix) proper nouns
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent: students SHOW evidence and OWN the explanation.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one evidence sentence + one explanation sentence that proves the thesis.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on evidence, explanation, combining, and proper nouns.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student adds one piece of evidence and writes an explanation that proves the thesis.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may chart, say, or write the evidence + explanation: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the evidence supports the thesis and the

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: proving the thesis with evidence + explanation,

A Promise Written Long Ago

In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions. The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed. The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial. The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice. Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens. Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. (Paired with "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community.)

Grade 4, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). "Level Up Your Thinking": stronger thinking comes from precise word choice, not from writing more.

1. Which sentence uses EVIDENCE to support the thesis?

- A. The passage states that the Magna Carta made even a king obey the law.
- B. The Magna Carta is famous.
- C. I think fairness is good.
- D. History is interesting.

2. Best way to combine: "The Magna Carta was written. It promised fairness."

- A. The Magna Carta was written it promised fairness.
- B. Magna Carta. Written. Fairness. Promised.
- C. The Magna Carta was written to promise fairness for everyone.
- D. No change is needed.

3. Which sentence is an EXPLANATION that proves the thesis?

- A. The passage has many sentences.
- B. This shows that fairness was meant to apply to everyone, even the most powerful leaders.
- C. The document was very old.
- D. Leaders lived in castles.

4. In "Magna Carta" and "Caddo," what kind of nouns are these?

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

5. In "a fair rule," which word is a singular noun?

- A. a
- B. fair
- C. rule
- D. long

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Evidence**Correct: A**

The correct sentence uses a text detail (a king must obey the law) as proof. The others are general or opinions. Choosing a general statement : point back to the text for evidence.

2. Best combine**Correct: C**

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

3. Explanation**Correct: B**

The correct sentence explains WHY the evidence proves the thesis (fairness for everyone). The others don't explain. Choosing a non-explanation : require a sentence after evidence: “This shows...”.

4. Proper nouns**Correct: D**

“Magna Carta” and “Caddo” name specific things : proper nouns. The others are common. Choosing “common nouns” : specific names are proper.

5. Singular noun**Correct: C**

“rule” names one thing. “a” is an article; “fair/long” are adjectives. Choosing a non-noun : sort words into noun vs. not-a-noun. explanation (an SCR needs both); Questions 2/4 : combining and proper nouns.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : reteach evidence vs. explanation (an SCR needs both); Questions 2/4 : combining and proper nouns.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Add one piece of evidence and one explanation that proves your thesis.” 4.12B(ii) 4.12B(ii)

4 “The passage states that the Magna Carta made even a king obey the law. This shows that fairness was meant to protect everyone, not just the powerful: which is why the promise still matters today.”

SECURE · evidence + an explanation that proves the thesis · RPLD: Independent

3 “The passage says the Magna Carta made leaders follow rules, which shows it was about fairness.”

DEMONSTRATES · evidence + a light explanation · RPLD: Visible 2 “The Magna Carta made leaders follow rules.” · DEVELOPING · evidence, no explanation · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add “This shows...”

1 “The Magna Carta.”

BEGINNING · no evidence or explanation · RPLD: Foundational · Next: find one text detail that proves the thesis

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores the evidence + explanation. Proper-noun editing is scored on the Standards Sweep tracking sheet.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“Prove it from the text, then EXPLAIN it. Evidence alone isn't finished thinking.”

SAY

SAY

“After your evidence, write 'This shows...' and say why it proves your thesis.”

► Have students box the evidence, then write one “This shows...” sentence before combining.

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

Module 4 · Own & Defend: Full SCR The independent Short Constructed Response

C L U S T E R 1 · 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 SCR: thesis, evidence, and explanation: with precise language: then check spelling.
STANDARDS	4.12B(i-iii) SCR 4.11B structure 4.11D(xxxv) spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent : Reflective: students OWN and DEFEND a complete SCR.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Monthly-facing Module Evidence: the culminating SCR (thesis : evidence : explanation, in precise language).

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

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

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes the full SCR: thesis, evidence, and explanation, using precise language.

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 SCR on the

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: organizing the SCR, precise language, and spelling.

A Promise Written Long Ago

In the year 1215, a very important document called the Magna Carta was created in a place called Runnymede, England. At that time, King John ruled England. Many people, especially powerful landowners called barons, were unhappy with how he treated them. The king collected heavy taxes and made unfair decisions. The barons wanted the king to follow rules. They believed even the king should not have complete power. So, they forced King John to meet them at Runnymede. There, the Magna Carta was written and signed. The Magna Carta was important because it limited the king's power. It said that the king had to follow the law, just like everyone else. It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that people could not be punished without a fair trial. The circumstances at the time helped shape the Magna Carta. People were tired of unfair treatment and wanted change. Because of this, the document shows that people long ago cared about fairness and justice. Hundreds of years later, the ideas from the Magna Carta influenced other governments. Leaders in the United States used similar ideas when creating the U.S. Constitution. Like the Magna Carta, the Constitution limits government power and protects the rights of citizens. Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly. (Paired with "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community.)

Grade 4, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). "Level Up Your Thinking": stronger thinking comes from precise word choice, not from writing more.

1. Which is the BEST concluding sentence for this SCR?

- A. That is the end of my SCR.
- B. I hope you agree with me.
- C. Magna Carta is two words.
- D. Because it promised fairness even from the powerful, the Magna Carta shaped rights that still protect people today.

2. Which sentence does NOT belong in an SCR about the Magna Carta?

- A. The Magna Carta promised fair rules.
- B. Old documents look really cool with fancy handwriting.
- C. It limited a leader's power.
- D. Its ideas still shape our rights.

3. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. The Magna Carta promissed fairness for everyone.
- B. The Magna Carta promised fairnes for everyone.
- C. The Magna Carta promised fairness for everyone.
- D. The Magna Carta promised fareness for everyone.

4. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. Its ideas still protect people today.
- B. Its ideas still protects people today.
- C. Its ideas still protecting people today.
- D. Its ideas is still protect people today.

5. Which order BEST organizes an SCR?

- A. Just a list of facts.
- B. A thesis, evidence from the text, and an explanation that proves it.
- C. One sentence with no evidence.
- D. The explanation 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: D

The correct conclusion restates the thesis and its significance. The others just stop, plead, or state a fact about words. Choosing “the end” : model conclusions that prove the idea’s importance.

2. Does not belong

Correct: B

A comment on handwriting isn’t part of the argument. The other three are thesis/evidence. Missing it : keep only thesis, evidence, and explanation in an SCR.

3. Correct spelling

Correct: C

This sentence spells “promised” and “fairness” correctly. The others misspell them. Repeated misses : a spelling sweep (11D(xxxv)).

4. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: A

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

5. Best organization

Correct: B

The SCR shape is thesis : evidence : explanation. The distractors are a list, a fragment, or backwards. Choosing a list : require a thesis-first plan before drafting. on 1 or 5 : reteach SCR structure; 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 SCR structure; miss on 3 : a spelling sweep.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “In a Short Constructed Response, explain what “A Promise Written Long Ago” shows”

4 “The Magna Carta was an early promise of fairness that still shapes our rights today. The passage explains that it required even a king to obey the law. This shows that fairness was meant to protect everyone, not only the powerful. Because that idea was written down long ago, it still guides the rights people expect now.”

SECURE · thesis + evidence + explanation, precise language · RPLD: Independent

3 “The Magna Carta promised fairness. It made leaders follow rules, which shows fairness was for everyone. That idea still matters.”

DEMONSTRATES · thesis + evidence + explanation, lighter precision · RPLD: Visible

2 “The Magna Carta was about fairness and rules.”

DEVELOPING · a general statement; no evidence/explanation · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add evidence + “This shows...” 1 “Fairness.” · BEGINNING · does not answer the prompt · RPLD: Foundational · Next: plan thesis + evidence + explanation

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this anchor SCR: the cluster's strongest single piece of evidence, and the score to record if you take a Cluster 1 grade. Reward precise thinking, not length.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“This is your SCR. State your thesis, give evidence from the text, and explain how it proves your idea: in

SAY

SAY

“Level up, don't lengthen. Make each sentence show stronger thinking.”

► Give a plan box (thesis / evidence / explanation). Independent write; conference after the draft is complete.

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