

Grade 4 Mini-Assessment

Springtime Poetry Set

This grade 4 mini-assessment is based two poems: “The Seedling” by Paul Laurence Dunbar and “The Coming of the Spring” by Nora Perry. These texts are considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meet the expectations for text complexity at grade 4. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will employ quality, complex texts 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 text. Questions also may address several standards within the same question because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis. In this mini-assessment there are ten selected-response questions and two paper/pencil equivalents of a technology enhanced item that address the Reading Standards listed below, and one optional constructed-response question that addresses the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards listed below.

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.

*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.***

The questions align to the following standards:

RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
RL.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
RL.4.3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
RL.4.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
RL.4.5	Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.
RL.4.6	Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
RL.4.9	Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

W.4.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.4.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.4.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.4.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.4.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
L.4.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
L.4.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

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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 4 Mini-Assessment

Springtime Poetry Set

Today you will read two poems, "The Seedling" by Paul Laurence Dunbar and "The Coming of the Spring" by Nora Perry. You will then answer several questions based on these texts. 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.

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 poems and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read the passages.

Poem 1: "The Seedling"

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

1 As a quiet little seedling
 Lay within its darksome bed,
 To itself it fell a-talking,
 And this is what it said:

5 "I am not so very robust,
 But I'll do the best I can;"
 And the seedling from that moment
 Its work of life began.

 So it pushed a little leaflet

10 Up into the light of day,
 To examine the surroundings
 And show the rest the way.

The leaflet liked the prospect,
So it called its brother, Stem;
15 Then two other leaflets heard it,
And quickly followed them.

To be sure, the haste and hurry
Made the seedling sweat and pant;
But almost before it knew it
20 It found itself a plant.

The sunshine poured upon it,
And the clouds they gave a shower;
And the little plant kept growing
Till it found itself a flower.

25 Little folks, be like the seedling,
Always do the best you can;
Every child must share life's labor
Just as well as every man.

And the sun and showers will help you
30 Through the lonesome, struggling hours,
Till you raise to light and beauty
Virtue's¹ fair, unfading flowers

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¹ The quality of doing what is right

Poem 2: "The Coming of the Spring"

by Nora Perry

1 There's something in the air
 That's new and sweet and rare—
 A scent of summer things,
 A whir as if of wings.

5 There's something, too, that's new
 In the color of the blue
 That's in the morning sky,
 Before the sun is high.

 And though, on plain and hill,

10 'Tis winter, winter still,
 There's something seems to say
 That winter's had its day.

 And all this changing tint,
 This whispering stir, and hint

15 Of bud and bloom and wing,
 Is the coming of the spring.

And to-morrow or to-day
The brooks will break away
From their icy, frozen sleep,
20 And run and laugh and leap!

And the next thing, in the woods,
The catkins¹ in their hoods
Of fur and silk will stand,
A sturdy little band.

25 And the tassels² soft and fine
Of the hazel will untwine,
And the elder-branches³ show
Their buds against the snow.

So, silently but swift,
30 Above the wintry drift,
The long days gain and gain,
Until, on hill and plain,

¹ A long, thin cluster of tiny, petal-less flowers growing on certain trees

² A cluster of flowers growing on certain trees

³ Branches from an Elder tree, a tree with poisonous berries

Once more and yet once more

Returning as before,

35 We see the bloom of birth

Make young again the earth.

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QUESTIONS:

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

Part A: What does the word “robust” mean as it is used in line 5 of “The Seedling”?

- A. complete
- B. happy
- C. useful
- D. strong

Part B: Why is the word “robust” important in the poem?

- A. It establishes the seedling’s goal in the poem.
- B. It introduces the seedling as the main character in the poem.
- C. It introduces a scientific term important to the seedling’s growth in the poem.
- D. It establishes that the seedling is frustrated and needs help from others in the poem.

- 2. What is important about the last two stanzas (lines 25-32) in “The Seedling”?**

- A. The poet is trying to teach readers a lesson about life.
- B. The poet argues to readers that plants are as important as people.
- C. The poet is making sure the readers know the poem is fiction.
- D. The poet argues to readers that we need to take care of plants in our environment.

- 3. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.**

Part A: In Poem 1, “The Seedling,” what theme does the poet develop throughout the poem?

- A. Springtime is the best time of the year.
- B. It is important to do things on your own.
- C. The sunshine and clouds are important parts of nature.
- D. Having support from others can help you achieve great things.

Part B: Which lines from “The Seedling” help to support the correct answer from Part A?

- A. “And the seedling from that moment/Its work of life began.” (lines 7-8)
- B. “To be sure, the haste and hurry/Made the seedling sweat and pant;” (lines 17-18)
- C. “The sunshine poured upon it/And the clouds they gave a shower” (lines 21-22)
- D. “Till you raise to light and beauty/Virtue’s fair, unfading flowers” (lines 31-32)

4. Which two lines from “The Seedling” best develop the idea that the seedling grows quickly into a plant?

- A. “Up into the light of day,” (line 10)
- B. “And show the rest the way.” (line 12)
- C. “To be sure, the haste and hurry” (line 17)
- D. “But almost before it knew it” (line 19)
- E. “And the little plant kept growing” (line 23)
- F. “Till it found itself a flower.” (line 24)

5. Read lines 9, 10, 11, and 12 from the poem “The Coming of the Spring”:

*And though, on plain and hill,
'Tis winter, winter still,
There's something seems to say
That winter's had its day.*

What is the purpose of these lines?

- A. to show that winter is a beautiful season
- B. to make the reader miss spring
- C. to help the reader picture winter
- D. to show the season is about to change

6. Read the following dictionary entry for the word “stir.”

Stir [stur] verb Meanings: 1. To blend together 2. To begin to have activity 3. To cause excitement 4. To change position
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Which meaning of the word “stir” is used in line 14 of “The Coming of the Spring”?

- A. meaning 1
- B. meaning 2
- C. meaning 3
- D. meaning 4

7. Read the following lines from “The Coming of the Spring.” Circle three of the underlined phrases that best help establish the setting for the reader.

1 *There’s something in the air*

That’s new and sweet and rare—

A scent of summer things,

A whir as if of wings.

5 *There’s something, too, that’s new*

In the color of the blue

That’s in the morning sky,

Before the sun is high.

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

Part A: Which theme is most developed in “The Coming of the Spring”?

- A. Winter is a difficult time for many.
- B. Spring is a time of life and renewal.
- C. All seasons have something special to offer.
- D. All life is most active during the springtime.

Part B: Which line from “The Coming of the Spring” best shows this theme?

- A. “There’s something in the air” (line 1)
- B. “There’s something seems to say” (line 11)
- C. “Above the wintry drift,” (line 30)
- D. “We see the bloom of birth” (line 35)

9. Why did the poet most likely choose these lines in “The Coming of the Spring”?

*The brooks will break away
From their icy, frozen sleep,
And run and laugh and leap!*

- A. to help the reader remember how it feels when winter finally ends
- B. to make the reader think of the brooks as being like humans
- C. to help the reader imagine the sound of the spring
- D. to make the reader want to see the brooks

10. How are lines 5 and 6 of “The Seedling” different from the rest of the poem and from “The Coming of the Spring”?

- A. They switch to a first-person point of view.
- B. They do not follow a rhyming pattern as seen in the poems.
- C. They provide a fact about what happens in spring.
- D. They do not fit into the settings shared by the poems.

11. Complete the chart by identifying the ways each poet presented their poem. Put an X in the correct column for each description on the left.

Description	“The Seedling”	“The Coming of the Spring”	Both poems
The poem is told like a story.			
The poem is a mostly a description.			
The poem has rhyming.			
The poem has dialogue.			
The poem mainly describes one sign of spring.			
The poem describes many signs of spring.			

12. Which statement best describes the setting of both poems?

- A. It's the middle to end of spring.
- B. It's the beginning to middle of winter.
- C. It's the end of winter to early spring.
- D. It's the end of spring to beginning of summer.

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Text

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The poems for this mini-assessment have been placed at grade 4, 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 one¹ 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 unconventional punctuation of non-prose texts like poetry, quantitative measures cannot accurately determine the grade level of a text, and so are omitted below. In these cases, texts are placed based on qualitative analysis.**
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade level** based on a qualitative analysis.

After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the Supplement to Appendix A (www.corestandards.org/resources) and determine the **grade band** of the text.

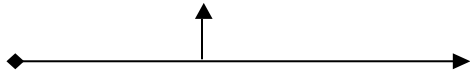
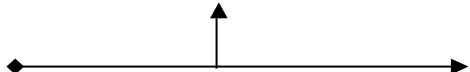
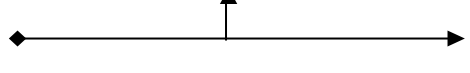
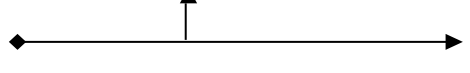

Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

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

Figure 1 reproduces the conversion table from the Supplement to Appendix A, showing how the initial results from the Lexile and the Reading Maturity measure were converted to grade bands.

¹ 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.

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	"The Seedling"	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 4	high 4 to early 5	mid to end 5	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	Although the poem's explanation of the growth of the plant is straightforward and sequential, it ends with a stanza that offers the theme, so it doesn't follow the conventions of chronological order strictly throughout. With the theme being revealed at the end (the plant is symbolic of children growing up), the structure becomes more complex.					
Language Clarity and Conventions	Dunbar uses complex language and vocabulary to create imagery. For example, while the concept in the lines, "And the seedling from that moment/Its work of life began" is not difficult to comprehend, the unconventionality of the structure may require multiple readings. Some vocabulary may be difficult and require the use of context clues and multiple readings (e.g., robust, virtue, haste).					
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	Students may benefit from some prior knowledge about plant growth. However, Dunbar clearly references plants growing, including leaves, stems, and plants' need for sunlight and water so students can figure out the steps even without prior knowledge. This is a topic that students should be familiar with by upper elementary school.					
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	There are multiple levels of meaning in this text: nature relies on multiple parts to function (i.e., a plant requires soil, the sun, and water to grow). Furthermore, the author connects the idea of the plant working hard and relying on other resources to grow with the growth of a child. A child must also work hard, but they also have resources that help them along their path.					
Overall Placement: Grade 4	The qualitative measures, including some challenging vocabulary and multiple levels of meaning within the text, make this text most appropriate for grade 4, most likely mid to end of year.					

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	"The Coming of the Spring"	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 4	high 4 to early 5	mid to end 5	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The poem begins with a discussion of the narrator noticing the signs of spring, while also describing the fading of winter. The reader will recognize the transition between the two seasons through the description of the narrator's observations. The last two stanzas clarify the theme for the reader by stating that the Earth is made young again.					
Language Clarity and Conventions	Perry's conventionality is largely explicit and straightforward throughout this poem, but readers will need to understand her use of personification and other figurative language. Some vocabulary will be difficult for students as it may be unfamiliar (e.g., catkins, tassels, elder-branches).					
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	Knowledge demands with this poem are not extensive; however, students might benefit from some understanding of winter weather in colder climates (e.g., The brooks will break away, From their icy, frozen sleep).					
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	There are multiple purposes in this poem: to describe the transition from one season to the next and to develop the idea that spring is Earth's rebirth or reemergence into youth. Over the last two stanzas, the poet explores this theme that spring is the Earth's return to youth, making this idea explicit to the reader.					
Overall Placement: Grade 4	Although this poem is readily accessible to grade 4 students, the vocabulary and figurative language within the poem make it most appropriate for middle to end of the year.					

Question Annotations: Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1 Part A	D	RL.4.4, RL.4.2, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although “complete” fits with the idea that the seedling is not yet a plant, the word “robust” means “strong” as used in the line.</p> <p>B. Although the seedling may be “happy” about its upcoming experience of growth, the word “robust” means “strong” as used in the line.</p> <p>C. Although the seedling might end up being a “useful” plant, the word “robust” means “strong” as used in the line.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. “Robust” in the line means “strong.” The seedling is saying it isn’t strong yet but will try hard to grow.</p>
1 Part B	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. The word “robust” establishes the fact that the seedling knows it isn’t yet strong, but it is willing to grow to become stronger.</p> <p>B. Although the seedling is the main character of the poem, the word “robust” isn’t used to introduce the seedling, as it is first mentioned in line 1.</p> <p>C. Although the poem hints at the process of seedling growth into a full-sized plant, the word “robust” is not meant to be scientific but rather ties to the idea of the seedling’s goal.</p> <p>D. Although the seedling has a challenge ahead of it, there is no support in the poem for the idea that the seedling is frustrated.</p>
2	A	RL.4.2, RL.4.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. In the last two stanzas, Dunbar offers a comparison between a human child and a plant to teach the lesson that one can use support from others to live one’s best life and achieve great things.</p> <p>B. Although it is possible Dunbar believed plants are important, there is no textual evidence to support the idea that he feels they are equally important to people, nor is that the importance of the last two stanza.</p> <p>C. Although the poem is clearly fictional in that it personifies the seedling and gives it a speaking role, clarifying that point is not the importance of the last two stanzas.</p> <p>D. Although it is possible Dunbar believed plants should be taken care of, there is no textual evidence to support that idea, nor is that the importance of the last two stanzas.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
3 Part A	D	RL.4.2, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although springtime and new growth are the main subjects of the poem, there is no textual evidence to support the theme of spring being the best time of the year.</p> <p>B. Although at times it is important to do things on your own, the poem actually develops the theme that having support from others can help you.</p> <p>C. Although the sunshine and clouds are important parts of nature, this statement does not develop the overall theme in that it does not connect to the idea of the reader’s potential when receiving important help from others.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The idea of having support from others (in the poem, the seedling receives help from the sunshine and clouds, and in life, young readers will receive help from “the sun and showers,”) or the good times and bad times and those people involved in the experiences.</p>
3 Part B	C		<p>A. Although lines 7-8 mention “work of life,” they speak only to the beginning of the effort and do not tie to the idea of support from others to achieve great things.</p> <p>B. Although lines 17-18 detail part of the seedlings’ struggle to succeed, they do not mention support from others to help the seedling overcome its challenges.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The sunshine helps the seedling grow because the sun “poured upon it,” and the clouds help it grow because they give the seedling “a shower.” Both references develop the theme of achieving great things with support from others.</p> <p>D. Although lines 31-32 mention to other aspects of nature (light and beauty), similar to the sunshine and clouds, in this case those aspects are what the child should be aspiring to, not what helped him or her get there.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
4	C, D	RL.4.3, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although “Up into the light of day” shows the seedling is growing taller, the line doesn’t speak to the seedling’s rate of growth.</p> <p>B. Although “And show the rest the way” speaks to the seedling gaining more leaves, the line doesn’t show the seedling grew quickly.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. “To be sure, the haste and hurry” shows that the seedling was hurrying to grow or growing quickly.</p> <p>D. This is a correct answer. “But almost before it knew it” shows the seedling grew quickly, so fast that the seedling didn’t even realize it.</p> <p>E. Although “And the little plant kept growing” shows the seedling has changed to a plant and continues to grow, it does not speak to the idea of growing quickly.</p> <p>F. Although “Till it found itself a flower” shows the seedling did complete its growth, the line doesn’t speak to the rate of growth.</p>
5	D	RL.4.4, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although winter can sometimes be a beautiful season, the poem focuses on the spring.</p> <p>B. Although the lines depict winter’s presence, they aren’t meant to make the reader miss spring but rather to show that winter is still occurring in that part of the poem.</p> <p>C. Although the lines depict a wintry scene, they do not offer enough detail to help the reader picture winter.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Lines 9 and 10 show that winter is still the season in this part of the poem, but lines 11 and 12 show that “something seems to say/That winter’s had its day,” meaning signs of winter being over can be felt.</p>
6	B	L.4, RL.4.4, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although “to blend together” is one meaning of “stir,” the poet uses the word “stir” in the poem to show spring activity is beginning.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The poet says “The whispering stir” to suggest that the activities common to the coming of spring have started happening.</p> <p>C. Although “to cause excitement” is one meaning of “stir,” the poet isn’t addressing a level of excitement but rather a level of spring activity starting to happen.</p> <p>D. Although “to change position” is one meaning of “stir,” the poet isn’t addressing anything changing position but rather a level of activity beginning.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
7	<p>the color of the blue</p> <p>the morning sky</p> <p>Before the sun is high</p>	<p>RL.4.3, RL.4.1</p>	<p>Incorrect answers:</p> <p>“Something in the air” hints at change coming but does not develop the setting as strongly as the noted correct answers.</p> <p>“Sweet and rare” speaks to the poet’s feelings about the coming change and the new elements it introduces to the setting but does not develop the setting itself.</p> <p>“A whir” likely describes changes in the level of activity being very light but does not give details about the actual setting like the noted correct answers do.</p> <p>“That’s new” tells that the seasons are changing but does not give details about the actual setting like the noted correct answers do.</p> <p>Correct Answers:</p> <p>“The color of the blue” describes the color of the sky in the setting.</p> <p>“The morning sky” and “Before the sun is high” both describe the time of day of the setting.</p>
8 Part A	<p>B</p>	<p>RL.4.2, RL.4.1</p>	<p>A. Although winter may be difficult for many because of the cold, there is no textual evidence to support that theme.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The poet develops the theme of spring being a time of renewal with “new” in lines 2 and 5. Additionally, line 15, “Of bud and bloom and wing” shows signs of new life as spring arrives. In lines 18-20, the brooks even seem to wake up and play. Also, in lines 25-28, plants are beginning to bloom as spring arrives. And finally, the author mentions “We see the bloom of birth/Make young again the earth.”</p> <p>C. Although it is true that some feel that each season has something special about it, that is not a theme developed throughout the poem.</p> <p>D. Although the author points to life being active during spring, there is no comparison to other seasons outside of winter, so a conclusion cannot be drawn regarding summer and fall.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
8 Part B	D		<p>A. Although “There’s something in the air” hints at change, it does not develop the idea that the change is a time of life and renewal.</p> <p>B. Although “There’s something seems to say” ties to the idea of change, it does not develop the idea that the change is a time of life and renewal.</p> <p>C. Although “Above the wintry drift” establishes the current setting as winter, it does not establish that things are going to be changing to a time of life and renewal.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. “We see the bloom of birth” implies a sense of life and renewal.</p>
9	B	L.4.5, RL.4.4, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although the poet is discussing one event that occurs when winter is ending (the brooks are beginning to flow), she does so in a way that personifies the brook for the reader rather than trying to make the reader remember how it feels when winter ends.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The poet personifies the brook (or makes the brooks seem human) by saying the brooks “will break away/From their icy, frozen sleep,” meaning they wake up, and then they “run and laugh and leap,” which are human activities.</p> <p>C. Although it is likely the cracking of the ice makes a noise when it melts, the noise isn’t mentioned, so the poet is not trying to help the reader imagine the sounds associated with spring.</p> <p>D. Although the lines focus on the brooks as they begin to flow again, the poet focuses on how the brooks demonstrate human activities. She does not offer enough visual clues to indicate that she wants to encourage the reader to see the brooks.</p>
10	A	RL.4.6, RL.4.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. Lines 5 and 6 of “The Seedling” include dialogue from the seedling, showing that the point of view has temporarily shifted to first person, while the rest of the poem and the second poem are told in third person.</p> <p>B. Although the point of view shifts in lines 5 and 6 of “The Seedling,” the rhyming pattern stays intact, as reflected throughout both poems.</p> <p>C. Although lines 5 and 6 of “The Seedling” depict a common event in early spring, they do not do so in a factual manner, as seedlings are not able to speak, making this a fictional retelling.</p> <p>D. Although the point of view shifts in lines 5 and 6 of “The Seedling,” the shared setting of the poems remains the same: it is late winter, and spring is arriving.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options				
11	See right column.	RL.4.9, RL.4.5, RL.4.1		Description	"The Seedling"	"The Coming of the Spring"	Both poems
				The poem is told like a story.	X		
				The poem is a mostly a description.		X	
				The poem has rhyming.			X
				The poem has dialogue.	X		
				The poem mainly describes one sign of spring.	X		
				The poem describes many signs of spring.		X	
12	C	RL.4.3, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although a shift in settings is clear in both poems, the shift is from winter to spring, not middle to end of spring.</p> <p>B. Although a shift in settings is clear in both poems, the shift is from winter to spring, not stages of winter.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. Both poets speak to events that occur when spring arrives, Dunbar discussing the spouting of seedlings and Perry speaking to several events that occur (e.g., changes in the color of the sky, buds growing, the brooks beginning to flow).</p> <p>D. Although spring is the main aspect of the shared setting of the poems, the signs described are all the beginning of spring rather than the end of spring.</p>				

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
<p style="text-align: center;">13 Optional Writing Prompt</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">See right column.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9, RL.4.6, RL.4.9, RL.4.1, L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3</p>	<p>Scoring Notes</p> <p>Strong student responses will include points such as:</p> <p>Dunbar’s “The Seedling”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses personification in lines 5-6 to make the seedling seem human. • Uses language that makes the seedling seem at a disadvantage, such as lines 1 and 2 where the “quiet little seedling” lies in a place of darkness and in line 5 where it admits to not being very strong. This makes the reader want to cheer the seedling on. • Uses powerful language such as “Its work of life began” to show the seedling has set a goal for itself, drawing the reader because we want to learn if it reaches its goal. • Details the various challenges the seedling overcomes, such as pushing up its first “little leaflet” in line 9, and how tiring the growth is (“made the seedling sweat and pant”) in line 18. • Explains how others contributed to the success of the seedling: “The sunshine poured upon it/And the clouds gave a shower” in lines 21 and 22. • The way the poet describes each individual step of the growth process, one event at a time, also helps build excitement. • Finally, it’s also exciting to learn in the last two stanzas that the poet was trying to teach the reader a lesson about how the reader can achieve great things with the help of others. <p>Perry’s “The Coming of the Spring”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses hints that spring is coming rather than stating it explicitly: “There’s something in the air/That’s new and sweet and rare” in lines 1 and 2 and “There’s something too, that’s new” in line 5. She even uses the word “hint” in line 14. • Uses personification to make the reader feel the brooks’ excitement in lines 18-20. • Provides signs of things coming to life: “scent of summer things/A whirl as if of wings” in lines 3 and 4, “changing tint/This whispering whirl” lines 13 and 14, “catkins in their hoods/Of fur and silk will stand” lines 22 and 23, “the mention of the tassels of the hazel and the elder branches budding in lines 25-28. • Uses alliteration (“So, silently but swift”) in line 29 and repetition (“gain and gain”) in line 31 and (“Once more and yet once more”) in line 33 to detail the way that spring is coming on quickly but silently. • Circles back to the idea of new life in the last stanza, with “bloom of birth” and “Make young again the earth.”

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