



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC



Module 1

Level Up Your Thinking

Grade 4 • Cluster 1

Tackling TEKS • Reading & Writing

4.11(A)(i) • 4.12(B)(i) • 4.12(B)(ii) • 4.12(B)(iii) • 4.11(C)(i) • 4.11(C)(ii) • 4.11(D)(i) • 4.11(D)(vii) • 4.11(D)(ix) • 4.11(D)(xxxv)



★ Meet Our Week!

Week 1 · Low Stamina · Cluster 1 (SCR)

★ Daily Deck

I Will...

- I will read, decide, defend, plan, write, revise, edit, and explain my decisions.
- I will choose precise words that show stronger thinking, not just longer answers.
- I will prove an idea with the author's exact words.
- I will make the relationships among my ideas clearer.

I Can...

- I can tell the difference between evidence and explanation in a response.
- I can identify the thinking level of a response from its words.
- I can upgrade a response one level higher by choosing more precise words.
- I can write a Short Constructed Response with a **thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.**



Becoming Thinking Detectives

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

★ Daily Deck

Passage 1: “A Promise Written Long Ago”

nonfiction · the Magna Carta

How can the words we choose make a Short Constructed Response show stronger thinking?

Which response shows stronger thinking? What makes it stronger? Circle or name the words that reveal stronger thinking. What changed besides the length?

★ 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!

★ The Five Thinking Levels

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

Level 1

Foundational

The text says... /
This shows...

Level 2

Emergent

According to the
text... / This
suggests...

Level 3

Visible

The text indicates... /
This demonstrates...

Level 4

Independent

The text
establishes... / This
strengthens the
inference...

Level 5

Reflective

The evidence
converges... /
Ultimately, this
reveals...

Move one response up one level. Change the **thinking**, not just the vocabulary.

★ Words = Thinking Level

Day 1 · Reveal (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

The Level-Up Language Ladder

Basic says · shows · this means

Stronger indicates · suggests · demonstrates · establishes · strengthens the inference · ultimately reveals

Ask: *What does my word choice show about the depth of my thinking?*

Watch Me!

Original (Level 2): According to the text, “They brought pottery and tools to trade.” This suggests they work together.

Upgrade: The text indicates that “They brought pottery and tools to trade.” This demonstrates cooperation.

Teacher Answer Key: the signal phrase and explanation both become more precise.

★ Level Up Showdown!

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “A Promise Written Long Ago” & “Morning in the Village”

How to Play

- 1 Spin to land on a thinking level.
- 2 Draw and read a task card.
- 3 Identify the current thinking level.
- 4 Upgrade the response one level higher.
- 5 Explain what you changed and why.
- 6 Record at least two upgraded responses.

Success Check: *Did your revision add stronger thinking, or only a harder word?*

With Your Partner...

Task Card · Level 1

“The text says, ‘Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.’ This shows they need food.”

level it up

Upgrade

“According to the text, ‘Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.’ This suggests they depend on farming.”

What Changed When We Leveled Up?

What words showed the **original** level?

What did you **change**?

Did the **evidence** become clearer?

Did the **explanation** become deeper?

Student Directions: “Connect to the Overarching Question: How are the words we choose changing the strength of the response?”



What Makes Thinking Stronger?

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

What Changed When We Levelled Up?

**precise
signal phrases**

**two connected
pieces of evidence**

**an explanation that
reaches the larger idea**

Vocabulary changes and thinking changes: precision, connection, inference, explanation, or clearer relationships among ideas.



Try It On Your Own!

Day 3 · Use (Independent Practice) · Interactive Notebook

WHY

Why do people in Tayanita's village work together? *Rewrite the response at a higher thinking level.*

HOW

How does the author show that ideas from the Magna Carta influenced later governments? *Rewrite at a higher thinking level. Think: What relationship is the author showing?*

SWEEP

Choose one simple sentence from your response. Underline the subject once. Underline the verb twice. Circle one singular noun. Box one common noun. Check the spelling of your high-frequency words.

Keep the answer accurate; upgrade the evidence signal phrase; upgrade the explanation; make the relationship among ideas clearer.

★ Award & Target!

Day 4 · Award & Target

★ Daily Deck

Award 🏆

Give yourself credit for leveling up your thinking today.

- I upgraded a signal phrase.
- I made my explanation more precise.
- I connected evidence to a bigger idea.
- I used a word from my Thinking Level Chart correctly.

Target 🎯

“My next thinking-level goal is _____
because _____.”

Curiosity Questions

Do authors use thinking levels when they write?
Can one word change how strong your answer is?



Exit Ticket

Day 5 · Educate & Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck

How can the words we choose make a Short Constructed Response show stronger thinking?

“The words _____ show a Level _____ response. I upgraded it by _____.
This makes the thinking stronger because _____.”

Finish: “One word or phrase I can use to show stronger thinking is _____ because _____.”



Build the Response with Quotes

★ Daily Deck

Small-Group Support

Match the quote to the correct idea, build a three-sentence response: **thesis** (central idea), **evidence**, **explanation**.

“Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows”

“They brought pottery and tools to trade”

“The barons wanted the king to follow rules”

Support Frame: According to the text, “___.” This suggests ___.

You must prove it using the author’s exact words.

★ Multi-Quote Mastery

Enrichment · Write in your notebook

Challenge: Use both quotes to build one stronger response.

“Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows” + “They brought pottery and tools to trade”

Prompt: Why is cooperation important in the village?

Explain how the quotes connect.

Rewrite the response at Levels 3, 4, and 5.

Justify the word choices that make each level different.

★ 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
Tell evidence apart from explanation.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Name a response's thinking level from its words.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Upgrade a response one level higher on purpose.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Prove an idea with the author's exact words.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Check my sentence for conventions.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it



Citizenship Connection

Good Citizens · Our Community & Country

★ A Promise Written Long Ago

“It also protected certain rights of the people. For example, it said that free men could not be punished without a lawful judgment.” “Even today, the Magna Carta reminds us that rules should apply to everyone and that people deserve to be treated fairly.”

Let's Look at an Answer!

Prompt: Why do people in Tayanita's village work together? Rewrite the response so it shows stronger thinking, a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that proves the idea.

LOW Level 1

“They work together. The text says they grew crops. This means they help.”

What Is Working: The student names the idea and points toward the text.

Teacher Notes: The signal phrase (“says”) and explanation (“this means they help”) are basic and restate rather than prove. There is only a general reaction.

What Needs Improvement: Upgrade the signal phrase, quote exact words, and explain the larger idea (cooperation) rather than stopping at “they help.”

Let's Look at Another Answer!

Prompt: Why do people in Tayanita's village work together? Rewrite the response so it shows stronger thinking, a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that proves the idea.

MEDIUM Level 2

“The people work together because they need to share resources. According to the text, ‘Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows.’ This suggests they depend on farming.”

What Is Working: A WHY thesis (central idea) with a subordinating conjunction, an exact quote, and a “suggests” explanation.

Teacher Notes: The thinking is solid but uses one quote and a single-step explanation.

What Needs Improvement: Connect a second quote and deepen the explanation to reach the larger idea of shared responsibility.

Our Strongest Answer!

Prompt: Why do people in Tayanita's village work together? Rewrite the response so it shows stronger thinking, a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that proves the idea.

HIGH Level 3-4

“Even though each person has a role, the village works together due to shared responsibility. The text indicates that ‘Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows’ and ‘They brought pottery and tools to trade.’ This suggests cooperation is necessary for the community to thrive.”

What Is Working: A precise thesis (central idea), two connected pieces of exact evidence, and an explanation that reaches the larger idea rather than restating the quotes.

Teacher Notes: The response shows stronger thinking through precise language and connected evidence, exactly what leveling up means.

★ **This is our target!**