

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 4, Cluster 1, Module 2: Build a Strong Thesis (central idea)

A warm, plain language guide to what your student is learning this week, with easy ways to talk and work together at home. **Every page is in English and Spanish.**

Welcome, families. This week your student is learning to build a strong thesis, the central idea. A thesis is the clear opening sentence of a response. Your student is learning that the question tells you how to begin, answer the question directly and set up what the paragraph will prove. We are reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo village. This packet shows you what is happening in class, the words your student is learning, the thinking tool your student uses, and simple ways to help from home. You and your student can work through it together in about ten minutes.

Ask your student to teach you what they learned. Teaching it out loud is part of how the learning sticks.

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En español

Todo este paquete también está disponible en español.

1 Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student is learning to build a strong thesis, the central idea. A thesis is the clear opening sentence of a response. Your student is learning that the question tells you how to begin, answer the question directly and set up what the paragraph will prove.

We are reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo village. Ask your student to explain how the question helps the response begin, then ask what evidence would prove the thesis and what the evidence means.

Please try this at home. Ask your student to answer a question about the day in one complete sentence that names the topic and gives the main idea. That is the thesis habit we practice this week.

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to teach you the three pieces of a thesis. If your student can name the topic, the charge, and the answer, the skill is sticking.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is learning that the way a response begins determines the strength of everything that follows. A thesis, the central idea, answers the question directly and sets up what the paragraph will prove. Students also learn that a quote is not automatically strong evidence, evidence proves, while explanation tells what the proof means.

The standard, in plain words

The work connects to the Texas standards for informational writing. Your student organizes a focused introduction and composes a brief informational response with a clear central idea. In plain words, your student learns to begin with control and prove one clear idea.

The three pieces of a thesis your student uses

Piece	Meaning
TOPIC	The important noun or subject.
CHARGE	What the prompt is asking the writer to do.
ANSWER	Your clear response to that charge.

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to teach you the three pieces of a thesis. Explaining it out loud is part of how the skill sticks.
- Ask what the question is really asking. Let your student name the charge.
- Ask for the answer in one complete sentence before adding evidence.
- If your student is stuck, ask about the clue word. Ask whether the prompt asks WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
- Let your student write the answer. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the answer.

thesis (central idea)

the clear main idea a response will prove

Example, my thesis is that the setting matters to the village.

charge

what the prompt is asking you to do

Example, the charge is to explain why the setting is important.

evidence

proof from the text

Example, my evidence is the author's exact words.

explanation

thinking about what the evidence means

Example, my explanation shows what the proof means.

response

the writing you build to answer the prompt

Example, my response begins with the thesis.

simple sentence

a sentence with one complete thought

Example, a WHAT thesis can be a simple sentence.

complex sentence

a sentence with a subordinating conjunction

Example, a WHY thesis often uses a complex sentence with because.

subordinating conjunction

a word like because or since that adds a reason

Example, I use because to show a reason.

preposition

a word like through or by that names a method

Example, I use by to name the method.

inference

an idea built from clues and thinking

Example, I can infer the setting from the details.

setting

the time, place, environment, and community where a story happens

Example, the setting is a Caddo village in the Piney Woods.

Magna Carta

a 1215 document that limited the king's power

Example, the Magna Carta said the king had to follow the law.

Tip for reading together. When a new word appears in a passage, pause and let your student use the sentence around it to figure out the meaning before you explain. Naming the guess out loud builds confidence.

4 Our Thinking Tool

This week your student uses the Three Pieces chart and the Thesis Types chart. The question tells the writer how to begin, and the sentence structure matches the thinking the prompt needs.

The three pieces of a thesis

Piece	Meaning
TOPIC	The important noun or subject.
CHARGE	What the prompt is asking the writer to do.
ANSWER	Your clear response to that charge.

The thesis types

Prompt type	Sentence habit	Helpful clue
WHAT	Simple sentence	Facts or details
WHY	Complex sentence	Subordinating conjunction plus reason
HOW	Simple sentence	Preposition plus method or connection

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this prompt, *Why is the setting important to the people in Tayanita's village?* Ask your student to name the three pieces and build a WHY thesis.

Answer for families. One strong thesis could be, the setting is important because it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods. It includes the topic, the charge, and a precise answer with because.

SCR A Short Constructed Response opens by answering the question directly. **Evidence proves, and explanation tells what the proof means.**

5 Conversation Starters and a Simple Family Activity

- Ask what a strong thesis does at the beginning of a response.
- Ask how the wording of a question can help you begin your answer.
- Ask why a quote is not automatically strong evidence.
- Ask what the difference is between evidence proving and explanation telling what the proof means.
- Ask what the setting of "Morning in the Village" is, and how the student knows.

Begin with the Question

Ask a question about the day. Have your student answer directly in one complete sentence that names the topic and gives the main idea.

Evidence and Explanation

Ask your student to share one detail from a passage. The student says, "This evidence proves ____ because ____" and then explains what the proof means.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong answer to this week's writing task. Each piece has its own job.

Prompt. Why is the setting important to the people in Tayanita's village?

Thesis (central idea)

The setting is important because it shows how people work together to grow food and trade goods.

Evidence

The text says, "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows" and "They brought pottery and tools to trade."

Explanation

This evidence shows that people depended on the fields and worked together to grow food and exchange goods.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The thesis includes the topic, the charge, and a precise answer.
- ☐ The thesis matches the prompt type, WHAT, WHY, or HOW.
- ☐ A WHY thesis uses because to give a reason.
- ☐ The evidence proves the idea with the author's exact words.
- ☐ The explanation tells what the proof means.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ identify the topic, the charge, and the answer in a prompt
- ☐ tell WHAT, WHY, and HOW prompts apart
- ☐ write a thesis that matches the prompt
- ☐ use because for a WHY reason and by or through for a HOW method
- ☐ explain that evidence proves while explanation tells what the proof means
- ☐ build a single strong paragraph with a thesis, evidence, and explanation

Student name

Family signature

Date

Please sign and send this page back to school with your student. The teacher will celebrate the progress together with your student.