

PARCC Preview Guide

You can preview the PARCC Practice Tests at <http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/>

They can be previewed online and also can be downloaded to print out paper versions. They are available in English and Spanish, regular print, large print, and Braille.

The following pages are explanations of the kinds of items that students will find on PARCC.

This resource is called a preview not a practice guide because the purpose is not to practice taking the test but to ask students to think about the kinds of questions and tasks on the test.

The question types and tasks on PARCC represent a bridge to Common Core standards—they are models for classroom activities more than an annual test.

If teachers take students on a PARCC preview “tour”—using the paper version to identify the parts, kinds of questions, and kinds of thinking that those questions require, that will be more useful than starting to answer the questions immediately.

Teachers can turn PARCC samples into learning activities if students analyze questions, identify the strategies they would use to respond, and then pair and compare their ideas to figure out the best response.

You can use this guide as a preview by itself or use each section as an introduction to the parts of the PARCC and then visit the test so that students have an opportunity to do the kinds of thinking that PARCC emphasizes.

PARCC Questions ask students to think clearly.

The next pages preview the kinds of questions on PARCC.

It's important on any assessment to think about the questions—what do they ask, what skills, ideas, and information do I need to use to answer them?

After you preview them, look at the sample test to see

As you read the PARCC sample questions, think about how you would answer these kinds of questions.

For guides that students can use to develop the Common Core competencies required by PARCC, go to <http://teacher.depaul.edu>.

PARCC READING ASSESSMENT: Text-Based Questions

PARCC Vocabulary Questions ask you to figure out what a word means based on what you read.

PARCC gives this example of an OLD kind of vocabulary question.

Which two words are synonyms for heap.

- a. pile b. row c. corner d. mound e. pattern

If you know what heap means, you can choose the correct response.

If you don't know what heap means, you only can guess.

PARCC does not use that old kind of question.

PARCC uses a different kind of vocabulary question.

It asks you to tell what a word means based on how it is used in a text you read.

So if you don't know what a word means, you can still figure it out.

You use the context to choose the best answer.

PARCC kind of vocabulary question:

Part A.

What is the meaning of the word as used in paragraph 23?

- a. hint b. fix c. understand d. decide

Part B. Which phrase helps the reader understand the meaning of dictate?

- a. recreate the tree house
b. determine the shape
c. is less expensive to build
d. has all the time in the world

PARCC calls these kinds of questions EBSR—**Evidence Based** Selected Response. They are multiple-choice questions with two parts.

1. In the first part you select the best answer.
2. In the second part you choose the example, the **evidence**, that you used to choose the answer to the first part.

PARCC READING ASSESSMENT: SEQUENTIAL QUESTIONS

The questions have a sequence or order that helps you read the text carefully. If it's a story, the first questions ask you to think about what happens in the story, who the characters are, how they feel, and what theme or lesson the writer wants you to learn. This example shows how PARCC helps you figure out the story.

After reading part of *Julie of the Wolves*, students answer these questions.

Evidence-Based Selected Response

Part A. Choose one word that describes Miyax based on evidence from the text. There is more than one correct choice listed below.

reckless lively imaginative observant impatient confident

Part B.

Find a sentence in the passage with details that support your response to Part A. Click on that sentence and drag and drop it into the box below.

Find another sentence in the passage with details that support your response to Part A. Click on that sentence and drag and drop it into the box below.

Part A

Based on the passage from *Julie of the Wolves*, how does Miyax feel about her father?

- She is angry that he left her alone.
- She blames him for her difficult childhood.
- She appreciates him for his knowledge of nature.
- She is grateful that he planned out her future.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage best shows Miyax's feelings for her father?

- "She had been lost without food for many sleeps on the North Slope of Alaska."
- "This could be done she knew, for her father, an Eskimo hunter, had done so."*
- "Unfortunately, Miyax's father never explained to her how he had told the wolf of his needs."
- "And not long afterward he paddled his kayak into the Bering Sea to hunt for seal, and he never returned."

If it is nonfiction, then the questions ask you about the ideas and information you learn and what the writer's point of view is.

Look at the sample test to see how the questions help you think about what you read as you take time to read the text.

PARCC READING CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE TASK

After you read two or three texts, PARCC asks you to write about them.

PARCC calls these Constructed Response tasks. They ask you to think about what you read and write about the texts.

There are three kinds of constructed responses on the PARCC reading assessment.

You can learn about the three kinds of tasks here. Then look at the examples in the practice tests to see how the tasks build on the readings and questions that PARCC gives you before the constructed responses.

Narrative Task

In these, PARCC asks you to write based on a story or event.

Here is an example of a narrative task for fiction.

In the passage, the author developed a strong character named Miyax. Think about Miyax and the details the author used to create that character. The passage ends with Miyax waiting for the black wolf to look at her.

Write **an original story** to continue where the passage ended.

In your story, **be sure to use what you have learned about the character Miyax** as you tell what happens to her next.

Literary Analysis Task

In these, PARCC asks you to write about texts—about how they are organized or about the ways the writers communicated their ideas.

Here is an example.

You have read two different stories. Write an essay describing how each narrator's point of view influenced how the events are described. Be sure to use details from both stories.

PARCC READING: Research Simulation Task

This really is how you learn about any topic.

In these, PARCC asks you to write about what you learned.

Here is an example of a research simulation tasks in which students write about two different texts.

You have read two texts about famous people in American history who solved a problem by working to make a change.

Write an article for your school newspaper describing how these two persons faced challenges to change something in America. In your article, be sure to describe in detail why some solutions they tried worked and others did not. Tell how the challenges each one faced were the same and how they were different.

Students in grades 6-12 also will see a short video when they take the PARCC. So the constructed response will ask them to write about the video and the texts.

Here is an example of one of those tasks.

You have read a website entry and an article and watched a video describing Amelia Earhart. All three include the claim that Earhart was a brave, courageous person. Consider the argument each author uses to demonstrate Earhart's bravery.

Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments about Earhart's bravery in at least two of the supporting materials. Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.

PARCC Online includes another Kind of Reading Constructed Response

Students in grades 6 and above who take the PARCC tests online will have one more kind of question. It is called the TECR, which stands for Technology Enhanced Constructed Response.

These are called constructed responses because you use a graphic organizer to put together a summary or a sequence chart or a diagram based on what you read.

These are graphic organizers that you will use to explain what you read. Some will have drop-down menus, and some will have “drag and drop” parts.

If you will take the PARCC test online, preview those on the sample tests.

Try them out this way:

First, figure out what the directions ask you to do.

Second, think how you will figure out the best response.

Third, make your choices using the online graphic organizer.

Fourth, check your response—think about the question and look to see if you’ve answered it the best way you could.

The PARCC Math Questions

The math questions start with items that ask you to show what you know—they are multiple choice questions.

Visit the math practice test to see the kinds of questions that PARCC starts with.

Most of the questions have one correct response.

You choose that response by answering a question that you need to know math to solve.

For example,

Which pair of fractions is equivalent?

- a. $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{3}{5}$
- b. $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{5}$
- c. $\frac{6}{10}$ and $\frac{4}{8}$
- d. $\frac{6}{10}$ and $\frac{3}{5}$

To answer that question, you need to know what equivalent means and how to reduce a fraction.

To answer ANY math question you need to know rules, terms, and skills.

Take a preview of the PARCC math test to see the kinds of questions.

You will notice that most have one correct response, and some of them have two correct responses.

For example, a fifth grade question asks: Which of these are equal to 83.041?

Then there are five possible answers.

Two of them are correct—one that is written in words, the other written as an equation.

If there is more than one correct response, that means you need to think more. Think about each choice. Choose the two that make the most sense.

Math Explanatory Items

You will see that some of the questions ask you to identify a mistake someone makes and then explain why.

Jian's family sells honey. They collected 3,311 ounces this season. They will use the honey to completely fill 4 ounce jars or 6 ounce jars.

Jian's family will sell the 4-ounce jars for \$5 each or 6-ounce jars for \$8 each.

Jan says if they use only the 4-ounce jars, they could make \$4,140 because $3,311 \div 4 = 827 \text{ R}3$. That rounds up to 828, and 828 multiplied by \$5 each is \$4,140

Part A. Explain the error that Jian made when finding the amount the family could make if they used only the 4-ounce jars.

Part B. Explain how to determine the money Jian's family could make if they used only 6-ounce jars. Include the total amount of money and the total number of 6-ounce jars in your explanation.

Directions are Important on any assessment—and any activity!

Read the directions for any test carefully before you preview it and when you take it.

Here are some examples from the Math test that you need to follow to succeed on it.

“To answer a question that asks you to pick more than one answer, select your answer from the answer choices.

If a question asks you to show or explain your work, you must do so to receive full credit.

Be sure to

- Enter your response in the box provided
- Label each part of your work if a question has more than one part, and clearly identify your answer for each part”

Think on Paper

When you take the PARCC math or reading test, you’ll be able to use blank paper to make notes. Even if you take the test online, help yourself to think about your answers by noting information you need or listing information you’ll put into your response.

Online or on paper, if you aren’t sure about answering a question, you can put a “flag” on it so you can go on to the next questions. Then if you have time at the end of the test you can go back and think again about any question you weren’t sure how to answer.