

## Grade 11 Literary Nonfiction Mini-Assessment

### “Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Address (1801)”

This Grade 11 Mini-Assessment is based on an excerpt (527 words) from Thomas Jefferson’s inaugural address in 1801. This text is considered seminal, meaning the text was instrumental in impacting future events or viewpoints in American history. Jefferson’s Inaugural Address is a text worthy of students’ time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at Grade 11. Assessments aligned to the CCSS will employ quality, complex texts such as this one.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students’ time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the texts. Several standards may be addressed within the same question because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis. In this mini-assessment there are six questions that address the Reading Standards below. There is also one constructed-response question that addresses the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards. We encourage educators to give students the time that they need to read closely and write to sources. 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 is 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 seven questions align to the following standards:**

<b>RI.11-12.1</b>	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
<b>RI.11-12.2</b>	Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
<b>RI.11-12.3</b>	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
<b>RI.11-12.4</b>	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

<b>RI.11-12.6</b>	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
<b>RI.11-12.8</b>	Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., <i>The Federalist</i> , presidential addresses).
<b>RH.11-12.1</b>	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
<b>RH.11-12.2</b>	Determine the central ideas or informational of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
<b>RH.11-12.3</b>	Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters
<b>RH.11-12.4</b>	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines <i>fraction</i> in <i>Federalist</i> No. 10)
<b>RH.11-12.8</b>	Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
<b>W.11-12.2</b>	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
<b>W.11-12.4</b>	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
<b>W.11-12.9</b>	Draw evidence from literary or informational tasks to support analysis, reflection, and research.
<b>L.11-12.1</b>	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
<b>L.11-12.2</b>	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
<b>L.11-12.3</b>	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when 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](http://www.achievethecore.org)

## Grade 11 Mini-Assessment – “Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Address”

Today you will read Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Address from 1801. You will then answer several questions based on the text. 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 need to answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B, but you may go back 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 the ways you may have additional time.

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

### Excerpt from Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Speech

March 4, 1801

Friends and Fellow Citizens:

During the contest of opinion through which we have passed, the animation of discussions and of exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely and to speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the Constitution, all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good. All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things. And let us reflect that, having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions. During the throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his

long-lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore; that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others, and should divide opinions as to measures of safety. But every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong, that this Government is not strong enough; but would the honest patriot, in the full tide of

successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm on the theoretic and visionary fear that this Government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest Government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.

Let us, then, with courage and confidence pursue our own Federal and Republican principles, our attachment to union and representative government.

## Questions

1. The box below indicates some possible purposes of Jefferson’s speech. Read the list, and then write Jefferson’s three main purposes in the correct places on the chart, next to their corresponding evidence from the text. No purpose statement can be used more than once and some will not be used at all.

<u>List of Possible Purposes</u>	
Establish why he was elected over his opponent	
Urge the country to come together	
Criticize less-tolerant governments of other countries	
Reassure people who did not vote for him	
Express faith in America’s representative-based government	
Discuss the rights and responsibilities of American citizens	

Jefferson’s Purpose	Evidence of Purpose from Speech
	“..., all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the law and unite in common efforts for the common good.”
	“...the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect...”
	“I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest Government on earth.”

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

**PART A: The word “principle” recurs throughout Jefferson’s speech. In the context of the speech, what is the meaning of the word *principle*?**

- A** a tendency of human beings to respond to a situation in a similar way
- B** a basic belief that gives rise to and supports other ideas
- C** a concern shared by members of the same political group
- D** a desire to treat all living things with equality

**PART B: How does the repetition of the word *principle* in Jefferson’s speech help him achieve his purpose?**

- A** It shows his listeners that Jefferson plans to actively provide leadership.
- B** It allows Jefferson to acknowledge that different people believe different things.
- C** It stresses the significance of the strong foundations on which the government was formed.
- D** It emphasizes the importance Jefferson places on behavior and manners.
- E** It explains how America’s current government differs from governments of other countries.

**3. After reading Jefferson’s speech, what can the reader infer about Jefferson’s political position?**

- A** He believes that the republic form of government, though still experimental in America, is better than being ruled by one person.
- B** He believes that many humans are naturally weak and require a strong, decisive ruler to guide Americans to success.
- C** He believes that electing people to govern is risky, but slightly better than the alternatives.
- D** He believes that a leader must honestly assess his own weaknesses before can govern others effectively.

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

**PART A: Based on Jefferson's speech, what can the reader conclude about his political opponents?**

- A They respect him personally but do not understand his thoughts on government.
- B They are confused by their lack of support from the American public.
- C They are afraid he is likely to involve America in foreign wars.
- D They would prefer a more traditionally powerful central government.

**PART B: Which excerpt from the speech best supports the answer to part A?**

- A "During the contest of opinion through which we have passed the animation of discussions and of exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely..."
- B "...during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long-lost liberty..."
- C "We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."
- D "I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong, that this Government is not strong enough..."

**5. Which two statements express central ideas from Jefferson's speech?**

- A America is on the right path and should unite based on the underlying principles on which the government is based.
- B It is beneficial to experiment with different forms of government.
- C America is not immune to the kinds of violence found in other countries.
- D Tolerating differences of opinion is a sign of successful government, not a sign of failure.
- E Once an election is over, expressing negative opinions serves no purpose.
- F The role of the president is to satisfy the citizens of his country.

**6. Read this excerpt from Jefferson's speech. Jefferson includes many terms meant to develop a tone that is strongly positive and optimistic. Circle in the text below three of the underlined sections that Jefferson uses to help create his forcefully optimistic tone. There are more than three correct answers, but you only need to circle three.**

1)We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists. If there be 2)any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, 3) let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it. 4) I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong, 5)that this Government is not strong enough; but would the honest patriot, 6)in full tide of successful experiment, abandon 7)a government which has so far kept us free and firm on the 8) theoretic and visionary fear that this Government, 9) the world's best hope , 10)may by possibility want energy to preserve itself?





## 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. This text has been placed at grade 11 for the purpose of this exemplar. This section of the exemplar provides an explanation of the process that was used to place the text at grade 11, illustrating why this text meets the expectations for text complexity in Reading Standard 10. Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards and the Supplement to Appendix A: *New Research on Text Complexity* lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts. According to Appendix A of the CCSS, the first step in selecting grade-level appropriate texts is to place a text within a grade-band according to a quantitative text complexity score.

The quantitative data for Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Address is below:

<b>Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Address</b>	<b>Quantitative Measure #1</b>	<b>Quantitative Measure #2</b>
	Flesch-Kincaid: 11.4 (9-CCR))	Lexile: 1400 (Career and college ready)

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](http://www.corestandards.org/resources)) and determine the **grade band** of the text:

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

**Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures<sup>7</sup>**

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

### Qualitative Analysis for the excerpt from Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Speech

Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Where to place within the band?					
		NOT suited to band	Early	end 11-early 12	Mid-end 12 <sup>th</sup>	CCR	NOT suited to band
Structure (story structure or form of piece or sentence demands if notable)	The structure of the speech is fairly straightforward. First Jefferson makes a plea for the country to unite behind him as elected president and then asks the people to hold firm in their belief in a larger concept: a strong republican government.						
Language Clarity and Conventions (including vocabulary load)	Both the syntax and vocabulary used in the text are highly complex. As with many speeches from early American history, the language is a bit archaic, a fact that adds to the difficulty of the text. For example, the first sentence is very long and leans heavily on the archaic phrase “worn an aspect.”						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	There is a moderate demand for some knowledge of early American history in that Jefferson refers to the struggles the country faced as it broke from religious persecution and the rule of kings, but students in 11 <sup>th</sup> grade should be very familiar with this historical context, as well as the need to unite a country under one elected leader after a divisive election.						
Levels of Meaning/Purpose	The speech has a single purpose: Jefferson calls for unity under his leadership so that the country can move forward as a strong republic.						
<b>Overall placement</b>  Grade 11	<b>Justification: Both quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that this text belongs at Grade 11. As described above, the first sentence uses archaic language and relies heavily on an obscure phrase. The archaic language used throughout the text and knowledge demands place this in the middle of the 11-12 band.</b>						

## Question Annotations & Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
<b>1</b>	<b>See right column</b>	RI.11-12.6, RI.11-12.8, RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.8, RH.11-12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Row 1: The correct answer is “Urge the country to come together.” The evidence shows Jefferson asking citizens to “arrange themselves under the will of the law” and “unite in common efforts” for the “common good” which begs a joining of purpose.</li> <li>• Row 2: The correct answer is “Reassure people who did not vote for him.” The “minority” in Jefferson’s speech refers to those that chose to vote for his opponent. In this quotation, he assures them of their “equal rights.”</li> <li>• Row 3: The correct answer is “Express faith in America’s representative-based government.” The quotation captures Jefferson’s belief that despite what others may think, he believes the republican form of government is “the strongest government on earth.”</li> </ul>
<b>2, Part A</b>	<b>B</b>	RI.11-12.4, RI.11-12.6, RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.4, RH-11.12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A.</b> “Principle” in the context of the speech does not refer to “a tendency of human beings” but rather a “basic belief.”</li> <li><b>B.</b> This is the correct answer. Jefferson uses “principle” to outline “a basic belief that gives rise to and supports other ideas.”</li> <li><b>C.</b> “Principle” is not defined as “a concern shared by members of the same political group” in this speech, although members of a political group typically do share the same underlying principles that form their platform.</li> <li><b>D.</b> “Principle” in this speech is not used to describe “a desire to treat all living things with equality,” although that may be seen as one principle most individuals endorse.</li> </ul>
<b>2, Part B</b>	<b>C</b>	RI.11-12.4, RI.11-12.6, RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.4, RH-11.12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A.</b> Although by using “principle” Jefferson is showing that as a leader he understands the beliefs on which America was built, he isn’t using the word to show his active leadership.</li> <li><b>B.</b> Although Jefferson acknowledges people have different beliefs, he uses “principle” in this speech to outline the beliefs on which America was built.</li> <li><b>C.</b> This is the correct answer. “Principle” is used to stress the significance of the strong foundations on which the government was formed.</li> <li><b>D.</b> Although behavior and manners may be a result of one’s principles, Jefferson does not use the word to make a point about how important behaviors and manners are.</li> <li><b>E.</b> Although different governments have different principles, Jefferson does not use the word in this speech to make that point.</li> </ul>

3	A	RI.11-12.3, RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.1, RH.11-12.1.3	<p><b>A.</b> This is the correct answer. Jefferson states, “I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest Government on earth” to show that the American form of government is better than being ruled by a king.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This option is the opposite of what Jefferson believes. He thinks humans are strong and can unite for the “common good.”</p> <p><b>C.</b> This option is also opposite to what Jefferson believes. He acknowledges the form of government is still experimental, but also says he believes it is a much better choice than being ruled by a monarch.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Jefferson does not acknowledge a leader self-reflecting his own weaknesses. In fact, he avoids talking about leaders and focuses on the public as a whole in an effort to unify.</p>
4, Part A	D	RI.11-12.1, RI.11-12.3, RH.11-12.1, RH.11-12.3	<p><b>A.</b> Jefferson only mentions his political opponents when he says, “that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong, that this Government is not strong enough.” The reader cannot infer from this statement how the opponents feel about Jefferson personally.</p> <p><b>B.</b> The reader cannot infer from Jefferson’s reference to his opponents that they are confused by a lack of support or even that there IS a lack of support.</p> <p><b>C.</b> The reader cannot infer that opponents are afraid Jefferson will involve America in foreign wars, as the only war he references is the one when America fought for religious freedom.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This is the correct answer. In the quotation from Jefferson about his opponents, he says, “that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong, that this Government is not strong enough,” which means they would prefer a more traditionally powerful central government.</p>
4, Part B	D		<p><b>A.</b> Although this option could be seen as a link to Part A option B, the quotation refers to an outsider’s view of the election process, not the view of Jefferson’s opponents.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Although this option could be seen a link to Part A option C, it refers wars of the past rather than Jefferson dragging the US into wars in the future.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Although this option could be seen as a link to Part A option A in that it discusses personal beliefs, those beliefs are about principles, not Jefferson himself.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This is the correct answer. In this quotation, Jefferson makes it clear that while he does not believe in a strong central government, others favor that form over a republic.</p>

5	A, D	RI.11-12.2, RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> This is a correct answer. Throughout the text, Jefferson weaves the ideas of staying the course and unifying behind the principles outlined when the government was formed.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Although Jefferson acknowledges there are different forms of government, he does not imply that it is beneficial to experiment. Instead he advises America to stay on the course that was set out when the government was formed.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Although Jefferson mentions violence, he does so to illustrate what citizens went through to get to the current form of government, not to say we are not immune to the type of violence found in other countries. This is not a central idea of the text.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This is a correct answer. When Jefferson says, “All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression,” he is showing that tolerating differences of opinion is a sign of successful government. This is a central idea of the text.</p> <p><b>E.</b> Although Jefferson tries to unite the audience, he actually embraces the idea that differences in opinion should be honored since that is one of American’s principles. Although presidents typically want to satisfy the citizens of the country, Jefferson does not mention this specifically in the speech. Rather, he focuses on the role of unification. Satisfaction is not a central idea.</p>
6	<b>Students should select three options from the right column.</b>	RI.11-12.4, RI.11-12.6, RH.11-12.4, RH.11-12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists” is meant set a positive tone in that it promotes unity among Americans.</li> <li>• “Let them stand undisturbed as monuments of safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it” sets a tone of optimism as it demonstrates Jefferson’s promotion of the idea that even those against a republican form of government are part of American society as a whole.</li> <li>• “In full tide of successful experiment” is positive in tone in that it acknowledges that while America is young as a nation and the government isn’t well tried yet, it has proven successful.</li> <li>• “A government which has so far kept us free and firm” is another statement used to acknowledge the positive results of the government thus far.</li> <li>• “The world’s best hope” is optimistic and positive in that it portrays America’s republican government as the true avenue to freedom and equality.</li> </ul>

7	See right column	<p>W.11-12.2,  W.11-12.4,  W.11-12.9,  RI.11-12.3,  RI.11-12.1,  RH.11-12.8,  L.11-12.1,  L.11-12.2,  L.11-12.3</p>	<p><b>Top-Score Responses will address one of the following areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FREEDOM:</b> freedom of speech and expression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>EVIDENCE:</b> In the first sentence, Jefferson speaks of “the animation of discussions and of exertions” during the “contest of opinion” (the election) and implies that it may have looked negative to “strangers unused to think freely and to speak and write what they think”</li> <li>○ <b>EVIDENCE:</b> “If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated...” In other words, people may safely disagree.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>FREEDOM:</b> Protection/equal rights for the minority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Jefferson says it is a “sacred principle” that the rights of minority are protected by “equal law” and that “to violate would be oppression”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>FREEDOM:</b> freedom of religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Jefferson says, “having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>FREEDOM:</b> The right/freedom to defend and help to shape one’s own country; freedom to participate in government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Near the end of the speech, Jefferson says “...every man...would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern.” This implies that it is not only legal, but expected and desirable, that Americans will actively participate in their government.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## 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](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf)
- See the Text Complexity Collection on [www.achievethecore.org](http://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](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](http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf)