



THE WRITING ACADEMY®, LLC



Module 2

Writing a Strong Thesis (central idea)

Grade 5 · Cluster 2

Week 2 · Medium Stamina

Tackling TEKS · Reading & Writing

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



★ Meet Our Week!

Week 2 · Medium Stamina · 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.

★ A Problem & A Discovery

Day 1 · Gather

★ Daily Deck

Passage 1

A Harvest to Remember

Genre: Poem

A Harvest to Remember supports a discussion of how cooperation helped people survive and prepare for a harvest.

Passage 2

Spanish Rule in Early Texas

Genre: Informational passage

Spanish Rule in Early Texas supports a discussion of how missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas and how Spanish rule changed life for Native Americans.

Both are built around a BIG idea: a PROBLEM and how people solved it.

★ Shaping the Prompt

Day 1 · Gather

★ Daily Deck

Explain why cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

A Topic Only

The Pilgrims had help.

A Matched Thesis (Central Idea)

Clue word: WHY

Thinking type: REASONS

Strong thesis (central idea): Cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest because Squanto taught them how to grow corn, catch fish, and use the land wisely.

★ 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 Five Thinking Levels

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

Level 1

Foundational

I can explain the cause.

Level 2

Emergent

I can explain the purpose.

Level 3

Visible

I can explain why it matters in the text.

Level 4

Independent

I can explain what I can learn or apply to my life.

Level 5

Reflective

I can explain the universal lesson or significance.

Where this module primarily operates: Visible and Independent (Levels 3-4). Students use the conflict and textual evidence to write a matching thesis (central idea), then apply the same shaping habit independently to a new WHY or HOW prompt.

★ The ECR (TREE) Chart

Day 1 · Reveal

★ Daily Deck

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

ROOTS = the passage and prompt.

TRUNK = the clear thesis (central idea) that controls the ECR.

BRANCHES = reason or way, evidence, and explanation.

Significance: Why the explained idea matters.

Model branch: Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to grow crops like corn, catch fish, and find food.

Shape It First

Circle important nouns (the topic)

Box the important verb, the action

Ask: *Does the triangle mark WHY, reasons, or HOW, a way?*

Watch Me!

Prompt: Explain why cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

My Thesis (Central Idea): Cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest because Squanto taught them how to grow corn, catch fish, and use the land wisely.

Point out how the thesis (central idea) carries the important noun and verb from the prompt, then adds an original answer after because.

★ 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 missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas.
Check: HOW asks for a way.
- 4** Circle important nouns with a hand motion.
Check: missions and presidios; Spain; Texas
- 5** Box the important verb with a hand motion.
Check: solved

With Your Partner...

Sample Card · HOW

“Explain how missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas.”

shape it

Thesis (Central Idea) · Matched

“Missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas by protecting settlements and shaping daily life.”

★ 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 information to guide thinking.
Check: Missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas.
- 9 Write a complete thesis (central idea).
Check: Match the exact prompt.

With Your Partner...

Sample Card · HOW

“Explain how missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas.”

shape it

Thesis (Central Idea) · Matched

“Missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas by protecting settlements and shaping daily life.”

★ 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): Missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas by protecting settlements and shaping daily life.
Check: States how the system worked.
- 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.

With Your Partner...

Sample Card · HOW

“Explain how missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas.”

shape it

Thesis (Central Idea) · Matched

“Missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas by protecting settlements and shaping daily life.”

What told you this was a WHY prompt, and how did the conflict help you write your thesis (central idea)?

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?”



What Makes a Thesis (Central Idea) Strong?

★ Daily Deck

Day 3 · Discuss (cont.)

TRUNK = the clear thesis (central idea) that controls the ECR.

**the Noun of
Importance**

**the Verb of
Importance**

**an original answer
after because or by**

ROOTS = the passage and prompt. TRUNK = the clear thesis (central idea) that controls the ECR.



★ Try It On Your Own!

Day 3 · Use

WHY

Explain why cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

HOW

Explain how missions and presidios helped Spain control Texas. Shape the prompt and write a complete thesis (central idea).

MARK

Shape the prompt in your notebook. Write a thesis (central idea). Underline the reason in your thesis (central idea).

Match the prompt exactly · carry the noun and verb · add an original answer · underline the reason.



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):





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) from its roots through the trunk and branches.

“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

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

Listen For

- A clear reason or way
- Text proof
- An explanation connecting the proof to the thesis (central idea)
- Significance: Why the explained idea matters.



★ 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 cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

Directions: Read the module sentence statement. Identify the Noun of Importance and Verb of Importance, then write your original answer with because.

- 1. Selected response. This prompt asks for: [] REASONS (WHY) [] A WAY (HOW) (2 points)**
- 2. Constructed response. In one sentence, write a thesis (central idea) with the Noun of Importance, Verb of Importance, and original answer: (4 points)**
- 3. Underline the reason in your thesis (central idea). (2 points)**
- 4. Transfer / application. Name one detail from "Spanish Rule in Early Texas" that could support a HOW thesis (central idea): (2 points)**

Total Score: _____ / 10



Build It, Fix It, Say It

Small-Group Support

★ Daily Deck

Build It: “The problem was: _____. This caused: _____. So, laws were needed because: _____.”

“Spanish rule caused conflict”

“Laws were needed because people argued and fairness was lost”

Fix It: “Spanish rule caused conflict.” Revise to “Laws were needed because people argued and fairness was lost.”

Say It: turn to a partner and rehearse the frame, “The problem was... So... That means...”



★ Think Like an Author, Write Like a Scholar

Enrichment: Connect Across Texts

Part 1: Find the Conflict. Briefly compare the problems in the two texts, then return to the informational passage and shape one prompt.
5.12(B)(i)

Prompt: Explain WHY AND HOW laws improved communities.

Use the deck's dual lens: WHY, laws improved communities because they created fairness and reduced conflict; HOW, laws improved communities by setting clear rules that guided behavior and prevented disagreements. Students circle laws and communities, box improved, and triangle WHY and HOW in this single prompt.

Part 2: Write a Matching Thesis (central idea).

Students combine a reason and a way in a complete thesis (central idea): “Laws improved communities because they created fairness and reduced conflict by setting clear rules that guided behavior.” Partners check the thesis (central idea) against both parts of the shaped prompt.

★ Think Like an Author, Write Like a Scholar

★ Daily Deck

Enrichment: Connect Across Texts (continued)

Part 3: Develop and Transfer. Use TREE to plan text evidence, explanation, and significance for the laws thesis (central idea). Then apply the same habit to one informational passage prompt: “Explain HOW Squanto's discovery solved a problem.” Shape it, identify the conflict, 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

★ Self-government and responsible citizenship; free enterprise and science in society.

The passages show how cooperation, missions, presidios, settlement, and shared knowledge shaped people and outcomes.

Reflect & Discuss

How do fair rules and shared knowledge help a community keep people safe?

Low Exemplar

Prompt: Explain why cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

LOW Level 1

“The Pilgrims had help.”

What the student did successfully: Named the Pilgrims and attempted a complete sentence.

What is missing: The response is missing the important verb, the original answer, and a WHY structure.

Why it falls at this level: The response does not explain how cooperation helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for the harvest.

Exact next instructional step: Carry the noun and verb from the prompt, then add an original answer after because.

Medium Exemplar

Prompt: Explain why cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

MEDIUM Level 2-3

“Cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive.”

What the student did successfully: The thesis (central idea) carries the Noun of Importance and Verb of Importance from the prompt.

What is missing: The response stops before the writer adds an original answer with because.

Why it falls at this level: It repeats the topic and action but does not explain why the cooperation helped.

Exact next instructional step: Add an original answer: because Squanto taught them how to grow food and use the land.

High Exemplar

Prompt: Explain why cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest.

HIGH Level 4

Clue word: WHY

Thinking type: REASONS

Strong thesis (central idea): Cooperation with the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims survive and prepare for a successful harvest because Squanto taught them how to grow corn, catch fish, and use the land wisely.

Why it works: It includes the Noun of Importance, Verb of Importance, and original answer, and it uses because to match the WHY relationship.

★ **This is our target!**