

Grade 8 Informational Mini-Assessment

Screen Time Trio

This grade 8 mini-assessment is based on two articles, “In our digital world, are young people losing their ability to read emotions?” by Stuart Wolpert, and “Study: Kids can learn as much from ‘Sesame Street’ as from preschool” by Jim Tankersley, as well as a short video “This is how Cookie Monster Makes your Kid Smarter.” These texts and the recording are considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and watch and also meet the expectations for text complexity at grade 8. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will employ quality, complex texts and audio recordings such as these.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students’ time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the texts. Individual questions also may address several standards because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis, thus aligning to multiple standards. In this mini-assessment there are sixteen questions that address the Reading Standards listed below. Additionally, there is an optional writing prompt, which is aligned to Reading, Writing, and Language Standards.

We encourage educators to give students the time that they need to read closely and write to the source. While we know that it is helpful to have students complete the mini-assessment in one class period, we encourage educators to allow additional time as necessary; this mini-assessment will likely take two class periods.

*Note for teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs): This assessment is designed to measure students’ ability to read and write in English. Therefore, educators will not see the level of scaffolding typically used in instructional materials to support ELLs—these would interfere with the ability to understand their mastery of these skills. If ELL students are receiving instruction in grade-level ELA content, they should be given access to unaltered practice assessment items to gauge their progress. Passages and items should not be modified; however, **additional information about accommodations you may consider when administering this assessment to ELLs is available in the teacher section of this resource.***

RI.8.1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.8.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.8.3	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
RI.8.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
RI.8.5	Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
RI.8.6	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
RI.8.7	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
RI.8.8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
RI.8.9	Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
RST.6-8.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.
RST.6-8.3	Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks.
SL.8.3	Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

W.8.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
W.8.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.8.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.8.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.8.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.8.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading or listening.

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The assessment questions in this document align with the CCSS and reflect the instructional shifts implied by the standards. To learn more about these topics, please go to the following link:

www.achievethecore.org

Grade 8 Mini-Assessment – Screen Time Trio

Researchers have different views on the impact technology has on children. Today you will read two articles, “In our digital world, are young people losing their ability to read emotions?” by Stuart Wolpert, and “Study: Kids can learn as much from ‘Sesame Street’ as from preschool” by Jim Tankersley, and then watch a video titled, “This is How Cookie Monster Makes Your Kid Smarter.” You will then answer several questions based on the texts and video. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions. You will notice as you answer the questions that some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B, but you may return to Part A if you wish.

Take as long as you need to read and answer the questions. If you do not finish when class ends, come see me to discuss when you may have additional time.

Now read the passage and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read the passage.

Text 1: In our digital world, are young people losing their ability to read emotions?

By Stuart Wolpert

- 1 Children’s social skills may be declining as they have less time for face-to-face interaction due to their increased use of social media, according to a UCLA psychology study.
- 2 UCLA scientists found that sixth-graders who went five days without even glancing at a smartphone, television or other digital screen did substantially better at reading human emotions than sixth-graders from the same school who continued to spend hours each day looking at their electronic devices.
- 3 “Many people are looking at the benefits of digital media in education, and not many are looking at the costs,” said Patricia Greenfield, a distinguished professor of psychology in the UCLA College and senior author of the study. “Decreased sensitivity to emotional cues — losing the ability to understand the emotions of other people — is one of the costs. The displacement of in-person social interaction by screen interaction seems to be reducing social skills.”
- 4 The research will be in the October print edition of *Computers in Human Behavior* and is already published online.
- 5 The psychologists studied two sets of sixth-graders from a Southern California public school: 51 who lived together for five days at the Pali Institute, a nature and science camp about 70 miles east of Los Angeles, and 54 others from the same school. (The group of 54 would attend the camp later, after the study was conducted.)
- 6 The camp doesn’t allow students to use electronic devices — a policy that many students found to be challenging for the first couple of days. Most adapted quickly, however, according to camp counselors.



- 7 At the beginning and end of the study, both groups of students were evaluated for their ability to recognize other people's emotions in photos and videos. The students were shown 48 pictures of faces that were happy, sad, angry or scared, and asked to identify their feelings.
- 8 They also watched videos of actors interacting with one another and were instructed to describe the characters' emotions. In one scene, students take a test and submit it to their teacher; one of the students is confident and excited, the other is anxious. In another scene, one student is saddened after being excluded from a conversation.
- 9 The children who had been at the camp improved significantly over the five days in their ability to read facial emotions and other nonverbal cues to emotion, compared with the students who continued to use their media devices.
- 10 Researchers tracked how many errors the students made when attempting to identify the emotions in the photos and videos. When analyzing the photos, for example, those at the camp made an average of 9.41 errors at the end of the study, down from 14.02 at the beginning. The students who didn't attend the camp recorded a significantly smaller change. For the videos, the students who went to camp improved significantly, while the scores of the students who did not attend camp showed no change. The findings applied equally to both boys and girls.
- 11 "You can't learn nonverbal emotional cues from a screen in the way you can learn it from face-to-face communication," said lead author Yalda Uhls, a senior researcher with the UCLA's Children's Digital Media Center, Los Angeles. "If you're not practicing face-to-face communication, you could be losing important social skills."
- 12 Students participating in the study reported that they text, watch television and play video games for an average of four-and-a-half hours on a typical school day. Some surveys have found that the figure is even higher nationally, said Uhls, who also is the Southern California regional director of Common Sense Media, a national nonprofit organization.
- 13 Greenfield, director of the CDMC, considers the results significant, given that they occurred after only five days.
- 14 She said the implications of the research are that people need more face-to-face interaction, and that even when people use digital media for social interaction, they're spending less time developing social skills and learning to read nonverbal cues.
- 15 "We've shown a model of what more face-to-face interaction can do," Greenfield said. "Social interaction is needed to develop skills in understanding the emotions of other people."
- 16 Uhls said that emoticons are a poor substitute for face-to-face communication: "We are social creatures. We need device-free time."

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/in-our-digital-world-are-young-people-losing-the-ability-to-read-emotions>

Text 2: Study: Kids can learn as much from ‘Sesame Street’ as from preschool

By Jim Tankersley

- 1 NEW YORK — Most Americans born since the mid-1960s have a favorite “Sesame Street” skit. Jennifer Kotler Clarke watched hers on a black-and-white television set in her family’s Bronx apartment. There were two aliens: One of them had long arms that didn’t move, while the other had short, moving arms. The aliens wished to eat apples from a tree, and they succeeded, after a couple of minutes, by working together. “Let’s call this cooperation,” one of them says. “No,” the other replies, “let’s call it Shirley.”
- 2 Clarke grew up to be the show’s vice president for research and evaluation, and she has long believed that the program’s laughs and lessons stick with children. Now, landmark academic research appears to back her up.
- 3 The most authoritative study ever done on the impact of “Sesame Street,” to be released Monday, finds that the famous show on public TV has delivered lasting educational benefits to millions of American children — benefits as powerful as the ones children get from going to preschool.
- 4 The paper from the University of Maryland’s Melissa Kearney and Wellesley College’s Phillip Levine finds that the show has left children more likely to stay at the appropriate grade level for their age, an effect that is particularly pronounced among boys, African Americans and children who grow up in disadvantaged areas.
- 5 After “Sesame Street” was introduced, children living in places where its broadcast could be more readily received saw a 14 percent drop in their likelihood of being behind in school. Levine and Kearney note in their paper that a wide body of previous research has found that Head Start, the pre-kindergarten program for low-income Americans, delivers a similar benefit.
- 6 The researchers also say those effects probably come from “Sesame Street’s” focus on presenting viewers with an academic curriculum, heavy on reading and math, that would appear to have helped prepare children for school.
- 7 While it might seem implausible that a TV show could have such effects, the results build on Nixon-era¹ government studies that found big short-term benefits in watching the show, along with years of focus-group studies by the team of academic researchers who help write “Sesame Street” scripts. Several outside researchers have reviewed the study, and none are known to have questioned its results.
- 8 The new findings offer comforting news for parents who put their children in front of public TV every day and/or memorized entire Elmo DVDs, unwittingly.
- 9 They also raise a provocative question, at a time when many lawmakers are pushing to expand spending on early childhood education: Do kids need preschool if a TV show works just as well?
- 10 Yes, say the economists — and the “Sesame Street” educational team. Head Start, Kearney and Levine write, was designed to provide more than an academic boost: It delivers family support,

¹ Richard Nixon was president of the United States from January 20, 1969-August 9, 1974.

medical and dental services, and development of emotional skills that help kids in social settings.

- 11 Levine and Kearney see the study as a clear lesson in the value of a (very cheap) mass-media complement to preschool. The potentially controversial implication they embrace from the study isn't about early-childhood education. It's about college, and the trend toward low-cost massive open online courses, or MOOCs.
- 12 "Sesame Street," Levine and Kearney write, was the original MOOC. "If we can do this with 'Sesame Street' on television, we can potentially do this with all sorts of electronic communications," Kearney said in an interview. "It's encouraging because it means we might be able to make real progress in ways that are affordable and scalable."
- 13 The research can't say whether the show continues to deliver such high benefits to children, said Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, an economist at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy, who has read drafts of the paper and given feedback to the authors.
- 14 But, she said, it clearly shows "the importance of childhood education, which is really having its moment right now."
- 15 This study was brought to you, so to speak, by the letters U, H, and F.
- 16 "Sesame Street" debuted in 1969 with a diverse cast of humans and brightly colored fuzzy Muppets, including Oscar the Grouch, Bert and Ernie, and, of course, Big Bird. It was the country's first explicitly educational children's program, and it was an immediate hit: In the early 1970s, one-third of all American toddlers watched it.
- 17 That's a Super Bowl-level audience share. But it's even more striking because another third of the nation's toddlers couldn't have watched the show if they wanted to — they didn't have the right antenna to tune in to their local public television station.
- 18 This was well before the popularization of cable. TV broadcasts arrived over the air, on two different kinds of signals. The higher-quality signal was known as VHF, or Channels 1 to 13 on a standard TV set. The lower-quality signal was called UHF, and many households at that time were unable to tune it in. By a quirk of federal licensing, the public broadcasting channels in many major cities, including New York and Boston, aired on VHF channels, while others, including Los Angeles and Washington, aired on UHF.
- 19 As a result, about two-thirds of the nation's households were able to watch "Sesame Street." The other third weren't.
- 20 Levine read about that divide in early 2014. He realized it was the sort of rare natural experiment that economists live for — two groups of people, divvied up by fate and the Federal Communications Commission, who could be compared over time to see whether there was a difference in their educational outcomes.

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Video: This is How Cookie Monster Makes Your Kid Smarter

When the class is ready, we will watch the video recording together. To signal that you are ready to listen, please turn your mini-assessment face down on your desk.

We will watch the video twice, as some of the questions later in this mini-assessment will ask you to remember specific information from it.

The video is available at the following link:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/sesame-street-and-its-surprisingly-powerful-effects-on-how-children-learn/2015/06/07/59c73fe4-095c-11e5-9e39-0db921c47b93_story.html

QUESTIONS:

1. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What does *displacement* mean as it is used in paragraph 3 of Text 1: “In our digital world, are young people losing their ability to read emotions?”

- A. substitution
- B. advance
- C. support
- D. establishment

Part B: Which quotation best helps the reader determine the meaning of *displacement*?

- A. “Decreased sensitivity to emotional cues...”
- B. “...understand the emotions of other people...”
- C. “...one of the costs.”
- D. “...in-person social interaction by screen interaction...”

2. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Which sentence best states the central idea of Text 1?

- A. New research shows that teenagers are more likely to have positive social relationships when they spend time at the Pali Institute.
- B. New research indicates that technology has a negative impact on teens’ ability to understand the emotions of other people.
- C. New research demonstrates the importance of establishing friendships through both social media and face-to-face interactions.
- D. New research reveals that teenagers spend the majority of their evenings interacting with technology.

Part B: Which sentence from Text 1 best supports the correct answer to Part A?

- A. “Children’s social skills may be declining as they have less time for face-to-face interaction due to their increased use of social media, according to a UCLA psychology study.”
- B. “The group of 54 would attend the camp later, after the study was conducted.”
- C. “The students also watched videos of actors interacting with one another and were instructed to describe the characters’ emotions.”
- D. “Students who participated in the study reported that they text, watch television, and play video games for an average of four-and-a half hours on a typical school day.”

3. The table below notes that the scientists took 6 steps to complete the study described in Text 1. Complete the column labeled “What the scientists did” by writing in details from the bottom row of the chart in the order that the scientists used. You will not use all of the details, but you will use 2 details twice.

Step	What the scientists did
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
What the scientists did	
Send all students to the Pali Institute. Take electronic devices away from half of the students. Regulate the number of hours students spend with their phone every day. Show students pictures of people who are expressing a variety of emotions. Record the number of errors students made. Teach children about the importance of face-to-face communication. Allow five days to pass.	

4. Which sentence from Text 1 provides the best support for the claim that “social interaction is needed to develop skills in understanding the emotions of people”?
- A. “The psychologists studied two sets of sixth-graders from a Southern California Public School: 51 who lived together for five days at the Pali Institute, a nature and science camp about 70 miles east of Los Angeles, and 54 others from the same school.”
 - B. “The camp doesn’t allow students to use electronic devices – a policy that many students found to be challenging for the first couple of days.”
 - C. “The children who had been at the camp improved significantly over the five days in their ability to read facial emotions and other nonverbal cues to emotion, compared with students who continued to use their media devices.”
 - D. “Researchers tracked how many errors the students made when attempting to identify the emotions in the photos and videos.”
5. In Text 1, the author states: “Many people are looking at the benefits of digital media in education, and not many are looking at the costs.” How does this quotation impact the article?
- A. It explains why the researchers were interested in sixth-grade students rather than students of other ages.
 - B. It explains why the researchers believed the study would have negative results.
 - C. It explains why the researchers considered the results of the study consistent with other findings.
 - D. It explains why the researchers initially chose to undertake the study.

6. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Reread paragraph 16 from Text 1. How does the author’s choice to conclude the article with these sentences impact his overall message?

- A. In concluding the article with a reference to “emoticons,” the author highlights the researchers’ belief that future researchers should use tools that are familiar to teens.
- B. In concluding the article with a reference to “face-to-face communication,” the author provides support for the researchers’ perspective that all forms of communication are equally important.
- C. In concluding the article with an explanation of humans as “social creatures,” the author reveals the researchers’ belief that social media can help teens to develop social skills.
- D. In concluding with a statement in favor of “device-free time,” the author emphasizes the researchers’ perspective that teenagers should spend more time engaging with each other.

Part B: Which sentence from Text 1 best supports the correct answer to Part A?

- A. “At the beginning and end of the study, both groups of students were evaluated for their ability to recognize other peoples’ emotions in photos or videos.”
- B. “If you are not practicing face-to-face communication, you could be losing important social skills.”
- C. “Greenfield, the director of the CDMC, considers the results significant, given that they occurred after only five days.”
- D. “We’ve shown a model of what more face-to-face interaction can do,” Greenfield said.

7. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then Answer Part B.

Part A: Which word gives the best definition for *complement* as it is used in paragraph 11 of Text 2: “Study: Kids can learn as much from ‘Sesame Street’ as from preschool?”

- A. to change or adjust
- B. to complete or make whole
- C. to analyze or study
- D. to relate or associate

Part B: Which detail from Text 2 helps the reader determine the meaning of *complement*?

- A. the description of the history of Head Start
- B. the explanation of the theory that Sesame Street is a model for MOOCs
- C. the explanation of why researchers study Sesame Street
- D. the description of the benefits of Head Start

8. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What is the central idea of Text 2?

- A. Sesame Street has been positively impacting preschoolers for over 40 years, but more research is needed to see if it will continue to have an impact on young children.
- B. Children who watch Sesame Street are more likely to have academic success than children who do not watch the show, but only if they watch it regularly.
- C. New research shows that Sesame Street has more impact on children now than it did when the show was first created, but the positive impact stops at preschool.
- D. Research shows that watching Sesame Street can have academic benefits for preschoolers, but more information is needed to see if the results can apply to other settings.

Part B: Which two quotations from Text 2 best support the correct answer to Part A?

- A. "...The most authoritative study ever done on the impact of "Sesame Street," to be released Monday, finds that the famous show on public TV has delivered lasting educational benefits to millions of American children..."
- B. "Levine and Kearney note in their paper that a wide body of previous research has been found that Head Start, the pre-kindergarten program for low-income Americans, delivers a similar benefit."
- C. "...the results build on Nixon-era government studies that found big short-term benefits in watching the show..."
- D. "The potentially controversial implication they embrace from the study isn't about early-childhood education."
- E. "The research can't say whether the show continues to deliver such high benefits to children..."
- F. "'But,' she said, it clearly shows, 'the importance of early childhood education, which is really having its moment right now.'"

9. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: How does the author of Text 2 develop his point of view about Sesame Street?

- A. by acknowledging the skepticism around the claims of Sesame Street's effectiveness and explaining the additional scientific evidence to support these claims
- B. by noting the way parents feel about Sesame Street and explaining that they will find value in the results of the study
- C. by highlighting the importance of early-childhood education and explaining the reasons Sesame Street makes early childhood education more important
- D. by explaining the strategies Sesame Street uses to teach children and explaining how they can be applied to other situations

Part B: Which paragraph best supports the correct answer to Part A?

- A. Paragraph 3
- B. Paragraph 5
- C. Paragraph 6
- D. Paragraph 7

10. How does the author of Text 2 make a connection between Sesame Street and college?

- A. She proposes that Sesame Street provides cost-effective programming to young students but colleges do not have the ability to be as cost effective for older learners.
- B. She explains that the academic and social benefits that children gain from Sesame Street will help them as they make their way to and through college.
- C. She highlights the idea that lessons learned from Sesame Street could be applied to make higher education more accessible.
- D. She describes how the format of Sesame Street has been proven to be effective in teaching college students.

11. How does the explanation of VHF and UHF television signals in paragraph 18 impact Text 2?

- A. It explains what types of children Levine was interested in studying.
- B. It explains where Levine studied viewers of Sesame Street.
- C. It explains how Levine became interested in the study of children and television.
- D. It explains why Levine was able to study how Sesame Street impacts children.

12. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What does the speaker of the video: “This is how Cookie Monster makes your kid smarter” believe to be true?

- A. Well-researched television shows can help children learn.
- B. Funny characters are an important part of keeping children interested.
- C. Parents must watch television shows with their children.
- D. Children can learn something from all television programs.

Part B: Which quotation from the video best supports the correct answer to Part A?

- A. “When we’re thinking about a new curriculum topic, the producers and writers really hear from experts about what is critical for children to know and understand, and how they learn through media.”
- B. “Okay, so we see that he explains what listening with his whole body is, and we have a payoff here, which is the karate belt.”
- C. “It is a way to show children that if they don’t pay attention that they aren’t going to learn the instructions to get actually what they want.”
- D. “Having that octopus come in allows Cookie Monster to be still.”

13. Consider Text 2 and the video. Complete the table below by placing an X next to the source that is **most** effective in accomplishing each of the purposes listed in the center column. The first row has been completed for you.

Text 2	Purposes	Video
	Explaining what Sesame Street looks like to its young viewers	X
	Explaining how Sesame Street is structured to impact learning	
	Explaining why Sesame Street is important	
	Explaining the types of lessons Sesame Street teaches children	
	Explaining research associated with Sesame Street	

14. Each text presents a different perspective regarding the impact technology has on children. Choose **two** quotations, one from each text, that support these differing perspectives.

- A. “Most adapted quickly, however, according to camp counselors.” (Text 1)
- B. “In another scene, one student is saddened after being excluded from a conversation.” (Text 1)
- C. “Uhls said that emoticons are a poor substitute for face-to-face communication: ‘We are social creatures.’” (Text 1)
- D. “After ‘Sesame Street’ was introduced, children living in places where its broadcast could be more readily received saw a 14 percent drop in their likelihood of being behind in school.”(Text 2)
- E. “Yes, say the economists – and the ‘Sesame Street’ educational team.” (Text 2)
- F. “It’s encouraging because it means we might be able to make real progress in ways that are affordable and scalable.”(Text 2)

15. Which quotation from Text 2 best indicates that the author may agree with some of the conclusions of the research described in Text 1?

- A. “The new findings offer comforting news to parents who put their children in front of public TV every day and/or memorized entire Elmo DVDs, unwittingly”
- B. “They also raise a provocative question, at a time when many lawmakers are pushing to expand spending on early childhood education: Do kids need preschool if a TV show works just as well?”
- C. “Head Start, Kearney and Levine write, was designed to provide more than an academic boost: It delivers family support, medical and dental services, and the development of emotional skills that help kids in social settings.”
- D. “‘If we can do this with ‘Sesame Street’ on television, we can potentially do this with all sorts of electronic communications,’ Kearney said in an interview.”

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Texts

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The texts for this mini-assessment have been placed at grade 8, and the process used to determine this grade level placement is described below. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one² quantitative measure according to the research-based conversion table provided in the Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity (www.corestandards.org/resources). **Note: Given the lack of transcript for videos, quantitative measures cannot accurately determine the grade level of a text, and so are omitted below. As such, videos are rated based on qualitative analysis. The information on this page is included just for teacher understanding in general.**
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade-level** based on a qualitative analysis.

Text	Quantitative Measure 1: ATOS	Quantitative Measure 2: Lexile
“In our digital world, are teenagers losing the ability to read emotions” (in orange)	11.0	1160
“Study: Kids can learn as much from ‘Sesame Street’ as from preschool” (in blue)	9.8	1160

Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power [®]	Flesch-Kincaid [§]	The Lexile Framework [®]	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 nd – 3 rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 th – 5 th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 th – 8 th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 th – 10 th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

² For higher-stakes tests, it is recommended that two corresponding text complexity measures be used to place a text in a grade band. When two measures are used, both placing the text in the same **band**, the results provide additional assurance that the text selected is appropriate for the band.

To find the **grade-level** of the text within the designated grade band, engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of the text. The characteristics that should be analyzed during a qualitative analysis can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. (www.corestandards.org)

Qualitative Analysis	“In our digital world, are teenagers are losing their ability to read emotions?”	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid-6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The article has a simple structure, main idea and supporting details: The author begins by stating the central idea, that new research supports the claim that teenagers do not read emotions well when they are exposed to too much technology. The author then explains, in a general way, how the researchers came to this conclusion. He concludes the article with one of the scientist’s beliefs about the implications of the study.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language of the text is relatively complex. The author uses minimal domain specific vocabulary (psychology study), but there is a significant amount of Tier 2 vocabulary (displacement, adapting, interacting, excluded, etc.). However, there is sufficient context that can be used to determine meaning. Additionally, some of the words are used in ways that may not be familiar to middle school students (e.g., costs related to negative as opposed to monetary implications).						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	Though the basic topic of the text (technology and teenagers) will be very familiar to middle school readers, students would benefit from a general understanding of the scientific method, including the idea of a control vs. an experimental group. The article does provide context to help students understand these concepts, but a general understanding of these ideas would be helpful to aid students in understanding how the scientists came to their conclusion.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The text has one purpose: to explain the results of the study about to the potential negative impact technology can have on teenagers.						
Overall placement: Grade 8	The text has a simple structure and singular purpose, but it also has some complex language. Because students would benefit from prior knowledge about the scientific method, most likely familiar at the upper end of the middle school grade band, it is most appropriate for eighth grade students.						

Qualitative Analysis	“Study: Kids can learn as much from ‘Sesame Street’ as preschool”	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid-6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The text has a relatively complex structure. The author begins with an anecdote about one person’s experience with Sesame Street before describing the study and potential implications before jumping back to the study. The shift in topics, though related to the central idea about the study, adds complexity the structure.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The text uses a variety of sentence types and lengths. The author uses some domain specific vocabulary (e.g., the discussion of the different types of TV signals), but there is sufficient context to understand the meaning. The text uses many Tier 2 words (authoritative, impact, provocative, etc.). These words are also surrounded by sufficient context to determine meaning.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	The text requires students understand that Sesame Street is a television show aimed at young children. Students will also benefit from a basic understanding of the structure of college courses, and how MOOCs are different. The text does, however, provide context to help students understand what MOOCs are.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The text has a singular purpose: To explain the results of the study about Sesame Street as well as potential implications of the study.						
Overall placement: Grade 8	The text uses relatively simple language and has a singular purpose. However, the complex structure and high knowledge demands mean it is most appropriate for eighth grade students.						

Qualitative Analysis	"This is how Cookie Monster makes your kid smarter."	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid-6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The structure of the video is somewhat complex, as it introduces the idea of research-based programming and then uses a clip from Sesame Street to explain the concept. The video then switches between the clip and the speaker's explanation of the content of the clip.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language of the video is relatively simple. The speaker uses a variety of sentences and speaks at a pace that is easy to follow. She uses language that is readily accessible to a middle school audience.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	The knowledge demands of the video are low. Students should know that Sesame Street is targeted to young children. There are some references to content included in Sesame Street that is targeted for adult audiences (e.g., the reference to Karate Kid) that may be unfamiliar to middle school students, but, the video provides enough context to allow students to understand what Sesame Street references.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The purpose of the video is singular: to explain how a Cookie Monster clip is structured to help children learn.						
Overall placement: Grade 8	The simple language, limited knowledge demands, and singular purpose, coupled with the more complex structure of the video, make it most appropriate for eighth grade students.						

Question Annotations: Correct Answers and Distractor Rationales

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
1, Part A	A	RI.8.4, RI.8.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. <i>Displacement</i> means to substitute or replace.</p> <p>B. <i>Advance</i> means to move forward, which is not the same as <i>displacement</i>.</p> <p>C. <i>Support</i> means to hold up, which is not the same as <i>displacement</i>.</p> <p>D. <i>Establishment</i> is when something is set up or recognized, which is not the same as <i>displacement</i>.</p>
1, Part B	D		<p>A. “Decreased sensitivity to emotional cues” refers to one of the effects of teenagers using devices, not what using devices replaces.</p> <p>B. “...Understand the emotions of other people” refers to the skill teenagers lose when they spend too much time using devices, not what devices replace.</p> <p>C. “...One of the costs” refers to the loss of the ability to read emotions, not what causes the ability to read emotions to be lost.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. “...In-person social interaction by screen interaction...” shows what is replaced when teenagers use their electronic devices to communicate instead of face-to-face communication.</p>
2, Part A	B	RI.8.2, RI.8.1	<p>A. Although Text 1 implies that teenagers will have an easier time interacting with each other face-to-face (as the Pali Institute does not allow teens to use their devices), this is a reasonable inference to be made from the text, not the central idea.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The focus of Text 1 is to provide an overview of the research related to teenagers and technology.</p> <p>C. Although Text 1 discusses the variety of ways teenagers interact (via screens and face-to-face), the author does not discuss the importance of friendships, nor does he discuss how the friendships are formed.</p> <p>D. Although Text 1 describes research related to the amount of time teens spend on their devices every evening, it is a point in support of the researcher’s claims, not a central idea of the text.</p>
2, Part B	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. The focus of the article is the results of the research, which are highlighted in this sentence.</p> <p>B. This sentence describes the number of students involved in the study, not the results of the study.</p> <p>C. This sentence describes how the study was conducted, not the results of the study.</p> <p>D. This sentence describes the types of students who participated in the study, not the results of the study.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales																						
3	See Right Column	RST.6-8.3, RST.6-8.1, RI.8.1	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Step</th> <th>What the scientists did</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Show students pictures of people who are expressing a variety of emotions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Record the number of errors students made.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Take electronic devices away from half of the students.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Allow five days to pass.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Show students pictures of people who are expressing a variety of emotions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Record the number of errors students made.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Distractor</th> <th>Rationale</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Send all students to the Pali Institute.</td> <td>Students are sent to the Pali Institute in two groups at different times.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regulate the number of hours students spend with their phone every day.</td> <td>The researchers mention the number of hours teens spend on their phones every day, but it was not something that they regulated.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teach children about the importance of face-to-face communication.</td> <td>The researchers draw conclusions about the importance of face-to-face communication, but they do not teach children about this issue.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Step	What the scientists did	1	Show students pictures of people who are expressing a variety of emotions.	2	Record the number of errors students made.	3	Take electronic devices away from half of the students.	4	Allow five days to pass.	5	Show students pictures of people who are expressing a variety of emotions.	6	Record the number of errors students made.	Distractor	Rationale	Send all students to the Pali Institute.	Students are sent to the Pali Institute in two groups at different times.	Regulate the number of hours students spend with their phone every day.	The researchers mention the number of hours teens spend on their phones every day, but it was not something that they regulated.	Teach children about the importance of face-to-face communication.	The researchers draw conclusions about the importance of face-to-face communication, but they do not teach children about this issue.
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4	C	RI.8.8, RI.8.1	<p>A. This sentence describes how researchers conducted the study, but it does not support the researchers’ conclusions based on the results of the study.</p> <p>B. This sentence explains why the Pali Institute was chosen as the location for the study; it does not support the researchers conclusions based on the results of the study.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The results of the study lead to the researchers’ conclusions about the need for social interaction. This sentence shows one result of the study.</p> <p>D. This sentence explains how researchers gathered the data; it does not support the conclusions based on the study.</p>																						
5	D	RI.8.5, RI.8.3, RI.8.1	<p>A. The quotation is not about the age of the students the researchers were interested in studying.</p> <p>B. The article does not suggest that the researchers went into the study with preconceived notions.</p> <p>C. Although the quotation briefly mentions previous findings, the article does not expand upon them. As such, the quotation does not discuss how the findings are similar to/dissimilar from other studies.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The researchers were interested in studying the negative implications of technology because no one else was.</p>																						

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
6, Part A	D	RI.8.5, RI.8.1	<p>A. The reference to “emoticons” refers to how teenagers use different tools of technology to substitute for face-to-face interaction, not what researchers should use to study teens.</p> <p>B. The researchers clearly state that face-to-face communication is more beneficial to teenagers than technology driven communication.</p> <p>C. The reference to “social creatures” is about the fact that people need to interact face-to-face; the researchers believe that face-to-face communication is a stronger way for teens to develop social skills.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The researchers believe that teens need time away from their screens to truly develop communication skills.</p>
6, Part B	B		<p>A. This describes a step in the study, not a conclusion the researchers drew as a result of the findings.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. This quotation shows how researchers believe teenagers best learn social skills, through face-to-face communication.</p> <p>C. This shows that the results happened quickly, and that the researchers believe they are important. It does not discuss how the researchers believe teenagers learn social skills.</p> <p>D. This quotation shows the purpose of the experiment but does not detail the searchers’ perspective that more device-free time is important.</p>
7, Part A	B	RI.8.4, RI.8.1	<p>A. <i>Complement</i> means to complete or make whole, not to change or adjust.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. Sesame Street is a <i>complement</i> to Head Start in that it makes the set of learning for children who both watch Sesame Street and attend Head Start more complete.</p> <p>C. <i>Complement</i> means to complete or make whole, not to analyze or study.</p> <p>D. <i>Complement</i> means to complete or make whole, not to relate or associate.</p>
7, Part B	D		<p>A. The article mentions the history of Head Start, but this provides readers with an understanding of the program, not how it works together with Sesame Street.</p> <p>B. The theory discusses how Sesame Street is a model for MOOCs, not a complement, or something that completes them.</p> <p>C. This explanation helps illustrate the context for the study, not how Sesame Street and Head Start work together.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Head Start provides more social and environmental benefits, while Sesame Street can provide academic benefits. The two programs complement, or complete, each other.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
8, Part A	D		<p>A. Text 2 does state that Sesame Street has had an impact on children throughout its history. It does not, however, focus on the long term impacts on young children.</p> <p>B. Although Text 2 explains how children who watch Sesame Street receive academic benefits, it does not focus on how often children watch Sesame Street.</p> <p>C. Text 2 states that Sesame Street has had a positive impact on children who watch the show throughout its history, it does not go into the degree of impact.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Text 2 explains that Sesame Street provides specific benefits to young children, but that the applicability of research is unknown.</p>
8, Part B	A, E	RI.8.2, RI.8.1	<p>A. This is a correct answer. This quotation states the benefits that Sesame Street provides to young children.</p> <p>B. This quotation notes that Sesame Street provides benefits similar to Head Start. It does not, however, explain what those benefits are.</p> <p>C. This quotation shows the fact that the research is supported by history, not what the benefits of the study are.</p> <p>D. This quotation shows what the researchers want to do about generalizing the results of the study. It does not, however, state what the inference that can be made from the research is, or what is controversial about the implication.</p> <p>E. This is a correct answer. The quotation states that researchers don't know if the results can apply to other settings or if they extend beyond the ages initially studied.</p> <p>F. This quotation shows why the study is important, not what the results are or how they apply to other settings.</p>
9, Part A	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. The author notes that there is "skepticism" about the results, but that there are many years of studies that show support for the new research.</p> <p>B. Although the author mentions parents, he includes this detail to explain why parents will value the research, not to develop his point of view regarding the program.</p> <p>C. The author mentions that early-childhood education is important, not that Sesame Street makes it more important.</p> <p>D. The author does not discuss the strategies that Sesame Street uses, he simply explains that Sesame Street provides benefits.</p>
9, Part B	D	RI.8.6, RI.8.1	<p>A. This paragraph reveals the central idea of the text; it does not show the author acknowledging that there is skepticism around the results of the study.</p> <p>B. This paragraph shows the research supporting the current study, not that there is skepticism around the results of the study.</p> <p>C. This paragraph shows the types of things Sesame Street shows children, not that people question the results of the study.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. This paragraph shows that some may think the results of the study may be "implausible," but that the study reflects the results of other studies, and that other researchers consider the results accurate.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
10	C	RI.8.3, RI.8.1	<p>A. Although it is true that the article states Sesame Street is cost-effective for young children, research is unclear if these benefits can be applied to other age groups. The author does not mention the ability of colleges/universities to provide these benefits.</p> <p>B. The author notes that it is actually unclear if the benefits of Sesame Street extend beyond early childhood.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The author explains that there is some possibility that the format of Sesame Street may potentially be useful for MOOCs, but it is unclear if these types of programs will work.</p> <p>D. The author clearly states that the format of Sesame Street is untested for older learners.</p>
11	D	RI.8.3, RI.8.5, RI.8.1	<p>A. The signals explain why the study about Sesame Street was possible, not which children Levine wanted to study.</p> <p>B. The discussion of the signals notes that the location of each type of signal was random, it does not, however explain where Levine did his research.</p> <p>C. The discussion of the signals shows why the study was possible, not why Levine was interested in Sesame Street.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The study was possible because there were two different groups of children, each with a different type of television signal.</p>
12, Part A	A	SL.8.3, RI.8.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. The speaker in the video focuses on the fact that research supports every detail of Sesame Street programming. She also notes that children can mimic Cookie Monster’s actions, which reveals learning.</p> <p>B. The video shows Cookie Monster as entertaining, but it does not state that the humor he provides is necessary for learning.</p> <p>C. The video mentions parents and notes that they will enjoy some of the elements of the show, but it does not state that they must watch the show with their children.</p> <p>D. The speaker in the video does not mention other television shows; instead, she focuses on how Sesame Street provides benefits.</p>
12, Part B	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. The speaker describes how Sesame Street provides benefits by relying on “experts” to understand what children should be learning.</p> <p>B. This quotation explains what the specific clip is about, learning how to listen, not how the producers decided to create the programming.</p> <p>C. This quotation explains what children are learning, not how the producers decided what they should be learning or how to teach the specific lesson.</p> <p>D. This quotation describes what is happening on the screen, not how the producers used researchers to create learning.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales		
13	See Right Column	RI.8.7, RI.8.1	Text 2	Purposes	Video
				Explaining what Sesame Street looks like to its young viewers <i>Rationale: Although Text 2 mentions Sesame Street characters, the video shows specific character/scene examples.</i>	X
				Explaining how Sesame Street is structured to impact learning <i>Rationale: The video takes viewers step-by-step through a specific example from Sesame Street. Text 2 simply explains that Sesame Street provides benefits.</i>	X
			X	Explaining why Sesame Street is important <i>Rationale: Although the video shows how Sesame Street creates learning, Text 2's discussion of the impact of Sesame Street better emphasizes the importance of the program.</i>	
				Explaining what Sesame Street teaches children <i>Rationale: The video explains the types of lessons children learn from Sesame Street through the example of active listening, while Text 2 simply notes that Sesame Street provides viewers with academic benefits.</i>	X
			X	Explaining research associated with Sesame Street <i>Rationale: Although the video mentions research, Text 2 explains the specific research and how it was conducted.</i>	
14	C, D	RI.8.9, RI.8.1	<p>A. This quotation shows that children can adapt to not using technology, not that the author believes that technology is positive or negative for children.</p> <p>B. This quotation shows the type of information included in the study, not the author or researcher's views.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. This shows that the researcher believes that teenagers need screen-free time to learn social skills.</p> <p>D. This is a correct answer. This shows the researchers view that Sesame Street, and therefore, technology, can provide benefits related to learning.</p> <p>E. This quotation explains the economists' view that Sesame Street cannot replace preschool, not that technology has an impact on children.</p> <p>F. This quotation shows the researchers view that Sesame Street cannot replace preschool, not that technology has a positive or negative impact on children.</p>		

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
15	C	RI.8.9, RI.8.1	<p>A. This quotation explains why parents will like the research, not that the author believes that screen time does not offer.</p> <p>B. This quotation explains the question that comes out of the results of the Sesame Street study, not the limits of Sesame Street programming.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. It shows that the authors of the study believe that Sesame Street does not provide the same social benefits as face-to-face interaction.</p> <p>D. This quotation shows the researchers believe screen time may be beneficial to more settings, not fewer.</p>
16, Part A	C	RI.8.4, RI.8.1	<p>A. <i>Implications</i> means conclusions drawn based on evidence, not the actual results of the study.</p> <p>B. <i>Implications</i> means conclusions drawn based on evidence, not the achievements that come out of something.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. <i>Implications</i> are conclusions drawn based on evidence.</p> <p>D. <i>Implications</i> means conclusions drawn based on evidence, not the significance, or importance, of something.</p>
16, Part B	D		<p>A. This quotation shows what the Cookie Monster clip asks the children to do, not an implication of watching the show.</p> <p>B. This quotation shows how the program creates learning, not how the learning occurs.</p> <p>C. This quotation shows that researchers looked for the implications of children watching the view, not what the implication was.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. This quotation shows children were able to learn from the show. This shows that they were able to draw the appropriate conclusions based on their viewing.</p>
17	<i>See Right Column</i>	W.8.2, W.8.4, W.8.9, L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, RI.8.9, RI.8.2	<p>A well supported argument would include some or all of the following ideas.</p> <p>Young people should have access to technology because it provides academic benefits, especially to children who are disadvantaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though the author of Text 1 notes that teenagers may have negative social consequences due to using technology, they also note that “many people are looking at the benefits of digital media in education,” which implies that there are other benefits outside of the Sesame Street Study. • In Text 2, the author notes that Sesame Street has the same impact on young children as Head Start. • The authors of Text 2 describe the results of one study in detail, but they also note that this one study is supported by findings of studies dating back to the “Nixon-era.” • The video shows how research goes in to Sesame Street programming, which reveals the skills children are taught. • The video also shows how children can learn social skills through television. “The Biscotti Kid” is about learning how to listen, which is both an academic and social skill. The authors of Text 2 note that teens have trouble paying attention, but “The Biscotti Kid” is all about teaching kids how to actively listen and pay attention to someone who is speaking to them.

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
			<p>Alternatively, a student may argue that:</p> <p>Young people should not have access to technology because it can have a negative impact on their ability to read emotions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Text 1, the author notes that teens have trouble reading the emotions of the people around them when they spend too much time using technology. • In Text 1, the author notes that the results of this particular study, while limited to a group of 105 students, are “significant,” because they occurred over 5 days. • The author of Text 2 indicates that “Sesame Street” cannot replace Head Start, because Head Start provides other benefits, including “...development of emotional skills that help kids in social settings.” In other words, the benefits of Sesame Street are more tied to academic, and not the social skills. • The author of Text 2 indicates that more research is needed to see if “Sesame Street” can continue to have benefits for children into their teen and young adult years. This means that the findings of the study in Text 1 are important because they show a negative impact of too much screen time in those later years. • While the video shows how children can learn from television, the author explains that Sesame Street is well researched. As such, it can be inferred that the results are limited to this specific type of programing. <p>Alternatively, a student may argue that:</p> <p>Technology is beneficial for young children, because it provides academic benefits, but not teenagers, because it hinders their social skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Text 1, the author notes that teenagers received benefits when they spent five days without access to cell phones or other devices. The author notes that the results of the study are “significant,” because they occurred over a minimal amount of time (5 days). • On the other hand, in Text 2, the author notes that “Sesame Street” has tremendous academic benefits, equal to that of Head Start. This shows that young children should have access to quality programming. • Additionally, the video shows how children learn from Sesame Street. It explains that children who watched “The Biscotti Kid” were able to mimic the listening skills described.

Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners (ELLs)

Mini-Assessment Design and English Language Learners

Each mini-assessment is designed using the best practices of test design. English Language Learners will benefit from the opportunity to independently practice answering questions about grade-level complex texts.

Prior to delivering the mini-assessment, teachers should read through each item. If there is language in the question stems specific to the standards (e.g., plot, theme, point of view), make sure that students have been introduced to these concepts prior to taking the assessment. Teachers should not pre-teach specific vocabulary words tested in the assessment (e.g., words students are asked to define) and should only pre-teach language that would impede students from understanding what the question is asking.

The mini-assessments attend to the needs of all learners, and ELLs specifically, by including texts that:

- *Are brief and engaging:* Texts vary in length, but no individual text is more than three pages long.
- *Embed student-friendly definitions:* Footnotes are included for technical terms or words that are above grade level when those words are not surrounded by context that would help students determine meaning.

Informational text sets, such as those included in the mini-assessment, specifically attend to the needs of ELLs by:

- *Building student knowledge:* Mini-assessments often include multiple texts or stimuli on the same topic:
 - For sets with two texts or stimuli, the first text is generally broader, providing a foundation in the content and introducing key vocabulary, and the second text provides more detail or contrast on the same topic. This allows ELLs to dig into the features of the passage being assessed rather than being inundated with dissimilar content and vocabulary.
 - For sets with more than two texts or stimuli, there is an “anchor” text that provides introductory information on the topic.
- *Containing ideas that lend themselves to discussion from a variety of perspectives:* Often these pairs or sets of texts present multiple perspectives on the same topic.

The mini-assessments attend to the needs of all learners, and ELLs specifically, by including questions that:

- *Feature a variety of academic words:*
 - Each mini-assessment contains at least one vocabulary item. Items assessing vocabulary test one of the following:
 - The meaning of Tier 2 academic words in context.
 - The meaning of a figurative word/phrase in context.

- The impact of word choice on meaning and/or tone.
- MOST vocabulary items test Tier 2 words.
- All tested words are chosen because:
 - They are central to the meaning of the text.
 - They are surrounded by sufficient context to allow students to determine meaning.
- *Highlight “juicy” sentences that feature grade-appropriate complex structures, vocabulary, and language features:* Most mini-assessments include at least one item assessing Reading for Literature or Reading: Informational text standard 5. These items point students to analyze the structure of the text. While standard 5 items specifically focus on the structure of the text, other items require the analysis of language features, vocabulary, and relationships between ideas, all of which build student understanding of texts.
- *Provide graphic organizers to help students capture and reflect on new knowledge:* Most mini-assessments include at least one item mimicking a “technology enhanced item.” These items include things like tables and charts.
- *Provide writing activities that allow students to use new vocabulary and demonstrate knowledge of new concepts:* Most mini-assessments include an optional writing prompt that allows students to write about the text(s).

Administration Guidelines for ELLs

When assessing ELL students, appropriate accommodations may be considered. Modifications to the assessment itself should not be made.

According to the *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners, First Edition*:

- “Modifications refer to practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce state-required learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment.”
- “Accommodations are accessibility supports [that] do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific needs of students in instruction and assessment and enable educators to know that measures of a student’s work produce valid results.”

Teachers **may** choose to make accommodations that meet the unique needs of ELLs. Prior to delivering any practice assessment, especially if the mini-assessment is to be used in a more formal setting (e.g., as part of a district benchmark assessment), teachers should research what accommodations will be available to students during their state’s summative assessment. For example, some states allow ELLs to use a bilingual dictionary during an assessment; other states do not allow this. Ensure your ELLs are practicing with the accommodations they can expect to see on the summative. Some examples of appropriate accommodations include:

- Reading the directions aloud to students multiple times.
- Providing student directions in student native language.
- Allowing students additional time to complete the mini-assessments.
- Exposing students to item types prior to the assessment.

- Reading the scoring expectations for the writing prompt aloud to students.

Because the goal of literacy mini-assessments is to measure grade-level literacy as students progress toward college- and career-readiness, teachers must be careful **not** to make modifications that may be commonly used in classroom instruction. Examples of modifications that should **not** be used include:

- Reading passages aloud for students.
- Adding student glossaries of unfamiliar terms.
- Pre-teaching tested vocabulary words.

In any testing setting, teachers must be careful to choose accommodations that suit the needs of each individual student.

Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation

Shift 1 – Complexity: *Regular practice with complex text and its academic language*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts:
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- See the Text Complexity Collection on www.achievethecore.org

Shift 2 – Evidence: *Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational*

- See Close Reading Exemplars for ways to engage students in close reading on
<http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>
- See the Basal Alignment Project for examples of text-dependent questions:
<http://www.achievethecore.org/basal-alignment-project>

Shift 3 – Knowledge: *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts:
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Sample Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing Prompts:

http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf