



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC



Module 1

If You Have to Decide, Declare the Why

Grade 4 · Cluster 6

Tackling TEKS · Reading & Writing

4.11(A)(i) · 4.11(B)(iv) · 4.11(C)(i) · 4.11(C)(ii) · 4.12(C)(i) · 4.12(C)(ii)



★ Meet Our Week!

★ Daily Deck

Week 1 · Low Stamina · Cluster 6 (ECR Argumentative Correspondence)

I Will...

- I will read closely, listen actively, and discuss my reasoning.
- I will use text evidence, write independently, reflect on my growth, and explain my thinking to others.
- I will decide a side and then declare the why.
- I will connect my argument to a bigger idea or theme.

I Can...

- I can build a supportable argumentative claim by choosing a side and declaring the why.
- I can recognize a decision prompt (should/should not, whether or not) as a WHY prompt.
- I can write a claim as a complex sentence using a subordinating conjunction.
- I can name both reasonable sides of an argument before I choose one.



The Great Divider Line

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “A Day That Changed” & “Understanding the Texas Regions”

fiction · nonfiction

How does choosing a side and declaring the why help a writer build a convincing argument from a text?

One side of the line says YES / SHOULD / MATTERS; the other says NO / SHOULD NOT / DOES NOT MATTER.

Move to the side you agree with for each statement, then be ready to declare your why.

★ Dot the Tricky Words

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

★ Daily Deck

D

Dot

Place a small dot above any word you are not sure about yet.

O

Discover

Discover the meaning as we learn together through our lessons.

T

Drop

Erase the dot once you know what the word means.

A little dot above a word means:
“I’m not sure about this word yet.”

Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot, then celebrate when you own it!

★ Decision Prompts Are WHY Prompts

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

?

DECIDE

If a prompt says should or should not, says whether or not, or asks you to choose between ideas, then it is a WHY prompt, and a WHY prompt needs reasons.

C

THE CLAIM

A claim is the thesis (central idea) in argumentative writing. A strong claim answers the prompt and includes a subordinating conjunction because it is a WHY response.

S·E·C

STRUCTURE

Introduction: S, E, C. Body: Reason, Evidence, Explanation, Significant Inference when natural. Conclusion: R1, R2, R3, then a Reflective Statement / Big Picture / Lesson Learned.

If the statement asks whether, should, or asks you to choose a side, decide first and then declare the why. Claim = position + why.

Decision = Why. Choose a side = Give reasons.



Teacher Model: Decide, Then Declare

★ Daily Deck

Day 1 · Reveal (cont.)

Prompt Analysis Questions

What am I being asked to decide?

What side will I take?

Why do I believe that side?

What three reasons can support my side?

Which evidence from the text best proves each reason?

Watch Me!

Prompt: “Explain whether or not students should observe the weather carefully before making plans.”

Sample Claim: “Students should observe the weather carefully before making plans because weather can change quickly, even within a few hours.”

“First, I ask what I must decide. I must decide whether students should observe the weather carefully or should not. I choose that they should. Now I must declare the why.”

★ Declare the Why Dash

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “A Day That Changed” & “Understanding the Texas Regions”

How to Play

- 1 Draw a prompt card and read it aloud.
- 2 Spin.
- 3 Complete the task from the spinner.
- 4 If the group answers correctly, move the Pencil Guy forward one space.
- 5 Record the best answer.

With Your Group...

Prompt Card

Explain whether or not all four Texas regions should be valued as important parts of the state.

Write the Claim

“All four Texas regions should be valued as important parts of the state because each one has different landforms, climate, resources, and economic activities.”

Discuss What Makes a Claim Strong

What words tell us we must
decide a side?

Why is a decision prompt really a
WHY prompt?

What happens if you choose a side
but do not give reasons?

Why should a claim be a **complex**
sentence?

Student Directions: “Connect to the Overarching Question: How does choosing a side and declaring the why build a convincing argument?”



What Makes a Claim Strong?

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

Use the prompt language.

**Name the
position.**

**Explain
the why.**

**Identify what evidence
could support the claim.**

A strong claim clearly chooses a side and declares a why that evidence can support.



Try It On Your Own!

Day 3 · Use (Independent Practice) · Interactive Notebook

DECIDE

For each prompt: underline what must be decided, write the two sides, choose your side, and write a claim using a subordinating conjunction.

PROMPT 1

Explain whether or not students should observe the weather carefully before making plans.

PROMPT 2

Explain whether or not all four Texas regions should be valued equally.

PRECISION

Choose one claim you wrote. Revise it to improve sentence structure and word choice so the position and the why are precise and clear.

Title your notebook page “Cluster 6 Module 1: If You Have to Decide, Declare the Why.”

★ Award & Target!

Day 4 · Award & Target

★ Daily Deck

Award 🏆

Give yourself credit for making a supported decision today.

- I found the decision words in the prompt.
- I named both reasonable sides.
- I chose a side and declared the why.
- I wrote my claim as a complex sentence.

Target 🎯

“I chose a side and proved my why by _____.”

Curiosity Questions

How can theme make an argument stronger?
Why do readers trust arguments that include evidence?



Exit Ticket

Day 5 · Educate & Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck

How does choosing a side and declaring the why help a writer build a convincing argument from a text?

“I know it is argumentative when ____.” “The first thing I do when I see a prompt is ____.” “A strong claim should ____.”

Finish: “If you have to decide, declare the why means ____.”



Decide and Declare

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

For students who need more support recognizing what a prompt is asking them to decide. Slow it down and make the thinking visible.

Read
one
prompt
aloud.

Highlight
the
decision
words.

Ask
students
to name
the two
sides.

Have students
place a sticky
note on the side
they choose.

Orally
generate
one
reason.

Turn the reason
into a claim
sentence using
because or since.

Sentence Frames: “___ should ___ because ___.” / “I believe ___ because ___.”



Prompt Architect Challenge

Enrichment · Write in your notebook

Students who master the concept create their own argumentative sentence-statement prompts based on the passages.

Their prompts must: begin with Explain, require the writer to choose a side, include either should/should not or whether or not, connect to theme or big-picture thinking.

Then they answer one of their own prompts with a claim, three reasons, one piece of evidence for each reason, and a reflective ending statement.

Extension: students swap prompts with a partner and evaluate: Does this prompt require a decision? Is it truly a WHY prompt?

★ My Progress Tracker

This tracker is for YOU! As you read and write this week, look at each skill. If you can do it all by yourself, color in the box that matches how you feel. Be honest, this helps you see how much you are growing!

I Can...	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Find the decision words in a prompt.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Name both reasonable sides.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Choose a side and declare the why.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Write my claim as a complex sentence.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Revise my claim to make it precise.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it



Citizenship Connection

Good Citizens · Our Community & Country

★ A Day That Changed

“Soon, light rain began to fall, and teachers quickly moved everyone inside. Some students were disappointed, but Ms. Rios saw it as a chance to explain.”

Let's Look at an Answer!

Prompt: Explain whether or not students should observe the weather carefully before making plans.
Write a claim that chooses a side and declares the why.

LOW Level 1

“Students should watch the weather. It is good.”

What Is Working: The student chooses a side.

Teacher Notes: The claim is a simple sentence with no why and no reason the text can support.

What Needs Improvement: Turn it into a complex sentence with “because” and a reason the passage supports.

Let's Look at Another Answer!

Prompt: Explain whether or not students should observe the weather carefully before making plans.
Write a claim that chooses a side and declares the why.

MEDIUM Level 2-3

“Students should observe the weather carefully because the weather is important.”

What Is Working: A complex sentence with a side and a why.

Teacher Notes: The why is general (“the weather is important”) rather than tied to what the passage shows.

What Needs Improvement: Sharpen the why to name what the passage shows about how quickly weather can change.

Our Strongest Answer!

Prompt: Explain whether or not students should observe the weather carefully before making plans.
Write a claim that chooses a side and declares the why.

HIGH Level 4

“Students should observe the weather carefully before making plans because weather can change quickly, even within a few hours, the way it did on Jayden’s field day.”

What Is Working: A complex claim that clearly chooses a side and declares a specific why the passage can support, with a connection to how careful observation helps people plan.

Teacher Notes: The claim is supportable, precise, and ready for three reasons and evidence.

★ **This is our target!**