

Grade 9 Informational Mini-Assessment

The Manhattan Project Texts

This grade 9 mini-assessment is based on a series of texts about the Manhattan Project and President Truman’s communication to Joseph Stalin regarding the United States’ development of an atomic bomb. This series of texts is considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at grade 9. 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 eleven selected-response or paper/pencil-equivalent of technology-enhanced questions that address the Reading Standards listed 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 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 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 questions align to the following standards:

RI.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
RI.9-10.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

RI.9-10.8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
RI.9-10.9	Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"), including how they address related themes and concepts.
RH.9-10.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
RH.9-10.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
RH.9-10.3	Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
RH.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
RH.9-10.5	Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
RH.9-10.6	Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
RH.9-10.9	Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
W.9-10.2	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.
W.9-10.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.9-10.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
W.9-10.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
W.9-10.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.9-10.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.9-10.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.9-10.3	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

Grade 9 Mini-Assessment – The Manhattan Project Texts

Today you will read a series of texts about the development of the Manhattan Project and President Truman’s communication to Joseph Stalin regarding the atomic bomb. You will then answer several questions based on this series of 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, but you may go back and change your answer to Part A if you want to.

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

Manhattan Project Texts – Grade 9

Text 1: “The Einstein Letter”

by F. G. Gosling

On October 11, 1939, Alexander Sachs, Wall Street economist and longtime friend and unofficial advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, met with the President to discuss a letter written by Albert Einstein the previous August. Einstein had written to inform Roosevelt that recent research on chain reactions utilizing uranium made it probable that large amounts of power could be produced by a chain reaction and that, by harnessing this power, the construction of “extremely powerful bombs” was conceivable. Einstein believed the German government was actively supporting research in this area and urged the United States government to do likewise. Sachs read from a cover letter he had prepared and briefed Roosevelt on the main points contained in Einstein’s letter. Initially the President was noncommittal and expressed concern over locating the necessary funds, but at a second meeting over breakfast the next morning Roosevelt became convinced of the value of exploring atomic energy.

Einstein drafted his famous letter with the help of the Hungarian émigré physicist Leo Szilard, one of a number of European scientists who had fled to the United States in the 1930s to escape Nazi and Fascist repression. Szilard was among the most vocal of those advocating a program to develop bombs based on recent findings in nuclear physics and chemistry. Those like

Szilard and fellow Hungarian refugee physicists Edward Teller and Eugene Wigner regarded it as their responsibility to alert Americans to the possibility that German scientists might win the race to build an atomic bomb and to warn that Hitler would be more than willing to resort to such a weapon. But Roosevelt, preoccupied with events in Europe, took over two months to meet with Sachs after receiving Einstein's letter. Szilard and his colleagues interpreted Roosevelt's inaction as unwelcome evidence that the President did not take the threat of nuclear warfare seriously.

Roosevelt wrote Einstein back on October 19, 1939, informing the physicist that he had set up a committee consisting of civilian and military representatives to study uranium. Events proved that the President was a man of considerable action once he had chosen a direction. In fact, Roosevelt's approval of uranium research in October 1939, based on his belief that the United States could not take the risk of allowing Hitler to achieve unilateral possession of "extremely powerful bombs," was merely the first decision among many that ultimately led to the establishment of the only atomic bomb effort that succeeded in World War II—the Manhattan Project.

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www.energy.gov

Text 2: Truman Tells Stalin, July 24, 1945

Most of the groups and individuals who had considered the subject -- from the Scientific Panel to the writers of the Franck Report -- believed it necessary to inform the USSR¹ of the imminent success of the Manhattan project. Failure to do so, they believed, would guarantee a post-war atmosphere of suspicion and hostility.

At the Potsdam Conference, however, President Truman chose to tell Stalin only that the U.S. possessed "a new weapon of unusual destructive force." Truman's decision raises an obvious question: Since Stalin would learn of the existence of the atomic bomb the day it was used, if he did not know already, what purpose could be served by Truman's tactic?

Truman's announcement to Stalin can be seen here from the accounts of the different observers. Each describes the same event, but the event appears in a different light to each observer. Did the "master politicians" Truman, Churchill, and Byrnes know what they were doing? Or did they make a tragic blunder?

From Atomic Bomb: Decision by Gene Dannen <http://www.dannen.com/decision>

Text 3: President Truman's version:

On July 24 I casually mentioned to Stalin that we had a new weapon of unusual destructive force. The Russian Premier showed no special interest. All he said was he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make "good use of it against the Japanese."

Harry S. Truman, *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1955) p. 416.

¹ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which existed between 1922 and 1991, is commonly abbreviated as USSR. USSR was an ally of the United States during World War II.

Text 4: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's version:

I was perhaps five yards away, and I watched with the closest attention the momentous talk. I knew what the President was going to do. What was vital to measure was its effect on Stalin. I can see it all as if it were yesterday. He seemed to be delighted. A new bomb! Of extraordinary power! Probably decisive on the whole Japanese war! What a bit of luck! This was my impression at the moment, and I was sure that he had no idea of the significance of what he was being told. Evidently in his immense toils and stresses the atomic bomb had played no part. If he had the slightest idea of the revolution in world affairs which was in progress his reactions would have been obvious. Nothing would have been easier than for him to say, "Thank you so much for telling me about your new bomb. I of course have no technical knowledge. May I send my expert in these nuclear sciences to see your expert tomorrow morning?" But his face remained gay and genial and the talk between these two potentates soon came to an end. As we were waiting for our cars I found myself near Truman. "How did it go?" I asked. "He never asked a question," he replied. I was certain therefore that at that date Stalin had no special knowledge of the vast process of research upon which the United States and Britain had been engaged for so long...

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Text 5: British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden's version:

Mr. Churchill and I had previously discussed together the problem of telling Stalin and, if so, whether before the explosion of the bomb or after. If we did tell him would he ask for the know-how at once? A refusal would be awkward, but inescapable.

There were embarrassments every way, but on balance I was in favour of telling Stalin. My chief argument was that the United States and Britain would have to refuse the secret information. They would be better placed to do this if Stalin had already been told that we possessed this weapon and meant to use it. There was not much to this, but the Prime Minister thought it the better way.

On the question of when Stalin was to be told, it was agreed that President Truman should do this after the conclusion of one of our meetings. He did so on July 24th, so briefly that Mr. Churchill and I, who were covertly watching, had some doubts whether Stalin had taken it in. His response was a nod of the head and a brief "thank you." No comment.

Excerpt from "The Memoirs of Anthony Eden: Earl of Avon -- The Reckoning"; Copyright © 1965 by The Times Publishing Co. Ltd; pgs. 634-635

Text 6: Soviet Marshal Georgii Zhukov's version:

I do not recall the exact date, but after the close of one of the formal meetings Truman informed Stalin that the United States now possessed a bomb of exceptional power, without, however, naming it the atomic bomb.

As was later written abroad, at that moment Churchill fixed his gaze on Stalin's face, closely observing his reaction. However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him. Both Churchill and many other Anglo-American authors subsequently assumed that Stalin had really failed to fathom the significance of what he had heard.

In actual fact, on returning to his quarters after this meeting Stalin, in my presence, told Molotov about his conversation with Truman. The latter reacted almost immediately. "Let them. We'll have to talk it over with Kurchatov and get him to speed things up."

I realized that they were talking about research on the atomic bomb.

It was clear already then that the US Government intended to use the atomic weapon for the purpose of achieving its Imperialist² goals from a position of strength in "the cold war." This was amply corroborated on August 6 and 8. Without any military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely-populated Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971) pp. 674-675. Used under Fair Use guidelines.

² Imperialism is a nation's policy of attempting to extend its power or influence over other nations.

QUESTIONS

1. A six-year gap exists between the events described in Text 1, which occurred in 1939, and the events in Texts 2–6, which occurred in July 1945. To understand Texts 2–6, which two events can the reader conclude took place during this gap?

- A. The United States trained soldiers on using new weapons.
- B. Einstein assumed a lead role in developing the atomic bomb.
- C. Truman replaced Roosevelt as president of the United States
- D. Roosevelt convinced Truman of the importance of the Manhattan Project.
- E. The United States succeeded in developing an atomic weapon and had it ready for use.
- F. The United States began to suspect that both Germany and the USSR were doing atomic research.

2. This item has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: According to Text 1, what are two reasons President Roosevelt initially hesitated to commit the United States to researching atomic power?

- A. He did not want to upset the relationship between the United States and the USSR.
- B. He thought such a project would be expensive.
- C. He feared it would take years to develop an atomic weapon.
- D. He was focused on the war in Europe.
- E. He was reluctant to create such a destructive weapon.
- F. He felt the United States was already well equipped for war.

Part B: According to Text 1, what ultimately convinced Roosevelt of the value of atomic research?

- A. Meeting with his friend and advisor Alexander Sachs
- B. Receiving a letter from esteemed scientist Albert Einstein
- C. Doing his own reading on recent findings in nuclear physics
- D. Realizing that Germany possessed more weapons than the U.S.

3. This item has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Which statement best describes the author's main purpose in Text 1?

- A. To provide little-known details about the Manhattan Project
- B. To show appreciation of those who ensured America's victory in World War II
- C. To analyze the events and thought processes behind a historic decision
- D. To suggest that presidential choices can have unforeseen consequences

Part B: How does paragraph 2 best help develop and refine the author's ideas?

- A. Paragraph 2 further explains to the reader the role Sach played in getting Einstein's letter to Roosevelt, discussed in paragraph 1.
- B. Paragraph 2 helps the reader understand the events that led to the meeting between Sach and Roosevelt, discussed in paragraph 1.
- C. Paragraph 2 reveals to the reader that the letter discussed in paragraph 1 was actually the work of a scientist other than Einstein.
- D. Paragraph 2 describes the many scientists who worked together to bring the threat of nuclear warfare to Roosevelt's attention, as discussed in paragraph 1.

4. This item has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Based on paragraph 2 of Text 2, what is the meaning of the word *tactic*?

- A. deliberate action
- B. impulsive decision
- C. detailed process
- D. ultimate plan

Part B: The author's use of the word *tactic* reinforces the central idea of Text 2 by emphasizing—

- A. that the United States suddenly possessed and planned to use an extremely dangerous weapon.
- B. the enormous amount of research needed to ensure that the Manhattan Project would be a success.
- C. that Truman believed he needed to carefully consider what information to share and when to do so.
- D. the strength of Truman's personality, which allowed him to overcome the objections of others.

5. The following paragraphs from Text 6 contain some underlined phrases. Circle three of the underlined phrases that help create a negative or critical tone toward the United States.

As was later written abroad, at that moment Churchill fixed his gaze on Stalin's face, closely observing his reaction. However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him. Both Churchill and many other Anglo-American authors subsequently assumed that Stalin had really failed to fathom the significance of what he had heard. . . .

It was clear already then that the US Government intended to use the atomic weapon for the purpose of achieving its Imperialist goals from a position of strength in "the cold war." This was amply corroborated on August 6 and 8. Without any military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely-populated Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

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

Part A: What is the main purpose of Texts 3 and 4?

- A. To establish that Stalin was duly informed of the United States' new weapon and supported its potential use
- B. To suggest that the United States was fully prepared to share more information with Stalin if he had asked
- C. To justify to British and American citizens their governments' decision to tell Stalin about the new weapon
- D. To acknowledge that the United States was ignorant as to whether the Soviets were working on their own atomic bomb

Part B: Which sentence best explains how each author's word choice reveals the correct answer to Part A?

- A. Each man focuses on the results of the conversation, Truman using words like "glad to hear it," and Churchill describes Stalin's reaction as "gay and genial."
- B. Each man emphasizes the informal nature of the conversation with Stalin, Truman using words like "casually mentioned," and Churchill describing it as the "momentous talk."*
- C. Each man highlights Stalin's lack of prior knowledge about the bomb, Truman using words like "no special interest," and Churchill describing Stalin as having "no special knowledge."
- D. Each man accentuates the brief nature of the conversation, Truman noting that "all he said," was one line, while Churchill says that the talk "soon came to an end."

7. This item has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Which assumption do Churchill and Eden make in Texts 4 and 5?

- A. Truman should have given Stalin more information.
- B. Stalin was delighted to learn that the United States had a powerful new weapon.
- C. The Soviets lacked understanding of or involvement in the field of nuclear science.
- D. The United States would gladly share nuclear information with the Soviets after bombing Japan.

Part B: Circle one sentence from both Texts 4 and 5 that supports the assumption you chose in Part A.

8. Which point is agreed upon by all four firsthand accounts of Truman’s conversation with Stalin (Texts 3–6)?

- A. Stalin made a very limited response to Truman’s announcement.
- B. At the time, Stalin did not fully comprehend what Truman was telling him.
- C. Stalin urged Truman to use the new weapon against the Japanese.
- D. Truman indicated that the United States planned to use its new weapon.

9. The chart below shows some of the claims made or implied by the various texts. Complete the chart by writing the number of the text(s) (Text 1–6) that support these claims into the corresponding boxes. You may use the same texts more than once.

<p>The United States mentioned the new weapon to Stalin because they were allies in the war.</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p>	<p>Truman withheld from Stalin the true name of the new weapon.</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p>Stalin immediately understood that the United States had an atomic bomb.</p> <p>1. _____</p>
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10. Based on information in the series of texts, what are two reasons the Americans and the British leaders thought it best to tell Stalin the result of the Manhattan Project?

- A. They were divided on the issue of whether to use the bomb against the Japanese and wanted to see where the USSR stood on the matter.
- B. They believed that the USSR would be less able to make demands of the United States if the United States did it the courtesy of acknowledging the existence of the bomb.
- C. They had suspicions that the USSR was working on its own nuclear bomb and needed a way to confront Stalin about it.
- D. They feared that failing to disclose the bomb would make the USSR suspicious of the United States’ intentions in the future.
- E. They felt obligated to warn the USSR that Japan might seek revenge against the United States and its allies after its cities were bombed.
- F. They hoped to control Stalin and the USSR by establishing the fact that the United States had a powerful new weapon and was willing to use it.

11. Circle two conclusions that can be drawn after synthesizing the information in Texts 1–6. Then, in the Supporting Sentences column, write the sentence from the list provided that best supports each conclusion you chose.

Conclusion	Supporting Sentences
The United States government viewed the Manhattan Project as an opportunity for international cooperation.	
The Soviets were not interested in discussing the development of nuclear weapons with America.	
Many experts were opposed to informing Stalin of the existence of the Manhattan Project.	
Although the USSR was an ally of the United States and Britain, relations were strained and mistrustful.	
Officials of the United States knew they could not hope to win World War II without developing a powerful new weapon.	

List of Possible Supporting Sentences

- 1) "Einstein had written to inform Roosevelt that recent research on chain reactions utilizing uranium made it probable that large amounts of power could be produced by a chain reaction and that, by harnessing this power, the construction of 'extremely powerful bombs' was conceivable." (Text 1)
- 2) "Einstein drafted his famous letter with the help of Hungarian émigré physicist Leo Szilard, one of a number of European scientists who had fled to the United States in the 1930s to escape Nazi and Fascist repression." (Text 1).
- 3) "Or did they make a tragic blunder?" (Text 2)
- 4) Mr. Churchill and I had previously discussed the problem of telling Stalin and, if so, whether before the explosion of the bomb or after (Text 5).
- 5) If we did tell him would he ask for the know-how at once? (Text 5)
- 6) However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him (Text 6).

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. The series of texts for this mini-assessment is placed at grade 9 for the purpose of this exemplar. This section of the exemplar explains the process that was used to place the series of texts at grade 9 and the reasons that it meets the expectations for text complexity in Reading Standard 10. “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 one³ 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).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade level** based on a qualitative analysis.

The Manhattan Project Texts	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
	Lexile: 1270	Flesch-Kincaid: 10.6

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. **Note: Because of the brevity of some of the texts in this set, the set has been rated as a whole unit rather than by individual texts.**

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 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 – 12.17	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.17	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

³ 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 by doing a qualitative analysis, a sample of which can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. (www.corestandards.org).

Qualitative Analysis	The Manhattan Project Texts	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too Low	Early-mid 9	Mid-end 9	Early – mid 10	End 10	NOT suited to band
Structure: (both story structure or form of piece)	The structure of the set of passages should be accessible to high school students, as the title of each text provides information essential to understanding the content, particularly the names, roles, and nationalities of the people providing accounts from the Potsdam Conference. The set is organized with the first passage providing critical background knowledge of events in 1939 leading up to the development of the atomic bomb, the second passage providing an overview of President Truman’s communication with Joseph Stalin in 1945, and the other passages providing different perspectives of Truman and Stalin’s interaction at the Potsdam Conference in 1945.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The use of language in the texts is explicit and straightforward. The set of texts includes a mix of simple and compound sentences, with a few complex constructions (<i>He did so on July 24th, so briefly that Mr. Churchill and I, who were covertly watching, had some doubts whether Stalin had taken it in.</i>). Vocabulary is mostly contemporary and familiar, with a few instances of tier 2 words that may be unfamiliar to students (<i>unilateral, imminent, covertly, corroborated</i>).						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	To understand the texts, it would be helpful for students to have a basic understanding of which countries were involved in World War II. Additionally, students must recognize that “Russian Premier” was the head of the Soviet government, and the USSR counterpart to President Truman. But even without that knowledge, the information needed to answer the questions lies within the four corners of the texts.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The main purpose of Text 1 is implicit, as it provides critical background knowledge for Texts 2–6. The main purpose of Texts 3–6 is explicit: to show different perspectives on the same moment in history.						
Overall placement: Grade 9	This series of texts is slightly complex in regard to vocabulary, sentence structure, and knowledge demands. However, the connections among the texts, specifically the shifting perspectives of authors, increase the complexity of the set as a whole. This mini-assessment may be most appropriate for all 9th graders early in the year.						

Question Annotations: Correct Answer(s) and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1	C, E	RH.9-10.3, RH.9-10.1	<p>A. Although the U.S. had developed “a new weapon of unusual destructive force,” there is no evidence that soldiers had been trained to use it.</p> <p>B. Although Einstein played an important role in alerting Roosevelt to potential impact of atomic energy, there is no evidence that he was actually the lead scientist developing the atomic bomb.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. Text 1 refers to “President Roosevelt” while Texts 2–6 refer to Truman as the American President, so the reader can infer that Truman succeeded Roosevelt.</p> <p>D. Although Truman realized the importance of the Manhattan Project, there is no evidence to suggest that this realization was based on President Roosevelt’s influence.</p> <p>E. This is a correct answer. Text 1 explains the situation leading Roosevelt to approve uranium research, while Texts 2–6 describe Stalin learning of the existence of the atomic bomb.</p> <p>F. Text 1 states that Einstein believed Germany was doing atomic research; there is no evidence that the USSR was suspected of developing an atomic weapon.</p>
2 Part A	B, D	RH.9-10.3, RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.1	<p>A. Text 1 does not hint at Roosevelt being concerned about the relationship between the United States and the USSR. Instead, he was concerned with funding of the effort and the events in Europe.</p> <p>B. This is a correct answer. According to paragraph 1 of Text 1, Roosevelt “expressed concern over locating the necessary funds.”</p> <p>C. Although scientists were concerned that Germany “might win the race to build an atomic bomb,” there is no mention of Roosevelt’s concerns about the timeline.</p> <p>D. This is a correct answer. According to paragraph 2 of Text 1, Roosevelt was “preoccupied with events in Europe.”</p> <p>E. Although the bomb is described as “extremely powerful,” there is no evidence that Roosevelt was opposed to such a destructive weapon.</p> <p>F. There is no mention of Roosevelt’s opinion on how well equipped the United States was to fight a war.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
2 Part B	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. Within a week of meeting with Sachs, Roosevelt formed a committee to study uranium.</p> <p>B. Although Einstein’s letter played a significant role in Sachs urging Roosevelt to move forward, the president had received Einstein’s letter months before approving uranium research and did not act on it.</p> <p>C. Although Roosevelt approved uranium research, he appointed civilians and military representatives to do the research instead of doing it himself.</p> <p>D. Although Einstein warned that Germany was conducting uranium research, there is no evidence that Germany had more weapons than the United States.</p>
3 Part A	C		<p>A. The author outlines key points in the development of the Manhattan project, like Einstein’s “famous letter,” not little known details.</p> <p>B. In Text 1, the author uses objective descriptions rather than words of appreciation.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The author describes important events leading to the development of the atomic bomb.</p> <p>D. Text 2, not Text 1, suggests that President Truman’s decision to tell Stalin limited information regarding the atomic bomb may have had unforeseen consequences.</p>
3 Part B	B	RI.9-10.6, RH.9-10.5	<p>A. Although paragraph 1 discusses the role Sach played in the delivery of the letter, paragraph 2 does not build on this idea.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. Paragraph 2 explains that Einstein and other scientists became concerned about Hilter’s potential access to and use of nuclear weapons, which led them to draft a letter to President Roosevelt.</p> <p>C. Although paragraph 2 mentions that Einstein had help with the letter, it does not imply that the letter was the actual work of another scientist.</p> <p>D. Although paragraph 2 mentions other scientists who were concerned, it does not help develop paragraph 1, which only mentions Einstein’s worries.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
4 Part A	A	RH.9-10.4, RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. Truman deliberated carefully before taking the action of communicating with Stalin about the Manhattan Project.</p> <p>B. Truman was thoughtful and deliberate when making his decision to tell Stalin about the Manhattan Project; he did not act impulsively but rather weighed various factors carefully.</p> <p>C. “Detailed process” does not connote a sense of deliberate action, which is what “tactic” means in the sentence from the text. Truman’s process of delivering the news about the Manhattan Project was not detailed at all.</p> <p>D. Although Truman developed an “ultimate plan,” to tell Stalin about the Manhattan Project, “ultimate plan” does not connote the intentional maneuvering or deliberate action that is part of “tactic.”</p>
4 Part B	C		<p>A. “Tactic” refers to Truman’s communication plan about the Manhattan project, not the weapon itself.</p> <p>B. “Tactic” reinforces the central idea of Truman’s limited acknowledgement of the atomic bomb, not the research that went into it.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. “Tactic” refers to how Truman acted deliberately when he chose to share limited information with Stalin regarding the atomic bomb.</p> <p>D. Although Truman decided on the communication strategy with Stalin, “tactic” refers to his political maneuverings rather than his personality.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
5	<p><u>As was later written abroad, at that moment Churchill fixed his gaze on Stalin's face, closely observing his reaction. However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him. Both Churchill and many other Anglo-American authors subsequently assumed that Stalin had really failed to fathom the significance of what he had heard. . . .</u></p> <p>It was clear already then that the <u>US Government intended to use the atomic weapon</u> for the purpose of <u>achieving its imperialist goals</u> from a position of strength in "<u>the cold war.</u>" This was <u>amply corroborated</u> on August 6 and 8. <u>Without any military need whatsoever,</u> the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on <u>the peaceful and densely-populated Japanese cities</u> of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.</p>	<p>RI.9-10.4, RI.9-10.1</p>	<p><u>As was later written abroad:</u> This phrase explains Zhukov’s acknowledgement of others describing the interaction between Truman and Stalin, not Zhukov’s opinion of the United States.</p> <p><u>closely observing his reaction:</u> This phrase refers to Churchill’s observation of Stalin, not Zhukov’s negative outlook on the United States.</p> <p><u>pretended that he saw nothing special:</u> This phrase refers to Zhukov’s impression of Stalin hearing Truman’s message, rather than Zhukov’s opinion of the United States.</p> <p><u>failed to fathom the significance:</u> This phrase focuses on Stalin’s understanding of America’s atomic capabilities as perceived by Churchill and others, not the United States.</p> <p><u>US Government intended to use the atomic weapon:</u> Although phrase includes America’s intent to use a destructive weapon, it is presented as a simple fact with no loaded words or negative connotations regarding the United States.</p> <p><u>“the cold war”:</u> This phrase refers to future tension between the United States and the USSR.</p> <p><u>amply corroborated:</u> This phrase refers to the confirmation of United States’ atomic capabilities, not Zhukov’s negative outlook on the United States.</p> <p><u>achieving its Imperialist goals:</u> This is a correct answer. By calling the United States “imperialist,” Zhukov makes the negative suggestion that America was seeking power over other countries.</p> <p><u>Without any military need whatsoever:</u> This is a correct answer. Zhukov suggests that the United States did not have just cause to drop the atomic bombs in Japan but was just following an imperialist plan.</p> <p><u>the peaceful and densely-populated Japanese cities:</u> This is a correct answer. Zhukov describes Hiroshima and Nagasaki as “peaceful” and “densely-populated” to again suggest that the United States acted without good reason and to emphasize the number of people affected by the bombs.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
6 Part A	A	RH.9-10.6, RI.9-10.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. Both Truman’s and Churchill’s recollections were that Truman informed Stalin of the new weapon and that Stalin approved of using it against Japan.</p> <p>B. Although Truman shared some information on the new weapon with Stalin, there is no evidence to suggest that Truman would have offered any specifics.</p> <p>C. Texts 2 and 3 focus on Truman communicating information on a new weapon to Stalin rather than the reasons Truman was justified in doing so.</p> <p>D. Texts 2 and 3 focus on Truman communicating information about a new weapon to Stalin, rather than what weapons the USSR may have been developing.</p>
6 Part B	B		<p>A. Though both authors note Stalin’s reaction, neither chooses to emphasize this. Rather, they focus on the fact that the conversation occurred at all.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. Each author describes the nature of the conversation in order to show that Stalin was informed of what was to come.</p> <p>C. Churchill makes inferences about Stalin’s prior knowledge, but Truman makes no such claims. Rather, each men notes that Stalin was a participant in the conversation at all.</p> <p>D. Though Truman’s account is brief, it does not focus on the length of the conversation. Stalin, as well, does not focus on the length of the conversation, but rather that it occurred at all.</p>
7 Part A	C	RI.9-10.2, RH.9-10.6, RH.9-10.1	<p>E. Although Text 5 discusses how much information British officials thought Truman should share, Text 4 only focuses on Churchill’s observation of the conversation; neither text suggests that Truman should have shared more information.</p> <p>F. Although in Text 4, Churchill suggests Stalin was delighted by “a new bomb!” in Text 5, Eden states that Stalin only nodded and briefly thanked Truman.</p> <p>G. This is the correct answer. Both Churchill and Eden believed that Stalin “had no special knowledge of the vast process of research” and failed to realize the significance of America’s atomic bomb.</p> <p>H. In Text 5, British officials pondered the timing of informing Stalin, but Eden does not suggest that the United States would share information beyond the existence of the bomb.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
7 Part B	<p>Possible Correct Answers for Text 4:</p> <p>“Evidently in his immense toils and stresses the atomic bomb had played no part”</p> <p>OR</p> <p>“I was certain therefore that at that date Stalin had no special knowledge of the vast process of research upon which the United States and Britain had been engaged for so long...”</p> <p>Possible Correct Answer for Text 5:</p> <p>“If we did tell him would he ask for the know-how at once?”</p>		<p>Text 4: <i>“Evidently in his immense toils and stresses the atomic bomb had played no part”</i> In this statement, Churchill suggests that Stalin was unconcerned about the possibility of atomic weapons.</p> <p><i>“I was certain therefore that at that date Stalin had no special knowledge of the vast process of research upon which the United States and Britain had been engaged for so long...”</i> Churchill believes that Stalin was unaware of the significance of the atomic weapon the U.S. had developed.</p> <p>Text 5: <i>“If we did tell him would he ask for the know-how at once?”</i> By wondering if Stalin would ask for the “know-how,” Eden conveys his doubts about the Soviets’ knowledge of atomic weapons.</p>
8	A	RH.9-10.9, RH.9-10.6, RI.9-10.9, RI.9-10.1	<p>A. This is the correct response. Texts 3–6 are all consistent in describing that Stalin had “no special interest” in Truman’s announcement.</p> <p>B. Only Texts 4 and 5 suggest that Stalin did not understand the importance of Truman’s announcement, and neither of those texts includes Stalin’s perspective to confirm this belief.</p> <p>C. Only Texts 3 and 4 agree that Stalin encouraged Truman to use the new weapon against Japan.</p> <p>D. Only Texts 5 and 6 suggest that the United States intended to use the atomic weapon, and neither text states that Truman conveyed this information.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options	
9	See rationales in far right column.	RI.9-10.8, RI.9-10.5, RI.9-10.1	<p>The United States mentioned the new weapon to Stalin because they were allies in the war.</p> <p>1. Text 2 “Failure to do so, they believed, would guarantee a post-war atmosphere of suspicion and hostility.”</p> <p>2. Text 5 My chief argument was that the United States and Britain would have to refuse the secret information. They would be better placed to do this if Stalin had already been told that we possessed this weapon and meant to use it.</p>	<p>Truman withheld from Stalin the true name of the new weapon.</p> <p>1. Text 2 “At the Potsdam Conference, however, President Truman chose to tell Stalin only that the U.S. possessed ‘a new weapon of unusual destructive force.’”</p> <p>2. Text 3 “On July 24 I casually mentioned to Stalin that we had a new weapon of unusual destructive force.”</p> <p>3. Text 6 “I do not recall the exact date, but after the close of one of the formal meetings Truman informed Stalin that the United States now possessed a bomb of exceptional power, without, however, naming it the atomic bomb.”</p> <p>Stalin immediately understood that the United States had an atomic bomb.</p> <p>Text 6 “However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him.”</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
10	B, D	RH.9-10.6, RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.1	<p>A. Although there were discussions between Americans and British about telling the USSR about the existence of the bomb, none of the texts suggest that the Americans and British were divided on whether to use the weapon against Japan.</p> <p>B. This is a correct answer. In Text 5, Eden writes, “They would be better placed to do this if Stalin had already been told that we possessed this weapon and meant to use it.”</p> <p>C. Although Text 6 suggests the USSR was working on nuclear weapons, none of the American or British officials indicated their concern over such a development.</p> <p>D. This is a correct answer. Text 2 states, “Failure to do so, they believed, would guarantee a post-war atmosphere of suspicion and hostility.”</p> <p>E. Although officials felt some obligation to tell the USSR about the weapon, it was to better position American and Britain in their relationships with the Soviets, not to warn the USSR.</p> <p>F. Texts 3 and 4 indicate that the United States intended to use its new weapon against the Japanese, not the USSR.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options		
			Conclusion	Rationale	Supporting Sentence from Passage
11	See rationales in far right column.	RH.9-10.3, RH.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.1	The United States government viewed the Manhattan Project as an opportunity for international cooperation.	Not supported: Although the U.S. worked with other countries in the research the development of the bomb, the U.S. intended to use the bomb against Japan in war.	
			The Soviets were not interested in discussing the development of nuclear weapons with America.	This is a correct answer. Each account of Truman and Stalin’s interaction indicates that Stalin did not engage in further discussion with Truman after hearing of the new weapon.	However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him (Text 6).
			Many experts were opposed to informing Stalin of the existence of the Manhattan Project.	Not supported. Text 2 states that most experts involved with the project “believed it necessary to inform the USSR of the imminent success of the Manhattan project.”	
			Although the USSR was an ally of the United States and Britain, relations were strained and mistrustful.	This is a correct answer. Text 2 states that experts encouraged Truman to tell Stalin of the bomb, saying, “Failure to do so, they believed, would guarantee a post-war atmosphere of suspicion and hostility.”	Mr. Churchill and I had previously discussed the problem of telling Stalin and, if so, whether before the explosion of the bomb or after (Text 5). OR If we did tell him would he ask for the know-how at once? (Text 5)
			Officials of the United States knew they could not hope to win World War II without developing a powerful new weapon.	Not supported: The U.S. began developing the atomic bomb based on Germany’s advancements in uranium research; there is no evidence in any text to suggest that the U.S. doubted its ability to win the war.	

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
<p style="text-align: center;">12 (Optional Writing Prompt)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">For top-score response bullets, see far right column.</p>	<p>W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.9, RH.9-10.9, RH.9-10.3, RH.9-10.1, L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3</p>	<p>A good student response will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of how Truman broke news—he was “brief” (text 5) and “casual” (text 3) • He was vague, did not use the word “atomic” (texts 2, 3, 6) • Advantage: Stalin asked no questions and the conversation stayed light and genial (text 4) • Advantage: The US was not put in the awkward position of having to refuse to share the secrets of nuclear technology (text 5) • Disadvantage: Any chance for a frank, open conversation about the atomic bomb was lost (text 6; Stalin responded to Truman’s vagueness by keeping quiet about his own country’s efforts to develop the atomic bomb) • Disadvantage: Since the conversation was so brief, the Soviets could later plausibly claim that they did not know about or support bombing Japan (text 6) • Disadvantage/effect on future relations: Text 6 makes it obvious that the Soviets did not like how America handled the situation • Last paragraph of Text 6 condemns American actions and sets a hostile tone for future relations <p>Writing can be scored using the rubric of your choice or the SAP Scoring Rubric found at http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf</p>

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

Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing

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