

FAMILY PACKET

Family Packet, Grade 4, Cluster 2, Module 2: Writing Thesis (Central Idea) Statements

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 learns to write a thesis (central idea), the main-idea sentence that begins an informative response. A strong thesis (central idea) has three pieces, the noun of importance from the prompt, the verb of importance from the prompt, and the answer from the student's own thinking. 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.

Family Letter

Dear Families,

This week your student continues Cluster 2 with Module 2, Writing Thesis (central idea) Statements. A thesis (central idea) is the main-idea sentence that begins an informative response. A strong thesis (central idea) has three pieces, the noun of importance from the prompt, the verb of importance from the prompt, and the answer from the student's own thinking.

WHY questions use a because sentence, and HOW questions use a through or by sentence. We are reading *The Energy We Use Everyday*, about renewable and nonrenewable resources, and *Columbus's Arrival*, about Columbus's 1492 voyage and its effects.

At home, ask your student to keep the topic word and add an own idea in one clear sentence. I am excited to see each student's thesis (central idea) grow into a strong trunk for the ECR tree.

With appreciation,

[Classroom teacher signature]

The Writing Academy, LLC

ASK FOR THE THREE PIECES

Ask your student to show you the noun of importance, the verb of importance, and the answer in a thesis (central idea). If your student can point to all three pieces, the skill is sticking.

Family Tip Sheet

The skill, in plain words

Your student is learning to write the main-idea sentence of an informative response, the thesis (central idea). A strong thesis (central idea) has three pieces, the noun of importance from the prompt, the verb of importance from the prompt, and the answer from the student's own thinking. The sentence type must match the question, a because sentence for WHY and a through or by sentence for HOW.

The standard, in plain words

This week the work connects to Texas standards for writing. Your student develops a focused, structured draft with a purposeful introduction and composes an informational text with a clear central idea. In plain words, your student learns to open a response with one clear main idea that answers the exact prompt.

The three pieces your student uses



Noun of importance

The main topic word in the prompt



Verb of importance

The word that tells what to explain



WHY or HOW

The clue that chooses the sentence type

How to help without giving the answer

- Ask your student to find the noun and the verb in a question.
- Ask whether the question asks for WHY or HOW.
- Ask what answer your student would add from their own thinking.
- If the thesis (central idea) copies the prompt, ask for the student's own idea.
- Let your student build the sentence. Your job is to ask good questions, not to supply the answer.

Key Words

thesis (central idea)

a complete sentence that clearly answers the prompt

Example, Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships, it affected people in important ways.

noun of importance

the main topic word in the prompt

Example, in the prompt above the noun of importance is arrival.

verb of importance

the word that tells what to explain

Example, the verb of importance is affected.

answer

your own idea added to the noun and verb

Example, changed land, culture, and relationships is the answer.

WHY prompt

a prompt that asks for reasons

Example, Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people asks for a because sentence.

HOW prompt

a prompt that asks for a way something happened

Example, Explain how resources shape decisions asks for a through sentence.

complex sentence

a sentence with a subordinator

Example, because begins the complex thesis (central idea).

subordinator

a word like because or since that adds a reason

Example, because shows a reason.

preposition

a word like through or by that names the method

Example, through names the way something happens.

cause and effect

how one thing makes another happen

Example, the arrival caused changes in land, culture, and relationships.

renewable

able to be replaced over time and used again

Example, renewable resources can be used again.

influence

the power to change or affect something

Example, Columbus's arrival had a lasting influence.

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.

Our Thinking Tool

This week your student uses the thesis (central idea) builder. A strong thesis (central idea) is the trunk of the ECR tree, and it has three pieces, the noun of importance, the verb of importance, and the answer.

The three pieces



Noun of importance

The main topic word in the prompt



Verb of importance

The word that tells what to explain



WHY or HOW

The clue that chooses the sentence type

Matching the sentence to the question

Question type	Clue	Sentence type	Example
WHY	why, reason, cause	A complex sentence with because	Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships, it affected people in important ways.
HOW	how, through, by	A sentence with through or by	Renewable and nonrenewable resources shape energy decisions through differences in availability.

The thesis (central idea) in steps

Step 1 Circle the noun of importance in the prompt. **Step 2** Box the verb of importance. **Step 3** Triangle WHY or HOW. **Step 4** Add your own answer and write the sentence in the matching type.

Mini version to use at home

Try it together

Read this WHY question, Why is recycling helpful? Have your student keep the topic word, recycling, and add a because reason in one sentence. Then try a HOW question, such as How does recycling help the environment? and ask for a through or by sentence.

Answer for families. A strong WHY thesis (central idea) could be, Recycling is helpful because it keeps waste out of landfills. A strong HOW thesis (central idea) could be, Recycling helps the environment by reusing materials instead of wasting them.

TRACKS While reading, students use TRACKS, which stands for **Time, Reactions, Actions, Character or Concept, Key Knowledge, and Scenery or Setting**, to notice details they can use in a thesis (central idea). Ask your student what TRACKS they found in this week's passages.

5 Conversation Starters and a Simple Family Activity

- What are the three pieces of a strong thesis (central idea)?
- Why cannot a thesis (central idea) just copy the question?
- What is the difference between a WHY sentence and a HOW sentence?
- What is a cause-and-effect relationship in one of our two passages?
- Which of your thesis (central idea) sentences is strongest, and why?

Keep the Topic, Add Your Idea

Ask a WHY question such as, Why is recycling helpful? Have your student keep the topic word and add a because reason in one sentence.

Why or How

Take turns asking WHY and HOW questions. Notice that a WHY answer uses because and a HOW answer uses by or through.

What Strong Work Looks Like

Here is a strong response to this week's writing prompt. Each part has its own job.

Prompt. Explain why Columbus's arrival affected people in the Americas in important ways.

Clue word and thinking type

The clue word is why, so the thinking type is WHY, asking for reasons.

Thesis (central idea)

Because Columbus's arrival changed land, culture, and relationships in the Americas, it affected people in important ways.

Evidence

The passage says that the arrival of Europeans introduced new customs, languages, and technologies and that some groups lost control of their land.

Explanation

This shows why Columbus's arrival affected people in important ways, it changed land, culture, and relationships.

Checklist for strong work

- ☐ The thesis (central idea) keeps the noun of importance from the prompt.
- ☐ It keeps the verb of importance from the prompt.
- ☐ It adds an answer from the student's own thinking.
- ☐ A WHY prompt gets a because sentence, and a HOW prompt gets a through or by sentence.
- ☐ The thesis (central idea) does more than copy the prompt.

Progress at Home

My student can...

- ☐ find the noun of importance in a prompt
- ☐ find the verb of importance in a prompt
- ☐ decide whether a prompt is WHY or HOW
- ☐ add an answer from my own thinking
- ☐ write a complete thesis (central idea) in the matching sentence type
- ☐ tell the difference between a WHY sentence and a HOW sentence

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.