

## PURPOSE

This tool provides guidance on how to best use the PARCC English Language Arts (ELA) Practice Tests for grades 3-5 teachers. The following sections are included:

- [3-5 PARCC ELA Test Structure](#)
- [Recommended Uses](#)
- [Item Types](#)
- [General Cautions](#)
- [Interpreting and Using Results](#)
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## 3-5 PARCC ELA TEST STRUCTURE

Specifics on the test structure and administration requirements are included in the [2014-2015 ELA 3-5 PARCC Assessment Guide](#). The PARCC assessment is made up of two testing administrations, the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and the End of Year Assessment (EOY). The testing dates follow:

Component	Format and Administration
Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)	<b>Test Administration Dates</b> <b>Paper-based Tests (PBT): March 16-20, 2015</b>
End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)	<b>Test Administration Dates</b> <b>Paper-based Tests (PBT): May 4-8, 2015</b>

The structure and time allowed on the grades 3-5 assessments are outlined below:

PBA Unit 1 Literary Analysis Task (LAT)	PBA Unit 2 Research Simulation Task (RST)	PBA Unit 3 Narrative Writing Task (NWT)	EOY Unit 1*
Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 literary texts</li> <li>• 6 selected-response questions</li> <li>• Students write an extended response that compares and/or explains elements in both texts (i.e., theme/central idea, characterization, structure, etc.)</li> </ul> <b>Time: 75 minutes</b>	Research with a set of related texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 (grade 3) or 3 (grades 4-5) texts on a given topic</li> <li>• Selected-response questions (6 questions at grade 3 and 9 questions at grades 4-5)</li> <li>• Students write about some aspect of the related texts (i.e., how each text presents the topic, the use of illustrations in the texts, etc.)</li> </ul> <b>Time: 75 minutes (Grade 3)</b> <b>90 minutes (Grades 4-5)</b>	Narrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 literary text</li> <li>• 5 selected-response questions</li> <li>• Students write a narrative related to the text (i.e., finish the story; retell the story in another narrative form, such as a journal entry, etc.)</li> </ul> <b>Time: 60 minutes</b>	Reading comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 literary text with 5 selected-response questions</li> <li>• 1 informational text with 6 selected-response questions</li> </ul> <b>Time: 75 minutes</b>

\*The EOY at all grade levels will also include one or two passage sets with 8 embedded-field test items.

Access the Grades 3-5 PARCC Practice Tests: <http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/english/>

Grade	PBA	EOY
Grade 3	<a href="#">Practice Test</a> and <a href="#">Answer Key</a>	<a href="#">Practice Test</a> and <a href="#">Answer Key</a>
Grade 4	<a href="#">Practice Test</a> and <a href="#">Answer Key</a>	<a href="#">Practice Test</a> and <a href="#">Answer Key</a>
Grade 5	<a href="#">Practice Test</a> and <a href="#">Answer Key</a>	<a href="#">Practice Test</a> and <a href="#">Answer Key</a>

## RECOMMENDED USES

There are a number of ways to use the practice tests to prepare your students for the PARCC administration.

General Use	Specific Guidance	Notes for Use
<b>Examine CONTENT to evaluate your instruction and resource materials by comparing content to practice test content</b>	Comparison between PARCC's approach and instructional approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare the integrated approach of the PARCC questions (Reading, Writing, Language skills taught through a set of related texts) to your lessons/units</li> <li>Compare the texts on the assessments to instructional texts: Are they varied (both literary and informational) and rich enough to support the standards, meaningful discussion, and text-based writing activities?</li> </ul>
	Connection between <a href="#">evidence statements</a> and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See how standards are assessed (different approaches to a standard, especially multi-part standards such as RI.3.3)</li> <li>Consider how more complex standards are broken up into separate questions to cover all parts of that standard</li> <li>Compare your interpretation of each standard to PARCC's</li> </ul>
	Basis of comparison for purchased and open-source assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the practice test as a guide for text selection, test length, level of rigor, item type variety, and scoring</li> <li>Examine assessments and ask questions such as: "Does the assessment offer the item variety and flexibility similar to that of the PARCC practice test?" and "What ways can I adjust a pre-made assessment to meet the level of rigor expected of my students?"</li> <li>Use in conjunction with <a href="#">Instructional Materials Evaluation Tools</a> provided by the LDE</li> </ul>
	(PBA only) Using rubrics to understand expectations for written responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use <a href="#">Scoring Activity</a> with fellow teachers and with students to understand <a href="#">Grade 3</a> and <a href="#">Grades 4-5</a> rubrics and identify qualities of writing that meet grade-level standards</li> <li>Use rubrics when scoring student writing in response to the practice tests or instructional tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Examine FORMAT and design classroom assessments that use features of practice test</b>	Sequenced tasks/passage sets vs random questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build lessons that order questions in a purposeful way and focus on essential words and ideas in a text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key vocabulary in context</li> <li>Text-based questions</li> <li>Sequence that builds understanding of a passage(PBA and EOY) and leads to culminating writing task (PBA only)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

General Use	Specific Guidance	Notes for Use
	Integrated assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create task-driven assessments that integrate reading, writing, and language skills, similar to PBA tasks (AVOID tests with separate sections: Reading Comprehension, Writing Prompt only, discrete Grammar skills)</li> <li>• Include tasks with both multiple-choice questions and a culminating writing task</li> </ul>
<b>Simulate TESTING CONDITIONS* to help students feel more prepared for actual test administration</b>	Strict time limits on each unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice timing by administering a unit from the practice test or a similar task/passage set created by teacher or from an EAGLE set (see timing restrictions on <a href="#">page 1</a>)</li> <li>• Simulate exact testing conditions to determine student's current comfort level with time</li> </ul>
	On-demand writing required at end of all PBA units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice timing by working on all facets of the writing process (brainstorming, formulating thesis statement, planning/outlining, creating a rough draft, writing final draft, proofreading)</li> </ul>
	Test materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice marking reading passages and test questions (annotating, highlighting, marking key words in stem of questions, etc.)</li> <li>• Incorporate test materials into lessons (scratch paper, highlighters, etc.)</li> <li>• Create assessments where students can practice bubbling on test itself, no separate answer sheet</li> </ul>
	Test-taking strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be mindful of time</li> <li>• Keep track of skipped test questions (make a list on provided scratch paper of question numbers to return to)</li> <li>• Try to answer all questions</li> <li>• Complete all parts of each writing task (PBA only)</li> <li>• Write responses in space provided (four pages, PBA only)</li> <li>• Cross out work that you don't want scored</li> <li>• When crossing out answer choices or highlighting, be careful not to make marks near bubbles</li> </ul>

\* PARCC has a [Paper-Based Tutorial](#) available to help students understand administration procedures and expectations. The tutorial contains items from grades 3-5, so it should not be used to examine specific content.

**ITEM TYPES**

Practice all item types: prose constructed response (PCR), evidence-based selected response (EBSR), multiple-select questions.

Type	Specifics	Scoring Information	Practice Test Examples
<p><b>PCR</b></p> <p><i>PBA ONLY</i></p> <p>For instructional examples, see the <a href="#">Connections</a> chart in the Appendix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires student to write</li> <li>Multi-part</li> <li>Connected to more than one text depending on the task (LAT, 2 texts; RST, 2 or 3 texts)</li> <li>Requires evidence</li> <li>Measures Reading, Written Expression, and Knowledge of Conventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scored with two PARCC Rubrics, one for LAT/RST and one for NWT</li> <li>LAT/RST (15 total points):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading (3, 2, 1, 0)</li> <li>Written Expression (score point of 3, 2, 1, 0 <b>times 3</b>)</li> <li>Knowledge of Conventions (3, 2, 1, 0)</li> </ul> </li> <li>NWT (12 total points):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written Expression (score point of 3, 2, 1, 0 <b>times 3</b>)</li> <li>Knowledge of Conventions (3, 2, 1, 0)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Grade 3 PCRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">LAT</a>: p.17, #7</li> <li>RST (see Grade 3 chart in <a href="#">Appendix</a>)</li> <li><a href="#">NWT</a>: p. 28, #13</li> </ul> <p>Grade 4 PCRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">LAT</a>: p. 15, #7</li> <li><a href="#">RST</a>: p. 39, #17</li> <li><a href="#">NWT</a>: p. 51, #23</li> </ul> <p>Grade 5 PCRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">LAT</a>: p. 15, #7</li> <li><a href="#">RST</a>: p. 39, #17</li> <li><a href="#">NWT</a>: p. 50, #23</li> </ul>
<p><b>EBSR</b></p> <p><i>PBA AND EOY</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-part item</li> <li>One part measures reading comprehension</li> <li>Other part asks for evidence to support understanding</li> <li>Evidence is presented in different ways (direct quotes, details from text, paragraph references only)</li> </ul>	<p>Worth up to two points (0, 1, 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial credit can be earned, but must answer correctly the part asking for understanding of text (usually Part A)</li> <li>no credit if <b>only</b> evidence part (usually Part B) is correct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 3 <a href="#">PBA</a>, p. 7, #1 (direct quotes from text, most common)</li> <li>Grade 3 <a href="#">EOY</a>, p. 15, #7 (details from the text)</li> <li>Grade 4 <a href="#">PBA</a>, p. 7, #1 (details from text)</li> <li>Grade 4 <a href="#">EOY</a>, p. 19, #11 (direct quotes from text)</li> <li>Grade 5 <a href="#">PBA</a>, p. 30, #12 (paragraph references)</li> <li>Grade 5 <a href="#">EOY</a>, p. 9, #4 (direct quotes from text)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multiple-Select</b></p> <p><i>PBA and EOY</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items that require more than one answer (number of answers required in bold face in question)</li> </ul>	<p>Worth up to two points (0, 1, 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial credit can be earned, but must answer correctly the part asking for understanding of text (usually Part A)</li> <li>no credit if <b>only</b> evidence part (usually Part B) is correct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 3 <a href="#">PBA</a>, p. 25, #10</li> <li>Grade 3 <a href="#">EOY</a>, p. 7, #2</li> <li>Grade 4 <a href="#">PBA</a>, p. 46, #18</li> <li>Grade 4 <a href="#">EOY</a>, p. 14, #6</li> <li>Grade 5 <a href="#">PBA</a>, p. 23, #9</li> <li>Grade 5 <a href="#">EOY</a>, p. 16, #8</li> </ul>

## GENERAL CAUTIONS

- Teachers should **not** limit instructional content based on specific items on the practice test (e.g., teach only expository and narrative writing because none of the three prose-constructed response items on the grade-level Practice Tests mention argument).
- Teachers should **not** limit strategies used in class instruction to only those required when taking the practice test (e.g., write only under timed circumstances, teach only parts of the writing process, design assessments where all test questions are two-part, etc.).

## INTERPRETING AND USING RESULTS

When scoring student performance on the practice tests, do **not** make assumptions about a student’s score (i.e., 70% equals a D). Unlike daily assignments, statewide assessments—LEAP, EOCs, PARCC, etc. —are not scored on a grading scale where, for example, answering 95% of questions correctly is always an A, nor answering only 40% of questions correctly is always an F. To score the practice test in this way would be inaccurate. Instead, consider trends, such as those presented in the table that follows, and adjust instruction appropriately.

Trends to Look For	Example of Trend	Recommendations
<b>Strengths and Weaknesses with Standards/Skills</b>	Students struggle (or do very well) with specific skills associated with broader standards (central idea, structure of text, point of view, etc.).	Address weaknesses through mini-lessons that focus on key ELA skills/elements. Build connections between standards students are having success with and the standards creating issues for students (i.e., show connections between character’s actions and theme).
<b>Specific types of questions</b>	Students struggle with two-part or multiple-select items.	Have students create two-part and/or multiple-select items and discuss them in groups. Carefully discuss each answer option, ask students to explain the correct answer and why the other options are incorrect.
<b>Evidence</b>	Students struggle with providing appropriate evidence in written responses.	Make sure that you are asking students to provide evidence in class discussions and when writing to sources. Discuss quality of evidence by using rubric language ( <i>relevant, convincing, effective</i> , etc.)
<b>Different types of texts</b>	Students miss more questions attached to literary texts than informational texts.	Examine the literary texts on the practice tests and make sure that students are encountering literary texts with same level of difficulty. Expose students to all kinds of literature (poetry, drama, stories, etc.).
<b>Different types of tasks</b>	Students create expository responses to the PCR attached to Narrative Task.	Review narrative techniques and offer opportunities for students to write stories. Find Guidebook tasks that focus on different task types (see <a href="#">Appendix</a> ).
<b>Rubric Dimensions</b>	Students receive low scores on a particular dimension of the PARCC rubrics (Reading, Written Expression, Conventions).	Examine each dimension and create mini-lessons that address a dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize annotating reading passages</li> <li>Work on development of ideas</li> <li>Use application of grade-level grammar skills</li> </ul> Repeat <a href="#">Scoring Activity</a> .

## RESOURCES

- [Louisiana Guide to PARCC ELA Assessments, Grades 3-5](#)
- [Teacher Leader Collaboration Presentations](#)
- [PARCC's Online Professional Learning Site](#)
- [PARCC Paper-Based Tutorial](#)
- [PARCC English Language Arts Documents](#)
- [Louisiana English Guidebook: Grades 3-5](#)
- [EAGLE](#)

## APPENDIX

### Scoring Activity: Scoring Student Writing Using Rubrics

**PURPOSE:** To establish common expectations for student writing

**OUTCOMES:**

- Learn to use a writing rubric and identify qualities of writing that meet standards
- Reveal grade-specific expectations in a school
- Learn about and discuss different approaches that can improve instruction

**PROCESS:**

1. Have students respond in writing to a common prompt. Available prompts:
  - a. [English language arts guidebooks](#) (e.g., Culminating Writing Task, writing task from the Express Understanding section in a lesson, Extension Task essay, Cold-Read Task essay)
  - b. [PARCC Practice Tests](#) (e.g., prose-constructed response items from the Performance-Based Assessment)
  - c. Tasks created at the school/district level
2. Collect student written responses to the common prompt.
3. Work collaboratively to understand the rubric.
  - a. Review the scoring criteria on the chosen rubric. Read through each row. Highlight the key words on the rubric that show the differences between each score.
  - b. Create anchor papers. These are papers that all participants agree represent a solid score (e.g., a 4 in Reading: Comprehension of Key Ideas and Details, a 2 in Content, etc.). Annotate the papers to identify which qualities match the rubric. They will serve as models of each score according to the rubric.
4. Score the compositions collaboratively.
  - a. Individually score the essays using the rubric and anchor set.
  - b. Then come together as a group. Read each essay aloud and, as a group, discuss the individual scores using the rubric and the anchor papers.
  - c. Try to reach consensus on the scores for each essay. Discuss any scores that are not consistent.
5. After the essays are scored, discuss the essays in general—strengths, weaknesses, different approaches to the task, etc. Determine any patterns that exist in the essays as a whole (e.g., difficulty with a particular construct, such as comprehension of the text, relevance of the evidence, or the organization of the ideas). Individual teachers should also consider their own students' papers to determine any patterns.
6. Finally, discuss the instructional implications: How will we address the general weaknesses? How will I address my own students' weaknesses, etc.? Develop a plan.

For more information about how to use this activity with teachers and students, see the presentation materials for the Teacher Leader Workshop presented in December, [Scoring Student Writing Using Rubrics](#).

To demonstrate how the practice tests reflect instruction, the grade-level tables that follow show connections between the Guidebook Tasks and the PARCC Performance Based Assessment Tasks (LAT: Literary Analysis Task, RST: Research Simulation Task, NWT: Narrative Writing Task). Each table provides an example for each task type. Teachers are encouraged to use these examples as models when creating additional practice for the PARCC test.

Connections Between Guidebook Tasks and Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) Tasks					
Grade 3					
Task Type	Texts Used	Task	Unit	Lesson/Task	Page
LAT	“Lapin and the Ball at M’sieur Deer’s” and “Why Lapin’s Tail Is Short”	Write a comparison and contrast essay that explains how the setting, plot and lessons of “Lapin and the Ball at M’sieur Deer’s” and “Why Lapin’s Tail Is Short” are similar and different. Use information from each story to support your essay.	<i>Lapin Plays Possum</i>	Lesson 5, Express Understanding	142
RST	“Vikings & European Explorers: Ferdinand Magellan” and <i>How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis and Clark</i>	What information in “Vikings & European Explorers: Ferdinand Magellan” is similar to information in <i>How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis and Clark</i> ? Explain the challenges that explorers experienced on their journey.	<i>The Louisiana Purchase</i>	Cold-Read Task	84
RST	<i>A Log’s Life; Tell Me, Tree: All about Trees for Kids; and A Tree is Growing</i>	Produce a written summary of the life cycle illustration including the relationship between steps and specific evidence gathered from each text to accompany the illustration.	<i>A Log’s Life</i>	Lesson 4, Express Understanding	71
NWT	<i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i> and <i>The Cricket in Times Square</i>	Tell a story about a time when you or another person tried to convince an adult to let you keep an unusual pet as a companion. Model your story language and dialogue after <i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i> and <i>The Cricket in Times Square</i> .	<i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i>	Lesson 2, Express Understanding	116



Connections Between Guidebook Tasks and Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) Tasks					
Grade 4					
Task Type	Texts Used	Task	Unit	Lesson/Task	Page
LAT	<i>Legends and Villains</i> and <i>The Lightning Thief</i>	Compare and contrast the story of Procrustes in “Procrustes and His Magic Bed” to the story told in “We Shop for Water Beds” in <i>The Lightning Thief</i> . How does each address the trials and challenges a hero encounters on a quest?	<i>The Lightning Thief</i>	Cold-Read Task	275
RST	<i>When Mr. Jefferson Came to Philadelphia: What I Learned of Freedom, 1776</i> and “The Declaration of Independence” from ReadWorks.	Compare and contrast the description of writing the Declaration of Independence in each of these texts. Provide specific examples from the texts.	<i>If You Lived at the Time of the American Revolution</i>	Cold-Read Task	244
NWT	“Possum’s Tail” and “How the Camel Got His Hump”	Write an original <i>pourquoi</i> tale explaining how an animal got a unique feature. Model your tale after the tales read in these stories.	<i>Pushing up the Sky</i>	Lesson 5, Express Understanding	206

Connections Between Guidebook Tasks and Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) Tasks					
Grade 5					
Task	Texts Used	Task	Unit	Lesson/Task	Page
LAT	“Down the Rabbit-Hole,” from <i>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland</i> , Lewis Carroll; and Chapters 1 and 2 of <i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i> , C. S. Lewis	Compare and contrast the experiences of Lucy to the experiences of Alice. As part of their response, instruct students to identify features of fantasy text and consider why the authors selected certain events to take place. Support your response with information from each text.	<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i>	Lesson 1, Express Understanding	409
RST	“Galileo: Sun-Centered System,” PBS and “Explore a Model of Earth’s Yearly Revolution Around the Sun,”—videos and “Quarter of Americans Convinced Sun Revolves Around Earth, Survey Finds”	Use information from all three sources to explain how the theory of the sun and planets has changed over time. In your response, explain the theories of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Galileo. Include why some theories were more widely accepted than others.	“The Making of a Scientist”	Cold-Read Task	332
NWT	“Statue of Liberty” from <i>Coming to America: A New Life in a New Land</i> , Katharine Emsden “The New Colossus,” Emma Lazarus	Have students work in pairs to write a short narrative from the point of view of an immigrant looking at the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Ask pairs to use details from the text and poem to support the experience of the immigrant in their narrative. Prompt students to orient the reader and use narrative techniques in their writing.	<i>Shutting Out the Sky</i>	Lesson 3, Express Understanding	436