



Capture the Core

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Sixth Grade

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PARCC Resources for Teachers

Assessments are a checkup for our schools. The PARCC assessment will provide timely, actionable information for teachers – and because students will take some of the new assessments early in the school year, teachers will be able to identify kids who are falling behind and need extra help.

These new assessments will replace outdated and ineffective tests with new tests that measure real world skills that colleges and employers say they value – like critical thinking and problem solving.



PTA Parents' Guide

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has created grade-by-grade overviews of the Common Core State Standards in for what students should be learning at each grade in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy in order to be prepared for college and careers. The Guide is available in English and Spanish. Download it from

Resource Links

[Sample Test Questions](#)

[Sample Items and Take Prototypes \(PDF\) — ELA/Literacy](#)

[Sample Items and Task Prototypes \(PDF\) — Math](#)

[K-12 Educators and PARCC](#)

[PARCC Model Content Frameworks](#)

[Non-Summative Assessments](#)

[Educator Leader Cadres](#)

[Professional Learning Modules: PARCC Assessments](#)

[Expanding Access - A Teacher's Guide \(PDF\)](#)

PARCC has collaborated with PBS affiliate WTCI to produce a series of standalone websites that give the public more information about the assessments and experiences of a variety of community members including K-12 educators, higher education experts and parents:

[PBS Learning Media CLO: PARCC for Educators](#)

PARCC has released a set of test specification documents, including assessment [blueprints and evidence statement tables](#), to help educators better understand the design of the PARCC assessments.

“One Stop Shop” for Writing

As we announced last month, www.ilwritingmatters.org has launched to meet K-12 educators literacy needs as they relate to writing. Today, Capture the Core will highlight some essential components of the site and then share specific strategies monthly that could be taken right to the classroom.

On the home page of the site, essential documents necessary for all individuals to view are the Critical Directions section. This describes what full implementation of a great reading

and writing program should have in place at all stages of a student’s career.

As each grade level is selected, there is background knowledge for every standard. These documents give practitioners extra support for the depth of the standard.

Progressions are offered at each grade level so that teachers will know what skills students come equipped with and what they will need the following year as well.

Rubrics are listed in two locations: one under rubrics and

another under PARCC. These will assist with possible scoring but hopefully identifying the skills and structure of writing needed at each grade level.

Finally, suggested books, websites, and lesson plans are available at every grade level. Highlights will be given each month on these resources.



Standard #1: Writing Arguments

W.6.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

When writing arguments, “the writer presents a claim and supports it with evidence in an attempt to change the reader’s point of view, bring about some action on the reader’s part, or to ask the reader to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue or problem,” (CCSS-ELA Appendix A p. 23).

Students need an understanding

of the vocabulary of standard #1 before they can actually apply those terms in their own writing.

Students should be familiar with the following terms:

- **Claim**—(typically answers the question: “What do I think?”)
- **Reasons**—typically answers the question: “Why do I think this?”)
- **Evidence**—typically answers the question: “How do I know this is the

case?”).

ReadWriteThink has created a strategy guide for developing evidence-based arguments from texts. [Click here](#) to



Student Samples of Argument Writing

When learning to write arguments, students can benefit from the following teaching practices:

1. Teachers model how to write an argument.
2. Teachers select and read aloud from mentor texts that guide students as they work to apply similar writing techniques. Sometimes only a small section of text is needed to model the strategy.

3. Teachers expose students to arguments written by other 6th grade students.

[Click here](#) to see samples of 6th grade argument writing from:

- Student Achievement Partners
 - Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project
 - Appendix C from the CCSS
- Teachers can use the samples in many ways in the classroom.

One way is to have students to highlight the claim, reasons and evidence from samples in small groups. Each group can share with the whole class how the sample met or did not meet the argument writing standard.



Publishers' Criteria on Practice Standards Excerpt

Practice-Content Connections: Materials

connect content standards and practice standards. "Designers of curricula, assessments, and professional development should all attend to the need to connect the mathematical practices to mathematical content in mathematics instruction." (CCSSM, p. 8.) Over the course of any given year of instruction, each mathematical practice standard is meaningfully present in the form of activities or problems that stimulate students to develop the habits of mind described in the practice standards. These practices are well-grounded in the content standards. The practice standards are not just processes with ephemeral products (such as conversations). They also specify a set of products students are supposed to learn how to produce. Thus, students are asked to produce answers and solutions but also, in a grade-appropriate way, arguments, explanations, diagrams, mathematical models, etc.

Focus and Coherence via Practice Standards: Materials

promote focus and coherence by connecting practice standards with content that is emphasized in the Standards. Content and practice standards are not connected mechanically or randomly, but instead support focus and coherence. Examples: Materials connect looking for and making use of structure (MP.7) with Structural themes emphasized in the standards such as properties of operations, place value decompositions of numbers, numerators and denominators of fractions, numerical and algebraic expressions, etc.; materials use repeated reasoning (MP.8) as a tool with which to explore content that is emphasized in the Standards. (In K-5, materials might use regularity in repetitive reasoning to shed light on, e.g., the 10 x 10 addition table, the 10 x 10 multiplication table, the properties of operations, the relationship between addition and subtraction or multiplication and division, and the place value system; in 6-8, materials might use regularity in repetitive reasoning to shed light on proportional relationships and linear functions; in high school, materials might use regularity in repetitive reasoning to shed light on formal algebra as well as functions, particularly recursive definitions of functions.)

Careful Attention to Each Practice Standard: Materials

attend to the full meaning of each practice standard. For example, MP.1 does not say, "Solve problems." Or "Make sense of problems." Or "Make sense of problems and solve them." It says "Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them." Thus, students using the materials as designed build their perseverance in grade-level-appropriate ways by occasionally solving problems that require them to persevere to a solution beyond the point when they would like to give up. MP.5 does not say, "Use tools." Or "Use appropriate tools." It says "Use appropriate tools strategically." Thus, materials include problems that reward students' strategic decisions about how to use tools, or about whether to use them at all. MP.8 does not say, "Extend patterns." Or "Engage in repetitive reasoning." It says "Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning." Thus, it is not enough for students to extend patterns or perform repeated calculations. Those repeated calculations must lead to an insight (e.g., "When I add a multiple of 3 to another multiple of 3, then I get a multiple of 3."). The analysis for evaluators explains how the full meaning of each practice standard has been attended to in the materials. http://isbe.net/common_core/pdf/math-pub-crit-k8.pdf

"What task can I give to build understanding, rather than how can I explain clearly so they can understand."

-Grayson Wheatley

More Information on Practice Standards

Inside Mathematics <http://www.insidemathematics.org/common-core-resources/mathematical-practice-standards>

Capture the Core 2012- Summer 2013 http://isbe.net/common_core/htmls/news.htm

K-5 Illustrative Mathematics <http://commoncoretools.me/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Elaborations.pdf>

6-8 Illustrative Mathematics <http://commoncoretools.me/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-05-06-Elaborations-6-8.pdf>



Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Three Elements of Student Engagement

Students' classroom work embodies substantial intellectual engagement (reading, thinking, writing, problem-solving and meaning-making). Students take ownership of their learning to develop, test and refine their thinking. Engagement strategies encourage equitable and purposeful student participation and ensure that all students have access to, and are expected to participate in, learning. Student talk also embodies substantive and intellectual thinking. Here are some activities to incorporate the elements of student engagement (Cognitive, Social and Emotional) into lessons and units. ISBE engagement and re-engagement website; <http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/engagement.htm>

Cognitive Engagement

Enhance Self-Regulation

- ◆ Peer –to-peer Editing
- ◆ Use Interactive Math Journals
- ◆ Allow Students to Teach lessons
- ◆ Utilize Checklist/Boxes to show completion of activities

Support Learning Goals

- ◆ Produce reflective writing about the goals that were included in the unit
- ◆ Create visual representation of specific goals
- ◆ Employ a Graffiti Wall Review—Fill whiteboard with review of concepts...pictures and words
- ◆ Have students identify unit goals and the steps needed to complete them

Increase Investment in Learning

- ◆ Employ Self-grading techniques for student identification of struggles
- ◆ Develop student progress monitoring tools



Social Engagement

Support Positive Interactions

- ◆ Collaborative Group Work
- ◆ Random Grouping
- ◆ Group Centers—Non-fiction newspaper hunt, Spelling word searches...etc.

Enhance Ownership and Effort

- ◆ Reflection time at the end of each day
- ◆ Rubrics for reflecting on group work
- ◆ Public applause/acknowledgement
- ◆ Role play opportunities

Increase Participation

- ◆ Student driven conversations about topics related to a novel or story
- ◆ Group writing of a descriptive paragraph or complete story
- ◆ Random selection of students during whole class activity
- ◆ Group research and presentations. Allow students to teach the class on the topic

Emotional Engagement

Generate Interest

- ◆ Develop math problems that incorporate student interests
- ◆ Explore writing and editing skills needed in many occupations
- ◆ Conduct interest inventories to identify what each student connects with
- ◆ Integrate Technology

Identification for Personal Connection

- ◆ Use student names in word problems and stories
- ◆ Connect Current events connected to the students
- ◆ Develop a classroom Mascot
- ◆ Craft social stories with names and pictures of the students

Create a sense of Belonging

- ◆ Cite student work within the room during and after the unit
- ◆ Work with additional classrooms to create a "whole school" positive climate
- ◆ Schedule class meetings
- ◆ Always use student names, avoid "he", "she" or "you".

Supporting a Positive Attitude About Learning

- ◆ Develop a class "what went well" journal
- ◆ Provide Positive responses for not only correct work, but effort as well
- ◆ Allow time for Individual and class reflection
- ◆ Plan for Re-telling of what was learned the day before

