

Grade 3 Literary Mini-Assessment

“Because of Winn Dixie” by Kate DiCamillo

This Grade 3 Mini-Assessment is based on an excerpt from *Because of Winn-Dixie*. This text is worthy of students’ time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at Grade 3. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards will employ quality, complex texts such as this one.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students’ time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the texts. Several standards may be addressed within the same question because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis. In this mini-assessment there are 7 questions that address the Reading Standards below.

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

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

The 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.

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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

Excerpt from *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo

- (1) I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library. The Herman W. Block Memorial Library sounds like it would be a big fancy place, but it's not. It's just a little old house full of books, and Miss Franny Block is in charge of them all. She is a very small, very old woman with short gray hair, and she was the first friend I made in Naomi.
- (2) It all started with Winn-Dixie not liking it when I went into the library, because he couldn't go inside, too. But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me. But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didn't think he was a dog. She thought he was a bear.
- (3) This is what happened: I was picking out my books and kind of humming to myself, and all of a sudden, there was a loud and scary scream. I went running up to the front of the library, and there was Miss Franny Block, sitting on the floor behind her desk.
- (4) Miss Franny sat there trembling and shaking.
- (5) "Come on," I said. "Let me help you up. It's okay." I stuck out my hand and Miss Franny took hold of it, and I pulled her up off the floor. She didn't weigh hardly anything at all. Once she was standing on her feet, she started acting all embarrassed, saying how I must think she was a silly old lady, mistaking a dog for a bear, but that she had a bad experience with a bear coming into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library a long time ago, and she never had quite gotten over it.
- (6) "When did it happen?" I asked her.
- (7) "Well," said Miss Franny, "it is a very long story."
- (8) "That's okay," I told her. "I am like my mama in that I like to be told stories. But before you start telling it, can Winn-Dixie come in and listen, too? He gets lonely without me."

- (9) "Well, I don't know," said Miss Franny. "Dogs are not allowed in the Herman W. Block Memorial Library."
- (10) "He'll be good," I told her. "He's a dog who goes to church." And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a "huummmppff" and a sigh, right at Miss Franny's feet.
- (11) She looked down at him and said, "He most certainly is a large dog."
- (12) "Yes ma'am," I told her. "He has a large heart, too."
- (13) "Well," Miss Franny said. She bent over and gave Winn-Dixie a pat on the head, and Winn-Dixie wagged his tail back and forth and snuffled his nose on her little old-lady feet. "Let me get a chair and sit down so I can tell this story properly."
- (14) "Back when Florida was wild, when it consisted of nothing but palmetto trees and mosquitoes so big they could fly away with you," Miss Franny Block started in, "and I was just a little girl no bigger than you, my father, Herman W. Block, told me that I could have anything I wanted for my birthday. Anything at all."
- (15) Miss Franny looked around the library. She leaned in close to me. "I don't want to appear prideful," she said, "but my daddy was a very rich man. A very rich man." She nodded and then leaned back and said, "And I was a little girl who loved to read. So I told him, I said, 'Daddy, I would most certainly love to have a library for my birthday, a small little library would be wonderful.'"
- (16) "You asked for a whole library?"
- (17) "A small one," Miss Franny nodded. "I wanted a little house full of nothing but books and I wanted to share them, too. And I got my wish. My father built me this house, the very one we are sitting in now. And at a very young age, I became a librarian. Yes ma'am."

- (18) "What about the bear?" I said.
- (19) "Did I mention that Florida was wild in those days?" Miss Franny Block said.
- (20) "Uh-huh, you did."
- (21) "It was wild. There were wild men and wild women and wild animals."
- (22) "Like bears!"
- (23) "Yes ma'am. That's right. Now, I have to tell you. I was a little-miss-know-it-all. I was a miss-smarty-pants with my library full of books. Oh, yes ma'am, I thought I knew the answers to everything. Well, one hot Thursday, I was sitting in my library with all the doors and windows open and my nose stuck in a book, when a shadow crossed the desk. And without looking up, yes ma'am, without even looking up, I said, 'Is there a book I can help you find?'
- (24) "Well, there was no answer. And I thought it might have been a wild man or a wild woman, scared of all these books and afraid to speak up. But then I became aware of a very peculiar smell, a very strong smell. I raised my eyes slowly. And standing right in front of me was a bear. Yes ma'am. A very large bear."
- (25) "How big?" I asked.
- (26) "Oh, well," said Miss Franny, "perhaps three times the size of your dog."
- (27) "Then what happened?" I asked her.
- (28) "Well," said Miss Franny, "I looked at him and he looked at me. He put his big nose up in the air and sniffed and sniffed as if he was trying to decide if a little-miss-know-it-all librarian was what he was in the mood to eat. And I sat there. And then I thought, 'Well, if this bear intends to eat me, I am not going

to let it happen without a fight. No ma'am.' So very slowly and carefully, I raised up the book I was reading."

(29) "What book was that?" I asked.

(30) "Why, it was War and Peace, a very large book. I raised it up slowly and then I aimed it carefully and I threw it right at that bear and screamed, 'Be gone!' And do you know what?"

(31) "No ma'am," I said.

(32) "He went. But this is what I will never forget. He took the book with him."

(33) "Nu-uh," I said.

(34) "Yes ma'am," said Miss Franny. "He snatched it up and ran."

(35) "Did he come back?" I asked.

(36) "No, I never saw him again. Well, the men in town used to tease me about it. They used to say, 'Miss Franny, we saw that bear of yours out in the woods today. He was reading that book and he said it sure was good and would it be all right if he kept it for just another week.' Yes ma'am. They did tease me about it." She said. "I imagine I'm the only one left from those days. I imagine I'm the only one that even recalls that bear. All my friends, everyone I knew when I was young, they are all dead and gone."

(37) She sighed again. She looked sad and old and wrinkled. It was the same way I felt sometimes, being friendless in a new town and not having a mama to comfort me. I sighed, too.

(38) Winn-Dixie raised his head off his paws and looked back and forth between me and Miss Franny. He sat up then and showed Miss Franny his teeth.

(39) "Well now, look at that," she said. "That dog is smiling at me."

(40) "It's a talent of his," I told her.

- (41) "It's a fine talent," Miss Franny said. "A very fine talent." And she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.
- (42) "We could be friends," I said to Miss Franny. "I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends."
- (43) Miss Franny smiled even bigger. "Why, that would be grand," she said, "just grand."
- (44) And right at that minute, right when the three of us had decided to be friends, who should come marching into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library but old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson. She walked right up to Miss Franny's desk and said, "I finished Johnny Tremain and I enjoyed it very much. I would like something even more difficult to read now, because I am an advanced reader."
- (45) "Yes dear, I know," said Miss Franny. She got up out of her chair.
- (46) Amanda pretended like I wasn't there. She stared right past me. "Are dogs allowed in the library?" she asked Miss Franny as they walked away.
- (47) "Certain ones," said Miss Franny, "a select few." And then she turned around and winked at me. I smiled back. I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson.

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Questions for Students

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

Part A: In paragraphs 14–36, Miss Franny tells about when she was a young girl. How do these paragraphs help the reader understand the rest of the passage?

- A. They show why Miss Franny’s father was a wealthy person.
- B. They show why Miss Franny allowed Winn-Dixie to go into the library.
- C. They show why Miss Franny is afraid of Winn-Dixie at first.
- D. They show why Miss Franny likes the narrator more than she likes Amanda.

Part B: Which sentence provides the best evidence for the answer to Part A?

- A. “But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didn’t think he was a dog.”
- B. “She nodded and then leaned back and said, ‘And I was a little girl who loved to read.’”
- C. “My father built me this house, the very one we are sitting in now.”
- D. “‘Are dogs allowed in the library?’ she asked Miss Franny as they walked away.”

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

Part A: In paragraph 36, what is the meaning of the word *recalls*?

- A. remembers
- B. believes in
- C. misses
- D. is afraid of

Part B: Which sentence from the text best helps the reader determine the meaning of *recalls*?

- A. “...and I threw it right at that bear and screamed, ‘Be gone!’”
- B. “No, I never saw him again.”
- C. “Well, the men in town used to tease me about it.”
- D. “I imagine I’m the only one left from those days.”

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

Part A: Which statement best describes the narrator's feelings after Miss Franny ends the story about the bear?

- A. The narrator decides that she loves dogs.
- B. The narrator remembers how lonely she is.
- C. The narrator is glad that she can trust adults.
- D. The narrator thinks about how much she dislikes rules.

Part B: Which sentence from the story best shows this feeling?

- A. "But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me."
- B. "And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a *'huummmppff'* and a sigh, right at Miss Franny's feet."
- C. "'Then what happened?' I asked her."
- D. "It was the same way I felt sometimes, being friendless in a new town and not having a mama to comfort me."

4. What are two details from the passage that show that Miss Franny is becoming friends with Winn-Dixie?

- A. "he was okay, as long as he could see me."
- B. "She thought he was a bear."
- C. "he came in and lay down with a *'huummmppff.'*"
- D. "'He'll be good,'" I told her."
- E. "That dog is smiling at me."
- F. "'Certain ones,' said Miss Franny."

5. Which sentence best demonstrates the central lesson of this passage?

- A. "I am like my mama in that I like to be told stories."
- B. "He's a dog who goes to church."

- C. "Let me get a chair and sit down so I can tell this story properly."
- D. "Oh, yes ma'am, I thought I knew the answers to everything."
- E. "I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends."

6. In the passage, use your pencil to draw a ring around two sentences that show that Miss Franny is brave in the face of danger.

7. Miss Franny and the narrator have several traits that are alike, and these traits lead them to become friends. The ways in which they are alike are listed in Column 1 in the chart below. For each sentence in Column 1, find one sentence from the passage that demonstrates that trait for each of the characters. Write the sentence in the correct box under the column under each character. The first row has been done for you.

Column 1: Ways the characters are alike	Detail for Miss Franny	Detail for the Narrator
Both have the same interest in reading.	And I was a little girl who loved to read.	I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library.
Both like Winn-Dixie.		
Both are lonely.		

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Texts

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness. This text has been placed at grade 3 for the purpose of this exemplar. This section of the exemplar provides an explanation of the process that was used to place the text at grade 3, illustrating why this text meets the expectations for text complexity in Reading Standard 10. Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards and the Supplement to Appendix A: *New Research on Text Complexity* lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts. According to Appendix A of the CCSS, the first step in selecting grade-level appropriate texts is to place a text within a grade-band according to a quantitative text complexity score. The quantitative data for *Because of Winn-Dixie* is below:

<i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i>	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
	Flesch-Kincaid: 3.3	Lexile: 760

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.coresstandards.org/resources) and determine the **grade band** of the text:

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

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

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	Flesch-Kincaid ¹	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

Qualitative Analysis for Because of Winn-Dixie

Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Where to place within the band?				
		NOT suited to band	early to mid 2	mid 2 to low 3	low 3 to mid 3	mid 3 to end 3
Structure (story structure or form of piece or sentence demands if notable)	The structure of this text is rather complex in that it includes a story within a story. Although both stories are chronological in nature, this story-within-a-story structure drives the text complexity higher. Other aspects of the form, e.g., first-person narration and use of dialogue, are not especially challenging for this grade band.					
Language Clarity and Conventions (including vocabulary load)	The language used in this excerpt is mostly literal, conversational, and conventional, which helps make the text accessible for students. The sentences are straightforward and simple and the vocabulary should mostly be familiar to students.					
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	There are multiple themes within this text, from the importance of friendship to the impact of loneliness, none of which are explicitly stated. There are two perspectives as well, since we get the narrator's perspective from the story as a whole and then we get the perspective of a much older woman from the flashback. Although both stories illustrate many of the same themes, the multiple perspectives make this excerpt more complex. The experiences depicted may be foreign to students, but they know about libraries, dogs, and bears, so they should be able to access the text.					
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	Although there are multiple implicit themes and purposes in this text, there are so many details used to illustrate these themes that the level of meaning should be apparent to students.					
Overall placement Grade 3	Justification: Although the multiple themes are implicit, the language load and other aspects of this text (knowledge of libraries, pets, being lonely, and the importance of friendship) make this text appropriate for the early or middle part of the third grade year.					

Question Annotations & Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1A	C	RL.3.1	<p>A Although Miss Franny states that her father was wealthy [“. . . my daddy was a very rich man . . .” (paragraph 15)], which explains the existence of the library, paragraphs 14-36 do not tell how the library came to be.</p> <p>B Although Miss Franny does eventually allow Winn-Dixie into the library, these paragraphs do not explain why. In fact, prior to paragraphs 14-36, the narrator takes it upon herself to break the rule about animals in the library.</p> <p>C This is the correct answer. The story about the bear in paragraphs 14-36 explains why Miss Franny was afraid when she saw Winn-Dixie at the window.</p> <p>D Although Miss Franny seems much closer to the narrator than she is to Amanda, paragraphs 14-36 do not help the reader understand the relationships.</p>
1B	A	RL.3.2 RL.3.5	<p>A This is the correct answer. This sentence provides the reason Miss Franny was afraid of Winn-Dixie when she first saw him at the window: she thought he might be a bear.</p> <p>B This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option B, as it indicates why Miss Franny wanted a library as a birthday present, but it does not provide evidence for Miss Franny being afraid of Winn-Dixie at first.</p> <p>C This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option A, as it supports the claim that Miss Franny’s father was rich, but it does not provide evidence for Miss Franny being afraid of Winn-Dixie at first.</p> <p>D This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option D, as it suggests that Miss Franny may not allow dogs in the library because they are too big, but it does not provide evidence for Miss Franny being afraid of Winn-Dixie at first.</p>
2A	A	RL.3.1 RL.3.4	<p>A This is the correct answer. Miss Franny’s statement that she is the only one left who recalls the bear indicates that she is remembering a time from much earlier.</p> <p>B The context indicates that “recalls” means remembers, not “believes in,” because Miss Franny explains that she is the only one left from that time and that other people did believe that the bear visited the library.</p> <p>C The context indicates that “recalls” means remembers, not “misses,” because Miss Franny explains that she is the only one left from that time.</p> <p>D The context indicates that “recalls” means remembers, not “misses,” because Miss Franny explains that she is the only one left from that time rather than she is the only one who fears the bear.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
2B	D		<p>A This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option D, as it indicates that Miss Franny was afraid of the bear; however, it does not provide context for the meaning of the word “recalls.”</p> <p>B This distractor plausibly links to Part A, option B, as it indicates that Miss Franny did not see a bear again; however, it does not provide context for the meaning of the word “recalls.”</p> <p>C This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option C, as the fact that the men teased Miss Franny about the bear indicates that others may also believe that a bear was present; however, it does not provide context for the meaning of the word “recalls.”</p> <p>D This is the correct answer. It supports that Miss Franny is telling a story that she remembers from her past.</p>
3A	B	<p>RL.3.1 RL.3.3</p>	<p>A Although it is evident that the narrator has a great affection for dogs, this feeling was in place prior to the end of Miss Franny’s story.</p> <p>B This is the correct answer. The story triggers the narrator’s awareness that she’s lonely in the town.</p> <p>C Miss Franny’s story helps the narrator identify with Miss Franny in that they have some things in common, but the narrator doesn’t walk away with additional trust.</p> <p>D Although the narrator disobeys the rule of no dogs in the library, there is no evidence that she dislikes rules in general.</p>
3B	D	<p>RL.3.1 RL.3.3</p>	<p>A This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option A, in that it shows how the narrator makes sure that Winn Dixie can be happy while the narrator is in the library, but it does not show that the narrator remembers how lonely she is.</p> <p>B This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option D, in that it shows that the narrator does not wait for a response from Miss Franny and enters the library with Winn Dixie, but it does not show that the narrator remembers how lonely she is.</p> <p>C This quotation plausibly links to Part A, option C, in that it provides evidence that the narrator was interested in what Miss Franny had to say, but it does not show that the narrator remembers how lonely she is.</p> <p>D This is the correct answer. The narrator can see that Miss Franny is missing the same thing that the narrator is, a friend.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
4	E and F	RL.3.1 RL.3.3	<p>A Although Winn Dixie misses the narrator, this does not show that the dog is special; many dogs miss their owners.</p> <p>B Although Winn Dixie is a large dog and mistaken for another animal, this does not show that Winn Dixie is special; many dogs are large.</p> <p>C Although Winn Dixie does make a noise when lying down, this is common for animals to do and does not make Winn Dixie special.</p> <p>D Although Winn Dixie has the capacity to be good under the supervision of the narrator, this does not show that Winn Dixie is special; many dogs are good.</p> <p>E This is a correct answer. The fact that Winn Dixie smiles makes the dog unusual and assures Miss Franny that Winn Dixie is friendly and can be trusted.</p> <p>F This is a correct answer. Miss Franny is comfortable around Winn Dixie and decides that Winn Dixie is an exception to the rule and will be allowed to enter the library with the narrator.</p>
5	E	RL.3.1 RL.3.2	<p>A Although this quotation sets the plot in motion by providing a reason for Miss Franny's retelling the story about the bear, it is a detail and not the central message.</p> <p>B Although this quotation shows Winn-Dixie is well behaved, it does not capture the central message of friendship.</p> <p>C Although this quotation introduces the fact that Miss Franny is going to tell the narrator a story, the act of telling a story does not illustrate the central message; the characters' reactions help establish the message.</p> <p>D Although this quotation helps to establish Miss Franny's behavior as a young person, it does not help develop the central message.</p> <p>E This is the correct answer. It foreshadows that the narrator and Miss Franny will become friends. It provides evidence that there is trust between the two of them and that despite their differences that they will join together as friends.</p>
6	<p>Well, if this bear intends to eat me, I am not going to let it happen without a fight.</p> <p>I raised it up slowly and then I aimed it carefully and I threw it right at that bear and screamed, 'Be gone!'</p>	RL.3.1 RL.3.3	<p>Both sentences show that despite Miss Franny's current fear of bears and of the sight of Winn Dixie there was a time when she was fearless in her younger age. She decides to confront the bear and attacks it by hurling a large book at it.</p>
7	See completed chart on next page.	RL.3.1 RL.3.2 RL.3.3	<p>There are many details in the story that support how Miss Franny and the narrator are similar, which leads to their friendship. Please see the completed chart below for possible correct answers.</p>

Column 1: Ways the characters are alike	Detail for Miss Franny	Detail for the Narrator
Both have the same interest in reading.	And I was a little girl who loved to read.	I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library.
Both like Winn-Dixie.	<p>Possible Answers: She bent over and gave Winn-Dixie a pat on the head, and Winn-Dixie wagged his tail back and forth and snuffled his nose on her little old-lady feet.</p> <p>“Well now, look at that,” she said. “That dog is smiling at me.”</p> <p>“It’s a fine talent,” Miss Franny said. “A very fine talent.” And she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.</p> <p>Miss Franny smiled even bigger. “Why, that would be grand,” she said, “just grand.”</p>	<p>Possible Answers:</p> <p>But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me.</p> <p>But before you start telling it, can Winn-Dixie come in and listen, too?</p> <p>He gets lonely without me.”</p> <p>“He’ll be good,” I told her.</p> <p>And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a “<i>huummmppff</i>” and a sigh, right at Miss Franny’s feet.</p> <p>“Yes ma’am,” I told her. “He has a large heart, too.”</p> <p>“We could be friends,” I said to Miss Franny. (Could be correct because the “We” includes Winn-Dixie)</p> <p>“I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends.”</p>
Both are lonely.	<p>Possible Answers:</p> <p>“I imagine I’m the only one left from those days.</p>	<p>Possible Answers:</p> <p>It was the same way I felt sometimes, being friendless in a new town and not having a mama to comfort me.</p>

	<p>I imagine I'm the only one that even recalls that bear.</p> <p>All my friends, everyone I knew when I was young, they are all dead and gone."</p> <p>She sighed again.</p> <p>She looked sad and old and wrinkled.</p> <p>Miss Franny smiled even bigger.</p> <p>"Why, that would be grand," she said, "just grand."</p>	<p>I sighed, too.</p> <p>"We could be friends," I said to Miss Franny.</p> <p>"I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends."</p> <p>I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson.</p>
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Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners (ELLs)

Mini-Assessment Design and English Language Learners

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Feature a variety of academic words:*
 - Each mini-assessment contains at least one vocabulary item. Items assessing vocabulary test one of the following:

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

Administration Guidelines for ELLs

When assessing ELL students, appropriate accommodations may be considered. Modifications to the assessment itself should not be made. According to the *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners, First Edition*:

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

Teachers **may** choose to make accommodations that meet the unique needs of ELLs. Prior to delivering any practice assessment, especially if the mini-assessment is to be used in a more formal setting (e.g., as part of a district benchmark assessment), teachers should research what accommodations will be available to students during their state’s summative assessment. For example, some

states allow ELLs to use a bilingual dictionary during an assessment; other states do not allow this. Ensure your ELLs are practicing with the accommodations they can expect to see on the summative. Some examples of appropriate accommodations include:

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

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

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

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

Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation

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

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