



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC



Module 1

Growing the Tree

Grade 4 · Cluster 2

Tackling TEKS · Reading & Writing

4.11(B)(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)(vi) · 4.11(D)(vii) · 4.11(D)(viii) ·
4.11(D)(ix) · 4.11(D)(x) · 4.11(D)(xxxiii) · 4.11(D)(xxxv)



★ Meet Our Week!

Week 1 · Low Stamina · Cluster 2 (ECR Informative)

★ Daily Deck

I Will...

- I will use the passage and the prompt as the roots of my thinking.
- I will speak about my thinking, record my work, and explain how my choices strengthen the response.
- I will tell evidence apart from explanation and use both.
- I will make sure every branch connects back to the trunk.

I Can...

- I can name the parts of an informative ECR: roots, trunk, and branches.
- I can read an ECR prompt as a statement and mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue.
- I can write a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt with a clear central idea.
- I can support my thesis (central idea) with evidence and an explanation that connects back to it.



From Short Response to Extended Response

★ Daily Deck

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

Passages: “The Energy We Use Everyday” & “Columbus’s Arrival”

nonfiction · Low Stamina · the ECR Tree

**How does understanding the passage, the prompt,
and the parts of an ECR help us build a strong
informative response?**

ECR prompts are NOT questions, they are STATEMENTS. ECR only has TWO
TYPES, WHY and HOW.

Roots strong, trunk tall, branches growing.



★ 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 ECR Grows Like a Tree

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

1

ROOTS

Passage + Prompt. Everything starts here.

2

TRUNK

Thesis (Central Idea). This is your main answer.

3

BRANCHES

Reason/Way, Evidence, Explanation. Every branch must connect back to the trunk.

ECR prompts are NOT questions, they are STATEMENTS.

Roots strong, trunk tall, branches growing.



★ Read the Prompt, Grow the Tree

Day 1 · Reveal (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

Mark the Prompt (Roots)

NOI Noun of Importance, what the prompt is about

VOI Verb of Importance, what you must do

Clue the WHY or HOW that tells you the ECR type

NOI (Noun of Importance): what the prompt is about.

VOI (Verb of Importance): what you must do.

Watch Me!

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use.

NOI: renewable and nonrenewable resources. **VOI:** affect. **Clue:** how.
Renewable and nonrenewable resources both affect energy decisions because each has advantages and limitations.

I marked the NOI, VOI, and clue in the prompt, then built a thesis (central idea) on the trunk.



BOOM BOOM GRAB, Tree Style

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “The Energy We Use Everyday” & “Columbus’s Arrival”

How to Play

- 1 Place Thesis (Central Idea), Evidence, and Explanation cards between partners.
- 2 Listen to the sentence.
- 3 Grab the matching part.
- 4 Be ready to justify your choice.

Success Check: Say aloud why each card is a thesis (central idea), evidence, or explanation.

With Your Partner...

Sentence Card

“The text says, ‘Renewable energy sources are not always available.’”

grab the card

Grab · Evidence

The passage states, ‘Renewable energy sources are not always available.’



How do the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR work together to build a strong informative response?

Why is evidence not enough by itself?

What would happen if we skipped the thesis (central idea)?

Why do we only use WHY or HOW in ECR?

Every branch must connect back to the trunk.

Student Directions: “How do the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR work together to build a strong informative response?”



What Makes an ECR Tree Strong?

★ Daily Deck

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

How do the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR work together to build a strong informative response?

**roots: the passage
and the marked prompt**

**a trunk: one clear
thesis (central idea)**

**branches that connect
back to the trunk**

Evidence shows, but explanation GROWS the idea.





Try It On Your Own!

Day 3 · Use (Independent Practice) · Interactive Notebook

ROOTS

Circle the NOI, box the VOI, triangle the clue word (how).

TRUNK

Add a thesis (central idea), one evidence detail, and one explanation.

BRANCHES

Evidence (example): The text states, “Renewable energy sources are not always available.”

SWEEP

Check subject-verb agreement, singular/plural/common/proper nouns, spelling patterns, and high-frequency words.

Circle the NOI, box the VOI, triangle the WHY/HOW clue, then add a thesis (central idea), one evidence detail, and one explanation.



★ Award & Target!

Day 4 · Award & Target

★ Daily Deck

Award 🏆

Give yourself credit for growing your tree today.

- I built a thesis (central idea) on the trunk.
- I marked the NOI, VOI, and clue in the prompt.
- I connected evidence to my thesis (central idea).
- I explained what my evidence proves.

Target 🎯

“My next ECR-tree goal is _____
because _____.”

Curiosity Questions

Why might two people answer the same prompt differently? How do stronger explanations make writing more powerful? What happens when evidence is weak?



Exit Ticket

Day 5 · Educate & Explain to Others

★ Daily Deck

How does understanding the passage, the prompt, and the parts of an ECR help us build a strong informative response?

“The ___ of an ECR is _____. It matters because _____. For example, _____.”

Understanding the passage and prompt gives the response strong roots, while knowing the ECR parts gives the writer a structure for turning a clear thesis (central idea) into reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation.





Build the Tree with Cards

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

My thesis (central idea) is _____. My evidence is _____. This shows _____.

“Renewable and nonrenewable resources both affect energy decisions”

“Renewable energy sources are not always available”

“This shows people must plan carefully and weigh advantages and limitations”

Support Frame: “My thesis (central idea) is _____. My evidence is _____. This shows _____.”

This shows people must plan carefully and weigh advantages and limitations when they decide.



★ Grow a Forest

Enrichment · Write in your notebook

Challenge: Create two different thesis (central idea) statements for the same prompt.

“Renewable energy sources are not always available” + nonrenewable resources “cannot be replaced quickly once they are used”

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use.

Write TWO different thesis (central idea) statements for the same prompt.

Provide different evidence for each.

Explain how the two responses grow from different thinking.

★ 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
Name the roots, trunk, and branches of an ECR.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Mark the NOI, VOI, and WHY/HOW clue in a prompt.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Write a thesis (central idea) that answers the prompt.	Not yet	Getting set	I can do it
Support my thesis (central idea) with evidence and explanation.	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



“Renewable energy sources are not always available.” Nonrenewable resources “cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.” This shows people must plan carefully and weigh advantages against limitations when they choose an energy resource.

Let's Look at an Answer!

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use. Build an ECR with a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that connects back to the thesis (central idea).

LOW Level 1

“Energy comes from resources. The text says there are renewable and nonrenewable ones. This is important.”

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

Teacher Notes: There is no clear thesis (central idea), the evidence is not exact, and the explanation (“this is important”) does not prove anything.

What Needs Improvement: Add a thesis (central idea) on the trunk, quote exact words as evidence, and explain how the evidence connects to energy decisions.

Let's Look at Another Answer!

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use. Build an ECR with a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that connects back to the thesis (central idea).

MEDIUM Level 2-3

“Renewable and nonrenewable resources affect energy decisions. The text states, ‘Renewable energy sources are not always available.’ This shows renewable energy has a limitation.”

What Is Working: A thesis (central idea), one exact quote, and a beginning explanation.

Teacher Notes: The response stops at one branch and does not connect the explanation fully back to the thesis (central idea) about decisions.

What Needs Improvement: Connect the explanation back to the central idea, that people must weigh advantages and limitations when they decide.

Our Strongest Answer!

Prompt: Explain how renewable and nonrenewable resources affect decisions about energy use. Build an ECR with a clear thesis (central idea), exact evidence, and an explanation that connects back to the thesis (central idea).

HIGH Level 3-4

“Renewable and nonrenewable resources both affect energy decisions because each has advantages and limitations. The text states, ‘Renewable energy sources are not always available,’ and it explains that nonrenewable resources ‘cannot be replaced quickly once they are used.’ This shows people must plan carefully and weigh advantages against limitations when they choose an energy resource.”

What Is Working: A clear thesis (central idea) on the trunk, two exact pieces of evidence, and an explanation that connects both branches back to the central idea.

Teacher Notes: Every branch connects back to the trunk, exactly what a strong ECR tree looks like.

★ **This is our target!**