

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 4, Cluster 1, Module 4: Make the Evidence Mean Something

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 finishes Cluster 1 with Module 4, "Make the Evidence Mean Something." Your student now knows how to write a thesis, the central idea, and choose strong evidence. This week your student learns the third sentence of a Short Constructed Response, the explanation. Evidence proves an idea, the explanation tells the reader what the proof means and why it matters, and connects it back to the thesis. We are reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community, now at the longest, most detailed level. 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.

Inside this packet

1 Family Letter

A note from the classroom about the week's learning.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill and standard in plain words, plus how to help.

3 Key Words

This week's words with student friendly meanings and examples.

4 Our Thinking Tool

The organizer students use, with a mini version for home.

5 Conversation Starters and a Family Activity

Easy ways to talk about the week's learning.

6 What Strong Work Looks Like

A short model and a checklist to see progress.

7 Progress at Home

A "my student can..." checklist to sign and send back.

En español

Todo este paquete también está disponible en español.

1 Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student finishes Cluster 1 with Module 4, "Make the Evidence Mean Something." Your student now knows how to write a thesis, the central idea, and choose strong evidence. This week your student learns the third sentence of a Short Constructed Response, the explanation.

Evidence proves an idea, and the explanation tells the reader what the proof means and why it matters, and connects it back to the thesis. Students use starter signals such as this means and this shows, and they learn that the word THIS points back to the evidence right before it.

We are reading "A Promise Written Long Ago," about the Magna Carta, and "Morning in the Village," about a day in a Caddo community, at the longest, most detailed level. Please try this at home. When your student shares a fact, ask, What does that mean? and Why does it matter?

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION

Ask your student to teach you what an explanation does. If your student can say that evidence proves and explanation tells what the proof means, the skill is sticking.

2 Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is completing the Short Constructed Response, thesis, evidence, explanation, by writing the explanation sentence. The explanation interprets the evidence, tells why it matters, and connects back to the thesis, the central idea. Evidence proves, and explanation tells the reader what the proof means. Repeating the evidence is not explaining it.

The standard, in plain words

The work connects to the Texas standards for informational writing. Your student composes informational responses with a clear central idea and uses craft. In plain words, your student learns to make meaning clear, not merely repeat a fact or a quote.

What an explanation does

Job	Example starter
Tells what the evidence means	This means...
Explains why it matters	This matters because...
Connects back to the thesis	This shows...

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to teach you what an explanation does. Explaining it out loud is part of how the skill sticks.
- Ask what the proof means, beyond the fact itself.
- Ask why the evidence matters to the idea.
- If your student is stuck, ask about THIS. Ask what the word THIS points back to.
- Let your student write the answer. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the answer.

explanation

thinking that tells what the evidence means

Example, my explanation shows what the quote proves.

clarify

to make an idea clearer

Example, I clarify the quote by explaining it.

meaning

what the evidence tells us

Example, the meaning of this quote is that power was limited.

signal marker

a starter that begins an explanation

Example, I use the signal marker this means.

demonstrative pronoun

a word like THIS that points to something

Example, THIS is a demonstrative pronoun.

cause

the reason something happens

Example, the cause was the unfair taxes.

effect

what happens because of a cause

Example, the effect was a limit on the king's power.

thesis (central idea)

the clear main idea a response will prove

Example, the explanation connects back to my thesis.

evidence

exact words from the text

Example, evidence proves the idea.

prove

to show something is true

Example, the evidence proves the thesis.

interpret

to explain what something means

Example, the explanation interprets the quote.

territory

an area of land a country controls

Example, the wars caused England to lose territory.

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 explanation starter pack and the power of THIS. The explanation is the third sentence that completes a Short Constructed Response.

What an explanation does

It tells what the evidence means, explains why it matters, and connects the evidence to the thesis, the central idea.

Explanation is not another quote, repeated evidence, or a random thought. It is the writer's interpretation.

The explanation starter pack

Starter	What it begins
This means...	An explanation of the evidence.
This shows...	A clear meaning from the proof.
This reminds me of...	A connection to a bigger idea.
This makes me think of...	An inference from the evidence.

The power of THIS

THIS points back to the evidence sentence right before it. A true detail alone is not an explanation.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this response, the setting is important because people depend on farming. The text says, "Corn, beans, and squash grew in long rows." Ask your student to add an explanation that begins with THIS and points back to the evidence.

Answer for families. One strong explanation could be, this means the village setting helps people grow food and exchange goods with others, so the whole community depends on the land.

SCR Evidence proves. Explanation tells the reader what the proof means. **Thesis, evidence, explanation, and THIS points back to the evidence.**

5 Conversation Starters and a Simple Family Activity

- Ask what an explanation sentence does that an evidence sentence does not.
- Ask what the word THIS points back to in a response.
- Ask why repeating the evidence is not the same as explaining it.
- Ask what one starter the student can use to begin an explanation.

So What Does It Mean?

Share one fact from your day, such as, it rained. Then explain it with "This means..." or "This shows..."

Point It Back

Give a fact, then an explanation that starts with THIS. Check together that THIS clearly points back to the fact you just said.

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? Complete a full SCR.

Thesis (central idea)

The setting is important because people depend on farming and trade.

Evidence

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

Explanation

This means the village setting helps people grow food and exchange goods with others, so the whole community depends on the land.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The student can tell evidence from explanation.
- ☐ The explanation begins with a starter signal.
- ☐ THIS points back to the evidence sentence before it.
- ☐ The explanation tells what the proof means and why it matters.
- ☐ The response completes a full thesis, evidence, explanation.

7 Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ tell evidence from explanation
- ☐ begin an explanation with a starter signal
- ☐ make THIS point back to the evidence
- ☐ tell what the proof means and why it matters
- ☐ complete a full thesis, evidence, explanation response
- ☐ check the response for conventions

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.