

THE WRITING ACADEMY®

Assessment Companion

Grade 3 · Cluster 1

Informational SCR

Passage: The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

Grade 3 Assessment Companion: Cluster 1

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Module 1 · Notice the Central Idea Introduce & make the target visible

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 1 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Identify the one clear central idea of an informational passage and tell a supporting detail from a topic detail.
STANDARDS	3.12B(i) central idea 3.11D(i) complete sentences + subject-verb agreement
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Emergent : Visible: students NOTICE and CHOOSE the central idea with support.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a one-sentence central idea + one supporting detail.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check (next pages): a fast selected-response grade of central-idea recognition.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes a central-idea sentence for the passage and underlines one detail that proves it.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may map, say, or write the central idea: same target, same scoring (Choice Integrity Test).

Grade the target, not everything. Collect only the central-idea sentence + one supporting detail. Do

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: noticing a clear central idea. Optional, for a quick

The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. After many weeks at sea, they reached the coast of North America. The Pilgrims explored the land and found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and ships. There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted. The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely. Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly. They started constructing small homes and gathering wood for fires. Soon, Plymouth became the place where they settled and built their new colony. (Paired with "Life Along the Nile River.")

Grade 3, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). Central idea and details are the assessment targets across all four modules.

1. What is the central idea of the passage?

- A. The Pilgrims built ships.
- B. The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had everything they needed.
- C. Plymouth had a harbor.
- D. Trees grow in forests.

2. Which detail BEST supports the central idea?

- A. The Pilgrims were travelers.
- B. Plymouth had a safe harbor, fresh water, and land for crops.
- C. Ships are made of wood.
- D. The land was explored.

3. Which sentence would be the BEST topic sentence?

- A. Plymouth is a place.
- B. Plymouth had everything the Pilgrims needed to build a home.
- C. I like boats.
- D. Trees are tall.

4. Which sentence does NOT belong in this passage?

- A. Plymouth had a safe harbor.
- B. My uncle went sailing last summer.
- C. The forests had tall trees for building.
- D. There was fresh water and farmland.

5. Which verb correctly completes the sentence: "The Pilgrims ____ the land."

- A. explores
- B. explored
- C. exploring
- D. explore's

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.12B(i): identifying and supporting a clear 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: B

B names the one idea that controls the whole passage. A and C are true details but too narrow; D is off-topic. A student who picks A or C may be confusing a detail with the central idea : reteach “topic detail vs. big idea.”

2. Best supporting detail

Correct: B

B lists the needs Plymouth met: the evidence for “everything they needed.” Choosing A/C/D suggests the student picks any true fact rather than a relevant one : practice “Best Evidence Wins.”

3. Best topic sentence

Correct: B

B states a controlling idea an informational paragraph can develop. Picking C signals opinion/informational confusion : contrast “I like...” with “Plymouth had...”

4. Sentence that does not belong

Correct: B

B is a personal aside, not information about why the Pilgrims chose Plymouth. Missing B suggests the student isn't checking each sentence against the central idea : model the “does it belong?” check.

5. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: B

“explored” agrees with the plural subject “Pilgrims” and fits past-tense narration. Choosing A/D shows agreement or apostrophe confusion : practice matching plural subjects to their verbs. you can reteach the pattern. Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : the class needs more work separating a detail from a central idea.

If several students miss the same question, the Error Analysis names the likely misconception so you can reteach the pattern. Questions 1 or 3 missed widely : the class needs more work separating a detail from a central idea.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Write a clear central idea for a paragraph about why the Pilgrims chose Plymouth.” 3.12B(i)

2 “*The Pilgrims found Plymouth and it had trees and water.*”
DEVELOPING · lists facts; names the topic but no controlling idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “Best Central Idea” artifact

1 “*The Pilgrims were travelers.*”
BEGINNING · restates the topic; no idea about it yet · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model turning a topic into an idea

Which rubric applies? This four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores every written central-idea response in Cluster 1. The Multiple-Choice Check uses its own 5-point key. Performance/portfolio tasks add a task-specific rubric in the Cluster Evidence Package.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“Today you'll write one sentence: your central idea. That's the ONE big thing you want your reader to

SAY

SAY

“A central idea is not a list and not just the topic. 'The Pilgrims' is a topic. 'The Pilgrims chose Plymouth

► 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 · Choose the Best Detail Support the idea with relevant evidence

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 2 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Choose the detail that best supports the central idea, and add an idea to strengthen a sentence.
STANDARDS	3.12B(ii) support with details 3.11C(i) revise: add ideas
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Visible: students CHOOSE and SHOW which detail proves the idea.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: a detail chosen to prove the idea + one sentence improved by adding an idea.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on choosing relevant support and adding ideas.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student picks one detail that proves the central idea and revises a short sentence by adding an idea.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may highlight, chart, or write the best supporting detail: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade the match between detail and idea, and whether the added

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: choosing the best supporting detail and adding ideas to

The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. After many weeks at sea, they reached the coast of North America. The Pilgrims explored the land and found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and ships. There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted. The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely. Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly. They started constructing small homes and gathering wood for fires. Soon, Plymouth became the place where they settled and built their new colony. (Paired with "Life Along the Nile River.")

Grade 3, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). Central idea and details are the assessment targets across all four modules.

1. Which detail BEST supports the idea that Plymouth had everything the Pilgrims needed?

- A. The Pilgrims were travelers.
- B. The forests had tall trees for building homes and ships.
- C. The Pilgrims explored.
- D. Plymouth is a name.

2. Which detail does NOT support the central idea?

- A. Plymouth had a safe harbor.
- B. There was fresh water and farmland.
- C. The Pilgrims liked to sing songs.
- D. The forests had tall trees.

3. Which is the BEST way to add an idea to: "The Pilgrims found Plymouth."

- A. The Pilgrims found Plymouth.
- B. The Pilgrims found Plymouth, where forests had tall trees for building homes.
- C. The Pilgrims found. Plymouth.
- D. Plymouth the Pilgrims found.

4. Which sentence gives a REASON the Pilgrims chose Plymouth, not just a fact?

- A. Plymouth is an area.
- B. The Pilgrims chose Plymouth because it had fresh water and farmland.
- C. There were trees.
- D. They had ships.

5. A writer wants to prove Plymouth was a good place to live. Which detail should they add?

- A. The weather is cold in winter.
- B. There was land where crops could be planted.
- C. Ships are big.
- D. Some travelers were tired.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.12B(ii) / 3.11C(i): choosing relevant support and adding ideas. 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 supporting detail

Correct: B

B shows a need Plymouth met (wood for building): direct support for the idea. Choosing A/C/D shows the student picks any true fact : practice testing a detail against the idea it must prove.

2. Detail that does not support

Correct: C

C is off-idea (a personal activity), not a reason Plymouth met the Pilgrims' needs. Missing C means the student isn't filtering relevant from irrelevant support : model "does this prove the idea?"

3. Best way to add an idea

Correct: B

B combines and adds a reason (trees for building). A adds nothing; C/D are broken. Choosing A signals the student joins without adding meaning : practice "add an idea, don't just glue."

4. Reason vs. fact

Correct: B

B answers WHY with "because..." the mark of support in informational writing. Choosing A/C/D shows fact/reason confusion : contrast "There were trees" with "...because there were trees to build with."

5. Detail to add

Correct: B

B extends "everything they needed" with farmland. A is off-idea; C/D are unrelated. Choosing A shows drift to interesting-but-unrelated facts : test each addition against the central idea. distinguishing a relevant reason from any true fact. Question 3 missed : reteach "add an idea" revision (11C(i)).

If several students miss the same question, Question 1 or 4 missed widely : the class needs work distinguishing a relevant reason from any true fact. Question 3 missed : reteach "add an idea" revision (11C(i)).

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Choose one detail that best supports the central idea, and explain why it helps the”

4 “The forests had tall trees, which the Pilgrims needed to build homes and ships. This proves Plymouth had what they needed to live.”

SECURE · relevant detail + explains how it meets a need + links to the idea · RPLD: Independent 3 “The forests had tall trees for building. That helped the Pilgrims.” · DEMONSTRATES · relevant detail, thin explanation · RPLD: Visible

2 “The trees were tall.”

DEVELOPING · names a detail but does not connect it to the Pilgrims' needs · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “Why does this help?” sentence frame

1 “The Pilgrims found Plymouth.”

BEGINNING · copies a sentence; no chosen detail or explanation · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model choosing one detail on purpose

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this choose-and-explain response. The MC Check uses its 5-point key. This is the same scale as Module 1: students see the target grow, not the rubric change.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“This time, don't just find a detail: CHOOSE the one that best proves our central idea, then tell me WHY it

SAY

SAY

“A good detail answers 'because.' The Pilgrims needed a home, and the trees helped because they could build

► Have students point to the detail, then finish the sentence “This helps because...” before writing.

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

Module 3 · Show It: Combine & Organize Build stronger sentences independently

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 3 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Combine two short sentences into one stronger sentence that adds an idea; edit nouns for correctness.
STANDARDS	3.11C(i) revise: combine + add ideas 3.11D(vi)/(viii) singular & common nouns
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent: students SHOW and OWN the revision move without support.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Daily Learning Artifact: one combined “Before : After” sentence + two nouns correctly identified.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on combining sentences and identifying nouns.

Path B

: Application Artifact Student rewrites two short passage sentences into one stronger sentence that adds an idea.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may use sentence strips, a chart, or writing to show the combine: same target, same scoring.

Grade the target, not everything. Grade whether the combine produces one correct sentence that

Multiple-Choice Check

Five questions on this module's target: showing a stronger sentence and editing nouns. Read the

The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. After many weeks at sea, they reached the coast of North America. The Pilgrims explored the land and found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and ships. There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted. The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely. Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly. They started constructing small homes and gathering wood for fires. Soon, Plymouth became the place where they settled and built their new colony. (Paired with "Life Along the Nile River.")

Grade 3, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). Central idea and details are the assessment targets across all four modules.

1. What is the BEST way to combine: “The Pilgrims explored the land. They found Plymouth.”

- A. The Pilgrims explored the land they found Plymouth.
- B. The Pilgrims explored the land and found Plymouth, which had a safe harbor.
- C. Explored the land. Plymouth found.
- D. No change is needed.

2. Which revision ADDS an idea instead of only joining?

- A. The forests were tall and the forests were big.
- B. The forests had tall trees, which the Pilgrims used to build homes and ships.
- C. The forests. The trees.
- D. Forests were there and trees were there.

3. Which sentence is a run-on that should be fixed?

- A. Plymouth had a safe harbor, and it had fresh water.
- B. Plymouth had a safe harbor it had fresh water too.
- C. Plymouth had a safe harbor.
- D. There was fresh water.

4. In “a place where they could live,” which word is a singular noun?

- A. where
- B. place
- C. they
- D. could

5. In “a group of travelers,” which words are common nouns?

- A. group and travelers
- B. of and a
- C. group only
- D. none

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.11C(i) / 3.11D(vi)(viii): combining sentences to add ideas and editing nouns.

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 combine

Correct: B

B joins the two sentences AND adds an idea (the safe harbor). A is a run-on; C is fragments; D leaves choppy sentences. Choosing D means the student doesn't yet see two short sentences as improvable : model "combine + add."

2. Adds an idea vs. joins

Correct: B

B combines and adds new information (why the trees mattered). A/D just repeat; C is fragments. Choosing A/D shows joining without adding : practice "what new idea can I add when I combine?"

3. Run-on

Correct: B

B fuses two independent clauses with no connecting word: the run-on. A uses ", and" correctly. Missing B : reteach spotting two complete thoughts jammed together (connects to 11D(i)).

4. Singular noun

Correct: B

"place" names one thing. "where/they/could" are not nouns. Choosing A/C shows noun/function-word confusion : sort words into noun vs. not-a-noun.

5. Common nouns

Correct: A

"group" and "travelers" name general people/things (not a specific name). Choosing C (group only) shows the student misses "travelers" : practice finding every common noun in a phrase. and run-ons together (11C(i)/11D(i)). Questions 4-5 missed : more noun-sorting practice before the Module 4 assessment.

If several students miss the same question, Question 1 or 3 missed widely : reteach combining and run-ons together (11C(i)/11D(i)). Questions 4-5 missed : more noun-sorting practice before the Module 4 assessment.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “Combine two short sentences from the passage into one stronger sentence that adds an”

4 “”

SECURE · one correct sentence that adds a meaningful idea · RPLD: Independent · DEMONSTRATES · combines correctly, adds a modest idea · RPLD: Visible · DEVELOPING · joins with “and” but adds no new idea · RPLD: Emergent · Next: “add an idea” frame

1

“The Pilgrims found Plymouth. There were forests.”

BEGINNING · leaves the two short sentences unchanged · RPLD: Foundational · Next: model one combine aloud

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this revision artifact. Editing (nouns) is scored on the Standards Sweep tracking sheet, not this scale. The MC Check keeps its 5-point key.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“You’re the writer now. Take two short, choppy sentences and make ONE stronger sentence: and add an

SAY

SAY

“Watch the trap: joining with ‘and’ isn’t enough. Add something new: a reason, a detail, a description.”

► Show one Before : After aloud, then have students combine a different pair independently. Circle the added

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

Module 4 · Own & Defend: Full Response The independent constructed response

CLUSTER 1 · MODULE 4 · MODULE ASSESSMENT MAP

What to Assess This Week

ASSESSMENT TARGET	Write a complete informational constructed response: central idea, two supporting details, and a conclusion: then check spelling.
STANDARDS	3.12B(i-iii) informational SCR 3.11D(xxxii) high- frequency spelling
RPLD STAGE THIS WEEK	Independent : Reflective: students OWN and DEFEND a full response.
EVIDENCE TYPE	Monthly-facing Module Evidence: the culminating SCR that shows the whole cluster target in one piece.

Three Ways to Gather the Evidence

Path A

: Quick Check The 5-question Multiple-Choice Check on organizing and finishing a response (conclusion, spelling, order).

Path B

: Application Artifact Student writes the full SCR to the prompt using two details from the passage and a conclusion.

Path C

: Choice Demonstration Student may plan-then-write or dictate-then-write: same target, same scoring; the SCR is the evidence.

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, concluding, and spelling in a full response.

The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth

In 1620, a group of travelers called the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a place where they could live and practice their beliefs freely. After many weeks at sea, they reached the coast of North America. The Pilgrims explored the land and found an area called Plymouth. Nearby were forests filled with tall trees that could be used to build homes and ships. There was also fresh water and land where crops could be planted. The harbor made it possible for their ship to anchor safely. Winter was coming, and the Pilgrims needed to begin building shelters quickly. They started constructing small homes and gathering wood for fires. Soon, Plymouth became the place where they settled and built their new colony. (Paired with "Life Along the Nile River.")

Grade 3, Cluster 1 (Scope & Sequence). Central idea and details are the assessment targets across all four modules.

1. Which is the BEST concluding sentence for a paragraph about Plymouth?

- A. And that is all.
- B. Because it had a harbor, forests, water, and farmland, Plymouth had everything the Pilgrims needed.
- C. Plymouth is a place.
- D. I hope you liked my writing.

2. Which sentence does NOT belong in an informational response about Plymouth?

- A. Plymouth had a safe harbor.
- B. The forests had tall trees.
- C. Pilgrims are the best and everyone should like them.
- D. There was land for crops.

3. Which sentence is spelled correctly?

- A. Their was fresh water and land.
- B. There was fresh water and land.
- C. They're was fresh water and land.
- D. Ther was fresh water and land.

4. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The Pilgrims was happy.
- B. The Pilgrims were happy.
- C. The Pilgrims is happy.
- D. The Pilgrims be happy.

5. Which order BEST organizes an informational response?

- A. Details, then topic, then nothing.
- B. Central idea, then supporting details, then a conclusion.
- C. Conclusion first, then random facts.
- D. Just a list of facts.

Purpose: a quick, gradeable check of 3.12B(iii) / 3.11D(xxxii): organizing and finishing an informational response.

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: B

B restates the central idea and gathers the details: a real conclusion. Choosing A/D shows the student ends by stopping, not concluding : model “conclusions finish the thinking.”

2. Sentence that does not belong

Correct: C

C is an opinion, not information: it does not belong in an informational response. Missing C : practice the opinion vs. informational check before the final draft.

3. Correct spelling

Correct: B

B uses “There” correctly (a high-frequency word, 11D(xxxii)). A/C/D confuse there/their/they're or misspell. Choosing A/C : targeted there/their/they're practice; D : high-frequency spelling review.

4. Subject-verb agreement

Correct: B

“were” agrees with the plural “Pilgrims.” Choosing A/C shows plural-subject agreement error : return to 11D(i) practice.

5. Best organization

Correct: B

B is the informational shape: idea : support : conclusion. Choosing A/D shows the student writes a list, not an organized response : use a plan before drafting. on 1 or 5 : reteach organization/conclusion before students write the anchor SCR. Miss on 3 : a short high-frequency spelling sweep.

If several students miss the same question, This is the pre-assessment check. Widespread misses on 1 or 5 : reteach organization/conclusion before students write the anchor SCR. Miss on 3 : a short high-frequency spelling sweep.

Exemplars & Rubric

Prompt: “What did the Pilgrims need in a new home, and how did Plymouth provide it? Use”

4 “The Pilgrims needed a safe place to live, and Plymouth gave them everything. It had a safe harbor for their ships and forests with tall trees to build homes. There was also fresh water and farmland for crops. That is why the Pilgrims chose Plymouth to build their new home.”

SECURE · central idea + two relevant details + explanation + conclusion · RPLD: Independent 3 “The Pilgrims needed a home. Plymouth had a harbor and trees and water. They chose it.” · DEMONSTRATES · idea + details, thin explanation and conclusion · RPLD: Visible

2 “Plymouth had a harbor and trees and water and land.”

DEVELOPING · lists details; no controlling idea or conclusion · RPLD: Emergent · Next: add an idea sentence + a conclusion

1 “The Pilgrims went to Plymouth.”

BEGINNING · does not answer the prompt with support · RPLD: Foundational · Next: plan idea + 2 details before writing

Which rubric applies? The four-point Targeted Evidence Scale scores this anchor constructed response: the cluster's strongest single piece of evidence. This is the score to record if you take a Cluster 1 grade.

TEACHER SCRIPT: EXPLAINING THIS TASK TO STUDENTS

SAY

SAY

“This is your whole-cluster writing. Tell me the Pilgrims' central need, give me two details from the passage

SAY

SAY

“Use your plan: idea first, then two details, then a conclusion that pulls it together. Then reread for the

► Give a plan box (idea / detail 1 / detail 2 / conclusion). Independent write; conference only after the draft is

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