

Grade 4

Supplemental Support System Teacher Guide

How the clusters, modules, learning cycles, resources, and
assessments work together for Grade 4

The Writing Academy, LLC

Presented by Randi Whitney

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Grade 4

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Relieving stress. Raising scores.

Purpose

WHAT THIS GUIDE IS

This guide explains how the Grade 4 Supplemental Support System is organized and how its components work together. It is written for the classroom teacher who will use the materials daily.

RATIONALE

The Writing Academy is a supplemental Reading Language Arts support with a writing focus, built to stand beside any core curriculum for Grades 3 through 5. It does not replace the core; it adds focused, daily practice in reading comprehension, evidence selection, and Extended Constructed Response (ECR) writing. Every component traces to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and to the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read this guide before opening any other Grade 4 material. It covers the year at a glance (nine clusters, 36 modules), the five-day GRADUATE lesson that drives every module, the daily Standards Sweep, the thinking levels that run through every resource, and a full inventory of the components you have access to. When you understand the design, every individual piece will make immediate sense.

1. Design Rationale

The Supplemental Support System is built on three ideas working together.

First, every cluster is a complete learning cycle: students meet a text, gather and weigh evidence, plan and build a piece of writing, and reflect. Then the next cluster does it again with a new genre and a longer text.

Second, the same five-level ladder appears everywhere (in the cluster books, in the Standards Sweep decks, and on every tracking sheet) so a student always knows what "getting stronger" looks like, and a teacher always has the same language for growth. The five RPLD levels of thinking are:

- **NOTICE** (Foundational)
- **CHOOSE** (Emergent)
- **SHOW** (Visible)
- **OWN** (Independent)
- **DEFEND** (Reflective)

Third, the daily Standards Sweep (editing, revising, and writing bell-ringers) sits beside the lessons so that even the conventions and process skills that are easy to skip get a short, guaranteed turn every day of the year.

Consistent, branded frameworks give students a mental hook for each kind of thinking. TRACKS names the six evidence categories. Genre frameworks carry through the reading and writing. Because the structure repeats, students stop spending energy figuring out what to do and spend it on the thinking itself.

2. How the Nine Clusters Are Laid Out

The year unfolds as nine clusters (a Prepare cluster plus Clusters 1 through 8), each with four modules, for a total of 36 modules. The clusters move from foundation to full independence. Genres are deliberately rotated so that thinking transfers across text types.

Cluster	Focus	What Students Build
Prepare	Choosing the Right Genre to Respond	Strong writers identify the topic, purpose, and audience first, then choose the response genre using the Genre Compass and the Response Ecosystem.
Cluster 1	Short Constructed Response (SCR)	Develop a precise WHY or HOW SCR through thinking levels, a strong thesis (central idea), evidence, and explanation.
Cluster 2	Extended Constructed Response with TREES	Grow an informative ECR from a shaped prompt through thesis, reasons or ways, evidence, and explanation using the TREE structure.
Cluster 3	Informative ECR through Poetry and Drama	Use poetry and drama to build a full informative ECR about conflict, rights, fairness, voice, and evidence.
Cluster 4	Argumentative ECR (CREATURES)	Build an evidence-based argument that develops from a C-R-E foundation into a complete CREATURES response.
Cluster 5	Paired-Passage Informative ECR	Synthesize a nonfiction and historical-fiction pair, balancing source evidence and controlling the whole paper. Includes the RRR conclusion.
Cluster 6	Argumentative Correspondence (CREATURES Letter)	Apply CREATURES in an evidence-based, audience-aware argumentative letter with a genuine request for information.
Cluster 7	Narrative and Poetry (TRAILS and LEAVES)	Explore voice, informed decisions, evidence, and responsible change through narrative and poetic craft.
Cluster 8	Research Capstone: Synthesis	Synthesize research to explain how challenges, questions, evidence, choices, actions, consequences, and revision create change.

Within each cluster, the four modules take one step at a time and the reading passage lengthens from module to module, so reading stamina and writing complexity climb together.

3. The Five-Day GRADUATE Lesson

Every module follows the same five-day GRADUATE Infinity Learning Cycle. GRADUATE stands for Gather, Reveal, Attempt, Discuss, Use, Award, Target, Educate, and Explain. The five instructional days map to these steps:

Day	GRADUATE Steps	What Happens
Day 1	Gather and Reveal	Students meet the passage and the prompt. The teacher reveals the thinking target for the module.
Day 2	Attempt	Students attempt the writing task with guidance. Errors are expected and welcomed.
Day 3	Discuss and Use	The class discusses models and evidence. Students use what they learned to revise.
Day 4	Award and Target	Students self-assess using the thinking levels. The teacher targets the next growth move.
Day 5	Educate and Explain	Students explain their thinking and teach a peer. The module closes with reflection.

The cycle repeats every module, so students internalize the rhythm and spend less energy on logistics and more on thinking.

4. The Daily Standards Sweep

The Standards Sweep is a short daily block (approximately 15 to 20 minutes) that runs alongside the cluster lessons. It covers editing, revising, writing, evidence, and paraphrasing through triplet sets: a teaching slide deck, a teacher script, and a student tracking sheet. Because the Standards Sweep distributes conventions practice across the entire year, every TEKS breakout for editing (TEKS 4.11D) gets taught and measured, even without a separate conventions unit.

5. Benefits

For Teachers

One read on every student. The five levels turn a right-or-wrong answer into a "cognitive address," so you see how a student is thinking and what the next move is.

Nothing falls through the cracks. The daily Standards Sweep guarantees every editing, revising, and writing standard gets taught and measured across the year.

Built-in differentiation. The same task carries five entry points, so one lesson reaches the whole range of a class.

Less prep, consistent language. The frameworks and level names repeat, so planning is lighter and feedback is consistent from day one to day 180.

For Students

They always know what "better" looks like. The ladder from NOTICE to DEFEND makes growth concrete and reachable.

Every learner has a way in. A student can start at Foundational and climb, rather than being stuck at "wrong."

Thinking becomes visible. Students learn to name their own evidence choices and defend them.

Confidence compounds. Short, winnable daily tasks build the stamina and self-belief that longer writing needs.

Skills transfer. Because genres and texts rotate, students build flexible thinking, not a single memorized pattern.

Test-ready by design. Authentic STAAR/SST-style items build familiarity in small, daily doses instead of a

6. Why This Order Is Good for the Brain

Spacing and spiraling. Skills are distributed across 36 weeks and revisited, not taught once and dropped. Decades of memory research show that spaced, repeated practice produces far more durable learning than massed practice. The Standards Sweep is built on exactly this.

Retrieval, daily and low-stakes. Each bell-ringer asks students to pull knowledge out rather than review it passively. Retrieval practice is one of the most reliable ways to move learning into long-term memory, and doing it in small, pressure-free doses protects motivation.

Desirable difficulty, gradually. Lexile levels and writing demands rise step by step: short responses before extended ones, single sources before paired, one genre before many. Learning is strongest when the challenge sits just past what a student can already do, which is precisely how the clusters are sequenced.

Gradual release made visible. The five RPLD levels are a worked-example-to-independence path: NOTICE and CHOOSE lean on models and support, SHOW and OWN fade the scaffolding, and DEFEND asks for independent justification. This mirrors how the brain builds automaticity.

Managed cognitive load. Each module features one skill at a time in a short daily window, so working memory is not overloaded. Consistent frameworks and color-coded levels add dual coding (word plus visual), which strengthens recall without adding load.

Interleaving for transfer. Rotating reading genres and writing purposes interleaves practice, which research shows improves a learner's ability to choose the right strategy in a new situation.

Metacognition and ownership. Naming one's own "cognitive address" is an act of self-monitoring, and students who can locate and steer their own thinking learn faster and remember longer. The Supplemental Support System makes that self-awareness a daily habit.

7. Grade 4 Components

The following table lists every component available for Grade 4 in the Supplemental Support System. All components are accessible through the IMRA Reviewer Dashboard.

Component	Description
Teacher Lesson Plans	Nine teacher lesson plan books (Prepare plus Clusters 1 through 8), each with 85 numbered sections covering four modules plus the five-day GRADUATE lesson. The GRADUATE lesson follows the Gather, Reveal, Attempt, Discuss and Use, Award and Target, Educate and Explain cycle. Each book includes daily scripted lessons, guided think-alouds, anchor charts, rubrics, and scoring guidance.
Student Workbooks	Nine full-color, full-year student workbooks (Prepare plus Clusters 1 through 8) with TEKS-aligned activities, graphic organizers, writing practice, and cut, fold, and build activities.
Type-In Interactive Workbooks	Digital versions of the student workbooks where students type directly into the document.
Lesson Daily Deck Sets	Per-cluster daily classroom slide decks (four modules per cluster, multiple slides per module) used alongside the Teacher Lesson Plans and Student Workbooks.
Standards Slide Decks	Triplet sets for editing, revising, writing, evidence, and paraphrasing. Each triplet includes a teaching slide deck, a teacher script, and a student tracking sheet. These run alongside the cluster lessons as the daily Standards Sweep.
Assessment Trackers	Per-cluster interactive grading dashboards (Prepare through Cluster 8) where teachers type scores and see Low, Medium, or High for each student, with the next best step.
Assessments	Grade-level diagnostics, the Assessment Companion (cluster by cluster), and three Summative Assessments per grade.
Good Morning Boards	A one-page morning board and a slide show for every module: yesterday's recap, today's focus, the passage, supplies, a Quick Think, and a song.
Weekly Pacing Guides	One page for every week of the year with every lesson and resource linked. Available for 165-day, 180-day, and 210-day calendars.
Pacing Calendars	Three complete day-by-day calendars (165, 180, and 210 days) showing how the 36 modules fit the school year.
Implementation Guide	The daily practice, pacing calendars, and TEKS for the 20-minute Standards block, tied to every grade-level material. Includes nine sections: Spelling, Grammar (Sentence Weather), Morphemes, Capitalization, Punctuation, Syntax, Word Choice, Literary Devices, and Figurative Language.
Scope and Sequence	The full-year scope and sequence by cluster and module, mapping TEKS and writing foci across 36 modules.
Reading Passages	Original reading passages at four stamina levels (Low, Medium, High, Very High) for every cluster, with paragraph counts rising module to module.
Content Language Support	Grade-level passages with key words students can tap to see a simple picture, one for every cluster.
Connection Activities	Per-cluster Bluebonnet Connection Activities tying each module to the TEA Bluebonnet core reading list.

Component	Description
Coloring with Purpose	A TEKS-ordered Core Connection Companion of coloring pages built from each cluster's low stamina passage, with an answer key.
Station Rotation	Ready-to-use station rotation plans aligned to the cluster lessons.
Editing Workbook	A dedicated editing workbook covering all editing TEKS breakouts for the grade.
Revising Workbook	A dedicated revising workbook covering all revising TEKS breakouts for the grade.
InterActivity Writer's Notebook	A student notebook for freewriting, brainstorming, and extended practice.
Homework Connection	Take-home activities that reinforce the cluster lessons.
Substitute Teacher Plans	Lesson plans for substitute teachers aligned to the cluster sequence.
Curriculum Connections	Documentation showing how the Supplemental Support System connects to and supports the core RLA curriculum.
Teacher User's Guide	How to use the grade-level Supplemental Support System: the Learning Journey, the numbering system, the five-day GRADUATE lesson, supports, assessment, and reflection.
Teacher Support Overview	The teacher support companion: scripts, slide decks, supports, assessments, training, guides, and apps.
Interactive Games Index	A directory of all interactive SmartBoard games and their matching student companion pieces.
Writing Genre and Response-Type Progression	A chart showing how writing genres and response types build across the nine clusters.
TEKS Chart	The three-column trace: teacher, student, and assessment for each TEKS.
Master TEKS List	A complete list of all grade-level TEKS addressed across the year.
Suitability Rubric Alignment	Documentation showing alignment to the TEA IMRA Suitability rubric.
Songs and Lyrics	Original songs aligned to the writing process, with synced lyrics and printable lyric sheets. Each grade has a dedicated musical play.

Musical Play: Jasper B. Sharp, a musical about the writing process and finding your voice. Available with two original songs from the Writing Process album.