



Partnership for Assessment of
Readiness for College and Careers

November 2014

COUNTDOWN TO PARCC FOR TEACHERS

PARCC BLUEPRINTS AND TEST SPECIFICATIONS

PARCC has released a set of test specification documents, including assessment blueprints and evidence statement tables, to help educators and the general public better understand the design of the PARCC assessments.

Blueprints describe the content and structure of an assessment by defining the total number of tasks and/or items for any given assessment component, the standards measured, the item types, and the point values for each. *Evidence tables* indicate the essential components of a student response with respect to each assessed standard.

Did you know that the PARCC test specifications, including blueprints and evidence statement tables, are available online? ELA and mathematics test specifications can be found at the link below. In addition, the site provides narrated PowerPoints that provide ideas for incorporating blueprints and evidence tables into instruction. <http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs>

Did you know that the PARCC sample items and rubrics are available online? ELA and mathematics item sets and ELA rubrics are posted at the link below. You may want to incorporate PARCC-like CCSS-aligned items into instruction and begin using the PARCC rubrics to grade writing assignments. <http://parcc-test.pearson.com/sample-items>

ASSESSMENT PREPARATION

PARCC is a next-generation assessment with varied item types that evaluates deep comprehension of the CCSS. For students to succeed on this assessment, they must receive high-quality CCSS-aligned instruction and be familiar with computer-based assessments. To help prepare students:

1. **Get them on the computer!** PARCC allows for a variety of devices as long as they adhere to minimum hardware and software specifications, which can be found here: <https://support.assessment.pearson.com/display/TN/System+Requirements+-+TestNav+8.1>. *Research shows that the type of testing device does not affect student performance as long as the same device is used in instruction and assessment.*
2. **In ELA, ensure that students can compose answers and essays on the computer.** While students will have access to scratch paper on the PARCC assessments, they will not have time to write answers by hand and copy them on to the computer.
3. **In math, teach students to use equation editors.** Many different computer programs use equation editors, and the ones on common word processing programs are similar to those on the PARCC math tests. Please see the following guides and tutorials: http://parcc.pearson.com/resources/GR3-5_EE_Tips_v0.1.pdf, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6D3sPttgqE>, and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yq7QERIBF3M>.

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TIPS FOR CCSS LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTION

The ability to read, understand, and interpret complex texts differentiates low and high performers in ELA and indicates readiness for college and careers. **In November**, you may want to start using PARCC Passage Selection Guidelines to choose CCSS-aligned texts in instruction, assignments, and assessments.

1. Select texts of **appropriate length and complexity** based on Lexile measures, Reading Maturity Metrics, and TextEvaluator. Ranges for these evaluators are listed in Appendix A of the CCSS.
2. Ensure that texts **are authentic, varied, content rich, and are interesting** to the students.
3. Introduce students to many **literary genres, informational text types, media, and forms of narrative**.
4. Use the evidence tables to **pair multiple texts** based on literary elements, central ideas or topics, versions, purposes, or structures.
5. Ensure that **texts are sensitive** to male and female students of varied cultures, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses.

For detailed information, read the updated **PARCC ELA Passage Selection Guidelines:**

<http://parconline.org/sites/parcc/files/Updated%20Passage%20Selection%20Guidelines.pdf>.

TIPS FOR CCSS MATH INSTRUCTION

CCSS in mathematics requires that students solve complex problems based on real-life situations. **In November**, you may want to begin using the MC² Thinking Protocol for sample PARCC items as a class warm-up or formative assessment. The Thinking Protocol is a series of steps that helps students interpret math problems and learn problem-solving strategies. See detailed steps at http://mc2.nmsu.edu/PARCC/Thinking_Protocol_for_PARCC_MC2.pdf.

Thinking Protocol (15–20 minutes)

1. Students **think individually** about the item. (3 minutes)
2. **Think with a partner** about the problem. Change colored writing utensils to add to the solution. Don't erase from your original ideas. (5 minutes)
3. **Share strategies**. Teacher selects 2–3 students or partners to share their ideas. The purpose is to add new ideas and strategies to the whole group's thinking. (6 minutes)
4. **Ask students to reflect** on the problem and identify what was easy about the problem. What required more effort? (1 minute)



All schools may utilize MC² PARCC support which includes instructional activities with practice problems aligned to the common core math practices. Each of these is available as a monthly archived webinar. See <http://mc2.nmsu.edu> for more information.