

The goal for English language arts students is that they can read and understand grade-level texts independently, as demonstrated through writing and speaking about those texts. Strong ELA assessments provide opportunities for students to demonstrate they have met this goal with many different types of texts. A combination of formative and summative assessments across the different components of an ELA classroom provide a full picture of student performance in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language study.



Title: Common Core ELA Benchmark Assessments

Grade: 6-8

Publisher: Measured Progress, Inc.

Copyright: 2013

Overall Rating: Tier III, Not representing quality

Tier I, Tier II, Tier III elements of this review:

STRONG	WEAK
<u>Range of Texts</u>	<u>Quality of Texts</u> (Non-Negotiable)
<u>Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks</u> (Non-Negotiable)	<u>Complexity of Texts</u> (Non-Negotiable)*
<u>Alignment</u> (Non-Negotiable)	<u>Design and Scoring</u> (Non-Negotiable)
	<u>Language</u>
	<u>Writing to Sources</u>
*strong at 7 th grade level	

Each set of submitted materials was evaluated for alignment with the standards beginning with a review of the indicators for the non-negotiable criteria. If those criteria were met, a review of the other criteria ensued.

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

[Grade 6 \(Tier 3\)](#)

[Grade 7 \(Tier 3\)](#)

[Grade 8 \(Tier 3\)](#)

The goal for English language arts students is that they can read and understand grade-level texts independently, as demonstrated through writing and speaking about those texts. Strong ELA assessments provide opportunities for students to demonstrate they have met this goal with many different types of texts. A combination of formative and summative assessments across the different components of an ELA classroom provide a full picture of student performance in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language study.



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Range of Texts	Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks (Non-Negotiable)	Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
Alignment (Non-Negotiable)	Design and Scoring (Non-Negotiable)
	Writing to Sources
	Language

To evaluate each set of submitted materials for alignment with the [standards](#), begin by reviewing Column 2 for the non-negotiable criteria. If there is a “Yes” for all required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “Yes” in Column 1. If there is a “No” for any required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “No” in Column 1.

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 1. QUALITY OF TEXTS: The quality of test passages and other stimuli is of high—they support multiple readings for various purposes and exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 1a) Nearly all texts are worth reading in the particular grade (i.e., provide opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of meeting grade-level standards, as determined by the PARCC Evidence Tables (Grades 3-11, Grades 3-11 Writing)); they are content rich and well crafted, representing the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the discipline.</p>	Yes	Nearly all texts are worth reading. They provide useful information and opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of meeting grade-level standards.
	<p>REQUIRED 1b) Nearly all passages and other stimuli are previously published rather than “commissioned.” Any commissioned texts have evidence that these texts have been reviewed and edited by teachers and professional editors.</p>	No	65% of the passages in Form/s A—D for Grade 6 are “commissioned” and copyrighted by Measured Progress. The small number of permissioned texts (five) does not meet expectations.
	<p>1c) Paired or multiple texts are governed by the standards at each grade; when research simulation tasks are included on an assessment, the set of texts includes at least two texts, one of which is an anchor text, and uses a variety of texts and text lengths.</p>	Yes	This indicator is met. For instance, in Form A, students read two paired texts that both feature a main character facing a difficult decision. After reading, students must demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast how both selections approach the topic of decision-making.
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 2. COMPLEXITY OF TEXTS: Reading passages have the appropriate level of complexity as stated by Reading Standard 10¹ and Reading</p>	<p>REQUIRED 2a) Texts indicate that research-based quantitative measures as well as qualitative analysis² were used in selection of texts. Poetry and drama are analyzed only using qualitative measures.</p>	Yes	Research-based quantitative measures can be found for many of the texts.

¹ Grades 3-12 Example: Texts present vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose similar to exemplars in Appendices A and B)

² The process for determining quantitative and qualitative measures is described in the [Supplement to Appendix A](#). Grade band conversions for quantitative measures are determined using the chart on page 4 of the document. A description of the criteria for analyzing the qualitative features of the text is located on pages 4-6 of the document.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
Foundational Standard 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 2b) Nearly all texts are placed within the <u>grade band</u> indicated by the quantitative analysis (as applicable). Rare exceptions (in which the qualitative measure has trumped the quantitative measures and placed the text outside the grade band) are usually reserved for literary texts in the upper grades.	No	Many of the texts in Form/s A—D for Grade 6 are placed below the grade band. For example when analyzed “Lacy Dover” has a Lexile level of 690, “A Secret Meeting” has a Lexile level of 790, and “Invisible: has a Lexile level of 860.
	REQUIRED 2c) In a set of reading assessments, the complexity of reading texts progresses according to expectations of Reading Standard 10 and Reading Foundational Standard 4 in grades K-5. Read-aloud texts follow the same trend, although they may have greater variability because listening skills in elementary school generally outpace reading skills.	Yes	Although many of the texts included in the Grade 6 Reading Benchmark are below the grade band, the texts do appear to increase in complexity across Forms A—D.
3. RANGE OF TEXTS: Texts used on reading assessments or in an item bank reflect the distribution of text types and genres suggested by the standards: Text types and genres generally reflect the definitions provided on page 31 (grades K-5) and page 57 (grades 6-12) of the standards and included in the text of the standards (e.g., RL.2.9 , RL.9-10.6 , RI.7.7 , or RI.11-12.9). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 3a) In grades K-12, passages on ELA assessments or in an item bank seek a balance between 50% literature/ 50% informational texts. In grades 6-12, the inclusion of literacy texts (i.e., historical and scientific informational texts) might shift the balance toward more informational texts.	Yes	There is a balance between informational and literary texts. Texts included in the Grade 6 Reading Benchmark (Forms A—D) include historical nonfiction, poems, a speech from a historical figure, and informational articles.
	REQUIRED 3b) Assessments or item banks include texts of different formats (e.g., print and non-print, including film, art, music, charts, etc.) and lengths.	Yes	Prose of varying lengths, images and captions, a chart, and a map are all included.
	3c) Assessments or item banks include many informational texts with an informational text structure rather than a narrative structure; grades 6-12 include literary nonfiction.	Yes	This indicator is met.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
II. Design			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>4. DESIGN AND SCORING: Assessments genuinely measure progress and elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the assessed grade-specific standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>4a) Assessments incorporate performance tasks³, which allow students to respond to a set of texts through a reading and writing. Student scores are based on their performance with texts, tasks, and a combination of standards with texts, rather than isolated standards.</p>	No	While assessments incorporate performance tasks and allow students to respond to a set of texts through reading and writing, many of the constructed response and multiple choice questions isolate standards and are not comparable to PARCC prototypes.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>4b) Aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines (such as scoring guides or student work exemplars) are included and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.</p>	Yes	Both a 4-point constructed-response rubric and constructed-response scoring notes are provided in order to guide teachers in interpreting student performance.
	<p>4c) A variety of assessments for different uses are included, e.g., pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p>	No	The assessments themselves serve as formative assessments, as they seek to “monitor student understanding and inform instruction.” Pre- and self-assessment measures are not evident.
	<p>4d) Materials assess student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</p>	Yes	If teachers honor testing accommodations, the materials allow for an unbiased and accessible assessment of students.

³ PARCC Task Models ([grades 3-5](#), [grades 6-8](#), [grades 9-11](#)) provide additional information about how standards might be combined around particular texts.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 5. TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS AND TASKS: Items are text-dependent, reflecting the expectations of Reading Standard 1; they require students to use the text to find or infer the answers and use textual evidence as support for meeting the expectations of other grade-level standards.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 5a) Nearly all of the questions on assessments or in an item bank are text-dependent, i.e., the questions require close reading and analysis of the text(s); they can be answered correctly without prior knowledge; and they are linked to a text (i.e., not “stand alone”).</p>	Yes	<p>Nearly all of the questions on assessments are text-dependent.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 5b) A large majority of items on a reading assessment reflect the requirements of Reading Standard 1 by requiring students to directly select or provide evidence from the text to support their answers.</p>	Yes	<p>A large majority of items require students to cite textual evidence to support their answer, to identify which piece of evidence best supports inferences, or how individual excerpts from the text contribute to the development of selections.</p> <p>For example, in Grade 6 – Reading Benchmark Form A, students are asked “What evidence from Selection 2 supports the answer above?” in a two-part question that mimics a PARCC prototype.</p>
	<p>5c) Assessments or item banks contain a variety of types of test questions and tasks, including when possible technology-enhanced and constructed-response formats, to approach the texts in ways uniquely appropriate to each text.</p>	No	<p>Test items are predominantly multiple choice or constructed response in format.</p> <p>Although there are evidence-based responses, technology-enhanced opportunities are not available. There are no unique and varied ways to approach the texts.</p>
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 6. ALIGNMENT: Items reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards; they assess the depth and breadth of the standards at each grade level.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 6a) Items on an assessment and in an item bank are worth asking in that they focus on the big ideas and important particulars of the text, rather than superficial or peripheral concepts.</p>	Yes	<p>Items on assessments are worth asking and focus students on the big ideas of the text.</p> <p>For example, in Form D, after reading two informational articles, students are asked how the authors use scientific experts to explain environment events, focusing the students on the big ideas and important particulars of each text.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 6b) Questions on an assessment or in an item bank include the language of the standards, and assess the depth and complexity required by the standards (i.e., the concepts, topics, and texts named) at each grade-level over time to advance and deepen student learning.</p>	Yes	<p>Many questions on the assessments include the language of the standards.</p> <p>For instance, constructed responses prompt students to “cite textual evidence” to support their evaluation of an author’s statement. A specific question in Form A asks students “Which evidence from Selection 4 supports the inference that the tour group did not expect winter</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	<i>(Note: not every standard must be assessed with every text.)</i>		weather conditions?"
	REQUIRED 6c) Vocabulary items on assessments and in an item bank assess words essential to the central meaning and purpose of the text with a specific emphasis on academic vocabulary (Tier 2 words); they assess the meaning of the words used in context rather than relying on prior knowledge.	Yes	Vocabulary items assess if students can “determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text,” particularly when the word is essential to the central meaning and purpose of the text.
	6d) Sets of questions for given text(s) often begin with comprehension before focusing on evaluation or interpretation; the set of questions is coherently sequenced to build student understanding and elicits sustained attention to the text and its connection to other texts, where appropriate.	Yes	This indicator is met.
<p>7. WRITING TO SOURCES: The majority of writing prompts and tasks are text-dependent and reflect the writing genres named in the standards.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	REQUIRED 7a) A vast majority of written tasks at all grade levels require students to analyze and synthesize sources, as well as to present careful analysis, well-defended claims and clear information, drawing on textual evidence and to support valid inferences from text.	Yes	Constructed-response prompts are text-dependent and require students to present well-defended claims, clear information, and textual evidence to support their inferences.
	REQUIRED 7b) Assessments include multiple writing tasks with varied length and time demands (e.g., notes, charts, summaries, short-answer responses, essays, on-demand, etc.).	No	The indicator includes examples of the multiple and varied tasks students should use to write to text, but the assessments only offer one type of written task (constructed response items).
	7c) Assessments include more than one mode of writing (opinion/argumentative, informative, narrative) or blended mode (i.e., analytical writing).	Yes	Constructed-response items ask students to “analyze” or “evaluate.” For example, text-dependent writing prompts ask that students “analyze how the author of Selection 4 illustrates how the weather influenced the events of the day?” and “explain how Marian’s attitude toward Ella changes from Selection 1 to Selection 2.”

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	<p>7d) Narrative prompts decrease in number and increase in being based on text(s) in later grades, e.g., narrative description (text-based, chronological writing) rather than imaginative narratives.</p>	N/A	None of the constructed-responses requires a narrative response – rather, all writing prompts are text-dependent and require an expository, informative, or analytical response.
<p>8. SPEAKING AND LISTENING*: Items assessing speaking and listening must be text-dependent and reflect true communication skills required for college and career readiness.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>*As applicable</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>8a) Texts and other stimuli used for assessing speaking and listening meet the criteria for complexity, range, and quality of texts (Criteria 1, 2, and 3).</p> <p>8b) Assessments assess students’ ability to gather and use evidence to orally present findings from research and express well-supported ideas clearly; effective engagement includes using appropriate, grade-level academic language (including vocabulary and syntax).</p> <p>8c) Items assessing listening permit the evaluation of active listening skills, such as taking notes on main ideas, asking relevant questions, and probing ideas under discussion by building and elaborating on remarks of others.</p>	N/A	<p>Speaking and listening skills are not assessed.</p> <p>The assessments do not assess students’ ability to gather and use evidence to orally present their findings.</p> <p>There are no items assessing true communication skills required for college and career readiness.</p>
<p>9. LANGUAGE: Items adequately address the Language standards for the grade, including through unpacking the vocabulary and syntax of text(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>9a) The majority of language points are obtained from test questions specifically designed to assess language as part of an integrated task or in relation to a text, or the points are obtained from scores on student writing.</p>	No	<p>Students are expected to exhibit control of standard English grammar when composing constructed-response items. However, the majority of constructed-response points relate to content.</p> <p>For example, students may earn a full “4” on the constructed-response task for having a “response that is accurate, complete; analyzes the impact of specific word choices on tone. Text references strongly support the task and demonstrate understanding of the text. The writing is clearly articulated, focused, and demonstrates strong control of conventions; a few minor errors may be present.”</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	REQUIRED 9b) Questions and tasks address common student errors and the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards at each grade level.	No	There are no questions that address the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards.
	REQUIRED 9c) Questions and tasks focus on conventions most important for college and career readiness that build from previous grade levels, as indicated by pages 30 and 56 of the standards .	No	Specific conventions are not specified within the questions and tasks.
	9d) A majority of items assessing conventions and writing strategies reflect actual practice to the extent possible, i.e., they mirror authentic editing or revision, writing, etc.	No	Conventions and writing strategies are assessed through authentic writing (constructed-response items). However, there is only one constructed response item for each section of selections. Editing and revision is not required, only recommended/implied by the scoring guide.

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

FINAL EVALUATION			
Compile the results for Sections I-VII to make a final decision for the material under review.			
Section	Criteria	Y/N	Final Justification/Comments
I: Text Selection and Other Stimuli	1. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	Texts are worth reading, but many are placed below the grade band and the majority of them are “commissioned.”
	2. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	Nearly all texts are placed below the grade band, though they do appear to increase in complexity across Forms A—D.
	3. Range of Texts	Yes	There is a balance between informational and literary texts. Prose of varying lengths, images and captions, a chart, and a map are all included.
II: Design	4. Design and Scoring (Non-Negotiable)	No	While assessments incorporate performance tasks and allow students to respond to a set of texts through reading and writing, the majority of the constructed response and multiple-choice questions isolate standards and are not always comparable to PARCC prototypes.
III: Assessment Items	5. Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	A large majority of both questions and tasks require students to cite textual evidence to support their answer, to identify which piece of evidence best supports inferences, or state how individual excerpts from the text contribute to the development of selections.
	6. Alignment (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	Questions use the language of the standards and assessment items often reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards.
	7. Writing to Sources	No	All constructed-response/writing tasks are text-dependent and require students to write to sources – however, constructed-response items are the only writing tasks in the assessments.
	8. Speaking and Listening*	N/A	
	9. Language	No	While students are expected to exhibit control of standard English grammar when composing their constructed-responses, questions do not adequately address the Language standards.
FINAL DECISION FOR THIS MATERIAL: <u>Tier III, Not representing quality</u>			

*As applicable

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STRONG	WEAK
Range of Texts	Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	Design and Scoring (Non-Negotiable)
Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks (Non-Negotiable)	Writing to Sources
Alignment (Non-Negotiable)	Language

To evaluate each set of submitted materials for alignment with the [standards](#), begin by reviewing Column 2 for the non-negotiable criteria. If there is a “Yes” for all required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “Yes” in Column 1. If there is a “No” for any required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “No” in Column 1.

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>1. QUALITY OF TEXTS: The quality of test passages and other stimuli is of high—they support multiple readings for various purposes and exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>1a) Nearly all texts are worth reading in the particular grade (i.e., provide opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of meeting grade-level standards, as determined by the PARCC Evidence Tables (Grades 3-11, Grades 3-11 Writing)); they are content rich and well crafted, representing the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the discipline.</p>	Yes	<p>Nearly all texts are worth reading. They provide useful information and opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of meeting grade-level standards.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>1b) Nearly all passages and other stimuli are previously published rather than “commissioned.” Any commissioned texts have evidence that these texts have been reviewed and edited by teachers and professional editors.</p>	No	<p>Although nearly all passages in forms A-D for Grade 7 are within the grade-level band, 12 of the 16 passages (75%) are “commissioned” and copyrighted by Measured Progress. The small number of permissioned texts (four) does not meet expectations.</p>
	<p>1c) Paired or multiple texts are governed by the standards at each grade; when research simulation tasks are included on an assessment, the set of texts includes at least two texts, one of which is an anchor text, and uses a variety of texts and text lengths.</p>	Yes	<p>This indicator is met.</p> <p>For instance, in Form C, students read two paired texts (an article and a radio cast) about the revolutionary war soldier, Nathan Hale. In Form D, students read a play adapted from the memoir <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> and an excerpt from Anne Frank’s actual diary entry.</p> <p>After reading, students must demonstrate the ability to determine key ideas and details, as well as analyze the craft and structure of both texts. Later, students integrate knowledge and ideas in a constructed-response.</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>2. COMPLEXITY OF TEXTS: Reading passages have the appropriate level of complexity as stated by Reading Standard 10¹ and Reading Foundational Standard 4.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>2a) Texts indicate that research-based quantitative measures as well as qualitative analysis² were used in selection of texts. Poetry and drama are analyzed only using qualitative measures.</p>	Yes	Text analysis indicates that research-based quantitative measures were used in selecting many of the texts.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>2b) Nearly all texts are placed within the <u>grade band</u> indicated by the quantitative analysis (as applicable). Rare exceptions (in which the qualitative measure has trumped the quantitative measures and placed the text outside the grade band) are usually reserved for literary texts in the upper grades.</p>	Yes	When texts are analyzed with the Lexile analyzer, nearly all texts are placed within the 6-8 grade band.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>2c) In a set of reading assessments, the complexity of reading texts progresses according to expectations of Reading Standard 10 and Reading Foundational Standard 4 in grades K-5. Read-aloud texts follow the same trend, although they may have greater variability because listening skills in elementary school generally outpace reading skills.</p>	Yes	Texts included in the Grade 7 Reading Benchmark do appear to increase in complexity across Forms A—D.
<p>3. RANGE OF TEXTS: Texts used on reading assessments or in an item bank reflect the distribution of text types and genres suggested by the standards: Text types and genres generally reflect the definitions provided on page 31 (grades K-5) and</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>3a) In grades K-12, passages on ELA assessments or in an item bank seek a balance between 50% literature/ 50% informational texts. In grades 6-12, the inclusion of literacy texts (i.e., historical and scientific informational texts) might shift the balance toward more informational texts.</p>	Yes	<p>There is a balance between informational and literary texts.</p> <p>Texts included in the Grade 7 Reading Benchmark (Forms A—D) include not only stories and poems, but also news releases, radio cast, plays, essay excerpts, and many informational texts.</p>

¹ Grades 3-12 Example: Texts present vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose similar to exemplars in Appendices A and B)

² The process for determining quantitative and qualitative measures is described in the [Supplement to Appendix A](#). Grade band conversions for quantitative measures are determined using the chart on page 4 of the document. A description of the criteria for analyzing the qualitative features of the text is located on pages 4-6 of the document.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
page 57 (grades 6-12) of the standards and included in the text of the standards (e.g., RL.2.9 , RL.9-10.6 , RI.7.7 , or RI.11-12.9). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 3b) Assessments or item banks include texts of different formats (e.g., print and non-print, including film, art, music, charts, etc.) and lengths.	Yes	Prose of varying lengths, a graph, a map, and images with captions are included.
	3c) Assessments or item banks include many informational texts with an informational text structure rather than a narrative structure; grades 6-12 include literary nonfiction.	Yes	This indicator is met.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
II. Design			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>4. DESIGN AND SCORING: Assessments genuinely measure progress and elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the assessed grade-specific standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>4a) Assessments incorporate performance tasks³, which allow students to respond to a set of texts through a reading and writing. Student scores are based on their performance with texts, tasks, and a combination of standards with texts, rather than isolated standards.</p>	No	While assessments incorporate performance tasks and allow students to respond to a set of texts through reading and writing, many of the constructed response and multiple choice questions isolate standards and are not comparable to PARCC prototypes.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>4b) Aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines (such as scoring guides or student work exemplars) are included and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.</p>	Yes	Both a 4-point constructed-response rubric and constructed-response scoring notes are provided in order to guide teachers in interpreting student performance.
	<p>4c) A variety of assessments for different uses are included, e.g., pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p>	No	The assessments themselves serve as formative assessments, as they seek to “monitor student understanding and inform instruction.” Pre- and self-assessment measures are not evident.
	<p>4d) Materials assess student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</p>	Yes	If teachers honor testing accommodations, the materials allow for an unbiased and accessible assessment of students.

³ PARCC Task Models ([grades 3-5](#), [grades 6-8](#), [grades 9-11](#)) provide additional information about how standards might be combined around particular texts.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 5. TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS AND TASKS: Items are text-dependent, reflecting the expectations of Reading Standard 1; they require students to use the text to find or infer the answers and use textual evidence as support for meeting the expectations of other grade-level standards.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 5a) Nearly all of the questions on assessments or in an item bank are text-dependent, i.e., the questions require close reading and analysis of the text(s); they can be answered correctly without prior knowledge; and they are linked to a text (i.e., not “stand alone”).</p> <p>REQUIRED 5b) A large majority of items on a reading assessment reflect the requirements of Reading Standard 1 by requiring students to directly select or provide evidence from the text to support their answers.</p> <p>5c) Assessments or item banks contain a variety of types of test questions and tasks, including when possible technology-enhanced and constructed-response formats, to approach the texts in ways uniquely appropriate to each text.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Nearly all of the questions on assessments are text-dependent.</p> <p>A large majority of items require students to cite textual evidence to support their answer, to identify which piece of evidence best supports inferences, or how individual excerpts from the text contribute to the development of selections.</p> <p>For example, in Grade 7- Reading Benchmark Form C, students are asked to explain how the authors of both selections (“The E-book vs. Printed Book: Which Is Better?” and a news article) make a case for why e-books may not be used. Students must cite textual evidence to support their answers.</p> <p>Test items are predominately multiple choice or constructed response in format.</p> <p>Although there are evidence-based responses, technology-enhanced opportunities are not available. There are not unique and varied ways to approach the texts.</p>
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 6. ALIGNMENT: Items reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards; they assess the depth and breadth of the standards at each grade level.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 6a) Items on an assessment and in an item bank are worth asking in that they focus on the big ideas and important particulars of the text, rather than superficial or peripheral concepts.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Items on assessments are worth asking and focus students on the big ideas of the text.</p> <p>For example, in Form C, after reading “Nathan Hale “ and “The Story of Nathan Hale,” students are asked to respond to the following prompt: “The selections present different accounts of the same incident. Explain how Nathan Hale and William Cunningham are portrayed in Selection 1, and analyze how Selection 2 helps the reader understand the characters of the two men. Cite textual evidence to support your answer.” This item reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards, RL.07.09, as students must “compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
			character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.”
	REQUIRED 6b) Questions on an assessment or in an item bank include the language of the standards, and assess the depth and complexity required by the standards (i.e., the concepts, topics, and texts named) at each grade-level over time to advance and deepen student learning. <i>(Note: not every standard must be assessed with every text.)</i>	Yes	Many questions on the assessments include the language of the standards. For instance, questions ask students to “cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text” and after reading the poem “Here for Now” in Form A, “In Selection 2, what two pieces of evidence best support the idea that some people think life will never change?”
	REQUIRED 6c) Vocabulary items on assessments and in an item bank assess words essential to the central meaning and purpose of the text with a specific emphasis on academic vocabulary (Tier 2 words); they assess the meaning of the words used in context rather than relying on prior knowledge.	Yes	Vocabulary items assess if students can “determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text,” particularly when the word is essential to the central meaning and purpose of the text.
	6d) Sets of questions for given text(s) often begin with comprehension before focusing on evaluation or interpretation; the set of questions is coherently sequenced to build student understanding and elicits sustained attention to the text and its connection to other texts, where appropriate.	Yes	This indicator is met.
7. WRITING TO SOURCES: The majority of writing prompts and tasks are text-dependent and reflect the writing genres named in the standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 7a) A vast majority of written tasks at all grade levels require students to analyze and synthesize sources, as well as to present careful analysis, well-defended claims and clear information, drawing on textual evidence and to support valid inferences from text.	Yes	Constructed-response prompts are text-dependent and require students to present well-defended claims, clear information, and textual evidence to support their inferences.
	REQUIRED 7b) Assessments include multiple writing tasks with varied length and time demands (e.g., notes, charts,	No	The indicator includes examples of the multiple and varied tasks students should use to write to text, but the assessments only offer one type of written task

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	summaries, short-answer responses, essays, on-demand, etc.).		(constructed response items).
	7c) Assessments include more than one mode of writing (opinion/argumentative, informative, narrative) or blended mode (i.e., analytical writing).	Yes	Constructed-response items ask students to “analyze” or “explain.” Writing tasks ask that students integrate their understanding of the texts. For example, after reading, “Edison and Modern Research Methods” and “Edison’s Scientific Method”, students are asked to “analyze how the authors of Selections 3 and 4 shape their presentations of Edison’s contributions. Cite textual evidence from both selections to support your answer (Form B)”.
	7d) Narrative prompts decrease in number and increase in being based on text(s) in later grades, e.g., narrative description (text-based, chronological writing) rather than imaginative narratives.	Yes	None of the constructed-responses requires a narrative response – rather, all writing prompts are text-dependent and require an expository, informative, or analytical response.
<p>8. SPEAKING AND LISTENING*: Items assessing speaking and listening must be text-dependent and reflect true communication skills required for college and career readiness.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>*As applicable</p>	REQUIRED 8a) Texts and other stimuli used for assessing speaking and listening meet the criteria for complexity, range, and quality of texts (Criteria 1, 2, and 3).	N/A	Speaking and listening skills are not assessed.
	8b) Assessments assess students’ ability to gather and use evidence to orally present findings from research and express well-supported ideas clearly; effective engagement includes using appropriate, grade-level academic language (including vocabulary and syntax).	N/A	The assessments do not assess students’ ability to gather and use evidence to orally present their findings.
	8c) Items assessing listening permit the evaluation of active listening skills, such as taking notes on main ideas, asking relevant questions, and probing ideas under discussion by building and elaborating on remarks of others.	N/A	There are no items assessing true communication skills required for college and career readiness.
9. LANGUAGE: Items adequately address the Language standards for the grade, including through unpacking the vocabulary and syntax	REQUIRED 9a) The majority of language points are obtained from test questions specifically designed to assess language as part of an integrated task or in relation to a text, or the	No	Students are expected to exhibit control of standard English grammar when composing constructed-response items. However, the majority of constructed-response points relate to content.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
<p>of text(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>points are obtained from scores on student writing.</p>		<p>For example, in Form A, Selection 4, students may earn a full “4” on the constructed-response task for having a “Response is accurate, complete; analyzes how two authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence. Text references strongly support the task and demonstrate understanding of the text. The writing is clearly articulated, focused, and demonstrates strong control of conventions; a few minor errors may be present.”</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 9b) Questions and tasks address common student errors and the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards at each grade level.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>There are no questions that address the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 9c) Questions and tasks focus on conventions most important for college and career readiness that build from previous grade levels, as indicated by pages 30 and 56 of the standards.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Specific conventions are not specified within the questions and tasks.</p>
	<p>9d) A majority of items assessing conventions and writing strategies reflect actual practice to the extent possible, i.e., they mirror authentic editing or revision, writing, etc.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Conventions and writing strategies are assessed through authentic writing (constructed-response items).</p> <p>However, there is only one constructed response item for each section of selections. Editing and revision is not required, only recommended/implied by the scoring guide.</p>

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

FINAL EVALUATION			
Compile the results for Sections I-VII to make a final decision for the material under review.			
Section	Criteria	Y/N	Final Justification/Comments
I: Text Selection and Other Stimuli	1. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	While most texts are worth reading and are placed within the grade band, the majority of them are “commissioned.”
	2. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	Nearly all texts are placed within the grade band, and the texts do appear to increase in complexity across Forms A—D.
	3. Range of Texts	Yes	There is a balance between informational and literary texts. Prose of varying length, a poem, a graph, images with captions, and a map are all included.
II: Design	4. Design and Scoring (Non-Negotiable)	No	While assessments incorporate performance tasks and allow students to respond to a set of texts through reading and writing, both the constructed response and multiple choice questions isolate standards and are not comparable to PARCC prototypes.
III: Assessment Items	5. Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	A large majority of both questions and tasks require students to cite textual evidence to support their answer, to identify which piece of evidence best supports inferences, or state how individual excerpt(s) from the text contribute to the development of selections.
	6. Alignment (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	Not only do questions use the language of the standards, but assessment items also reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards.
	7. Writing to Sources	No	All constructed-response/writing tasks are text-dependent and require students to write to sources – however, constructed-response items are the only writing tasks in the assessments.
	8. Speaking and Listening*	N/A	
	9. Language	No	While students are expected to exhibit control of standard English grammar when composing their constructed-responses, questions do not adequately address the Language standards.
FINAL DECISION FOR THIS MATERIAL: <u>Tier III, Not representing quality</u>			

*As applicable

The goal for English language arts students is that they can read and understand grade-level texts independently, as demonstrated through writing and speaking about those texts. Strong ELA assessments provide opportunities for students to demonstrate they have met this goal with many different types of texts. A combination of formative and summative assessments across the different components of an ELA classroom provide a full picture of student performance in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language study.



Title: Common Core ELA Benchmark Assessments

Grade: 8

Publisher: Measured Progress, Inc.

Copyright: 2013

Overall Rating: Tier III, Not representing quality

Tier I, Tier II, Tier III elements of this review:

STRONG	WEAK
Range of Texts	Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks (Non-Negotiable)	Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
Alignment (Non-Negotiable)	Design and Scoring (Non-Negotiable)
	Language
	Writing to Sources

To evaluate each set of submitted materials for alignment with the [standards](#), begin by reviewing Column 2 for the non-negotiable criteria. If there is a “Yes” for all required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “Yes” in Column 1. If there is a “No” for any required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “No” in Column 1.

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 1. QUALITY OF TEXTS: The quality of test passages and other stimuli is of high—they support multiple readings for various purposes and exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 1a) Nearly all texts are worth reading in the particular grade (i.e., provide opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of meeting grade-level standards, as determined by the PARCC Evidence Tables (Grades 3-11, Grades 3-11 Writing)); they are content rich and well crafted, representing the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the discipline.</p>	Yes	<p>Nearly all texts are worth reading. They provide useful information and opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of meeting grade-level standards.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 1b) Nearly all passages and other stimuli are previously published rather than “commissioned.” Any commissioned texts have evidence that these texts have been reviewed and edited by teachers and professional editors.</p>	No	<p>Although nearly all passages in forms A-D for Grade 8 are within the grade-level band, 12 of the 15 passages (75%) are “commissioned” and copyrighted by Measured Progress. The small number of permissioned texts (three) does not meet expectations.</p>
	<p>1c) Paired or multiple texts are governed by the standards at each grade; when research simulation tasks are included on an assessment, the set of texts includes at least two texts, one of which is an anchor text, and uses a variety of texts and text lengths.</p>	Yes	<p>This indicator is met.</p> <p>For instance, in Form B, students read two paired texts touting the benefits of online, digital learning. In Form C, students read two articles with differing stances about the environmental impact of Concentrating Solar Power.</p> <p>After reading, students must demonstrate the ability to determine key ideas and details, as well as analyze the craft and structure of both texts. Later, students integrate knowledge and ideas in a constructed-response.</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>2. COMPLEXITY OF TEXTS: Reading passages have the appropriate level of complexity as stated by Reading Standard 10¹ and Reading Foundational Standard 4.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>2a) Texts indicate that research-based quantitative measures as well as qualitative analysis² were used in selection of texts. Poetry and drama are analyzed only using qualitative measures.</p>	Yes	Research-based quantitative measures can be found for many of the texts.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>2b) Nearly all texts are placed within the <u>grade band</u> indicated by the quantitative analysis (as applicable). Rare exceptions (in which the qualitative measure has trumped the quantitative measures and placed the text outside the grade band) are usually reserved for literary texts in the upper grades.</p>	Yes	Nearly all texts are placed within the 6-8 grade band.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>2c) In a set of reading assessments, the complexity of reading texts progresses according to expectations of Reading Standard 10 and Reading Foundational Standard 4 in grades K-5. Read-aloud texts follow the same trend, although they may have greater variability because listening skills in elementary school generally outpace reading skills.</p>	No	The qualitative nature of the texts increase in complexity in the set of reading assessments A-D. For example, the assessments begin with fiction passages, and then increase to more scientific/technical subjects.
<p>3. RANGE OF TEXTS: Texts used on reading assessments or in an item bank reflect the distribution of text types and genres suggested by the standards: Text types and genres generally reflect the definitions provided on page 31 (grades K-5) and</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>3a) In grades K-12, passages on ELA assessments or in an item bank seek a balance between 50% literature/ 50% informational texts. In grades 6-12, the inclusion of literacy texts (i.e., historical and scientific informational texts) might shift the balance toward more informational texts.</p>	Yes	<p>There is a balance between informational and literary texts.</p> <p>Texts included in the Grade 8 Reading Benchmark (Forms A—D) include not only short stories and poems, but also opinion editorials and scientific articles.</p>

¹ Grades 3-12 Example: Texts present vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose similar to exemplars in Appendices A and B)

² The process for determining quantitative and qualitative measures is described in the [Supplement to Appendix A](#). Grade band conversions for quantitative measures are determined using the chart on page 4 of the document. A description of the criteria for analyzing the qualitative features of the text is located on pages 4-6 of the document.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
I. Text Selection and Other Stimuli			
page 57 (grades 6-12) of the standards and included in the text of the standards (e.g., RL.2.9 , RL.9-10.6 , RI.7.7 , or RI.11-12.9). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 3b) Assessments or item banks include texts of different formats (e.g., print and non-print, including film, art, music, charts, etc.) and lengths.	Yes	Prose of varying lengths, a diagram, a chart, and a map are included.
	3c) Assessments or item banks include many informational texts with an informational text structure rather than a narrative structure; grades 6-12 include literary nonfiction.	Yes	This indicator is met.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
II. Design			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>4. DESIGN AND SCORING: Assessments genuinely measure progress and elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the assessed grade-specific standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>4a) Assessments incorporate performance tasks³, which allow students to respond to a set of texts through a reading and writing. Student scores are based on their performance with texts, tasks, and a combination of standards with texts, rather than isolated standards.</p>	No	While assessments incorporate performance tasks and allow students to respond to a set of texts through reading and writing, many of the constructed response and multiple choice questions isolate standards and are not comparable to PARCC prototypes.
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>4b) Aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines (such as scoring guides or student work exemplars) are included and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.</p>	Yes	Both a 4-point constructed-response rubric and constructed-response scoring notes are provided in order to guide teachers in interpreting student performance.
	<p>4c) A variety of assessments for different uses are included, e.g., pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p>	No	The assessments themselves serve as formative assessments, as they seek to “monitor student understanding and inform instruction.” Pre- and self-assessment measures are not evident.
	<p>4d) Materials assess student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</p>	Yes	If teachers honor testing accommodations, the materials allow for an unbiased and accessible assessment of students.

³ PARCC Task Models ([grades 3-5](#), [grades 6-8](#), [grades 9-11](#)) provide additional information about how standards might be combined around particular texts.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 5. TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS AND TASKS: Items are text-dependent, reflecting the expectations of Reading Standard 1; they require students to use the text to find or infer the answers and use textual evidence as support for meeting the expectations of other grade-level standards.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 5a) Nearly all of the questions on assessments or in an item bank are text-dependent, i.e., the questions require close reading and analysis of the text(s); they can be answered correctly without prior knowledge; and they are linked to a text (i.e., not “stand alone”).</p> <p>REQUIRED 5b) A large majority of items on a reading assessment reflect the requirements of Reading Standard 1 by requiring students to directly select or provide evidence from the text to support their answers.</p> <p>5c) Assessments or item banks contain a variety of types of test questions and tasks, including when possible technology-enhanced and constructed-response formats, to approach the texts in ways uniquely appropriate to each text.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Nearly all of the questions on assessments are text-dependent.</p> <p>A large majority of items require students to cite textual evidence to support their answer, to identify which piece of evidence best supports inferences, or how individual excerpts from the text contribute to the development of selections.</p> <p>For example, in Grade 8- Reading Benchmark Form A, students are asked to analyze how Duluth’s and Kenny’s responses develop the image of the town of Flagstaff after reading Selection 3. Students must cite textual evidence to support their answers.</p> <p>Test items are predominantly multiple choice or constructed response in format.</p> <p>Although there are evidence-based responses, technology-enhanced opportunities are not available. There are not unique and varied ways to approach the texts.</p>
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 6. ALIGNMENT: Items reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards; they assess the depth and breadth of the standards at each grade level.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 6a) Items on an assessment and in an item bank are worth asking in that they focus on the big ideas and important particulars of the text, rather than superficial or peripheral concepts.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Items on assessments are worth asking and focus students on the big ideas of the text.</p> <p>For example, in Form C, after reading “The Obstacle “ and “Primed,” students are asked to respond to the following question: “Which statement shows how the author of Selection 2 uses a pattern of events similar to the events from Selection 1?” This item reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards, as students must compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	<p>REQUIRED 6b) Questions on an assessment or in an item bank include the language of the standards, and assess the depth and complexity required by the standards (i.e., the concepts, topics, and texts named) at each grade-level over time to advance and deepen student learning. <i>(Note: not every standard must be assessed with every text.)</i></p>	Yes	<p>Many questions on the assessments include the language of the standards.</p> <p>For instance, questions ask students to “cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text” and “Which piece of evidence in Selection 3 supports the inference that the people of Flagstaff knew for some time what would happen to their town?”</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 6c) Vocabulary items on assessments and in an item bank assess words essential to the central meaning and purpose of the text with a specific emphasis on academic vocabulary (Tier 2 words); they assess the meaning of the words used in context rather than relying on prior knowledge.</p>	Yes	<p>Vocabulary items assess if students can “determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text,” particularly when the word is essential to the central meaning and purpose of the text.</p>
	<p>6d) Sets of questions for given text(s) often begin with comprehension before focusing on evaluation or interpretation; the set of questions is coherently sequenced to build student understanding and elicits sustained attention to the text and its connection to other texts, where appropriate.</p>	Yes	<p>This indicator is met.</p>
<p>7. WRITING TO SOURCES: The majority of writing prompts and tasks are text-dependent and reflect the writing genres named in the standards.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 7a) A vast majority of written tasks at all grade levels require students to analyze and synthesize sources, as well as to present careful analysis, well-defended claims and clear information, drawing on textual evidence and to support valid inferences from text.</p>	Yes	<p>Constructed-response prompts are text-dependent and require students to present well-defended claims, clear information, and textual evidence to support their inferences.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 7b) Assessments include multiple writing tasks with varied length and time demands (e.g., notes, charts, summaries, short-answer responses, essays, on-demand, etc.).</p>	No	<p>The indicator includes examples of the multiple and varied tasks students should use to write to text and the assessments only offer one type of written task (constructed response items).</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	7c) Assessments include more than one mode of writing (opinion/argumentative, informative, narrative) or blended mode (i.e., analytical writing).	Yes	Constructed-response items ask students to “analyze” or “explain.” Writing tasks ask that students integrate their understanding of the texts by, for example, “explain[ing] how and why Thomas changes his strategy to convince Mr. Singleton to change his grade” or “analyz[ing] how the title “Primed” relates to the theme of Selection 2.”
	7d) Narrative prompts decrease in number and increase in being based on text(s) in later grades, e.g., narrative description (text-based, chronological writing) rather than imaginative narratives.	Yes	None of the constructed-responses requires a narrative response – rather, all writing prompts are text-dependent and require an expository, informative, or analytical response.
8. SPEAKING AND LISTENING*: Items assessing speaking and listening must be text-dependent and reflect true communication skills required for college and career readiness. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No *As applicable	REQUIRED 8a) Texts and other stimuli used for assessing speaking and listening meet the criteria for complexity, range, and quality of texts (Criteria 1, 2, and 3).	N/A	Speaking and listening skills are not assessed.
	8b) Assessments assess students’ ability to gather and use evidence to orally present findings from research and express well-supported ideas clearly; effective engagement includes using appropriate, grade-level academic language (including vocabulary and syntax).	N/A	The assessments do not assess students’ ability to gather and use evidence to orally present their findings.
	8c) Items assessing listening permit the evaluation of active listening skills, such as taking notes on main ideas, asking relevant questions, and probing ideas under discussion by building and elaborating on remarks of others.	N/A	There are no items assessing true communication skills required for college and career readiness.
9. LANGUAGE: Items adequately address the Language standards for the grade, including through unpacking the vocabulary and syntax of text(s). <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 9a) The majority of language points are obtained from test questions specifically designed to assess language as part of an integrated task or in relation to a text, or the points are obtained from scores on student writing.	No	Students are expected to exhibit control of standard English grammar when composing constructed-response items. However, the majority of constructed-response points relate to content. For example, in Form D, Selection 5, students may earn a full “4” on the constructed-response task for having a “response that is accurate, complete; analyzes the impact of specific word choices on tone. Text references strongly support the task and demonstrate understanding of the text. The writing is clearly articulated, focused, and demonstrates strong control of

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS? (Y/N)	JUSTIFICATION / COMMENTS
III. Assessment Items			
	REQUIRED 9b) Questions and tasks address common student errors and the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards at each grade level.	No	conventions; a few minor errors may be present.” There are no questions that address the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards.
	REQUIRED 9c) Questions and tasks focus on conventions most important for college and career readiness that build from previous grade levels, as indicated by pages 30 and 56 of the standards .	No	Specific conventions are not specified within the questions and tasks.
	9d) A majority of items assessing conventions and writing strategies reflect actual practice to the extent possible, i.e., they mirror authentic editing or revision, writing, etc.	No	Conventions and writing strategies are assessed through authentic writing (constructed-response items). However, there is only one constructed response item for each section of selections. Editing and revision is not required, only recommended/implied by the scoring guide.

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1-9.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Quality of Texts, Complexity of Texts, Design and Scoring, Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks, and Alignment), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

FINAL EVALUATION			
Compile the results for Sections I-VII to make a final decision for the material under review.			
Section	Criteria	Y/N	Final Justification/Comments
I: Text Selection and Other Stimuli	1. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	While most texts are worth reading and are placed within the grade band, the majority of them are “commissioned.”
	2. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	Nearly all texts are placed within the grade band, and they appear to increase in complexity across Forms A—D.
	3. Range of Texts	Yes	There is a balance between informational and literary texts. Prose of varying length, a poem, a chart, a diagram, and a map are all included.
II: Design	4. Design and Scoring (Non-Negotiable)	No	While assessments incorporate performance tasks and allow students to respond to a set of texts through reading and writing, both the constructed response and multiple choice questions isolate standards and are not comparable to PARCC prototypes.
III: Assessment Items	5. Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	A large majority of both questions and tasks require students to cite textual evidence to support their answer, to identify which piece of evidence best supports inferences, or how individual excerpts from the text contribute to the development of selections.
	6. Alignment (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	Not only do questions use the language of the standards, but assessment items also reflect the rigor and cognitive complexity demanded by the standards.
	7. Writing to Sources	No	All constructed-response/writing tasks are text-dependent and require students to write to sources – however, constructed-response items are the only writing tasks in the assessments.
	8. Speaking and Listening*	N/A	
	9. Language	No	While students are expected to exhibit control of standard English grammar when composing their constructed-responses, questions do not adequately address the Language standards.
FINAL DECISION FOR THIS MATERIAL: <u>Tier III, Not representing quality</u>			

*As applicable