

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

Assessment Companion

Grade 4 · Cluster 8

Research Capstone

Passage: What Shapes a Society? Place, Resources, and Connection

Grade 4 Assessment Companion: Cluster 8

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Module 1 · A Research Thesis One idea the facts support

C L U S T E R 8 · M O D U L E 1 · 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	Build a clear thesis from research facts: how place, resources, and connections shape a society.
STANDARDS	4.13 inquiry & research 4.12B(i) clear central idea 4.11D(i) agreement
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Emergent : Visible: students NOTICE the thesis the facts support.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a one-sentence research thesis for the topic.

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 and underlines the fact that best supports 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. In research, check that the idea is supported by

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: the thesis the research facts support.

What Shapes a Society? Place, Resources, and Connection

Every society begins somewhere. People may live near a river, on a grassy plain, beside an ocean, in a forest, or in a dry region where water is difficult to find. The land around them does not decide everything that will happen. People still make choices, solve problems, create new ideas, and change their surroundings. However, geography can create opportunities and challenges that influence how a society develops. The location of a society can affect the food people grow, the homes they build, the work they do, the resources they use, and the ways they travel. When societies begin connecting with other places, even more changes can occur. Understanding these connections helps answer an important question: How does the world around people help shape the world they create? Geography describes more than where a place is located on a map. It includes landforms, bodies of water, climate, plants, animals, and natural resources. Different environments provide different possibilities. A community near a river may have water for farming and transportation. A community surrounded by grasslands may have room for farming or raising animals. Forests can provide timber. Coastal areas can provide fish and places for ships to travel. The Caddo people provide one example. Many Caddo communities developed in what is now East Texas, where rivers, forests, and fertile land supported daily life. Families grew crops such as corn, beans, and squash. Rivers provided water and helped people move from place to place. Forests supplied materials that could be used for homes, tools, and other needs.

Grade 4, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question, gather facts from sources, build a clear thesis (central idea), and organize the information.

1. What is the central idea (thesis) of the research topic?

- A. Places have names.
- B. Resources can run out.
- C. Societies have people.
- D. A society is shaped by its place, resources, and connections, which create both opportunities and challenges.

2. Which fact BEST supports the thesis?

- A. Research uses sources.
- B. A society's location and resources shape the opportunities and challenges its people face.
- C. Maps show places.
- D. People live in groups.

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

- A. The place, resources, and connections of a society work together to shape how it grows.
- B. I think geography is interesting.
- C. A society is a group of people.
- D. Research takes a long time.

4. Which sentence does NOT belong in this research?

- A. A society's place shapes its opportunities.
- B. Resources influence how people live.
- C. My family is planning a trip next summer.
- D. Connections link a society to others.

5. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. A society's resources shape its future.
- B. A society's resources shapes its future.
- C. A society's resources shaping its future.
- D. A society's resources is shape its future.

CLUSTER 8 · MODULE 1 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE CHECK

Answer Key & Error Analysis

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

1. Thesis

Correct: D

The thesis connects place, resources, and connections to opportunities and challenges. The others are single facts. Picking a single fact : “what do all the facts add up to?”

2. Best supporting fact

Correct: B

The correct fact links location and resources to opportunities and challenges. The others are about research or generic. Choosing a generic fact : practice “Best Evidence Wins.”

3. Best thesis

Correct: A

A research thesis states how the parts work together. The distractors are an opinion, a definition, and a comment about research. Picking the opinion : contrast “I think...” with “The place, resources... work together...”.

4. Does not belong

Correct: C

A trip plan isn't research. The others inform. Missing it : model the “does it belong in research?” check.

5. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: A

“shape” agrees with the plural subject “resources.” The others use wrong forms. Wrong verb : agreement practice. a thesis from facts before the research paper.

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

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Write a clear thesis for a research paper on what shapes a society.” 4.12B(i) 4.12B(i)

4 “A society is shaped by its place, its resources, and its connections to others, which together create both the opportunities and the challenges its people face.”

SECURE · clear research thesis, supported by facts · RPLD: Independent 3 “A society is shaped by its place, resources, and connections.” · DEMONSTRATES · clear thesis, slightly general · RPLD: Visible 2 “Places and resources matter to a society.” · DEVELOPING · a fact; no controlling idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “what do these facts show together?” 1 “Society.” · BEGINNING · topic only · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model turning the topic into a thesis

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

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“In research, your thesis is what all the facts add up to. What do place, resources, and connections all do to a

SAY

SAY

“‘Society’ is a topic. ‘Place, resources, and connections shape a society’ is a thesis.”

► List the three factors (place, resources, connections); ask “what do they do together?” before writing.

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

Module 2 · Choose Relevant Facts Facts that prove the thesis

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 thesis, and use precise words.
STANDARDS	4.12B(ii) support with facts 4.13 gather relevant information 4.11C(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 thesis + 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 thesis 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 thesis: a true-but-unrelated

Multiple-Choice Check

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

What Shapes a Society? Place, Resources, and Connection

Every society begins somewhere. People may live near a river, on a grassy plain, beside an ocean, in a forest, or in a dry region where water is difficult to find. The land around them does not decide everything that will happen. People still make choices, solve problems, create new ideas, and change their surroundings. However, geography can create opportunities and challenges that influence how a society develops. The location of a society can affect the food people grow, the homes they build, the work they do, the resources they use, and the ways they travel. When societies begin connecting with other places, even more changes can occur. Understanding these connections helps answer an important question: How does the world around people help shape the world they create? Geography describes more than where a place is located on a map. It includes landforms, bodies of water, climate, plants, animals, and natural resources. Different environments provide different possibilities. A community near a river may have water for farming and transportation. A community surrounded by grasslands may have room for farming or raising animals. Forests can provide timber. Coastal areas can provide fish and places for ships to travel. The Caddo people provide one example. Many Caddo communities developed in what is now East Texas, where rivers, forests, and fertile land supported daily life. Families grew crops such as corn, beans, and squash. Rivers provided water and helped people move from place to place. Forests supplied materials that could be used for homes, tools, and other needs.

Grade 4, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question, gather facts from sources, build a clear thesis (central idea), and organize the information.

1. Which fact BEST supports the thesis that place shapes a society?

- A. Rivers can be wide.
- B. People own maps.
- C. A society near a river has water for farming, which creates opportunities to grow food.
- D. Research is careful.

2. Which fact does NOT support the thesis?

- A. My cousin likes to collect old maps.
- B. Resources create both opportunities and challenges.
- C. Connections let societies trade ideas.
- D. A place shapes how people live.

3. Which word most precisely completes: “Connections let a society ____ ideas with others”?

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

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

- A. A place does some stuff for people.
- B. A society's location determines the resources it can use and the challenges it must solve.
- C. There is a thing about societies.
- D. It's about places and stuff.

5. Which new fact keeps the thesis?

- A. Some rivers freeze in winter.
- B. People enjoy trips.
- C. Maps use many colors.
- D. A society without a needed resource may form connections to trade for it.

CLUSTER 8 · MODULE 2 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE CHECK

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 how place creates opportunity (food). The others are generic. Choosing a generic fact : test each fact against the thesis.

2. Does not support

Correct: A

Collecting maps is unrelated to what shapes a society. The others are relevant. Missing it : filter relevant from irrelevant research facts.

3. Precise word

Correct: D

“exchange” names exactly what connections let a society 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 (“location,” “resources,” “challenges”). The others rely on “stuff/thing.” Tolerating “stuff/thing” : replace vague words.

5. Fact that keeps the thesis

Correct: D

Forming connections to trade extends the thesis. The distractors drift off-topic. Choosing an unrelated fact : test additions against the thesis. 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 thesis, and explain how it shapes a society.” 4.12B(ii)

4 “A society located near a river has water for farming and travel, which creates opportunities to grow food and trade. This fact supports the thesis that a society's place shapes what its people can do.”

SECURE · relevant fact + explains how it shapes a society · RPLD: Independent 3 “A river gives a society water, which helps it grow.” · DEMONSTRATES · relevant fact, light explanation · RPLD: Visible 2 “Rivers have water.” · DEVELOPING · a fact not connected to the thesis · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “how does this shape a society?” 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 thesis. A river gives water: how does that shape a society?”

SAY

SAY

“A true fact isn't enough. It has to support your thesis about what shapes a society.”

► Have students point to a fact, then finish “This shapes a society because...” before writing.

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

Module 3 · Show It: Organize & Synthesize Group facts and connect them

CLUSTER 8 · MODULE 3 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Organize research into a clear order, synthesize related facts, combine sentences, and edit.
STANDARDS	4.13 organize & synthesize 4.11C(i) combine 4.11D(ix) proper nouns
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent: students SHOW and OWN research organization.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a short ordered plan (thesis : grouped facts : conclusion) + one combined sentence.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

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

Path B

: Application Artifact Student groups related facts and combines two 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 sensibly and the combine

Multiple-Choice Check

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

What Shapes a Society? Place, Resources, and Connection

Every society begins somewhere. People may live near a river, on a grassy plain, beside an ocean, in a forest, or in a dry region where water is difficult to find. The land around them does not decide everything that will happen. People still make choices, solve problems, create new ideas, and change their surroundings. However, geography can create opportunities and challenges that influence how a society develops. The location of a society can affect the food people grow, the homes they build, the work they do, the resources they use, and the ways they travel. When societies begin connecting with other places, even more changes can occur. Understanding these connections helps answer an important question: How does the world around people help shape the world they create? Geography describes more than where a place is located on a map. It includes landforms, bodies of water, climate, plants, animals, and natural resources. Different environments provide different possibilities. A community near a river may have water for farming and transportation. A community surrounded by grasslands may have room for farming or raising animals. Forests can provide timber. Coastal areas can provide fish and places for ships to travel. The Caddo people provide one example. Many Caddo communities developed in what is now East Texas, where rivers, forests, and fertile land supported daily life. Families grew crops such as corn, beans, and squash. Rivers provided water and helped people move from place to place. Forests supplied materials that could be used for homes, tools, and other needs.

Grade 4, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question, gather facts from sources, build a clear thesis (central idea), and organize the information.

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

- A. State the thesis, group facts by place, resources, and connections, 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 place has resources. Resources create opportunities.”

- A. A place has resources resources create opportunities.
- B. Place. Resources. Opportunities.
- C. A place's resources create opportunities for its society.
- D. No change is needed.

3. Which sentence synthesizes (connects) two research facts?

- A. And then stuff about places.
- B. Because a place provides resources, and resources create opportunities, geography shapes a society's future.
- C. Places resources connections society.
- D. Facts and also research things.

4. In “Texas” and “the Gulf of Mexico,” what kind of nouns are these?

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

5. In “a rich resource,” which word is a singular noun?

- A. a
- B. rich
- C. resource
- D. widely

C L U S T E R 8 · M O D U L E 3 · M U L T I P L E - C H O I C E C H E C K

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

3. Synthesis

Correct: B

The correct sentence connects two facts into a bigger point (geography shapes the future). The others don't connect. Choosing a non-synthesis : practice linking facts with “because..., so....”

4. Proper nouns

Correct: D

“Texas” and “the Gulf of Mexico” name specific places : proper nouns. The others are wrong types. Choosing another type : specific places are proper.

5. Singular noun

Correct: C

“resource” names one thing. “a” is an article; “rich” describes; “widely” is an adverb. Choosing a non-noun : sort words into noun vs. not-a-noun. organization and synthesis; Questions 2/4 : combining and proper nouns.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : reteach research organization and synthesis; Questions 2/4 : combining and proper nouns.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Combine two research facts into one synthesized sentence for your paper.” 4.11C(i) 4.11C(i)

4 “Because a society’s location provides the resources its people rely on, geography shapes both the opportunities a society enjoys and the challenges it must overcome.”

SECURE · one correct sentence that synthesizes related facts · RPLD: Independent 3 “A place gives resources, and those resources create opportunities.” · DEMONSTRATES · correct combine, lighter synthesis · RPLD: Visible 2 “A place has resources resources make opportunities.” · DEVELOPING · joins without a connector (run-on) · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add a connecting word 1 “A place has resources. Resources make opportunities.” · BEGINNING · leaves the facts uncombined · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model one combine aloud

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

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“Synthesize: connect facts that belong together. A place gives resources, and resources create opportunities: combine them.”

SAY

SAY

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

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

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

Module 4 · Own & Defend: Research Paper The independent research response

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 thesis, several relevant facts, synthesis, and a conclusion: then check spelling.
STANDARDS	4.13 research paper 4.12B(i-iii) informational 4.11D(xxxv) spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent : Reflective: students OWN and DEFEND a research response.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Monthly-facing Module Evidence: the culminating research paper (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 thesis, facts, synthesis, 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, synthesizing, and spelling in a research

What Shapes a Society? Place, Resources, and Connection

Every society begins somewhere. People may live near a river, on a grassy plain, beside an ocean, in a forest, or in a dry region where water is difficult to find. The land around them does not decide everything that will happen. People still make choices, solve problems, create new ideas, and change their surroundings. However, geography can create opportunities and challenges that influence how a society develops. The location of a society can affect the food people grow, the homes they build, the work they do, the resources they use, and the ways they travel. When societies begin connecting with other places, even more changes can occur. Understanding these connections helps answer an important question: How does the world around people help shape the world they create? Geography describes more than where a place is located on a map. It includes landforms, bodies of water, climate, plants, animals, and natural resources. Different environments provide different possibilities. A community near a river may have water for farming and transportation. A community surrounded by grasslands may have room for farming or raising animals. Forests can provide timber. Coastal areas can provide fish and places for ships to travel. The Caddo people provide one example. Many Caddo communities developed in what is now East Texas, where rivers, forests, and fertile land supported daily life. Families grew crops such as corn, beans, and squash. Rivers provided water and helped people move from place to place. Forests supplied materials that could be used for homes, tools, and other needs.

Grade 4, Cluster 8 (Scope & Sequence). Students form a research question, gather facts from sources, build a clear thesis (central idea), and organize the information.

1. Which is the BEST conclusion for this research paper?

- A. That is the end.
- B. Because place, resources, and connections work together, a society's opportunities and challenges are shaped by all three.
- C. I hope you liked my research.
- D. Society is a word.

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

- A. A place provides a society's resources.
- B. Connections let societies trade ideas.
- C. Resources create opportunities and challenges.
- D. Geography is honestly the most boring subject in school.

3. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. A socity is shaped by its place, resources, and connections.
- B. A society is shaped by its plaice, resources, and connections.
- C. A society is shaped by its place, resources, and connections.
- D. A society is shaped by its place, resorces, and connections.

4. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. A society's connections shape its future.
- B. A society's connections shapes its future.
- C. A society's connections is shape its future.
- D. A society's connections shaping its future.

5. Which order BEST organizes a research response?

- A. Just a list of facts.
- B. A thesis, several relevant facts, synthesis, and a conclusion.
- C. One sentence with no facts.
- D. The conclusion first, then random facts.

C L U S T E R 8 · M O D U L E 4 · M U L T I P L E - C H O I C E C H E C K

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 thesis and gathers the factors. 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

An opinion that geography is boring isn't research. The other three are facts. Missing it : practice opinion vs. fact in research.

3. Correct spelling

Correct: C

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

4. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: A

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

5. Best organization

Correct: B

The research shape is thesis : facts : synthesis : 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; 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; miss on 3 : a spelling sweep.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Explain what shapes a society. Use facts about place, resources, and connections, and”

4 “A society is shaped by its place, its resources, and its connections. Its location determines the resources it can use: a river brings water for farming, while a harbor opens trade. Because resources create both opportunities and challenges, and connections let a society exchange ideas with others, all three factors work together. In the end, place, resources, and connections combine to shape how a society grows and the legacy it leaves.”

SECURE · thesis + several relevant facts + synthesis + conclusion · RPLD: Independent

3 “A society is shaped by place, resources, and connections. A place gives resources, and connections help it trade. That is how societies grow.”

DEMONSTRATES · thesis + facts, lighter synthesis · RPLD: Visible 2 “Societies are near places and resources.” · DEVELOPING · facts; no controlling idea or conclusion · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add a thesis + a conclusion

1 “Society.”

BEGINNING · does not develop the prompt · RPLD: Foundational · Next: plan thesis + 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 thesis, give facts about place, resources, and connections, synthesize

SAY

SAY

“Use your plan: thesis, then grouped facts, then a conclusion about what shapes a society.”

► Give a plan box (thesis / place fact / resource fact / connection fact / conclusion). Independent write;

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