

T H E W R I T I N G A C A D E M Y ®

Assessment Companion

Grade 5 · Cluster 2

ECR: Informational

Passage: Spanish Rule in Early Texas

Grade 5 Assessment Companion: Cluster 2

© 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 · Understanding the Structure of an ECR

The controlling idea of the ECR

C L U S T E R 2 · 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	Identify the central idea about Spanish missions and separate it from a single fact.
STANDARDS	5.12B(i) central idea 5.11B(i) develop a focused piece 5.11D(i) agreement 5.11D(xxix) spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Emergent to Visible: students NOTICE the central idea.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a one-sentence central idea for the passage.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A : Quick Check

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

Path A : Application Artifact

Student writes a central idea 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 + one supporting fact. Check that it captures the purpose and effect of Spanish missions.

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: noticing the central idea about Spanish missions in Texas.

Spanish Rule in Early Texas

"Spanish Rule in Early Texas." Before 1600, Spain began to explore and claim land in what is now Texas. Spanish leaders wanted to expand their empire, spread the Catholic religion, and protect their land from other countries. To reach these goals, they built missions and presidios across the region. Missions were settlements led by Spanish priests called missionaries. (Paired with "A Harvest to Remember," about the Pilgrims' first harvest celebration.)

Grade 5, Cluster 2 (Scope & Sequence). Students plan an informative Extended Constructed Response (ECR) around a clear thesis (central idea) and support it with evidence and explanation, using the TREE and TREES frameworks.

1. What is the central idea of "Spanish Rule in Early Texas"?

- A. Spain had a king.
- B. Priests lived in missions.
- C. Spanish missions and presidios helped Spain expand its empire but changed the lives of Native peoples.
- D. Texas is a large state.

2. Which fact BEST supports the central idea?

- A. Missions were led by priests whose goal was to convert Native peoples, changing their traditions.
- B. Spain is in Europe.
- C. Texas has many rivers.
- D. Soldiers wore armor.

3. Which sentence would be the BEST thesis (central idea) for an ECR?

- A. I think missions are interesting.
- B. A mission is a building.
- C. History happened in Texas.
- D. Spanish missions helped Spain control Texas but deeply affected the Native peoples who lived there.

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

- A. Missions changed Native traditions.
- B. My family vacationed in San Antonio.
- C. Presidios protected Spanish land.
- D. Priests converted Native peoples.

5. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The missions changes Native life.
- B. The missions changed Native life.
- C. The missions changing Native life.
- D. The missions was change Native life.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 5.12B(i) central idea. 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 idea

Correct: C

The central idea connects missions to Spain's goals and the effect on Native peoples. The others are single facts. Picking a single fact: "what do all the facts add up to?"

2. Best supporting fact

Correct: A

The correct fact names the key detail (converting Native peoples changed their traditions). The others are trivial or off-topic.

3. Best thesis (central idea)

Correct: D

A thesis (central idea) states what the passage teaches. The distractors are opinions, definitions, or vague statements.

4. Does not belong

Correct: B

A personal vacation is not about Spanish missions. The others inform. Missing it: model the "does it belong?" check.

5. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: B

"changed" agrees with the plural subject "missions." The others use wrong forms.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 3 missed widely: more work stating a central idea that covers both purpose and effect.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: "Write a clear central idea for an informative ECR about "Spanish Rule in Early Texas."" 5.12B(i)

4 *"Spanish missions and presidios helped Spain expand its empire in Texas, but they deeply changed the traditions and ways of living of the Native peoples who already called this land home."*

SECURE: central idea covering purpose and effect · RPLD: Independent

3 *"Spain built missions in Texas, and they changed how Native peoples lived."*

DEMONSTRATES: clear idea, slightly general · RPLD: Visible

2 *"Spain explored Texas."*

DEVELOPING: a fact; no controlling idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: "what do the facts show?"

1 *"Missions."*

BEGINNING: topic only · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model turning the topic into an idea

Which rubric applies? This four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores every written central idea in Cluster 2. The Multiple-Choice Check uses its own 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT : EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

"Your central idea should cover the WHOLE passage. What do Spanish missions and their effects on Native peoples together teach us?"

SAY

"'Missions' is a topic. 'Spanish missions helped Spain expand but changed the lives of Native peoples' is a thesis (central idea)."

► 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 · Writing a Strong Thesis

The thesis (central idea) frames the whole ECR

C L U S T E R 2 · 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	Write a thesis (central idea) that frames the informative ECR by naming the topic and the controlling idea.
STANDARDS	5.11B(i) structure 5.11C(i) word choice 5.11C(ii) develop ideas 5.12B(i) central idea 5.12B(ii) evidence
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Visible: students CHOOSE a thesis (central idea) that controls the entire response.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one thesis (central idea) with a clear controlling idea.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A : Quick Check

The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on thesis (central idea) and precise language.

Path A : Application Artifact

Student writes a thesis (central idea) that names the topic and the controlling idea.

Path C : Choice Demonstration

Student may map, say, or write the thesis (central idea): same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the thesis (central idea) controls the response, not whether the rest is complete.

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: writing a thesis (central idea) that controls the ECR.

Spanish Rule in Early Texas

"Spanish Rule in Early Texas." Before 1600, Spain began to explore and claim land in what is now Texas. Spanish leaders wanted to expand their empire, spread the Catholic religion, and protect their land from other countries. To reach these goals, they built missions and presidios across the region. Missions were settlements led by Spanish priests called missionaries. (Paired with "A Harvest to Remember," about the Pilgrims' first harvest celebration.)

Grade 5, Cluster 2 (Scope & Sequence). Students plan an informative Extended Constructed Response (ECR) around a clear thesis (central idea) and support it with evidence and explanation, using the TREE and TREES frameworks.

1. Which word most precisely completes: "The passage ____ that missions changed Native life"?
 - A. says
 - B. demonstrates
 - C. does
 - D. goes
2. Which thesis (central idea) names the topic AND the controlling idea?
 - A. The passage is about Texas.
 - B. Spanish missions helped Spain reach its goals but forced Native peoples to abandon their traditional ways of living.
 - C. Missions are old buildings.
 - D. I think missions were bad.
3. Which sentence shows the **STRONGEST** thinking?
 - A. Spain's mission system served imperial goals while imposing lasting changes on Native communities.
 - B. Spain did a thing with missions.
 - C. There were missions and stuff in Texas.
 - D. The old missions said stuff about religion.
4. Which revision **UPGRADES** the language in "It says missions changed things"?
 - A. It says missions changed some things.
 - B. It says missions did stuff.
 - C. The passage explains that Spanish missions transformed Native peoples' traditions and daily routines.
 - D. It talks about missions and changes.
5. Which sentence correctly uses a possessive noun?
 - A. The missions' goal was to convert Native peoples.
 - B. The missions goal was to convert Native peoples.
 - C. The mission's's goal was to convert Native peoples.
 - D. The missions goals was to convert Native peoples.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 5.11B(i) structure. 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: B

"demonstrates" names exactly what the passage does; "says/does/goes" are flat. Choosing a flat verb: trade for a precise academic verb.

2. TOPIC + controlling idea

Correct: B

The correct thesis (central idea) names both the purpose (Spain's goals) and the effect (abandoned traditions). The others are vague or opinions.

3. Strongest thinking

Correct: A

The correct sentence names a precise relationship (imperial goals vs. lasting changes). The others use "stuff/thing."

4. Upgraded language

Correct: C

"The passage explains that Spanish missions transformed..." is precise. The others stay flat.

5. Possessive noun

Correct: A

"missions'" is the correct plural possessive. The others lack the apostrophe or misuse it.

If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 4 missed widely: practice upgrading language; Questions 2 or 3: thesis (central idea) structure.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: "Write a thesis (central idea) for an ECR about "Spanish Rule in Early Texas" that names the topic and the controlling idea." 5.12B(i)

4 *"Spanish missions and presidios helped Spain expand its empire in Texas, but they forced Native peoples to abandon traditions that had defined their communities for generations."*

SECURE: precise topic + controlling idea · RPLD: Independent

3 *"Spain built missions that changed how Native peoples lived."*

DEMONSTRATES: clear, slightly general · RPLD: Visible

2 *"Missions changed stuff."*

DEVELOPING: vague, flat language · RPLD: Emergent · Next: upgrade one word at a time

1 *"Missions."*

BEGINNING: no controlling idea · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model naming what the passage explains

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this thesis (central idea). The MC Check keeps its 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT : EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

"A strong thesis (central idea) names the TOPIC and tells the reader what the whole passage is really about. What is the topic? What is the controlling idea?"

SAY

"'Missions' is a topic. 'Missions helped Spain expand but changed Native life' is a thesis (central idea) with a controlling idea."

► Model one upgrade; then students write their own thesis (central idea).

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

Module 3 · The Reason/Way Branch of the ECR

Prove the thesis (central idea), then explain it

C L U S T E R 2 · M O D U L E 3 · 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 reason/way sentences that branch from the thesis (central idea) and support them with evidence.
STANDARDS	5.11B(iv) transitions 5.11C(iii) organize 5.11C(iv) develop 5.12B(i-iii) ECR
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent: students SHOW reasons/ways and OWN the explanation.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one reason/way sentence + one evidence sentence + one explanation.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A : Quick Check

The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on reasons, evidence, and transitions.

Path A : Application Artifact

Student writes a reason/way sentence with evidence and explanation.

Path C : Choice Demonstration

Student may chart, say, or write the reason/way branch: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the reason/way connects to the thesis (central idea) and the evidence proves it.

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: writing reason/way branches with evidence.

Spanish Rule in Early Texas

"Spanish Rule in Early Texas." Before 1600, Spain began to explore and claim land in what is now Texas. Spanish leaders wanted to expand their empire, spread the Catholic religion, and protect their land from other countries. To reach these goals, they built missions and presidios across the region. Missions were settlements led by Spanish priests called missionaries. (Paired with "A Harvest to Remember," about the Pilgrims' first harvest celebration.)

Grade 5, Cluster 2 (Scope & Sequence). Students plan an informative Extended Constructed Response (ECR) around a clear thesis (central idea) and support it with evidence and explanation, using the TREE and TREES frameworks.

1. Which sentence is a REASON that supports the thesis (central idea)?

- A. One reason Spanish missions changed Native life is that priests required Native peoples to follow new religious practices.
- B. Texas has nice weather.
- C. I like history.
- D. Missions are buildings.

2. Which sentence is an EXPLANATION that proves the reason?

- A. The passage has paragraphs.
- B. This shows that the missions did not just teach religion but replaced entire ways of living, from daily routines to community traditions.
- C. Missions were old.
- D. Spain is in Europe.

3. Which transition word BEST connects a reason to evidence?

- A. However
- B. For example
- C. But
- D. Instead

4. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. The missionarys taught religon.
- B. The missionaries taught religion.
- C. The missionares taught religien.
- D. The missioneries taught religeon.

5. Which sentence correctly uses a comma in a compound sentence?

- A. Spain wanted to expand, and missions helped reach that goal.
- B. Spain wanted to expand and, missions helped reach that goal.
- C. Spain, wanted to expand and missions helped reach that goal.
- D. Spain wanted, to expand and missions helped reach that goal.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 5.11B(iv) transitions. 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. Reason

Correct: A

The correct sentence names a specific reason (new religious practices). The others are off-topic or vague.

2. Explanation

Correct: B

The correct sentence explains WHY the evidence proves the reason. The others do not explain.

3. Transition

Correct: B

"For example" introduces evidence that supports the reason. The others signal contrast or change.

4. Spelling

Correct: B

"missionaries" and "religion" are spelled correctly. The others misspell them.

5. Comma in compound sentence

Correct: A

A comma before "and" joins two independent clauses correctly.

**If several students miss the same question, Questions 1 or 2 missed widely: reteach reason vs. explanation;
Question 3: transition practice.**

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Write one reason that supports your thesis (central idea), add evidence from the text, and explain how it proves the reason.” 5.12B(ii)

4 *“One reason Spanish missions changed Native life is that priests required Native peoples to follow new religious practices. The passage states that missionaries wanted to convert Native groups. This shows that the missions did not just teach religion but replaced entire ways of living.”*
 SECURE: reason + evidence + explanation · RPLD: Independent

3 *“Missions changed Native life because priests made people follow new practices.”*
 DEMONSTRATES: reason + evidence, light explanation · RPLD: Visible

2 *“Missions changed things.”*
 DEVELOPING: reason, no evidence or explanation · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add “The passage states...” + “This shows...”

1 *“Religion.”*
 BEGINNING: no reason or evidence · RPLD: Foundational · Next: find one text detail that supports the thesis (central idea)

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores the reason + evidence + explanation.

TEACHER SCRIPT : EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

“Name a REASON first. Then PROVE it with evidence from the text. Then EXPLAIN how it connects to the thesis (central idea).”

SAY

“A reason without evidence is just a claim. Evidence without explanation is unfinished thinking.”

► Have students write one reason, box the evidence, then add “This shows...” before reviewing.

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

Module 4 · The Evidence Branch of the ECR Tree

The independent Extended Constructed Response

C L U S T E R 2 · 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 ECR: thesis (central idea), reasons, evidence, and explanation, with precise language.
STANDARDS	5.12B(i-iii) ECR 5.11B structure 5.11C(i-iv) develop 5.11D(xxix) spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent to Reflective: students OWN and DEFEND a complete ECR.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Monthly-facing Module Evidence: the culminating ECR.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A : Quick Check

The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on organizing and finishing an ECR.

Path A : Application Artifact

Student writes the full ECR: thesis (central idea), reasons with evidence, and explanation.

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 four-point scale; reward precise thinking, not length.

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: organizing and finishing an ECR.

Spanish Rule in Early Texas

"Spanish Rule in Early Texas." Before 1600, Spain began to explore and claim land in what is now Texas. Spanish leaders wanted to expand their empire, spread the Catholic religion, and protect their land from other countries. To reach these goals, they built missions and presidios across the region. Missions were settlements led by Spanish priests called missionaries. (Paired with "A Harvest to Remember," about the Pilgrims' first harvest celebration.)

Grade 5, Cluster 2 (Scope & Sequence). Students plan an informative Extended Constructed Response (ECR) around a clear thesis (central idea) and support it with evidence and explanation, using the TREE and TREES frameworks.

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

- A. That is the end.
- B. I hope you liked it.
- C. Spain was old.
- D. Because missions served Spain's goals but replaced Native traditions, they remind us that expanding power can come at a deep cost to the people affected.

2. Which sentence does NOT belong in an ECR about Spanish missions?

- A. Missions changed Native traditions.
- B. My family drives a minivan.
- C. Presidios protected Spanish territory.
- D. Priests converted Native peoples.

3. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. The misions transformed Native tradishuns.
- B. The missions transformd Native traditions.
- C. The missions transformed Native traditions.
- D. The missions transformed Native tradisions.

4. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The missions transforms Native life.
- B. The missions transformed Native life.
- C. The missions transforming Native life.
- D. The missions was transform Native life.

5. Which order BEST organizes an ECR?

- A. A list of random facts.
- B. A thesis (central idea), reasons supported by evidence, and a conclusion that ties it together.
- C. One sentence with no evidence.
- D. The conclusion first, then unrelated details.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 5.12B(i-iii) ECR. 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: D

The correct conclusion restates the thesis (central idea) and its significance. The others stop abruptly or add nothing.

2. Does not belong

Correct: B

A family vehicle is not about missions. The other three support the thesis (central idea).

3. Correct spelling

Correct: C

"missions," "transformed," and "traditions" are spelled correctly.

4. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: B

"transformed" agrees with the plural subject "missions."

5. Best organization

Correct: B

An ECR needs a thesis (central idea), reasons with evidence, and a conclusion.

If several students miss the same question, this is the anchor check. Widespread misses on 1 or 5: reteach ECR structure; miss on 3: a spelling sweep.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “In an Extended Constructed Response, explain what “Spanish Rule in Early Texas” shows about how expanding power can affect the people who are already there. Use evidence and explanation.” 5.12B(i-iii)

4 *“Spanish missions and presidios helped Spain expand its empire in Texas, but they deeply changed the lives of the Native peoples who already lived there. The passage explains that priests required Native peoples to follow new religious practices, replacing traditions that had lasted for generations. This shows that expanding power can come at a deep cost. Because Spain’s goals reshaped entire communities, the story of the missions reminds us that progress for one group can mean loss for another.”*

SECURE: thesis (central idea) + reasons + evidence + explanation, precise language · RPLD: Independent

3 *“Spain built missions to expand its empire, and they changed Native life. Priests made people follow new practices, which shows it was not easy for Native peoples.”*

DEMONSTRATES: thesis (central idea) + evidence + explanation, lighter precision · RPLD: Visible

2 *“Spain built missions in Texas.”*

DEVELOPING: a general statement; no reasons or evidence · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add reasons + evidence + “This shows...”

1 *“Missions.”*

BEGINNING: does not answer the prompt · RPLD: Foundational · Next: plan thesis (central idea) + reasons + evidence

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this anchor ECR. Reward precise thinking, not length.

TEACHER SCRIPT : EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

“This is your ECR. State your thesis (central idea), give reasons with evidence from the text, and explain how they prove your idea.”

SAY

“Level up, do not lengthen. Make each sentence show stronger thinking.”

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

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