

Grade 3 Literary Mini-Assessment

Mrs. Mack Pair

This grade 3 mini-assessment is based on excerpts from two chapters, “The Woman with Snakeskin Boots” and “My Beautiful Copper Penny,” from the book *Mrs. Mack* by Patricia Polacco. These texts are considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meet the expectations for text complexity at grade 3. 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 texts. 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 seven selected-response questions and one paper/pencil equivalent of a technology enhanced item that address the Reading Standards listed below. Also, there is one constructed-response question that addresses Reading, Writing and Language Standards.

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

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

The questions align to the following standards:

RL.3.1	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
RL.3.2	Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
RL.3.3	Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events
RL.3.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.
RL.3.5	Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
RL.3.9	Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).
W.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

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

www.achievethecore.org

Grade 3 Mini-Assessment – *Mrs. Mack* Pair

Today you will read excerpts two chapters from *Mrs. Mack*, a book by Patricia Polacco. You will then answer several questions based on the 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 when 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.

The questions in this mini-assessment are based on two excerpts from Patricia Palacco’s book, *Mrs. Mack*, published by Philomel Books, a division of Penguin Group (USA) LLC.¹ Teachers will need to provide the excerpted text.

The first excerpt (Text 1: “The Woman with the Snakeskin Boots”) begins at the top of page 8 of *Mrs. Mack*, with the sentence, “We stood there for a while.” This excerpt ends on page 14, with the sentence, “I found myself going back to where Penny was and standing and looking at her and dreaming of a time that I might be good enough to ride her.”

The second excerpt (Text 2: “My Beautiful Copper Penny”) begins on page 25 of *Mrs. Mack*, with the sentence, “It was a very sunny Friday when it happened,” and ends at the bottom of page 29, with the sentence, “We exploded down the road together, the three of us!”

¹ The texts are not included in this document due to permissions denial for web rights. The user is solely responsible for any permission that may be necessary to reproduce, distribute, or publicly display the texts for purposes of the assessment.

QUESTIONS:

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

Part A: In paragraph 6 of Text 1, “The Woman with Snakeskin Boots,” Patricia’s dad talks about Mrs. Mack “with genuine admiration.” What does the word admiration mean?

- A. feelings of approval
- B. feelings of worry
- C. feelings of love
- D. feelings of confusion

Part B: Why does Patricia’s dad feel this way about Mrs. Mack?

- A. He knows she allows children to help her with her horses.
- B. He thinks the place she keeps her horses is unsafe.
- C. She knows a lot more about horses than other people do.
- D. He believes he may be making a mistake by letting his daughter stay with her.

2. In the beginning of Text 1, “The Woman with Snakeskin Boots,” Pat does not feel welcome at Mrs. Mack’s place. Choose two details from the story that best help explain why Pat does not feel welcome.

- A. Pat notices that Mrs. Mack stares at her.
- B. Mrs. Mack says Pat’s name in a strange way.
- C. There is an unfriendly old man standing at the fence.
- D. Donnie makes fun of the way Pat is dressed.
- E. The other kids rush her to learn about the horses.
- F. Pat is not allowed to ride the horses she likes best.

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

Part A: Which statement best describes a lesson from Text 1, “The Woman with Snakeskin Boots”?

- A. We can find something good in every situation.
- B. Animals make the best friends.
- C. We can accomplish more through teamwork.
- D. People will support you if you earn their respect.

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

- A. “‘Show Pat around,’ Mrs. Mack said as she pushed me toward them.”
- B. “‘That one there is Apache!’ she said, pointing to a horse out in the corral.”
- C. “‘Ain’t she grand!’ Donnie said as if he’d forgotten I was there.
- D. “‘Suddenly, it didn’t matter that I was in Dogpatch, or that these kids didn’t like me.’”

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

Part A: In paragraph 18 of Text 2, “My Beautiful Copper Penny,” what is the meaning of the word *coaxed*?

- A. quickly forgave
- B. carefully taught
- C. angrily warned
- D. gently urged

Part B: Which detail from Text 2 shows another act of coaxing?

- A. Mrs. Mack choosing the horse Pat will ride
- B. Pat using her knee to get Penny to walk faster
- C. Nancy giving Pat a thumbs up sign
- D. Penny forgiving Pat for falling off

5. In Text 2, “My Beautiful Copper Penny,” the author shows that Mrs. Mack treats Pat in a very special way. In the text, circle two things Mrs. Mack does that show that Pat is special to Mrs. Mack.

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

Part A: In Text 2, “My Beautiful Copper Penny,” what is the main problem?

- A. Pat must convince Mrs. Mack that she is ready to ride Penny.
- B. Pat still has not become friends with the Donnie and Nancy.
- C. Pat has not learned as much about horses as she thought.
- D. Pat becomes afraid to ride Penny after falling off her back.

Part B: In Text 2, which of the narrator’s actions solves the main problem?

- A. “I arrived at the stables like always, but something seemed different.”
- B. “She waited for a signal from me to tell her what to do.”
- C. “I lost my balance and fell from her back, hard to the ground.”
- D. “I gathered up the reins, turned the stirrup, stepped into it, and flung myself back into the saddle.”

7. How does the narrator’s opinion of Dogpatch change between the two texts?

- A. She enjoys Dogpatch at first, but then she resents being sent there.
- B. She feels uncomfortable in Dogpatch at first, but then she grows to love it.
- C. She overcomes her first fears of Dogpatch, but she continues to feel lonely there.
- D. She has never seen anything like Dogpatch, but she is happy to leave at the end of the summer.

8. What is one way the second text builds on ideas presented in the first text?

- A. Pat realizes her dream of riding Penny.
- B. Pat overcomes her fear of falling from the horse.
- C. Mrs. Mack learns why Pat was sent to Dogpatch.
- D. Pat sees that she will never be friends with Donnie and Nancy.

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Texts

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The texts for this mini-assessment have been placed at grade 3, and the process used to determine this grade level placement is described below. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one² quantitative measure according to the research-based conversion table provided in the Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity (www.corestandards.org/resources).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade-level** based on a qualitative analysis.

“The Woman with Snakeskin Boots” (circled in orange in the chart below)	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
	Flesch-Kincaid: 4.0	Reading Maturity: 6.3
“My Beautiful Copper Penny” (circled in blue in the chart below)	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
	Flesch-Kincaid: 2.9	Reading Maturity: 5.6

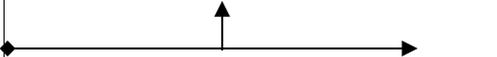
After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the Supplement to Appendix A (www.corestandards.org/resources) and determine the grade band of the text. Figure 1 reproduces the conversion table from the Supplement to Appendix A, showing how the initial results from the Flesch-Kincaid and the Reading Maturity measures were converted to grade bands.

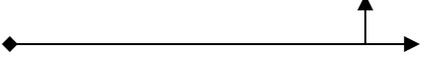
Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

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 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

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

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

Qualitative Analysis	"The Woman with Snakeskin Boots"	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early 2 to mid 2	mid 2 to early 3	early 3 to mid 3	mid 3 to end 3	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The structure of the text is chronological, beginning with Pat arriving in Dogpatch, then touring the stables, and ending with her feeling alone. The first-person narration is conventional, helping readers to understand Pat's loneliness and hopefulness about riding Penny.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language conventions in the text are largely explicit and easy to understand; however, there are several instances of figurative language (<i>I felt her eyes drink me in. As the sun danced....like a bright copper penny.</i>) Vocabulary is mostly contemporary and familiar. There are instances of subject-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to students (<i>stall, Appaloosa, mane, bridle</i>); these words increase the complexity of the text overall. However, there is sufficient context for these words.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	No prior knowledge is needed to understand this text, as the author develops the scene using common human emotions. Students unfamiliar with horses and riding terminology are able to access these ideas through context clues.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The theme of the text is implicit, but readily available, particularly in paragraph 20: "Suddenly, it didn't matter that I was in Dogpatch, or that these kids didn't like me. Nothing mattered to me anymore except having the change to be there with Penny." Although the narrator initially hates being in Dogpatch and feels alone, she falls in love with a horse and dreams of being able to ride her.						
Overall placement: Grade 3	Justification: The organizational structure of this text is chronological and no prior knowledge is needed to access the content. The theme is implicit but accessible for average 3rd graders. The use of figurative language increases the complexity of the text as does some of the subject-specific vocabulary. This mini-assessment would most likely be appropriate for the end of 3rd grade or beginning of 4th.						

Qualitative Analysis	“My Beautiful Copper Penny”	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early 2 to mid 2	mid 2 to early 3	early 3 to mid 3	mid 3 to end 3	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	Readers must understand that a significant amount of time passes from the end of Text 1 to the beginning of Text 2, enough time for Pat to learn to ride horses, overcome first impressions to develop friendships with Donnie and Nancy, and earn Mrs. Mack’s confidence. The structure of the text is chronological, beginning with Mrs. Mack presenting Penny to Pat, then Pat falling from Penny, and ending with Pat achieving her dream of riding Penny, alongside her new friends. The first-person narration is conventional, helping readers to understand Pat’s disappointment and joy throughout the scene.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language conventions in the text are largely explicit and easy to understand; however, there are several instances of figurative language, though fewer than in Text 1 (<i>My heart was singing.</i>) Vocabulary is mostly contemporary and familiar. There are instances of subject-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to students (<i>mount, corral, withers, canter</i>); however, there is sufficient context for these words.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	No prior knowledge is needed to understand this text, as the author develops the scene using common human emotions. Students unfamiliar with horses and riding terminology are able to access these ideas through context clues.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The theme of Pat realizing her dream of riding Penny is revealed at the beginning of the text, directly building on the conclusion of Text 1 (<i>It was a very sunny Friday when it happened.</i>), while the theme of perseverance is developed at the end of the text. The theme of changing first impressions, related to Donnie and Nancy, and to Dogpatch, is evident, but readers must infer what happens between the two excerpts.						
Overall placement: Grade 3	Justification: The organizational structure of this text is chronological, the language is conversational, and no prior knowledge is needed to access the content. There are multiple implicit themes. The inferences required to bridge the time from Text 1 to Text 2 increases the complexity of the task. This mini-assessment would most likely be appropriate for the end of 3rd grade or beginning of 4th.						

Question Annotations: Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1 Part A	A	RL.3.4, RL.3.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. Patricia’s dad compliments Mrs. Mack’s knowledge of horses to show his approval and admiration.</p> <p>B. Although Patricia feels worried when she arrives in Dogpatch, her father is confident leaving her with Mrs. Mack.</p> <p>C. Although Patricia’s father has positive feelings toward Mrs. Mack, paragraph 6 shows those feelings are of approval, rather than love.</p> <p>D. Although Pat may be a bit confused by the disorganization and unfriendliness of Mrs. Mack’s place, Patricia’s father speaks of Mrs. Mack’s knowledge of horses with approval.</p>
1 Part B	C		<p>A. Although Patricia’s father knows that Mrs. Mack allows children to help with her horses, it is her knowledge of horses that he admires.</p> <p>B. Although Patricia believes the “awful place” is “dirty and unfriendly,” her father most likely believes Dogpatch is safe since he leaves Patricia there.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. Patricia’s father states that Mrs. Mack has “forgotten more about horses than most people will ever know in a lifetime.”</p> <p>D. Although Patricia questions why her father brought her to Dogpatch, her father most likely believes Dogpatch is a good place for Patricia to be since he leaves her there.</p>
2	C, D	RL.3.3, RL.3.1	<p>A. Pat “felt her eyes drink me in,” showing her that Mrs. Mack was friendly and interested in Pat when she arrived at Dogpatch.</p> <p>B. Although Mrs. Mack’s accent causes her to pronounce Pat’s name in an unusual way, Mrs. Mack was friendly to Patricia when she arrived at Dogpatch.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. In paragraph 1, Pat notices “a real mean-looking old man,” whom she mentions again in paragraph 10.</p> <p>D. This is a correct answer. In paragraph 9, as soon as the children are alone, Donnie and Nancy laugh after Donnie comments on Pat’s “fancy outfit.”</p> <p>E. Although Pat “could hardly remember anything they were saying,” it was because she “felt so out of place,” not because the other kids were rushing her.</p> <p>F. Although Pat is not allowed to ride her favorite horse, the pull she feels for Penny is the only reason Pat wants to stay in Dogpatch.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
3 Part A	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. Although Pat initially feels lonely and uncomfortable at Dogpatch, her desire to ride Penny gives her something positive on which to focus.</p> <p>B. Although Pat feels affection for Penny, their relationship is not developed enough in Text 1 to support this lesson.</p> <p>C. Although Pat feels “useless” when Donnie, Nancy, and Mrs. Mack are working, there is no evidence to suggest that they would accomplish more working with Pat.</p> <p>D. In Text 1, Pat is new to Dogpatch and has not yet earned anyone’s respect.</p>
3 Part B	D	RL.3.2, RL.3.1	<p>A. Although Pat is able to find something positive at Dogpatch, it is Penny she really likes, not the other kids Mrs. Mack is pushing her toward.</p> <p>B. Although this sentence shows excitement about one of the horses, the excitement comes from one of the other characters, not Pat, so the sentence does not develop the theme that something positive comes out of everything, as option D does.</p> <p>C. Although Donnie echoes Pat’s feelings about Penny, it is Pat’s affection for Penny, in addition to her loneliness at Dogpatch, that supports the theme of finding something positive in every situation.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Seeing Penny, when Pat felt loneliest, showed Pat that there was something positive in Dogpatch.</p>
4 Part A	D	RL.3.4, RL.3.1	<p>A. Although Penny forgives Pat’s “inexperience” (in paragraph 20), “coaxed” does not apply to Penny’s forgiveness but rather Mrs. Mack’s urging.</p> <p>B. Mrs. Mack encourages Pat get back on Penny, but she is not carefully teaching her how to do so.</p> <p>C. Although Pat feels afraid after falling off Penny, Mrs. Mack is encouraging Pat to ride Penny again, not warning her to be careful.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Recognizing that Pat is now “afraid of Penny,” Mrs. Mack encourages Pat to try riding Penny again by gently urging Pat to get back on her.</p>
4 Part B	B		<p>A. Although Mrs. Mack chooses the horse Pat will ride, Pat is excited to ride Penny and does not need coaxing from Mrs. Mack.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. Pat gently convinces Penny to walk faster by signaling Penny with her knee.</p> <p>C. Although Nancy’s thumbs up emotionally encourages Pat, Nancy is not trying to convince Pat but rather she is praising her.</p> <p>D. Although Pat is affectionate to Penny after falling off, Penny forgives Pat’s inexperience without any convincing.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
5	See correct answers in right column.	RL.3.3, RL.3.1	<p>Any two of the following choices will serve as a correct response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “But today Mrs. Mack went to get it.” <i>Rationale: Instead of having Donnie or Nancy go get the horse, Mrs. Mack makes a special effort for Pat.</i> • “It was my Penny.” <i>Rationale: Mrs. Mack demonstrated her faith in Pat by giving her Penny to ride.</i> • “Mrs. Mack handed me the reins, her eyes kind of watery-like.” <i>Rationale: Mrs. Mack’s emotional response to presenting Penny indicates that she cares about Pat.</i> • “She sat on the fence rails and watched Penny and me intently.” <i>Rationale: Mrs. Mack cares about Pat and thus is interested in Pat’s first ride on Penny.</i> • “Mrs. Mack opened the gate and waved us toward the trail.” <i>Rationale: Mrs. Mack encourages Pat to ride Penny.</i> • “I started to lead Penny back to the stables when I heard Mrs. Mack shout, ‘No, Pat! Get back on that mare. Get on now!’” <i>Rationale: Mrs. Mack demands that Pat not give up on her dream.</i> • “‘Get back on, Pat,’ Mrs. Mack coaxed.” <i>Rationale: Mrs. Mack encourages Pat to persevere.</i>
6 Part A	D	RL.3.3, RL.3.1	<p>A. Although Text 1 ends with Pat “dreaming of a time that I might be good enough to ride her,” Text 2 begins with Mrs. Mack presenting Penny to Pat, indicating that Mrs. Mack is already convinced that Pat is ready.</p> <p>B. Although they are not friendly to Pat in Text 1, in Text 2 Donnie and Nancy encourage Pat before she rides Penny.</p> <p>C. Although Pat falls off Penny in Text 2, it is because of her riding inexperience, not a lack of knowledge about horses.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Pat’s dream of riding Penny is in jeopardy after Pat becomes afraid of riding Penny after Pat falls off the first time she rides Penny.</p>
6 Part B	D		<p>A. Although Pat recognizes something is different as she arrives at the stables, this knowledge does not solve the problem of her being afraid to get back on Penny after falling.</p> <p>B. Although Penny waits for a signal from Pat, the communication between the two is not the main problem of Text 2.</p> <p>C. Although Pat loses her balance and falls off Penny’s back, the fall causes the problem, not solves it.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Pat getting back on Penny after she falls solves the main problem of Pat’s fear.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
7	B	RL.3.9, RL.3.3, RL.3.1	<p>A. Although Pat resents being sent to Dogpatch in Text 1, she enjoys being there in Text 2.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. In Text 1, Pat feels lonely and out of place, but in Text 2 she has made friends and realized her dream.</p> <p>C. Although Pat believes Dogpatch is “an awful place” in Text 1, by Text 2, she has made friends with Donnie and Nancy and earned Mrs. Mack’s respect.</p> <p>D. Although Pat believes Dogpatch is “an awful place” in Text 1, by Text 2, she feels at home there.</p>
8	A	RL.3.9, RL.3.5, RL.3.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. Text 1 ends with Pat “dreaming of a time when I might be good enough to ride [Penny]” and Text 2 shows that her dream comes true.</p> <p>B. Although Text 2 shows Pat overcoming her fear after falling of Penny, Text 1 does not provide any evidence that Pat is afraid that she will fall off the horse..</p> <p>C. There is no evidence in either text to suggest why Pat was sent to Dogpatch.</p> <p>D. Although Pat is not friends with Donnie and Nancy in Text 1, the three children have developed a friendship by Text 2.</p>
9 Optional Writing Prompt	See top-score bullets in right column.	W.3.2, W.3.4, RL.3.9, RL.3.4, RL.3.1, L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3	<p>A good student response will include most of the following points from the story:</p> <p>Pat’s feelings about Penny are evident through her initial reaction to Penny and her experience riding Penny for the first time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There, standing in the broken sunlight, was the most beautiful animal I had ever seen in my life.” • “She was perfect.” • “This is the one! I thought. She was everything that was beautiful about a horse. She was my dream.” • “Nothing mattered to me anymore except having the chance to be there with Penny.” • “It was my Penny.” <p>How Pat uses specific words to help the reader understand her emotions:</p> <p>Pat’s wonder at Penny’s beauty is evident through her description of Penny’s appearance and movements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “a beautiful buckskin mare” • “her coat shone like a bright copper penny” • “her muscles danced” • “beautiful intelligent eyes”

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “an elegant trot” <p>Pat’s desire, fear, and joy to ride Penny are evident through her interactions with Penny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I found myself going back to where Penny was and standing and looking at her and dreaming of a time that I might be good enough to ride her.” • “I couldn’t breathe for a whole minute.” • “It felt as though time had stopped, the air wasn’t moving.” • “I felt my heart connect with Penny’s.” • “Penny seemed part of me. She moved as I moved. Her thoughts were mine. We moved like dancers or ice skaters, together. I felt elegant and graceful on her.” • “My heart was singing.” • “I fought back the tears and the feelings of disappointment, and terror.” • “I was suddenly afraid of Penny. Afraid of her!” • “My heart pounding in my ears, I came up beside Penny’s neck.” • “I found myself laughing out loud for the sheer pleasure of being on Penny’s back.” <p><i>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</i></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