WHAT TEA SAYS

OVERVIEW SUMMARY ACROSS SCORES AND GRADES • STAAR ECR

TEA RELEASED ECR SCORING GUIDE ORGANIZATION NOTES • SPRING 2026 • 104 NOTES

ACROSS THE SCORES • TEA MENTIONS • 16 NOTES PER SCORE, 24 AT SCORE 3

0
n=16

TOP IDEAS

16 of 16 controlling idea / thesis
14 of 16 organizational structure
13 of 16 evidence / text support
11 of 16 clarity of expression
9 of 16 elaboration / development
5 of 16 conclusion

DESCRIBING WORDS

7 unclear
6 lacks
4 vague
2 general

TEA PHRASE

"Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose."

Grade 3, TEA p. 11, Response 1

1
n=16

TOP IDEAS

16 of 16 controlling idea / thesis
16 of 16 elaboration / development
16 of 16 evidence / text support
16 of 16 organizational structure
15 of 16 conclusion
14 of 16 introduction

DESCRIBING WORDS

16 limited
9 minimal
6 weak
4 vague

TEA PHRASE

"Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose."

Grade 3, TEA p. 12, Response 1

2
n=16

TOP IDEAS

16 of 16 controlling idea / thesis
16 of 16 elaboration / development
16 of 16 evidence / text support
15 of 16 conclusion
15 of 16 introduction
15 of 16 organizational structure

DESCRIBING WORDS

14 limited
8 partial
6 weak
5 general

TEA PHRASE

"The logical development of the claim is minimal."

Grade 3, TEA p. 14, Response 1

3
n=24

TOP IDEAS

24 of 24 controlling idea / thesis
24 of 24 elaboration / development
23 of 24 conclusion
23 of 24 organizational structure
22 of 24 clarity of expression
22 of 24 evidence / text support

DESCRIBING WORDS

14 limited
11 clear
11 partial
8 basic

TEA PHRASE

"The progression of ideas is not always clear or easy to follow."

Grade 4, TEA p. 18, Response 3

4
n=16

TOP IDEAS

16 of 16 clarity of expression
16 of 16 controlling idea / thesis
16 of 16 elaboration / development
16 of 16 evidence / text support
16 of 16 organizational structure
15 of 16 conclusion

DESCRIBING WORDS

12 purposeful
10 effective
8 basic
8 clear

TEA PHRASE

"The expression of ideas is clear and effective."

Grade 3, TEA p. 20, Response 2

5
n=16

TOP IDEAS

16 of 16 clarity of expression
16 of 16 conclusion
16 of 16 controlling idea / thesis
16 of 16 elaboration / development
15 of 16 evidence / text support
15 of 16 introduction

DESCRIBING WORDS

16 effective
16 thorough
15 clear
13 purposeful

TEA PHRASE

"Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose."

Grade 4, TEA p. 23, Response 2

What this shows. Counts are TEA mentions: a note counts when TEA mentions the idea, whether TEA says it is present, weak, or missing. TEA comments on the claim in all 16 score 0 notes, on the evidence in 13 of 16, and on the structure in 14 of 16, even where it says they are missing. The describing words move from lacks and unclear at score 0 through limited at scores 1 and 2 to thorough and effective at score 5. Introduction and conclusion appear in only 5 of 16 score 0 notes but in at least 14 notes at every score from 1 to 5.

Describing words: a word is skipped when no, not, never, without, neither, nor, none, or n't stands within six words before it in the same clause, or when missing or absent follows it; words inside quoted student writing never count.

WHAT TEA SAYS

EXACT NUMBERS BY GRADE BAND • STAAR ECR

TEA RELEASED ECR SCORING GUIDE ORGANIZATION NOTES • SPRING 2026 • 104 NOTES

ACROSS THE GRADES • EACH CELL COUNTS NOTES WHERE TEA MENTIONS THE IDEA

IDEA	Elementary n=39	Middle n=39	High n=26
introduction	**30** of 39 77%	**32** of 39 82%	**23** of 26 88%
conclusion	**31** of 39 80%	**34** of 39 87%	**24** of 26 92%
controlling idea / thesis	**39** of 39 100%	**39** of 39 100%	**26** of 26 100%
organizational structure	**38** of 39 97%	**37** of 39 95%	**24** of 26 92%
progression of ideas	**22** of 39 56%	**19** of 39 49%	**11** of 26 42%
transitions / connections	**23** of 39 59%	**16** of 39 41%	**17** of 26 65%
evidence / text support	**35** of 39 90%	**39** of 39 100%	**24** of 26 92%
elaboration / development	**36** of 39 92%	**35** of 39 90%	**26** of 26 100%
focus	**15** of 39 38%	**10** of 39 26%	**9** of 26 35%
clarity of expression	**36** of 39 92%	**33** of 39 85%	**23** of 26 88%

Near universal. The claim (104 of 104), structure (38, 37, 24), development (36, 35, 26), evidence (35, 39, 24), and clarity (36, 33, 23) each run above four fifths in every band, elementary, middle, high.

Progression. It drops across the bands: 56% of elementary notes, 49% in middle school, 42% in high school.

Widest gap. Transitions and connections run 41% in middle school against 65% in high school, with elementary at 59%.

Focus and conclusion. Focus is level in elementary (15 of 39) and high school (9 of 26) with middle school lower (10 of 39); conclusion climbs from 31 of 39 to 34 of 39 to 24 of 26.

What this shows. Claim, structure, development, evidence, and clarity each run above four fifths in every band. Progression drops from elementary to high school, and transitions has the widest band gap. Focus is level in elementary and high school with middle lower; conclusion climbs across the three bands.