

Grade 6 Sample Items

The early prototypes included several items that were representative of the type of items one might see on a Grade 6 Narrative Writing Task for the Performance-Based Assessment. On an actual 6th grade PBA Narrative Writing Task, there would be Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR) items, a Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response (TECR) item, and one Prose Constructed Response (PCR) item. Students would read a purpose setting statement for the task and then read the passage. After answering EBSR and TECR items, the students would respond to the PCR item.

With the release of these sample items for Grade 6, if one combines these items with the previous prototypes, an educator can see a full complement of the items that would populate a typical Grade 6 Narrative Writing Task.

Each sample item presented includes information on (1) the advances in assessment and answers to the items; (2) an explanation of the alignment of the item to the standards and PARCC evidence statements; and (3) item scoring rules and rationale.



Sample Items for Grade 6: Excerpt from Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George	
Sample Item 1: Questions and Standards	Sample Item 1: Advances and Answers
Part A Question: Which statement best describes the central idea of the text? a. Miyax is far from home and in need of help. * b. Miyax misses her father and has forgotten the lessons he taught her. c. Miyax is cold and lacks appropriate clothing. d. Miyax is surrounded by a pack of unfriendly wolves.	Part A Item Advances: The skills of reading carefully, making inferences, and applying understanding of a text are essential for college and career readiness. This Evidence-Based Selected-Response question allows students to demonstrate comprehension of the central idea of the text: Miyax is lost far away from her home and needs help from the wolves to survive. The item advances assessment by asking students to offer proof of their answer as demonstrated by the inclusion of a Part B. Answering this complex item will help prepare students for the culminating activity in this Narrative Task—writing an original story to continue where the passage ended. Part A Answer Choice Rationales: Option A is correct, as the text focuses on the fact that Miyax has become lost far from home and needs food to survive. Her best chance of getting food is to make friends with the wolves. Option B is incorrect; although Miyax misses her father, she has not forgotten the lessons she learned from him. In fact, those lessons are what give her the idea to seek food from the wolves. Option C is incorrect because although the Miyax is in a cold environment, she is wearing a parka. Option D is incorrect; although Miyax is near the wolves, there is no
	indication they are unfriendly or threatening. In fact, to her they represent a chance of surviving her situation.
Part B Question: Which sentence best helps develop the central idea?	Part B Item Advances: Part B of this Evidence-Based Selected-Response question takes the item in a new direction that calls for students to show the
a. "Miyax pushed back the hood of her	evidence they used to help them determine the central idea of the text. Part B asks students to identify a sentence from the text that best helps develop the



- sealskin parka and looked at the Arctic sun."
- b. "Somewhere in this cosmos was Miyax; and the very life in her body, its spark and warmth, depended upon these wolves for survival."*
- c. "The next night the wolf called him from far away and her father went to him and found a freshly killed caribou."
- d. He had ignored her since she first came upon them, two sleeps ago."

central idea identified in Part A, illustrating one of the key shifts in CCSS assessment: use of textual evidence.

Part B Answer Choice Rationales: Although options A, C, and D are all sentences from the text, they do not help develop the central idea of the text. They represent misreadings or misunderstanding that serve as distractors for the incorrect options in Part A. Only option B helps develop the idea that Miyax is lost (implied the fact that she is "somewhere in this cosmos" and that she needs help to survive, "the very life in her body, its spark and warmth, depended upon these wolves for survival").

Sample Item 1: Alignment

Explanation of Alignment: The item meets the PARCC Assessment Claim for Reading Literature, as the question is based on a literary passage. Additionally, the item is aligned well to the two standards and the evidence statements listed because it asks students to use determine the central idea of the text and then choose textual support for their answer. This item demonstrates a level of complexity not seen in traditional tests in the past.

The text aligns to Reading Standard 10 because of the complexity it illustrates. Quantitative data place the text in the either 2-3 or 6-8 grade band. Quantitative measures sometimes differ on gradeband assignment on literary texts due the nature of themes, conventions, sentence structure, etc.

PARCC Assessment Claim, Standards, and Evidence Statements Assessed

PARCC Assessment Claim – Reading Literature: Students read and demonstrate comprehension of grade-level complex literary text.

<u>Standard RL.6.2</u>: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Evidence Statements for RL.6.2:

The student's response

- Provides a statement of a theme or central idea of a text.
- Provides a description of how the theme or central idea is conveyed through particular details.

Standard RL.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text



Therefore, grade level placement in these instances can be determined best by qualitative analysis, which in this case indicates that this text belongs at grade 6.

says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Evidence Statement for RL.6.1:

The student's response

• Provides cited textual evidence to support analysis of inferences drawn from the text.

Sample Item 1: Scoring Points and Rationale

Scoring Rationale: Past tests would have given full credit for a right answer regardless of how a student arrived at the answer, but the PARCC assessment reflects the key shift of requiring close reading by offering full credit only if both Part A and Part B are correct, demonstrating that students not only made an inference to determine the central idea but also supported that inference with textual evidence.

Scoring Points:

- 2 points are awarded when the student correctly chooses the answer to Part A (A) and the answer to Part B (B).
- 1 point is awarded when the student correctly chooses the answer to Part A (A).



Sample Items for Grade 6: Excerpt from Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George	
Sample Item 2: Questions and Standards	Sample Item 2: Advances and Answers
Part A Question: What is the purpose of this sentence in paragraph 1: "No roads cross it; ponds and lakes freckle its immensity"? a. It illustrates the theme that human beings should keep the natural would pure and unpolluted. b. It shows how beautiful the setting seems to Miyax. c. It helps develop the theme that nature connects all living things together. d. It emphasizes how the setting of the story creates great challenges for Miyax.*	Part A Item Advances: The skill of reading deeply to determine the role and importance of specific sentences in a complex text is essential for college and career readiness. Part A of this Evidence-Based Selected-Response question allows students to show their understanding that the sentence in the stem shows that the immensity of the setting makes Miyax's situation extremely challenging. In Part A, students choose the response that they believe they can defend through citation of evidence in Part B. This kind of assessment task represents an advance in the PARCC assessments. This item meets the standards by asking students to analyze how a particular sentence contributes to the development of the theme or setting. Answering this complex item will help prepare students for the culminating activity in this Narrative Task—writing an original story to continue where the passage ended. Part A Answer Choice Rationales: Option A is incorrect; the theme of humankind's obligation to maintain the purity of nature may be present in the story, but the selected sentence does not support that theme. Option B is incorrect; the setting may be beautiful, but the purpose of the sentence is not to show its beauty but to show its isolation (there are no roads) and size (the area is so large that lakes and ponds are like freckles). Option C is incorrect; other sections of the story may suggest the theme of interconnectedness, but the selected sentence does not contribute to that theme. Option D is the correct response; the size and isolation of the setting make Miyax's situation extremely desperate.
Part B Question: Which other sentence from the	Part B Item Advances: Part B of this Evidence-Based Selected-Response



story serves a similar purpose?

- a. "Quietly she put down her cooking pot and crept to the top of a dome-shaped frost heave, one of the many earth buckles that rise and fall in the crackling cold of the Arctic winter."
- b. "They were wagging their tails as they awoke and saw each other."
- c. "Winds scream across it, and the view in every direction is exactly the same."*
- d. "Unfortunately, Miyax's father never explained to her how he had told the wolf of his needs."

question takes the item in a new direction by asking students to locate additional evidence for the correct concept in Part A. In complex texts there is usually more than one piece of evidence supporting a claim or inference, and this kind of question allows students to show their understanding of that fact. Taken together, Part A and Part B of this question allow the student to demonstrate comprehension of an important aspect of the passage—that the setting of the story underlies the nearly hopeless situation of the main character.

Part B Answer Choice Rationales: Option C, like the sentence in the stem of Part A, supports the concept that Miyax is lost in a forbidding place, adding the additional detail of the sameness of the land. Options A, B, and D do not respond to the question in Part B; they do not introduce aspects of the setting that are challenging for Miyax.

Sample Item 2: Alignment

Explanation of Alignment: The item meets the PARCC Assessment Claim for Reading Literature, as the question is based on a literary passage. Additionally, the item is aligned well to the two standards and the evidence statements listed because it asks students how a given sentence contributes to the development of the setting of the story. Understanding the setting in this story is especially important, as the setting helps create the challenges the main character faces.

By asking students, in Part B, to cite additional textual evidence in support of the claim in Part A, this item raises the level of complexity beyond

PARCC Assessment Claim, Standards, and Evidence Statements Assessed

PARCC Assessment Claim: Students read and demonstrate comprehension of grade-level complex literary text.

<u>Standard RL. 6. 5</u>: Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

Evidence Statement for RL. 6. 5:

The student's response

• Provides an analysis of how a particular sentence, chapter, scene or stanza contributes to the development of the theme,



what is usually seen in traditional tests.

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setting or plot.

<u>Standard RL. 6.1</u>: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Evidence Statement for RL. 6. 1:

The student's response

• Provides cited textual evidence to support analysis of inferences drawn from the text.

Sample Item 2: Scoring Points and Rationale

Scoring Rationale: Past tests would have given full credit for a right answer regardless of how a student arrived at the answer, but the PARCC assessment reflects the key shift of requiring close reading and use of evidence to support comprehension by offering full credit only if both Part A and Part B are correct.

Scoring Points:

- 2 points are awarded when the student correctly chooses the answer to Part A (D) and the answer to Part B (C).
- 1 point is awarded when the student correctly chooses the answer to Part A (D).