

SUITABILITY AND CIVIC ALIGNMENT

Grade 4: Our Passages and the Suitability Rubric

How our passages support patriotism, free enterprise, good citizenship, and the civic values the State Board of Education asks for

Presented by **Randi Whitney**
The Writing Academy, LLC.

Grade 4: Our Passages and the Suitability Rubric

How the Grade 4 reading passages from The Writing Academy support patriotism, free enterprise, good citizenship, and the civic values the State Board of Education asks for

Overview

Every reading passage in the Grade 4 Supplemental Support System was chosen to do two jobs at once. It teaches a language arts skill, and it carries content worth a student's attention. A large share of that content was selected on purpose to reflect the civic values named in the Texas suitability rubric, the values that prepare students for self governance. This document states that purpose, explains the rationale, and charts exactly where each value appears across the fourth grade passages, labeled by cluster and module.

Purpose statement. The Writing Academy, LLC Grade 4 reading passages are designed to build established readers and writers on content that also cultivates informed, responsible citizens. Wherever it fits the grade and the skill, we anchor instruction in American patriotism, Texas history, the free enterprise system, good citizenship, democracy and self governance, respect for recognized authority, respect for individual rights, and the founding ideas of our state and nation, so that students grow in civic understanding while they learn to read and write.

The suitability values we address

The Texas suitability rubric asks that instructional materials help prepare students for self governance by promoting citizenship, patriotism, democracy, an understanding of the essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system, respect for recognized authority, and respect for individual rights, along with American and Texas history and the founding documents of the United States. The Grade 4 passages are mapped to these eight values.

1. **Patriotism** love of country and pride in national heritage. 2. **Free Enterprise** the essentials and benefits of the free market and individual initiative. 3. **Good Citizenship** contributing to and caring for a community. 4. **Democracy and Self Governance** how a free people make decisions and laws. 5. **Respect for Authority** the role of rules, laws, and legitimate leadership. 6. **Individual Rights** the freedoms and dignity of each person. 7. **Texas History** the story of our state. 8. **Founding Ideas and Documents** the principles and documents that established the nation.

Rationale

We did not add civic content as a layer on top of the reading. We chose passages whose real subject matter is civic, so the values are learned through genuine, grade appropriate texts rather than slogans. Biographies of builders and inventors carry the free enterprise system. Histories of the Pilgrims, the founders, and early Texas carry patriotism, founding ideas, and state history. Texts on laws, rights, compromise, and community carry citizenship, democracy, respect for authority, and individual rights. The remaining passages build the background knowledge that comprehension depends on. Because the same content is threaded through the writing, vocabulary, and grammar work as well, students meet these values many times and in many forms across the year.

Where the values appear: Grade 4, by cluster and module

Cluster / Module	Passage	Patriotism	Free Enterprise	Citizenship	Democracy	Authority	Indiv. Rights	TX History	Founding
C1 M1	A Promise Written Long Ago	✓							✓
C1 M2	Morning in the Village			✓					
C2 M1	The Energy We Use Everyday		✓						
C2 M2	Columbus's Arrival	✓							
C3 M1	A Lone Star Choice				✓		✓	✓	
C3 M2	Making It Happen		✓	✓					
C4 M1	The Wealth of Mansa Musa		✓						
C4 M2	Four Regions, One Big Adventure							✓	
C5 M1	Looking Back to Move Forward			✓					
C5 M2	Voices That Shaped Texas			✓	✓		✓	✓	
C6 M1	A Day That Changed			✓			✓		
C6 M2	Understanding Texas Regions							✓	
C7 M1	The Roads Between Us / What We Carry Forward	✓		✓					
C8 M1	What Shapes a Society (Change set)		✓	✓	✓			✓	

Each passage is labeled by its grade, cluster, and module. A check means the passage's own content gives students a genuine encounter with that value at the fourth grade level. Most civic passages carry several values at once, and every value in the rubric is addressed more than once across the grade. Passages without a check teach other required content and build the knowledge base that supports comprehension. This mapping reflects each passage's evident civic content and can be refined against the full passage texts.

Putting the civic values into action

The passages above carry a civic message. We also built activities that go beyond that message, so students actually use the civic responsibilities named in the suitability rubric. Here are a few of the places in our Grade 4 clusters where that happens most strongly.

Cluster / Module	Activity	Civic value in action	What students do
C1 M2	Build-A-Thesis Race (Magna Carta card)	Individual Rights; Respect for Authority	Students spin a prompt type and build a thesis explaining why the Magna Carta mattered, drawing on the text's point that it limited the king's power and protected the rights of the people.
C3 M3	Magnify the Reasons	Texas History; Democracy and Self Governance	Students brainstorm, sort, and narrow reasons that explain the importance of decisions in A Lone Star Choice, a poem about Texas deciding to join the United States, and Making It Happen, a drama about how ideas gain support.
C5 M2	Compare-Conquer Station Quest	Texas History; Democracy and Self Governance	Students rotate through four stations comparing Looking Back to Move Forward and Voices That Shaped Texas, pairing evidence such as "They began to believe that citizens should have a voice" with the work of Texas artists.
C6 M3	CREATURES Build-a-Paper Challenge (Texas Regions cards)	Texas History; Patriotism	Students take a claim such as whether all four Texas regions should be valued as important parts of the state and build a full argument with reasons, evidence, a counterargument, and a rebuttal.
C8 M2	Change Chain Challenge	Respect for Authority; Founding Ideas; Texas History	Groups sort mixed cards into NEED, IDEA, ACTION, and CHANGE chains, such as the barons' belief that a ruler should also be subject to law and Texas's 1845 choice to join the United States.