



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC

Module 4

Writing the Explanation Sentence

Grade 5 • Cluster 1

Very High Stamina • SCR

Tackling TEKS • Reading & Writing

5.11(B)(i) • 5.11(C)(i) • 5.11(C)(ii) • 5.12(B)(i) • 5.12(B)(ii) • 5.12(B)(iii)



★ Meet Our Week!

Week 4 · Very High Stamina · Cluster 1 (SCR)

★ Daily Deck

I Will...

- Read closely and listen for what evidence means.
- Tell the difference between evidence and explanation.
- Use a Definition or Story bookend.
- Connect each explanation to the thesis (central idea).
- I will revise sentence structure and word choice so my meaning is clear.

I Can...

- Explain what a piece of evidence means.
- Say why the evidence matters.
- I can use “this means” or “this shows” as a Definition bookend.
- Use “this reminds me of” or “this makes me think of” as a Story bookend.
- Use the word this to point back to nearby evidence.



Meaning Maker Warm-Up

Day 1 · Gather & Reveal

★ Daily Deck

Passage 1: “From Tension to Revolution”

How does a strong explanation turn evidence into clear meaning for the reader?

“Do not tell me what it is yet. Tell your partner what it does. Now tell your partner why it matters.”

Hold up an ordinary classroom object such as a pencil, sticky note, or paperclip.





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: boycott · resistance · instinct · predators · cooperation

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



★ Reveal the Job of Explanation / Listen for What Is Missing

★ Daily Deck

Day 1 · Reveal

D

Definition

this means / this shows

S

Story

this reminds me of / this makes me think of

P

Pointing Word

this points back to nearby evidence

this: a demonstrative pronoun that points back to nearby evidence

An explanation tells what the evidence means, connects it to the thesis (central idea), and shows why it matters. An explanation is not another QUOTE from the passage.

Reveal the job of explanation: Meaning + Connection + Why It Matters. Evidence proves; explanation interprets and connects the proof.



Evidence and Explanation Work Together

★ Daily Deck

Day 1 · Reveal (cont.)

Evidence + Explanation

Thesis (Central Idea) the main idea the response proves, e.g. Sea turtles survive dangerous moments because instinct guides them.

Evidence proof from the passage

Explanation what the proof means and why it matters

Ask: *What does this quote mean, and why does it matter?*

Watch Me!

Evidence: “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...”

Explanation: This means the turtles must act quickly to survive in a dangerous environment.

An explanation is your **THINKING** about the quote.



★ Explanation Relay Race

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

★ Daily Deck

Passages: “From Tension to Revolution” & “The Ocean Lesson”

How to Play

- 1** A student draws a Thesis (central idea) Card.
Check: Read the central idea.
- 2** Another student draws the matching Evidence Card.
Check: Read the exact evidence.
- 3** The team chooses the best Explanation Card.
Check: Does it add meaning?
- 4** If correct, the team moves one space.
Check: Match is accurate.

With Your Team...

Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence

Sea turtles survive dangerous moments because instinct guides them. “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...”

explain it

Explanation

“This means the turtles do not have time to be taught because survival must happen immediately.”



Explanation Relay Race (continued)

★ Daily Deck

Day 2 · Attempt · Partner Game

Passages: “From Tension to Revolution” & “The Ocean Lesson”

How to Play

- 5 If the team explains why, it moves an extra space.
Check: Defense names meaning and connection.
- 6 Repeat the chant before the next round.
Check: “I’m explaining now!”

With Your Team...

Thesis (Central Idea) + Evidence

Sea turtles survive dangerous moments because instinct guides them. “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...”

explain it

Explanation

“This means the turtles do not have time to be taught because survival must happen immediately.”





What Is Explanation Doing?

Day 3 · Discuss

★ Daily Deck

What makes an explanation more than a restatement? How does the word *this* point back to nearby evidence?

Evidence is from the passage, and explanation is the writer's thinking.

A weak explanation repeats the quote or stays too general.

Explanation helps the reader see why the evidence matters.

Remember: “An explanation tells what the evidence means. A weak explanation repeats the quote or stays too general.”





What Explaining Really Does

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

★ Daily Deck

A strong explanation can be short if it clearly tells what the evidence means.

**what the proof
means**

**how it supports
the thesis (central idea)**

**why the
evidence matters**

Think about: meaning · connection · An explanation is your THINKING about the quote.



★ Build the Explanation

Day 3 · Use

SET 1

Thesis (Central Idea): The colonists protested British laws because they were treated unfairly. Evidence: The text states, “They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice...” *Teacher Answer Example: This shows that the colonists believed British rule was unfair and wanted their rights respected.*

SET 2

Thesis (Central Idea): Sea turtles survive dangerous moments because instinct guides them. Evidence: The passage explains, “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...” *Teacher Answer Example: This means the turtles must act quickly to survive in a dangerous environment.*

SET 3

Practice Set 3, Story approach

Thesis (Central Idea): Orcas succeed because they learn from older members of their group. Evidence: “Young orcas observe older members of their group.” *Teacher Answer Example: This makes me think of a younger student learning from an older classmate during partner work.*

SET 4

Thesis (Central Idea): Setting influences behavior in both passages through conflict, instinct, and learning. Evidence: The text states, “Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty helped organize resistance...” *Teacher Answer Example: This means the historical setting pushed colonists to work together against British control.*

Copy the thesis (central idea) and matching evidence sentence · add one explanation using Definition or Story.

Check the first word of each sentence and the last punctuation mark.

★ Explanation Glow Line

Day 4 · Award

★ Daily Deck

Explanation Glow Line

Identify one explanation sentence that made your thinking visible to the reader.

- Explanation Glow Line: “One explanation HABIT I used well today was ____.”
- Bookend Badge: “I used this explanation type well because ____.”
- Partner Praise: “You explained clearly when you ____.”

Student Award

What can I already do? One explanation I wrote successfully, and the evidence in my work:

★ Choose a Next Target

Day 4 · Target

★ Daily Deck

Choose a Next Target

Choose one explanation habit to strengthen: clarity, connection, deeper meaning, or avoiding repetition.

- Explain more clearly what the quote means.
- Use “this shows” correctly.
- Use “this reminds me of” correctly.
- Connect the explanation to the thesis (central idea).
- Capitalize the first word.
- Punctuate the last word.
- Use stronger words from the Thinking Levels Chart.

Student Target

What do I want to practice next? One next step for explaining evidence:

Turn and Teach Directions

“Now you are going to teach someone else how explanation works.”

Partner A reads the thesis (central idea) and evidence, explains what the quote means using one starter, and tells whether the explanation used Definition or Story. Partner B listens, checks whether the explanation connects back to the evidence, says one strength, and suggests one way to make it clearer. Then switch roles.

Sentence stems: “This explanation is strong because ____.” “The word ‘this’ points back to ____.” “A clearer explanation would say ____.” “This explanation type is ____.”

Set 1

The colonists protested British laws because they were treated unfairly. Evidence: “They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice...” Possible explanation: This shows that the colonists believed they deserved a say in decisions that affected them.

★ Turn and Teach (continued)

Day 5 · Explain

★ Daily Deck

Set 2

Sea turtles survive dangerous moments because instinct guides them. Evidence: “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...” Possible explanation: This means the turtles do not need to stop and learn because survival must happen right away.

Set 3

Orcas succeed because they learn from older members of their group. Evidence: “Young orcas observe older members of their group.” Possible explanation: This makes me think of a new player learning from an experienced teammate.

Directions: Read the evidence from one of the two passages.

Write an explanation sentence using Definition or Story. Make sure the explanation adds meaning, connects to the thesis (central idea), and is a complete sentence.

Evidence: The text states, "They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice..."

1. Selected response. This sentence is: [] EVIDENCE [] EXPLANATION (2 points)
2. Constructed response. Write one explanation sentence that tells what the evidence means and why it matters: (4 points)
3. Name your bookend. Definition or Story: (2 points)
4. Transfer / application. Use evidence from "The Ocean Lesson" and write a second explanation that connects to a thesis (central idea): (2 points)

Total Score: _____ / 10

★ Say It, Sort It, Build It

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

Step 1: Say It.

Show the quote, “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...” Ask whether it is evidence or explanation. Answer: evidence. Model: “This means the turtles need to move toward safety quickly.” Repeat with “Young orcas observe older members of their group.” Model: “This shows that orcas learn survival habits from others.”

Step 2: Sort It.

Sort these under Evidence and Explanation.

Evidence: “They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice...” “Young orcas observe older members of their group.” “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...” “Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty helped organize resistance...”

Explanation: This shows that colonists wanted fairness. This means learning helps orcas survive. This makes me think of doing something quickly without stopping to ask for help. This shows the colonists worked together.

★ Say It, Sort It, Build It (continued)

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

Step 3: Build It.

Thesis (central idea): Sea turtles survive dangerous moments because instinct guides them. Evidence: “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...”

Choices: A. This means the turtles must move quickly to survive. B. “Their instinct guided them through the transition from sand to ocean...” C. The beach has sand. Answer: A.

Step 4: Write It. · Step 5: Say It Again.

Step 4: Write It. Students write a thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation. Check for a correct starter, a connection to the quote, a capital letter, and punctuation.

Step 5: Say It Again. Students read the explanation aloud.

“Reading it aloud helps you hear whether it makes sense.”

Goal: students can sort evidence from explanation and write an explanation that connects to the quote.

★ Explanation Upgrade Lab

Enrichment • Write in your notebook

Part 1: Choose the Stronger Explanation.

Thesis (central idea): The colonists protested British laws because they were treated unfairly. Evidence: “They argued that it was unfair to be taxed without a voice...”

Explanation A: This shows the colonists were unhappy. Explanation B: This shows that the colonists believed they should have a voice in decisions that affected them.

Answer: B is stronger because it is more precise and more clearly connected to the evidence and thesis (central idea).

Part 2: Improve a Weak Explanation.

Thesis (central idea): Orcas succeed because they learn from older members of their group. Evidence: “Young orcas observe older members of their group.”

Weak explanation: This shows something about orcas.

Sample answer: This shows that orcas depend on learning from experienced group members to survive successfully.



Explanation Upgrade Lab (continued)

Enrichment

★ Daily Deck

Part 3: Add a Story Bookend.

Sample answer: This makes me think of a new student learning classroom habits by watching others.

Part 4: Higher-Level Reflection.

Definition may work best for historical setting because the history needs to be clarified directly. Story may work well for environmental setting because animal behavior can be connected to familiar real-life examples.



★ My Progress Tracker

Directions: This tracker is for YOU. As you read and write this week, look at each skill below. If you can do it all by yourself without help, check the box that matches how you feel.

I Can...	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Tell the difference between evidence and explanation.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Write an explanation that tells what the evidence means.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Use the Definition bookend, this means or this shows.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Use the Story bookend, this reminds me of or this makes me think of.	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!
Connect my explanation back to the thesis (central idea).	Not Yet	Getting It	I've Got It!

★ Citizenship Connection

- ★ A strong explanation respects the evidence, then makes the meaning clear for another reader.

This module connects to responsible citizenship in the historical passage and to cooperation and survival in the environmental passage. Colonists connected unfair taxation to rights and resistance, and Nyla connects instinct and learning to survival.

Reflect & Discuss

Citizenship Question: “How can explaining evidence help people understand the meaning of a shared problem?”

Low Explanation

Prompt: Why did colonists protest British laws?

LOW Level 1

“This shows they were taxed without a voice.”

What the student did successfully: The explanation begins with the Definition starter ‘this shows’ and points back to the quote.

Teacher Notes: The sentence repeats the evidence in slightly different words and does not add meaning.

What Needs Improvement: Add what the quote means, such as: This shows that the colonists believed the system was unfair because they had no representation.

Answer Key Guidance: The explanation must state the larger meaning, not repeat the phrase ‘without a voice.’

Medium Explanation

Prompt: Why did colonists protest British laws?

MEDIUM Level 2-3

“This shows the colonists were unhappy.”

What the student did successfully: The explanation adds a small piece of meaning beyond the quote and stays connected to it.

Teacher Notes: The meaning is general; it names a feeling instead of the larger idea the evidence points toward.

What Needs Improvement: Sharpen the meaning and connect it to the thesis (central idea), such as: This shows that the colonists believed they should have a voice in decisions that affected them.

Answer Key Guidance: The response needs the larger idea of voice, rights, or representation.

High Explanation

Prompt: Why did colonists protest British laws?

HIGH Level 4

“This shows that the colonists believed they should have a voice in decisions that affected them, which is why unfair taxation pushed them to protest.”

What Is Working: The Definition explanation tells what the quote means, connects the meaning back to the thesis (central idea) about protest, and shows why the evidence matters.

Teacher Notes: The word this points clearly back to the nearby quote, the sentence adds interpretation instead of repeating the proof, and it links the meaning to the historical setting.

★ **This is our target!**