



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC



Module 1

Understanding the Structure of an ECR

Grade 5 · Cluster 2

Week 1 · Low Endurance · ECR Informative

Tackling TEKS · Reading & Writing

5.11(B)(i) · 5.12(B)(i) · 5.12(B)(ii) · 5.12(B)(iii)



★ Meet Our Week!

Week 1 · Low Endurance · Cluster 2 (ECR)

★ Daily Deck

I Will...

- Find important nouns, the important verb, and the clue word in a prompt.
- Decide whether a prompt asks WHY or HOW.
- Identify the problem in the text.
- Write a thesis (central idea) that matches the prompt.
- Connect my thesis (central idea) to reasons, evidence, and explanation.

I Can...

- Shape a prompt with a circle, box, and triangle.
- Tell whether a prompt asks for reasons or a way something happened.
- Use the conflict in a text to help me think.
- Write a complete thesis (central idea) for an ECR.

★ Two Informational Passages

Day 1 · Gather

★ Daily Deck

Passage 1

A Harvest to Remember

Genre: Informational passage

The Pilgrims struggled in a new land until Wampanoag people, including Squanto, taught them how to grow crops, catch fish, and find food. That help led to a productive harvest and a celebration.

Passage 2

Spanish Rule in Early Texas

Genre: Informational passage

Spain built missions and presidios to expand its empire, spread Catholicism, and protect its land. Missions transferred Spanish customs and skills, while presidios protected missions and settlements.

Both explain how actions and systems shaped outcomes. Students DOT unfamiliar words as they read.

★ Shaping the Prompt

Day 1 · Gather

★ Daily Deck

Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

A Topic Only

Spain built missions and presidios.

A Matched Thesis (Central Idea)

Clue word: WHY

Thinking type: REASONS

Strong thesis (central idea): Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas because missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism while presidios protected missions and nearby settlements.

Circle important nouns, box the important verb, and triangle WHY or HOW. A thesis (central idea) must answer the exact WHY or HOW question, not just state a detail.



Dot the Tricky Words

Day 1 · Gather

★ 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.”
Words to DOT: mission · presidio · cooperation · Catholicism · significance

Dot the word. Discover the meaning. Drop the dot.



The ECR TREE Chart

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

T

Thesis (Central Idea)

The answer to the prompt.

R

Reason/Way

Why or how the thesis (central idea) is true.

E·E·S

Evidence, Explanation, Significance

Gives text proof. Connects the proof to the thesis (central idea).
States why the idea matters.

The roots are the passage and prompt; the trunk is the thesis (central idea); the branches are the reason or way, evidence, and explanation.

The Two Types of Prompts

WHY asks for reasons something happened or was needed.

HOW asks for a way something happened or how a problem was solved.

Ask: *Does this prompt need a reason, or a way something happened?*

Watch Me!

Prompt: Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas. I see the word 'why.' That tells me I need a reason. I circle 'missions and presidios' as the Noun of Importance, box 'helped maintain control' as the Verb of Importance, and triangle 'why' as the clue word.

Modeled Thesis (Central Idea): Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas because missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism while presidios protected missions and settlements.

Point out how the thesis (central idea) answers **WHY** with reasons from the informational passage.

★ Spin and Shape Showdown!

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “A Harvest to Remember” & “Spanish Rule in Early Texas”

How to Play

- 1** Spin WHY, HOW, or BOTH.
Check: Name the result.
- 2** Draw a prompt card for the thinking type.
Check: Read the whole prompt.
- 3** Use the sample: Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest.
Check: HOW asks for a way.
- 4** Circle important nouns with a hand motion.
Check: Squanto; Pilgrims; harvest
- 5** Box the important verb with a hand motion.
Check: helped prepare

Sample Prompt Card

Prompt Card · HOW

“Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest.”

shape it

Thesis (Central Idea)

“Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest by teaching them to grow crops, catch fish, and find food in the area.”

★ Spin and Shape Showdown! (continued)

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “A Harvest to Remember” & “Spanish Rule in Early Texas”

How to Play

- 6 Triangle the clue word with a hand motion.
Check: HOW
- 7 Say the type aloud.
Check: A way something happened
- 8 Use the passage's challenge to guide thinking.
Check: The Pilgrims lacked food and needed to learn how to use the land.
- 9 Write a complete thesis (central idea).
Check: Match the exact prompt.

Sample Prompt Card

Prompt Card · HOW

“Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest.”

shape it

Thesis (Central Idea)

“Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest by teaching them to grow crops, catch fish, and find food in the area.”

★ Spin and Shape Showdown! (continued)

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “A Harvest to Remember” & “Spanish Rule in Early Texas”

How to Play

- 10 Possible thesis (central idea): Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest by teaching them to grow crops, catch fish, and find food in the area.
Check: States how Squanto helped.
- 11 Check the thesis (central idea) against the prompt.
Check: Correct thesis (central idea): move 2 spaces!
- 12 Switch roles and play another turn.
Check: Both partners shape and write.

Sample Prompt Card

Prompt Card · HOW

“Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest.”

shape it

Thesis (Central Idea)

“Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest by teaching them to grow crops, catch fish, and find food in the area.”

Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

What told you this was a **WHY** prompt?

How did the **conflict** help you write your thesis
(central idea)?

What has this passage reminded you of in
your own life?

What have you learned from this passage that
will help you in your own life?

Student Directions: “What has this passage reminded you of in your own life?”

Expected responses:

Important ideas: missions spread customs and Catholicism. Presidios protected missions and settlements. Spanish rule also caused conflict when Native Americans lost land and freedom.



What Makes a Thesis (Central Idea) Strong?

★ Daily Deck

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

A thesis (central idea) must answer the exact WHY or HOW question, not just state a detail.

**a reason grounded
in the conflict**

**text proof connected
to the thesis (central idea)**

**language that answers
the exact prompt**

Think about: the conflict · the exact WHY or HOW question.

★ Try It On Your Own!

Day 3 · Use

WHY

Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.
Shape the prompt and write a matching thesis (central idea).

HOW

Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest. *Shape the prompt, write a thesis (central idea), and underline the words that tell how Squanto helped.*

MARK

Circle the important nouns, box the important verb, and triangle the clue word (WHY or HOW). Underline the reason in your thesis (central idea).

Shape the prompt · write a thesis (central idea) · underline the reason · use two vocabulary words.

Step 4: Add one piece of evidence and one explanation sentence if ready. 5.7C



The Moment They Figured It Out

Day 4 · Award

★ Daily Deck

Student Award

- What can I already do? One prompt I shaped or thesis (central idea) I wrote successfully, and the evidence in my work:

Take a Step Forward If...

You shaped your prompt correctly; your thesis (central idea) matched the prompt; you used the conflict to guide your thinking.



What Do I Still Need to Grow?

Day 4 · Target

★ Daily Deck

Student Target

- What do I want to practice next? One next step for shaping a prompt or writing a matching thesis (central idea):

Weak Thesis (Central Idea)

“Spain built missions and presidios.”

Possible Revision: “Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control because missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism while presidios protected nearby settlements.”



Turn and Teach!

Day 5 · Educate and Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck

1

Demonstrate

circle, box, and triangle.

2

Explain

WHY versus HOW.

3

Trace

the thesis (central idea) through
T, R, E, E, S.

“Turn to someone near you and teach them what you learned today about shaping a prompt and building a thesis (central idea). Teaching it out loud in your own words is how you prove you truly own it.”



Explain and Educate

Day 5 · Partner Teach-Back

★ Daily Deck

Explain It

- Use the ECR (TREE) Anchor Chart.
- Explain where reasons, evidence, explanation, and significance would go after the thesis (central idea).

Listen For

- Reason/Way
- Text proof
- The explanation connecting the proof to the thesis (central idea)



Exit Ticket

Day 5 · Transfer

★ Daily Deck

Student-Friendly Target: I can shape a WHY prompt and write a clear thesis (central idea).

Prompt: Explain why presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

Directions: Read this excerpt from "Spanish Rule in Early Texas": "Their purpose was to serve as a protective force for the missions and nearby settlements. Soldiers guarded the area and helped keep control of the land." Then circle the important nouns, box the important verb, and triangle the clue word in the prompt.

1. Selected response. This prompt asks for: [] REASONS (WHY) [] A WAY (HOW) (2 points)
2. Constructed response. In one sentence, explain why presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas: (4 points)
3. Underline the reason in your thesis (central idea). (2 points)
4. Transfer / application. Name the detail in the excerpt that BEST shows why people needed a solution: (2 points)

Total Score: _____ / 10



Build It, Fix It, Say It

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

Build It: Spain wanted to _____. Missions helped by _____. Presidios helped by _____. So the thesis (central idea) is: _____.

“Spain built missions and presidios”

“Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control because missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism while presidios protected missions and settlements”

Fix It: “Spain built missions and presidios” becomes a sentence that explains what each settlement did.

Say It: “The passage says... This means...” Start with the text and finish with the outcome.

★ Think Like an Author, Write Like a Scholar

Enrichment: Connect Across Texts

Part 1: Find the System. Briefly compare the two texts, then shape one prompt about how systems shape outcomes. 5.7B

Prompt: Explain how systems shaped people and outcomes in the two passages.

Students circle “systems,” “people,” and “outcomes,” box “shaped,” and explain that HOW asks for ways. They use one detail about missions and presidios and one detail about Wampanoag help.

Part 2: Write a Matching Thesis (central idea). Students write: “Missions and presidios shaped people and outcomes by spreading Spanish customs and protecting settlements, while Wampanoag knowledge helped the Pilgrims use the land and prepare a productive harvest.” Partners check that the thesis (central idea) explains HOW.

★ Think Like an Author, Write Like a Scholar

★ Daily Deck

Enrichment: Connect Across Texts (continued)

Part 3: Develop and Transfer. Use TREE to plan evidence and explanation for the cross-text thesis (central idea). Then apply the same habit to “Explain how Squanto helped the Pilgrims prepare for a productive harvest.” Shape it, identify the challenge, and write a matching thesis (central idea) with the way underlined.

Expert Reflection: have students explain how the shaped words and conflict helped them write a matching thesis (central idea) for each prompt.

★ My Progress Tracker

Directions: This tracker is for YOU. As you practice shaping prompts and writing theses (central ideas), look at each skill below. If you can do it all by yourself without help, check the box that matches how you feel. Be honest with yourself. This helps you see your growth.

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Circle important nouns, box the important verb, and triangle WHY or HOW.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Tell whether a prompt asks for reasons or a way something happened.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Explain the difference between WHY and HOW.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Identify the problem or conflict in the text.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Write a thesis (central idea) that answers WHY with a reason.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Write a thesis (central idea) that answers HOW with a way something happened.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Add evidence that supports my thesis (central idea).	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Explain how my evidence proves my thinking.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Revise my thesis (central idea) to make it clear and complete.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!

★ Citizenship Connection

★ **Systems shape people and outcomes through settlement, protection, cooperation, and shared knowledge.**

Spain built missions and presidios to expand, spread Catholicism, and protect its land.
Wampanoag people helped the Pilgrims learn to use the land and prepare food.

Reflect & Discuss

How do systems and shared knowledge shape people and outcomes?

Low Exemplar

Prompt: Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

LOW Level 1

“Spain built missions and presidios.”

What the student did successfully: Named an important action from the passage and attempted a complete sentence.

What is missing: The response does not answer WHY and has no reason, evidence, or explanation.

Why it falls at this level: The response names an action without explaining how missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control.

Exact next instructional step: Shape the prompt and complete “Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control because _____.”

Medium Exemplar

Prompt: Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

MEDIUM Level 2-3

“Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control because they helped Spain protect the land.”

What the student did successfully: The thesis (central idea) answers WHY and includes a reason connected to the passage.

What is missing: The reason is too vague and there is no evidence or explanation.

Why it falls at this level: The thesis (central idea) is too general and does not name the separate work of missions and presidios.

Exact next instructional step: Add evidence that missions spread customs and Catholicism and presidios protected missions and settlements.

High Exemplar

Prompt: Explain why missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas.

HIGH Level 4

Clue word: WHY

Thinking type: REASONS

Strong thesis (central idea): Missions and presidios helped Spain maintain control in early Texas because missions spread Spanish customs and Catholicism while presidios protected missions and nearby settlements.

Why it works: It answers WHY with two specific reasons grounded in the informational passage.

★ **This is our target!**