

How to Use the ELA & Math Sample Assessment Questions for Instruction

(Provided by the New York State Department of Education)

The most striking difference in these sample questions will be in the passages accompanying ELA questions. Passages for these ELA sample questions were taken from public domain sources, while passages for the state assessments can be drawn from copyrighted material. As such, some sample passages may include antiquated language, outdated topics, and other shortcomings. Many are also well-read texts with which teachers and students may be very familiar. This is not indicative of a shift on future state assessments. What it does indicate, however, is a shift in the level of text complexity. Each text was chosen to clearly communicate Common Core grade-level expectations for text complexity. Although definitions for select words in passages will be provided in future state assessments, they are not provided with these passages.

NYSED has emphasized that while educators from around their state have helped craft these sample questions, they have not undergone the same extensive review, vetting, and piloting that occurs with actual questions used on the state assessments.

How to Use Different Aspects of the Sample Questions

Passages

- Use them to help guide your own text choices for instructional materials and expose students to similarly complex, diverse texts.
- Don't expect antiquated, public domain texts to be on future state assessments.

ELA Questions

- Interpret the way standards are conceptualized in each question.
- Consider the instructional changes that will need to occur in your classroom.
- Analyze the reading comprehension, argumentation, and marshaling of evidence called for in the constructed response questions.
- Pay attention to the text-based distractors in each multiple-choice question.
- Don't limit the amount of writing your students do in the classroom.
- Don't assume that the lined space provided for constructed response indicates the amount of writing students should provide to respond to the question.
- Don't assume that the sample questions represent a mini-version of future state assessments.

Math Questions

- Interpret the way the standards are conceptualized in each question.
- Note the multiple ways the standard is assessed throughout the sample questions.
- Take note of numbers (e.g., fractions instead of whole numbers) used in the samples.
- Pay attention to the strong distractors in each multiple-choice question.
- Don't consider these questions to be the only way the standard will be assessed.
- Don't assume that the sample questions represent a mini-version of future state assessments.
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Understanding ELA Sample Questions

Multiple Choice

Multiple-choice questions are designed to assess CCLS reading standards. They will ask students to identify different aspects of a given text including central idea, style elements, character and plot development, and vocabulary.

Multiple-choice questions will assess reading standards in a range of ways. Some will ask students to identify aspects of text or vocabulary. Many questions will require students to combine skills. For example, questions may ask students to identify a small piece 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. Students will also be required to negotiate plausible, text-based distractors. Each distractor will be drawn from the text and require students to truly comprehend what they have read in order to discern the correct response.

Short Constructed Response

Short constructed response sample questions are designed to assess CCLS reading standards. These are single questions in which students are asked to respond to a prompt or question by stating their answer and providing textual evidence to support their answer.

The goal of the short response questions is to require students to show succinctly their ability to comprehend text. In responding to these questions, students will be expected to write in complete sentences. Responses should require no more than three complete sentences.

Extended Constructed Response

Extended constructed response sample questions are designed to assess a student's ability to write from sources. They will focus primarily on CCLS writing standards. Many will be framed around a central question, and all will reference one or two texts.

Extended constructed response questions allow students to demonstrate the ability to write a coherent essay using textual evidence to support their ideas. Student responses will be rated based on CCLS writing standards and a student's command of evidence to defend his or her point.

Understanding Math Sample Questions

Multiple Choice

Sample multiple-choice math questions are designed to assess CCLS math standards and incorporate both standards and math practices in real-world applications. Math multiple-choice questions assess procedural and conceptual standards. Unlike questions on past math assessments, many require the use of multiple skills and concepts. Answer choices are also different from those on past assessments. Within the sample questions, all distractors will be based on plausible missteps.

Short Constructed Response

Math short constructed response questions are similar to past 2-point questions, asking students to complete a task and show their work. Like multiple-choice questions, short constructed response questions will often require multiple steps, the application of multiple math skills, and real-world applications. Many of the short constructed response questions will cover conceptual and application standards.

Extended Constructed Response

Math extended constructed response questions are similar to past 3-point questions, asking students to show their work in completing two or more tasks or one more extensive problem. Extended constructed response questions allow students to show their understanding of math procedures, conceptual understanding, and application.