

## Louisiana Guide to the PARCC Assessments for Grades 6-8 English Language Arts/Literacy

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### I. Purpose of Assessment Guide

This document is designed to assist Louisiana educators in understanding the PARCC assessments for grades 6-8, which will be implemented beginning in spring 2015. **This document will continue to be updated, with a more detailed version available in summer 2014.**

### II. Introduction to PARCC

In grades 3-8 for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, Louisiana has chosen to adopt the assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is a group of states working together to develop high-quality assessments driven by the following priorities:

- Determine whether students are college- and career-ready or “on track”
- Assess the full range of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including standards that are difficult to measure
- Measure the full range of student performance, including the performance of high- and low-performing students
- Provide data during the academic year to inform instruction, interventions, and professional development
- Provide data for accountability, including measures of growth
- Incorporate innovative approaches throughout the assessment system
- Allow our students a chance to show what they can do when compared to students across the country

Louisiana has been a member of the PARCC consortium since its inception. As a result, many Louisiana educators at the school, district, state, and college/university levels have and are continuing to serve on

various committees. These include, but are not limited to, the development of PARCC’s policies and procedures and the extensive review of PARCC assessment items.

### III. PARCC ELA/Literacy Summative Assessments

The PARCC ELA/Literacy assessments focus on an integrated approach to reading and writing and are based on assessment advances that reflect an effective ELA classroom:

- careful, close reading of authentic complex literary and informational texts, not artificially produced or commissioned passages
- a full range of reading and writing across the disciplines, including science and social studies texts, and a research task that asks for the synthesis of ideas across a range of informational resources
- questions worth answering, ordered in a way that builds meaning
- a focus on students citing evidence from texts throughout the assessment (including selected-response items)
- a focus on words that matter most in the texts, which include words essential to understanding a particular text and academic vocabulary that can be found throughout complex texts
- writing tasks that require students to write to sources and allow for a range of responses that demonstrate what students know and can do
- use of technology to allow students to construct meaning for computer-scored items

These changes are incorporated into the PARCC summative assessments for ELA/Literacy which include two sections:

The **Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)** is administered after approximately 75% of the school year is completed. The ELA/Literacy PBA at each grade level will focus on writing effectively when analyzing texts and will include three tasks: a literary analysis, a research simulation, and a narrative task. For each task, students will be asked to read one or more texts, answer several comprehension and vocabulary questions, and write an essay that requires them to draw evidence from the text(s).

The **End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)** is administered after approximately 90% of the school year is completed. The ELA/Literacy EOY at each grade level will include 4-5 texts, both literary and informational, and will focus on reading comprehension. To be able to provide results quickly, the EOY will consist entirely of computer-scored items.

### IV. Design of the ELA/Literacy Assessments

PARCC released [specifications documents](#) that detail the design of each section.

The PBA specifications identify the number and types of passages and the claims and sub-claims measured (which make up the reporting categories). The EOY specifications describe the number and types of texts; the standards, claims, and sub-claims measured; and the item types and number of points.

### Glossary for Specifications Documents

- **Claims and Sub-Claims:** the reporting categories that categorize the standards
- **EBSR** (evidence-based selected response): two questions about the same text that scaffold in difficulty and require textual evidence; they are 'selected response' which mean students select, rather than write, their answers
- **TECR** (technology-enhanced constructed response): an item type that requires the use of technology (e.g. drag and drop, cut and paste, highlighting of text) to answer questions
- **PCR** (prose constructed response): asks students to create an extended and complete written response

### Grade 7 Form Specifications (PBA)

Task Type	# of Passages	Claims/Sub-Claims	Item Types		Maximum # of Points from PCRs <sup>1</sup>	Standards Measured
			# of EBSR, TECR Items (total pts)	# of PCR items		
A Literature Analysis Task	2 (1 short text and 1 extended text)	Reading Literature	4 (8)	1	4	7A1: Contribution of one section to theme, setting, or plot RL1, 2, 3, 5, 6 7A2: Central idea/lesson RL1, 2, 3, 5 7A3: Interaction of story elements RL1,2,3,5 7A4: Comparison of techniques in print text and multimedia RL1, 2, 3, 7 7A5: Influence of narrator's or speaker's point of view RL1, 2, 3, 6
		Reading Vocabulary	2 (4)		0	RL 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)
		Writing/Written Expression	0		12	W 1 and/or W 2 W 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
		Writing/ Knowledge Language and Conventions	0		4	L 1, 2, 3, 6
B Research Simulation Task	3 (2 short texts 1 extended text)	Reading Information	6 (12)	1	4	7B1-7B3: Focus on point of view and purpose RI, RH, and RST 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 7B4-7B6: Use of illustrations and other visuals RI, RH, and RST 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 7B7-7B9: Analysis of argument RI, RH, and RST 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 7B10-7B12: Relationship of ideas RI, RH, RST 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9
		Reading Vocabulary	3 (6)		0	RI 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)
		Writing/Written Expression	0		12	W 1 and/or W 2 focus W 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
		Writing/Knowledge Language and Conventions	0		4	L 1, 2, 3, 6
C Narrative Writing Task	1 short text	Reading	5 (10)	1	4	7C1-7C2: Narrative story/Narrative description, any combination of RL standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9
		Writing/Written Expression	0		12	W 3 and /or W 2 focus W 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

		Writing/Knowledge Language and Conventions	0		4	L 1, 2, 3, 6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>20(40) Reading</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9 Reading 39 Writing 48 CCR</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>Note: The maximum number of points is dependent on the rubric score point ranges, which cannot be determined until after field testing.

### Grade 7 Form Specifications (EOY)

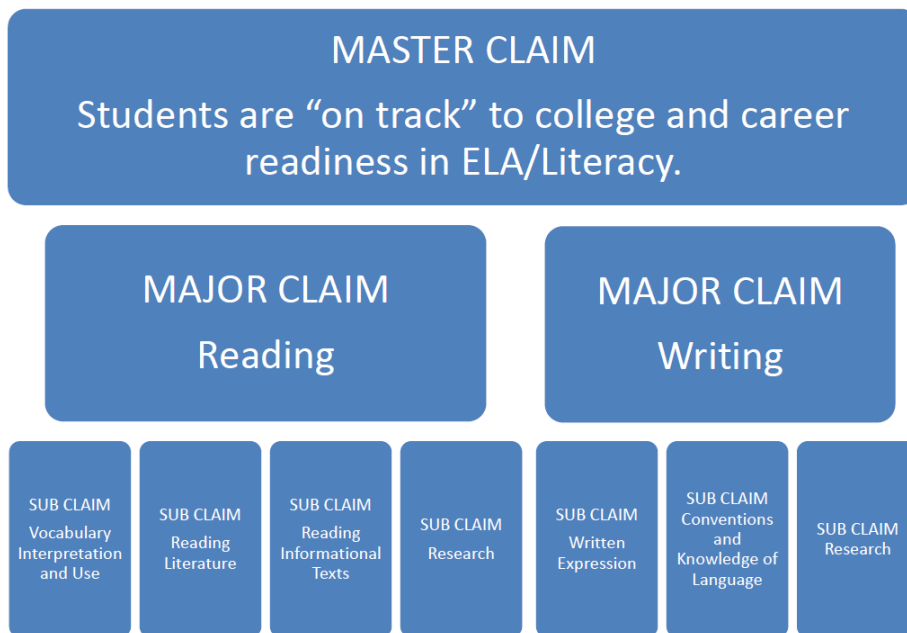
# of Texts	Type of Text	Standards to Measure	Claims/Sub-Claims	Item Types
				# EBSR/TECR items (total points)
1 short/medium text 400-600 words	Literary	RL 2, 3, 5, 6 (any combination)  RL 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)	Reading/Reading Literature  Reading/Reading Vocabulary	3 (6)  1 (2)
1 medium/long length text 600-1000 words *may be substituted with two paired texts <sup>1</sup>	Literary	RL 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 (any combination)  RL 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)	Reading/Reading Literature  Reading/Reading Vocabulary	5 (10)  1 (2)
1 short/medium text 400-600 words	Informational 1 that is Literary Nonfiction (RI focused)	RI 2, 3, 5, 8 (any combination)  RI 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)	Reading/Reading Information  Reading/Reading Vocabulary	4 (8)  1 (2)
1 short/medium text 400-600 words	1 that is History/SS (RH focused)  1 that is Science/Technical (RST focused)	RI 2, 3, 5, 8 (any combination)  RI 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)	Reading/Reading Information  Reading/Reading Vocabulary	4 (8)  1 (2)
1 medium/long length text 600-1000 words *may be substituted with two paired texts <sup>1</sup>	1 that is RI or RH or RST focused	RI 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 (any combination)  RI 4 and L 4, 5, 6 (any combination)	Reading/Reading Information  Reading/Reading Vocabulary	5 (10)  1 (2)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>26(52)</b>

## V. Overview of PARCC ELA/Literacy Claims and Reporting Information

Many of the PARCC documents refer to **claims** when describing the way PARCC will measure and report student performance. Instead of an assessment that focuses on specific and, sometimes, isolated skills, PARCC tests are designed to determine if students are achieving the claims. Each claim, by using a combination of standards, calls for students to demonstrate their deep understanding of the text. Within the PARCC ELA/Literacy Assessment System, there are three types of claims:

- **Master Claim:** measures the overall performance goal—students must demonstrate that they are “on track” for college and career readiness
- **Major Claims:** identify the extent to which students are “on track” by measuring
  - Reading –close, analytic reading and the comparison and synthesis of ideas that are at the heart of understanding complex literary works and informational texts, and
  - Writing –the ability to write effectively when using and/or analyzing sources.
- **Sub-Claims:** additional skills and understandings included in the major claims (The sub-claims integrate all of the specific standards.)

The graphic below shows the relationships between the claims:



PARCC ELA/Literacy assessment results will be based on these claims, and student performance will be reported according to five levels, captured in PARCC’s [Draft Performance Level Descriptors](#) (PLDs).

## VI. Evidence Statements

To further assist educators, PARCC has released evidence tables for the [Reading and Vocabulary](#) and [Writing](#) claims noted above. These tables break down the standards into smaller parts to illustrate how each standard will be assessed. See a sample of a grade 6 evidence table below.

### Example of Evidence Table (Grade 6)

Grade: 6	
Claim: Reading Information: Students read and demonstrate comprehension of grade-level complex informational texts.	
Items designed to measure this claim may address the standards and evidences listed below:	
Standards:	Evidences to be measured on the PARCC Summative Assessment The student's response:
<p><b>RI 1:</b> Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p><b>RST 1:</b> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.</p> <p><b>RH 1:</b> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For RI 1, provides textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. (1)</li> <li>For RI 1, provides textual evidence to support analysis of inferences drawn from the text. (2)</li> <li>For RST and RH, provides textual evidence to support an analysis of science and/or technical texts and/or historical primary and/or secondary sources. (3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>RI 2:</b> Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p> <p><b>RST 2:</b> Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</p> <p><b>RH 2:</b> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a statement of the central idea(s) of a text. (1)</li> <li>Provides a statement of how the central idea is conveyed through particular details. (2)</li> <li>Provides an objective summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (3)</li> </ul>

## VII. PARCC Policies Affecting Test Administration

### Testing Format and Administration for ELA/Literacy Summative Assessments

At the end of school year 2014-15, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 will take PARCC assessments **on computers**. Local education agencies (LEAs) can apply for a waiver to administer the assessment in paper and pencil form for one year, if technology systems are not ready for the 2014-15 administration.

The table that follows provides a breakdown of the testing sessions by grade level, including an estimate of the amount of time a typical student will need to complete each session. These estimates may be refined based on the results of the field tests and are summarized from PARCC’s [Assessment Administration Guidance](#).

Component	Format and Administration (Grades 6-8)
<b>Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)</b>  Hand- and Computer- Scored Items	<b>Format</b> Approximately 75% of the way through the school year 3 ELA/Literacy sessions, one for each task (from 50-85 minutes per session)  <b>Administration</b> 20-day testing window for Computer-Based Tests (CBT): March 2-27, 2015 5-day testing window for Paper-Based Tests (PBT): March 16-20, 2015
<b>End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)</b>  Computer-Scored Items Only	<b>Format</b> Approximately 90% of the way through the school year 2 ELA/Literacy sessions (70 minutes per session)  <b>Administration</b> 20-day testing window for Computer-Based Tests (CBT): April 27-May 22, 2015 5-day testing window for Paper-Based Tests (PBT): May 4-8, 2015

For 2015 only, results will not be available until early fall. Therefore, no summer retests will be offered for Summer 2015.

While it is anticipated that most students will complete the test sessions within these estimated times, all participating students will have a set amount of additional time for each session. Students with disabilities who have an unlimited/untimed accommodation documented in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be given time beyond the set additional time.

**Permitted Testing Materials**

Students will be permitted to have school-issued scratch paper. All scratch paper is to be collected by the administrator at the conclusion of testing each day. The test administration manuals will provide more specific information needed to administer the assessments.

**Computer-Based Materials**

Headphones are required for students taking the ELA/Literacy test. Students may bring these from home.

**VIII. Student Technology Skills**

**Students taking the PARCC online assessments** have an opportunity to practice using the computer tools provided in PARCC’s online testing system. These tools include both the enhanced-technology and accessibility features available to all students. PARCC has developed a Tutorial and Sample Tasks for the purpose of learning how to use these tools. Both are accessible at <http://practice.parcc.testnav.com/#>.



The computer operating system and web browser requirements for viewing the online Tutorial and Sample Tasks are the same as those for the general online testing system. For a complete set list of supported systems, see [http://www.pearsononlinetesting.com/TestNav/8/requirements\\_testnav\\_8\\_0\\_4.html](http://www.pearsononlinetesting.com/TestNav/8/requirements_testnav_8_0_4.html). Check with your district technology coordinator for questions regarding equipment compatibility issues.

## IX. PARCC ELA/Literacy Item Types

The PARCC ELA/Literacy summative assessments will include three different types of test items. The examples that follow each explanation are taken from the [PARCC sample items](#).

- 1) **Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR)**—This item type combines a traditional selected-response question with a second selected-response question that asks students to provide textual evidence that supports the answer they provided to the first question.

### [EBSR Sample Item, Grade 6 \(from PBA, Narrative Task\)](#)

Part A: Which statement **best** describes the central idea of the text?

- a. Miyax is far from home and in need of help.\*
- b. Miyax misses her father and has forgotten the lessons he taught her.
- c. Miyax is cold and lacks appropriate clothing.
- d. Miyax is surrounded by a pack of unfriendly wolves.

Part B: Which sentence **best** helps develop the central idea?

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



2) **Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response (TECR)**—This item type uses technology to capture student comprehension of texts in authentic ways that until now have been difficult to score for large-scale assessments. When answering these items, students will be able to drag and drop, cut and paste, highlight text, and move items to show relationships.

**[TECR Sample Item, Grade 7](#) (from PBA, Research Simulation Task)**

**Question:** According to the article “The Biography of Amelia Earhart,” which events had the most significant impact on Earhart’s life? From the list, create a summary by dragging the **four** most significant events and dropping them in chronological order into the table.

- Earhart becomes the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean by herself. (\*3)
- Earhart attends a finishing school in Philadelphia.
- Earhart purchases her first plane. (\*2)
- Earhart works as a nurse’s aid in Canada.
- Earhart attends an air show, where a stunt pilot flies close to her. (\*1)
- Earhart sets off on a flight around the world.
- Earhart places third at the Cleveland Women’s Air Derby. (\*4)

Event 1	
Event 2	
Event 3	
Event 4	

- 3) **Prose Constructed Response (PCR)**—This item type appears at the end of each of the PBA tasks and asks students to create an extended and complete written response. It elicits evidence that students have understood a text or texts they have read and can communicate that understanding well both in terms of written expression and knowledge of language and conventions.

**[PCR Sample Item, Grade 8](#) (from PBA, Literary Analysis Task):**

**Question:** You have read excerpts from two novels focused on survival in the wilderness.

These excerpts are from:

- *Brian's Winter* by Gary Paulsen
- *Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Consider how the main character in each excerpt reacts to the incidents that occur, and write an essay in which you analyze how each character's thoughts and actions reveal aspects of his personality.

You do not need to compare and contrast the characters from the two texts. You may consider each one separately. Be sure to include evidence from each excerpt to support your analysis and understanding.

Draft scoring rubrics ([Grades 6-11](#)) are included in the PARCC materials to help support a stronger understanding of what the Prose Constructed Response items are asking students to know and be able to do. The rubrics have been revised since PARCC's initial release to reflect understandings achieved through two research studies. The rubrics remain in draft form but can be used as a reference until they are refined by additional student responses during the completion of the field test. The draft rubrics are general and will be used as the basis for creating item-specific rubrics for each operational PARCC item.

The original versions of the samples presented in this document and additional sample items, along with annotations, are available in pdf format at <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/ela>.

## X. Glossary

**Claim:** A statement about student performance based on how students respond to test questions. PARCC tests are designed to elicit evidence from students that support valid and reliable claims about the extent to which they are college and career ready or on track toward that goal and are making expected academic gains based on the Common Core State Standards. To support such claims, PARCC assessments are designed to measure and report results in multiple categories called master claims, major claims, and sub-claims.

**College and Career Readiness Claim (CCR):** For ELA/Literacy, the way the Master Claim—students are “on track” to college and career readiness—is represented on the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) specifications documents.

**End of Year Assessment (EOY):** End-of-year assessments are administered after approximately 90 percent of the school year. The ELA/Literacy EOY will focus on reading comprehension.

**Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR):** An item type that combines a traditional selected-response (multiple-choice) question with a second selected-response question that asks students provide textual evidence that supports the answer they provided to the first question. This underscores the importance of Reading Anchor Standard 1 (evidence) for implementation of the CCSS.

**Local Education Agency (LEA)** – An LEA is an agency or other organization responsible for administrative control or direction of a school.

**Major Claims:** The two measures (Reading and Writing) that show the extent to which students are “on track” for college and career readiness.

**Master Claim:** The overall performance goal for the PARCC ELA/Literacy Assessment System—students must demonstrate that they are “on track” for college and career readiness. The Master Claim ensures students have the literacy skills and understandings required for success in multiple disciplines.

**Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** PARCC is a consortium of 18 states working together to develop an assessment system for English language arts and mathematics anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers.

**Performance-Based Assessment (PBA):** For PARCC, the performance-based assessment will be administered approximately 75 percent of the way through the academic study of the grade or course content. Student results on the PBA will be combined with their results on end-of-year assessment (EOY) to produce overall PARCC scores in each content area.

**Prose Constructed Response (PCR):** An item type that appears at the end of each of the PBA tasks and asks students to create an extended and complete written response. It elicits evidence that students have understood a text or texts they have read and can communicate that understanding well both in terms of written expression and knowledge of language and conventions.

**Standard Setting:** The process used to establish performance (achievement) level cut scores.

**Sub-Claims:** Additional skills and understandings that are extensions of the major claims: Vocabulary Interpretation and Use, Reading Literature, Reading Informational Texts, Written Expression, Conventions and Knowledge of Language; and Research.

**Summative Assessment:** A summative assessment is designed to measure a student’s knowledge and skills at the end of an instructional period, such as an entire school year or at the conclusion of a course. The PARCC summative assessment will include two components — the performance-based assessment (PBA) component and the end-of-year assessment (EOY) component. The results of the two components will be combined to produce overall summative assessment results.

**Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response (TECR)**—This item type uses technology to capture student comprehension of texts in authentic ways that until now have been difficult to score for large scale assessments. When answering these questions, students will be able to drag and drop, cut and paste, highlight text, and move items to show relationships. TECR items take advantage of the computer-based environment to present situations and capture responses in ways that are not possible on a paper-based test.