



New York State Testing Program

Educator Guide to the 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test

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Foreword

Beginning with the current school year (2012-13), NYSED is [redesigning its assessment program](#) to measure what students know and can do relative to the grade-level Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for English Language Arts. The CCLS for English Language Arts make up a broad set of literacy expectations for students. The CCLS English Language Arts Standards define literacy as integrated comprehension, analysis, and communication of information gleaned from reading, regardless of the text type.

The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test is designed to measure student literacy as defined by the CCLS. As such, there will be a noticeable **change in rigor** and **focus on text**.

Many of the questions on the 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test are more advanced and complex than those found on prior assessments that measured prior grade-level standards. Answer choices will not jump out; rather, students will need to make hard choices between fully correct and plausible but incorrect answers that are designed specifically to determine whether students have comprehended the entire passage and are proficient with the deep analyses specified by the standards.

To answer ELA questions correctly, students will need to read and analyze each passage completely and closely, and be prepared to carefully consider responses to multiple-choice questions. In many cases, if the student has not read and comprehended the entire passage, the answer choices may not make sense. For constructed response items, students will need to make inferences that can be defended with evidence gathered from rigorous literary and informational passages. Some passages will express an author's point of view with which not all readers will agree.

This guide details many of the changes involved with both instruction and the newly designed tests that measure the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts. While reading about each of the changes will help to understand how to prepare students for the upcoming test, it is important to remember that research has consistently demonstrated that students perform best on local, regional, statewide, or national tests when they have a great teacher delivering high-quality instruction aligned to rigorous standards¹. Rote test prep practices are incompatible with highly effective teaching and lead to lower student performance².

¹See, for example, <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/authentic-intellectual-work-and-standardized-tests-conflict-or-coexistence>.

² See, for example, http://metproject.org/downloads/MET_Gathering_Feedback_Research_Paper.pdf.

What It Means to Use Authentic Texts

State testing programs use either commissioned or authentic texts, or a combination, as passages for questions. Commissioned texts are authored by test developers or writers and are developed specifically for use in standardized tests. In contrast, authentic texts are published works that are typically encountered by students in daily life, such as in magazines, books or newspapers. The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test will use only authentic texts.

The transition to authentic texts and the CCLS for English Language Arts will mean that the 2013 Common Core English Language Arts Tests will be experienced differently than past state tests. Many of the Common Core *Reading for Information* Standards require students to recognize how authors support their opinions, to understand the author’s point of view and purpose, and to be able to discern well-supported arguments from those that are not. In order to assess these standards on the test, we must include text passages that express opinions and theories with which not all readers may agree. Students must demonstrate their ability to determine point of view, purpose, and success of argumentation with supporting evidence in subjects that they will encounter both in other academic classes and in their daily lives.

The move to using authentic texts allows for the inclusion of works of literature that are worthy of reading outside an assessment context. The use of authentic, meaningful texts may mean that some texts are more emotionally charged or may use language outside of a student’s particular cultural experience. While all assessments will include appropriate texts, please be aware that authentic texts will likely prompt real responses—perhaps even strong disagreement—among our students. Students need to be prepared to respond accordingly while engaging with the test. The alternative would be to exclude many authors and texts that are capable of supporting the rigorous analysis called for by the Common Core.

The use of authentic, meaningful texts may also mean that some students have read texts included on the 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test prior to administration. For the very reasons that texts were selected for use on the assessment, it is possible that teachers have selected the same texts for use in their classrooms and students may have read the books that passages were drawn from for their personal reading.

For example, a selection from Roald Dahl’s *James and The Giant Peach* may appear on Common Core tests, although the complete work from which it was drawn may include complex ideas and language. Likewise, a passage from Robert Coles’ *The Story of Ruby Bridges* may appear on Common Core tests, even though some may find the ideas and incidents present in the rest of the text (that does not appear on the test) to be provocative. Both of these texts are foundational texts for the grade-band. While passages from these examples do not appear on this year’s test, passages drawn from similarly great works will be taught across the state, and some of them may end up on the test.

Additionally, the use of passages drawn from authentic texts also means that while a whole text may be appropriate for a higher grade, passages from the whole work may be used, when appropriate, at lower grades. Oftentimes, parts of larger, more complex works are perfectly suited for younger readers.

Rigorous Texts

Selecting high-quality, grade-appropriate texts requires both objective text complexity metrics and expert judgment. For the 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test, both qualitative and quantitative measures are used to determine the complexity of the texts. Based on research and the guidance of nationally-recognized literacy experts,³ the following ranges for quantitative measures were used to guide text selection:

Common Scale for Band Level Text Difficulty Ranges⁴

Common Core Band	Text Analyzer Tool					
	ATOS	DRP	FK	LEXILE	SR	RM
2nd–3rd	2.75–5.14	42–54	1.98–5.34	420–820	0.05–2.48	3.53–6.13
4th–5th	4.97–7.03	52–60	4.51–7.73	740–1010	0.84–5.75	5.42–7.92
6th–8th	7.00–9.98	57–67	6.51–10.34	925–1185	4.11–10.66	7.04–9.57
9th–10th	9.67–12.01	62–72	8.32–12.12	1050–1335	9.02–13.93	8.41–10.81
11th–12th	11.20–14.10	67–74	10.34–14.20	1185–1385	12.30–14.50	9.57–12.00

Key	
ATOS	ATOS® (Renaissance Learning)
DRP	Degrees of Reading Power® (Questar)
FK	Flesch-Kincaid®
LEXILE	Lexile Framework® (MetaMetrics)
SR	Source Rater© (Educational Testing Service)
RM	Pearson Reading Maturity Metric© (Pearson Education)

For more information about passage selection, please refer to Passage Selection Resources and Appendix B of the CCLS for English Language Arts at

<http://engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-passage-selection-resources-for-grade-3-8-assessments>.

<http://engageny.org/resource/appendix-b-common-core-standards-for-elaliteracy-text-exemplars-and-sample-performance/>.

³ Nelson, Jessica; Perfetti, Charles; Liben, David; and Liben, Meredith, “Measures of Text Difficulty: Testing Their Predictive Value for Grade Levels and Student Performance,” 2012.

⁴ Ibid

Range of Informational Texts

One of the major shifts of the CCLS is an emphasis on developing skills for comprehending and analyzing informational texts. The CCLS for English Language Arts calls for a balance of literary and informational texts. This balance is reflected in the standards, instruction, and in the texts selected for the Grade 5 test.

Increased exposure to informational texts better prepares students for what they will encounter in college and the workplace. The array of passages selected for the 2013 tests will assess whether students can comprehend and analyze a range of informational texts.

The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test will have questions on a variety of informational texts. Each of these has unique characteristics and can be grouped by general similarities in structure and purpose. The chart below categorizes common informational texts according to their structure. Please note that the chart below is not specific to Grade 5, rather it is meant to help teachers understand the range of informational texts that students may encounter by the end of Grade 8.

EXPOSITORY	ARGUMENTATIVE	INSTRUCTIONAL	NARRATIVE
Textbooks (science)	Opinion/Editorial Pieces	Training Manuals	(Auto)Biographies
Textbooks (humanities)	Speeches (including those from seated politicians)	Contracts	Histories
Reports	Advertisements	User Guides/Manuals	Correspondence
Tourism Guides	Political Propaganda	Legal Documents	Curriculum Vitae
Product Specifications	Journal Articles	Recipes	Memoirs
Product/Service Descriptions	Government Documents	Product/Service Descriptions	News Articles
Magazine Articles	Legal Documents		Essays
Company Profiles	Tourism Guides		Interviews
Legal Documents	Correspondence		Agendas
Agendas	Essays		
Correspondence	Reviews		
Essays	Memoirs		
Interviews			
Government Documents			
News Articles			

For more information about informational texts, please refer to Appendix B of the CCLS for English Language Arts at <http://engageny.org/resource/appendix-b-common-core-standards-for-elaliteracy-text-exemplars-and-sample-performance/>.

The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test

Testing Sessions and Times

The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test will consist of **four books** that are administered over **three days**. **Day 1 will consist of Book 1. Day 2 will consist of Book 2 and Book 3. Day 3 will consist of Book 4.** The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test is designed so that most students will complete Day 1 and 2 testing in about 70 minutes and Day 3 testing in about 50 minutes. While it is likely that most students will complete testing within these times, students will be permitted 90 minutes to complete the test each day. This design provides ample time for students who work at different paces. For more information regarding what students may do once they have completed their work, please refer to the section, “When Students Have Completed Their Tests”.

Grade 5 Estimated Time on Task

Book	Day Administered	Estimated Time on Task
1	1	70*
2	2	70*
3		
4	3	50*
Total Estimated Time on Task		190

* Each Testing Day will be scheduled to allow 90 minutes for completion.

The tests must be administered under standard conditions and the directions must be followed carefully. The same test administration procedures must be used with all students so that valid inferences can be drawn from the test results.

NYSED devotes great attention to the security and integrity of the NYSTP. School administrators and teachers involved in the administration of State Assessments are responsible for understanding and adhering to the instructions set forth in the *2013 School Administrator’s Manual* and the *Teacher’s Directions*. These resources will be found at

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/eigen.html>.

When Students Have Completed Their Tests

Students who finish their assessment before the allotted time expires should be encouraged to go back and check their work. Once the student checks his or her work, or chooses not to, examination materials should be collected by the proctor. After a student’s assessment materials are collected, that student may be permitted to read silently.* This privilege is granted at the discretion of each school. No talking is permitted and no other schoolwork is permitted.

*For more detailed information about test administration, including proper procedures for talking to students during testing and handling reading materials, please refer to the *2013 School Administrator’s Manual* and the *Teacher’s Directions*.

Test Design

The chart below illustrates the test design for the 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test. This chart details the number of passages and the type(s) of questions in each book. Book 1 and Book 2 of the test consist of multiple-choice questions only. Book 3 and Book 4 consist of short- and extended-response questions.

Also noted is the approximate number of informational and literary passages present on the 2013 test. Please note that embedded field test questions and passages are included in the design. It will not be apparent to students whether a question is an embedded field test question that does not count towards their score or an operational test question that does count towards their score.

2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test Design					
	Day 1	Day 2		Day 3	
	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
Passages	6	3	2	3	14
Multiple-Choice Questions	42	21			63
Short-Response Questions			3	5	8
Extended-Response Questions			1	1	2
	Total Number of Literary Passages				5-9
	Total Number of Informational Passages				5-9

Test Blueprint

The chart below shows the percentage of points that relate to Reading, Language, and Writing Standards. When reading these charts, it is essential to remember that most questions assess many standards simultaneously. Additionally, Reading Standards are divided by focus (Key Ideas, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge) to help guide instruction.

Area of Focus		Approximate Percentage of Points
Reading Standards (RL and RI)		100% of points require close reading
Language and Writing Standards		Up to 45% of points require writing and command of language
Approximate Percent of Reading Points		
Key Ideas and Details	Craft and Structure	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Up to 65%	Up to 35%	Up to 30%

It should be noted that Standards RL5.1 and RI5.1 undergird all questions on the tests, as all will require text-based responses. Likewise, Standards RL5.10 and RI5.10 form the heart of all text-based CCLS instruction. While not assessed directly in questions, Standards RL5.10 and RI5.10 are present on the test in the form of rigorous, worthwhile texts.

Question Formats

Multiple-Choice

Multiple-choice questions are designed to assess Common Core Reading and Language Standards. They will ask students to analyze different aspects of a given text, including central idea, style elements, character and plot development, and vocabulary. Almost all questions, including vocabulary questions, will only be answered correctly if the student comprehends and makes use of the whole passage. For multiple-choice questions, students will select the correct response from four answer choices.

Multiple-choice questions will assess Reading Standards in a range of ways. Some will ask students to analyze aspects of text or vocabulary. Many questions will require students to combine skills. For example, questions may ask students to identify a segment of text that best supports the central idea. To answer correctly, a student must first comprehend the central idea and then show understanding of how that idea is supported. Questions will require more than rote recall or identification. Students will also be required to negotiate plausible, text-based distractors.⁵ Each distractor will require students to comprehend the whole passage.

⁵ A distractor is an incorrect response that may appear to be a plausible correct response to a student who has not mastered the skill or concept being tested.

Short-Response

Short-response questions are designed to assess Common Core Reading and Language Standards. These are single questions in which students use textual evidence to support their own answer to an inferential question. These questions ask the student to make an inference (a claim, position, or conclusion) based on his or her analysis of the passage, and then provide two pieces of text-based evidence to support his or her answer.

Sample Two-Credit Question:

What is the main purpose of the 2013 Test Guide? Provide two text-based details to support your answer.

Sample Response: The guide is designed to help teachers prepare students to be assessed on their mastery of the CCLS for ELA. The guide provides an overview of the CCLS for ELA and specific information about how the CCLS for ELA will be assessed, including Test Blueprint and Question Formats.

The purpose of the short-response questions is to assess a student's ability to comprehend and analyze text. In responding to these questions, students will be expected to write in complete sentences. Responses should require no more than three complete sentences. The rubric used to evaluate these types of responses is provided on page 12. It is important to note that students who answer the question only using details from the text will NOT receive full credit. A full-credit response is characterized by both an inference and textual support.

Extended-Response

Extended-response questions are designed to assess *Writing from Sources*. They will focus primarily on Common Core Writing Standards. Extended-response questions will require comprehension and analysis of either an individual text or paired texts. Paired texts require students to read and analyze two related texts. Paired texts are related by theme, genre, tone, time period, or other characteristics. Many extended-response questions will ask students to express a position and support it with text-based evidence. For paired texts, students will be expected to synthesize ideas between and draw evidence from both texts. Extended-response questions allow students to demonstrate their ability to write a coherent essay using textual evidence to support their ideas.

Student responses will be evaluated based on Common Core Writing Standards and a student's command of evidence to defend his or her point.

Sample Questions

Sample Questions for the Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Tests are available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/common-core-sample-questions/>.

New English Language Arts Rubrics

The 2013 Grade 5 Common Core English Language Arts Test will be scored using new rubrics. Both the English Language Arts 2-Point and 4-Point Rubrics have changed to reflect the new demands called for by the CCLS.

Short-Response (2-Point) Holistic Rubric

Short-response questions will ask students to make a claim, take a position, or draw a conclusion, and then support it with details. This structure forms the foundation of the CCLS. As such, the 2-point rubric focuses on both the inference and evidence a student provides. This structure allows students to have wide latitude in responding to each prompt so long as their response is supported by the text.

Additionally, the expectation for all short responses will be complete, coherent sentences. By weaving these elements together, the questions, responses, and scores remain firmly focused on student reading ability.

2-Point Rubric—Short-Response

Score	Response Features
2 Point	The features of a 2-point response are <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valid inferences and/or claims from the text where required by the prompt• Evidence of analysis of the text where required by the prompt• Relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt• Sufficient number of facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text as required by the prompt• Complete sentences where errors do not impact readability
1 Point	The features of a 1-point response are <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mostly literal recounting of events or details from the text as required by the prompt• Some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt• Incomplete sentences or bullets
0 Point	The features of a 0-point response are <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A response that does not address any of the requirements of the prompt or is totally inaccurate• No response (blank answer)• A response that is not written in English• A response that is unintelligible or indecipherable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 1.

Extended-Response (4-Point) Holistic Rubric

Within the Common Core, writing does not take place in a vacuum. To be college- and career-ready, one must be able to write for a purpose using information from textual sources. Extended-response questions on the 2013 Common Core English Language Arts Tests will ask students to analyze texts and address meaningful questions using strategic, textual details. Scores for extended responses will be based on four overarching criteria:

- **Content and Analysis**—the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics or texts
- **Command of Evidence**—the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support analysis and reflection
- **Coherence, Organization, and Style**—the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language
- **Control of Conventions**—the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

These four characteristics combined make up the focus of the 4-point, extended-response tasks, *Writing from Sources*. Whether in response to an individual text or a paired selection, a student will be asked to synthesize, evaluate, and evidence his or her thinking in a coherent and legible manner. Please note the new holistic 4-point rubric for Expository Writing in Grade 4–5 on page 14.

New York State Grade 4-5 Expository Writing Evaluation Rubric

CRITERIA	CCLS	SCORE				
		4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level	0 Essays at this level:
CONTENT AND ANALYSIS: the extent to which the essay conveys ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support an analysis of topics or texts	W.2 R.1-9	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows logically from the task and purpose —demonstrate insightful comprehension and analysis of the text(s)	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose —demonstrate grade-appropriate comprehension and analysis of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose —demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose —demonstrate little understanding of the text(s)	—demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
COMMAND OF EVIDENCE: the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support analysis and reflection	W.2 W.9 R.1-9	—develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence	—develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety	—partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant —use relevant evidence inconsistently	—demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant	—provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant
COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE: the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language	W.2 L.3 L.6	—exhibit clear, purposeful organization —skillfully link ideas using grade-appropriate words and phrases —use grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement that follows clearly from the topic and information presented	—exhibit clear organization —link ideas using grade-appropriate words and phrases —use grade-appropriate precise language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement that follows from the topic and information presented	—exhibit some attempt at organization —inconsistently link ideas using words and phrases —inconsistently use appropriate language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement that follows generally from the topic and information presented	—exhibit little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task —lack the use of linking words and phrases —use language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task —provide a concluding statement that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented	—exhibit no evidence of organization —exhibit no use of linking words and phrases —use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s) —do not provide a concluding statement
CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS: the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling	W.2 L.1 L.2	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	—demonstrate emerging command of conventions, with some errors that may hinder comprehension	—demonstrate a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension	—are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 2.
- If the student writes only a personal response and makes no reference to the text(s), the response can be scored no higher than a 1.
- Responses totally unrelated to the topic, illegible, incoherent, or blank should be given a 0.
- A response totally copied from the text(s) with no original student writing should be scored a 0.

