

Grade 6 Informational Mini-Assessment

Natural Resource Set

This grade 6 mini-assessment is based two articles: “Natural Resource” and “Power of the Wind.” These texts are considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at grade 6. 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 nine selected-response questions and two paper/pencil equivalents of a technology enhanced item that address the Reading Standards listed below, and one optional constructed-response question that addresses the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards listed below.

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

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

The questions align to the following standards:

RI.6.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.6.2	Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
RI.6.3	Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
RI.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
RI.6.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
RI.6.7	Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
RI.6.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
RI.6.9	Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

W.6.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.6.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.6.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.6.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.6.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
L.6.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Contents

Grade 6 Mini-Assessment –Article # 1, “Natural Resource”	4
Grade 6 Mini-Assessment –Article # 2, “Power of the Wind”	8
Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Texts	19
Question Annotations: Correct Answers and Distractor Rationales	22
Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners	32
Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation	35

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 6 Mini-Assessment

Natural Resources Set

Today you will read two articles about natural resources. 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.

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

Article 1: "Natural Resource"



Image 1: *The natural resource of wind powers these 5MW wind turbines on this wind farm in Belgium.*

Image Credit: Kiddle Encyclopedia.

1) A natural resource is anything that people can use which comes from nature. People do not make natural resources but gather them from the earth. Examples of natural resources are air, water, wood, oil, wind energy, iron, and coal. Refined oil and hydro-electric energy are not natural resources because people make them.

Supply

2) We often say there are two sorts of natural resources: renewable resources and non-renewable resources.

- A renewable resource is one which can be used again and again. For example, soil, sunlight, and water are renewable resources. However, in some circumstances, even water is not renewable easily. Wood is a renewable resource, but it takes time to

renew and, in some places, people use the land for something else. Soil, if it blows away, is not easy to renew.

- A non-renewable resource is a resource that does not grow and come back, or a resource that would take a very long time to come back. For example, coal is a non-renewable resource. When we use coal, there is less coal afterward. One day, there will be no more of it to make goods. The non-renewable resource can be used directly (for example, burning oil to cook), or we can find a renewable resource to use (for example, using wind energy to make electricity to cook).

3) Most natural resources are limited. This means they will eventually run out. A perpetual resource has a never-ending supply. Some examples of perpetual resources include solar energy, tidal energy, and wind energy.

4) Some of the things influencing supply of resources include whether it is able to be recycled, and the availability of suitable substitutes for the material. Non-renewable resources cannot be recycled. For example, oil, minerals, and other non-renewable resources cannot be recycled.

Demand

5) The demand for resources can change with new technology, new needs, and new economics (e.g., changes in cost of the resources). Some material can go completely out of use if people do not want it anymore. Demand for many natural resources is very high, but availability of some, such as precious metals, is very low.

Availability

6) All places have their own natural resources. When people do not have a certain resource they need, they can either replace it with another resource, or trade with another country to get the resource. People have sometimes fought to have them (for example, spices, water, arable land¹, gold, or petroleum).

7) When people do not have some natural resources, their quality of life can get lower. So, we need to protect our resources from pollution. For example, when they cannot get clean water, people may become ill; if there is not enough wood, trees will be cut and the forest will disappear over time (deforestation); if there are not enough fish in a sea, people can die of starvation. Renewable resources include crops, wind, hydroelectric power, fish, and sunlight. Many people carefully save their natural resources so others can use them in future.

¹ Arable land: Land that can be used to grow crops.

Images



Image 2: The rainforest in Fatu-Hiva, in the Marquesas Islands, is an example of an undisturbed natural resource.

Image Credit: Kiddle Encyclopedia.



Image 3: The Carson Fall in Mount Kinabalu, Malaysia is an example of undisturbed natural resource. Waterfalls provide spring water for humans, animals and plants for survival and also habitat for marine organisms. The water current can be used to turn turbines for hydroelectric generation.

Image Credit: Kiddle Encyclopedia.



Image 4: The ocean is an example of a natural resource. Ocean waves can be used to generate wave power which is a renewable energy. Ocean water is important for salt production, desalination, and providing habitat for deep water fishes.

Image Credit: Kiddie Encyclopedia.



Image 5: Udachnaya pipe is an open-pit diamond mine in Siberia. Diamonds are an example of a non-renewable natural resource.

Image Credit: Kiddie Encyclopedia.

“Natural Resource” from Kiddie Encyclopedia, in the public domain.

Article 2: "Power of the Wind"

Wind is the fastest growing source of electricity in the world.

by Emily Sohn

1) On a breezy day, you can feel the wind in your hair, on your face, against your body. It tickles, pushes, or slams into you, depending on how hard it's blowing. When it's windy, you can fly a kite or go sailing.

2) Wind is also an increasingly valuable source of energy—helping to bring electricity into our lives. Without electricity, there'd be no TV, no video games, and no cell phones. We'd have to sit around fires for warmth and eat dinner by candlelight.

3) At the National Wind Technology Center (NWTC) in Golden, Colorado, scientists are working to improve wind-power technology and lower the cost of generating electricity. The center is part of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, where researchers look for Earth-friendly ways to power our lives.

4) A renewable natural resource is one that can't be used up or one that can be replaced naturally. Sunlight is an example of a renewable resource that's always available somewhere, and wood is an example of one that can be replaced by new growth. Wind is also a renewable resource.

5) Wind is the fastest growing source of electricity in the world. It's often one of the least expensive forms of renewable power available. And it can sometimes be the cheapest form of any kind of power, some experts say.

6) Generating power from the wind leaves no dangerous waste products behind, says NWTC's Jim Johnson. Best of all, its supply is unlimited.

7) "It sounds almost trite to say, but it's true," Johnson says. "The wind is always blowing somewhere."

Catching the breeze

8) The idea behind wind power is simple. Like pinwheels, windmills are designed to catch breezes, which cause their blades to spin. This motion represents energy, which can then be used or converted into other forms of energy.

9) People have been harnessing the power of wind for a long time. Some of the first windmills were built more than 5,000 years ago, Johnson says, starting in the Middle East. Back then, people used wind to turn blades that rotated grinding stones that crushed grain into flour.

10) In the Netherlands, wind power has long been used to pump water. In the United States, a lot of windmills for pumping water, milling grain, and other purposes were built between 1870 and 1930. You can still see them on farms in some parts of the country.

11) Old windmills were usually made of wood and had any number of blades. Modern windmills, also called wind turbines, come in a variety of styles and sizes.

12) They're usually tall, skinny, and made of aluminum or steel. Most have two or three blades that spin on an axle, which is attached to a gearbox.

13) Nowadays, the blade motion is often converted into electrical energy.

14) "Think of a small, oscillating fan that you might put on your dresser or desk to make a breeze," Johnson says. A windmill does the same thing that a fan does—but in reverse. "Instead of consuming energy to power the motor and turn the fan blades, the breeze turns the fan blades, which run a generator that produces electricity," he says.

15) The average turbine has blades that carve out a circle about 150 feet wide, Johnson says. The biggest ones have blades that sweep out a circle stretching some 400 feet across. That's a full football field and a half!

16) A turbine's height depends on its location. Its blades have to catch gusts at the height above the ground at which the wind tends to be strongest. Some turbines are more than 100 feet tall.

17) But there's more to generating electricity than just catching the wind. For one thing, the electricity generated by a windmill has to be converted to different voltages and frequency levels before it can flow through power lines. And, because storing this energy would be inefficient, electricity generated by wind goes directly into the power grid, where it mixes with electrical energy from other sources.

Potential power

18) The potential for wind power is huge, advocates say.

19) Right now, the United States gets less than one-tenth of a percent of its electricity from wind energy, Johnson says. Some experts say it's possible to boost that number to 20 percent—or more.

20) In theory, North Dakota alone could supply one third of the country's energy if there were an efficient way to transport the energy to where it's needed, say experts at the American Wind Energy Association.

21) The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that the world's winds could generate 15 times the amount of energy now used around the globe, if only we could tap into them.

22) Even so, wind energy has its critics, who argue that the system is far from perfect. One of the biggest problems with wind, they say, is its unreliability. Though the wind might always be

blowing somewhere at any given time, there's no guarantee that it would blow all the time at any given place.

23) The faster and more often the wind blows, the cheaper and easier it is to extract power from it, so wind farms tend to pop up in the windiest places. In the United States, that means states in the Midwest, such as Minnesota and Kansas. California also has large wind farms.

24) Unfortunately, these places tend to be far from the biggest concentrations of people, who live mostly in cities on the coasts. There's still no good way to transport wind energy over long distances.

Ugly turbines

25) Another criticism of wind turbines is more personal. Wind farms take up a lot of space, and some people think they're just plain ugly.

26) One of the most controversial projects had been proposed for Nantucket Sound, off the coast of Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Offshore wind farms can be highly productive because the breezes out on the ocean are consistently fierce, but the United States has yet to get one built.

27) However, some people, including [former] Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, are worried that an offshore wind farm would ruin the natural beauty of the area.

28) Johnson disagrees. "Ugly is in the eye of the beholder," he says. "It's ugly if you're a 'Not in My Backyard' kind of person." People who support renewable energy, on the other hand, often think wind turbines are beautiful.

29) Other people have complained that wind turbines can be noisy, could affect bird migration, and cause the deaths of bats and other animals. One recent report suggested that large wind farms could even affect an area's local climate.

30) Paul White owns a wind-power development company in Minneapolis called Project Resources Corporation. He sees great value in the wind-energy business.

31) "My whole life has been powered by wind power for over 10 years," White says. "Everything I purchase, drive, sleep on, read, and eat was paid for by the proceeds from selling electricity generated by the wind. Everything."

32) "I'll be living off of wind power the rest of my life, as will all of my employees and their families, assuming the wind keeps blowing, which I'm willing to bet on," he adds.

33) There's still a lot of research to be done on making sure that wind power does its job efficiently, safely, and cheaply. That's where the engineers and other researchers at NWTC and elsewhere come in.

34) And that's where you can make a contribution if you do a science project involving wind energy and turbines.

35) Wind power has the potential to ease the world's dependence on fossil fuels and to help clean up the environment. It's worth the effort.

Emily Sohn, *Science News For Students*, February 28, 2005. Used with permission.

QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the meaning of the word “suitable” as it is used in paragraph 4 of Article 1, “Natural Resource”?**
 - A. required
 - B. acceptable
 - C. respectable
 - D. balanced

- 2. Which sentence from Article 1 best presents the author’s point of view regarding natural resources?**
 - A. “A non-renewable resource is a resource that does not grow and come back, or a resource that would take a very long time to come back.” (paragraph 2)
 - B. Some materials can go completely out of use if people do not want it anymore.” (paragraph 5)
 - C. “So, we need to protect our resources from pollution.” (paragraph 7)
 - D. “Many people carefully save their natural resources so others can use them in the future.” (paragraph 7)

- 3. This item has two parts. First answer Part A and then answer Part B.**

Part A: What is the central idea of Article 1?

- A. Renewable and non-renewable resources are both in short supply.
- B. Humans have tremendous impact on the availability of natural resources.
- C. Renewable and non-renewable resources serve important roles in the world.
- D. Some natural resources are more expensive because they are in high demand.

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

- A. “When we use coal, there is less coal afterward.” (paragraph 2)
- B. “A perpetual resource has a never-ending supply.” (paragraph 3)
- C. “The demand for resources can change with new technology, new needs, and new economics (e.g., changes in cost of the resources.” (paragraph 5)
- D. “When people do not have some natural resources, their quality of life can get lower.” (paragraph 7)

- 4. In which way do the images and captions in Article 1 best work together to support the information presented by the text?**
 - A. They help develop the idea that the resources discussed in the article can be found in nature in various parts of the world.
 - B. They help develop the idea that lack of availability of resources is becoming a problem.
 - C. They develop the idea that many natural resources will never run out and do not need to be conserved.
 - D. They develop the idea that people across the world tend to use the same natural resources.

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

Part A: What is the meaning of the word “generating” as it is used in paragraph 3 of Article 2, “Power of the Wind”?

- A. creating
- B. building
- C. focusing
- D. discovering

Part B: Which words from paragraph 3 of Article 2 provide the best context for the correct meaning of the word “generating”?

- A. “...working to improve...”
- B. “...lower the cost...”
- C. “...where researchers look...”
- D. “...power our lives...”

6. How does the author of Article 2 introduce the concept of wind power?

- A. She shares a story of her own positive experience with wind to engage the reader in the debate around wind power.
- B. She uses specific examples of wind power to show the reader why it is an easy solution to issues with resources.
- C. She describes common experiences with wind to connect the reader with the idea of wind power.
- D. She gives examples of the way humans use wind in everyday life to help the reader understand why wind power is essential.

7. In paragraph 18 of Article 2, the author states that, “The potential for wind power is huge, advocates say.” Which two quotations best support this claim?

- A. “Right now, the United States gets less than one-tenth of a percent of its electricity from wind energy, Johnson says.” (paragraph 19)
- B. “In theory, North Dakota alone could supply one third of the country's energy if there were an efficient way to transport the energy to where it's needed, say experts at the American Wind Energy Association.” (paragraph 20)
- C. “The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that the world's winds could generate 15 times the amount of energy now used around the globe, if only we could tap into them.” (paragraph 21)
- D. “One of the biggest problems with wind, they say, is its unreliability.” (paragraph 22)
- E. “Though the wind might always be blowing somewhere at any given time, there’s no guarantee that it would blow all the time at any given place.” (paragraph 22)

8. Choose three of the underlined phrases from the excerpt below from Article 2 that best support the claim that there are negative aspects of wind power.

Another criticism of wind turbines is more personal. Wind farms take up a lot of space, and some people think they're just plain ugly. (paragraph 25)

One of the most controversial projects right now has been proposed for Nantucket Sound, off the coast of Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Offshore wind farms can be highly productive because the breezes out on the ocean are consistently fierce, but the United States has yet to get one built. (paragraph 26)

However, some people, including [former] Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, are worried that an offshore wind farm would ruin the natural beauty of the area. (paragraph 27)

9. What does the word “consuming” mean as it is used in paragraph 14 of Article 2?

- A. reducing
- B. wasting
- C. absorbing
- D. using

10. Which sentence from Article 2 best illustrates a central idea from Article 1?

- A. “Wind is also an increasingly valuable source of energy—helping to bring electricity into our lives.” (paragraph 2)
- B. “Without electricity, there'd be no TV, no video games, and no cell phones.” (paragraph 2)
- C. “A renewable natural resource is one that can't be used up or one that can be replaced naturally.” (paragraph 4)
- D. “Generating power from the wind leaves no dangerous waste products behind, says NWTC's Jim Johnson.” (paragraph 6)

11. Both authors discuss natural resources. Complete the table below by choosing a statement that best describes each author's point of view regarding natural resources. Then choose two examples of how each author best develops and supports the point of view.

Article	Author's point of view	How author developed point of view	How author developed point of view
"Natural Resource"			
"Power of the Wind"			

Possible points of view	Possible ways the author developed point of view
<p>Renewable resources are more valuable than non-renewable resources.</p> <p>Natural resources are varied, and some are limited and need to be conserved.</p> <p>Natural resources are being destroyed by humans.</p> <p>Renewable resources have value and should be used to create power.</p>	<p>By presenting a view of the world that would be created if all natural resources were completely used up</p> <p>By presenting many examples of natural resources</p> <p>Through the use of facts and the opinions of others</p> <p>By focusing on one specific natural resource</p> <p>Through an article based primarily on facts</p>

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Text

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The excerpt for this mini-assessment has been placed at grade 6, and the process used to determine this grade-level placement is described below. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one¹ quantitative measure according to the research-based conversion table provided in the Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity (www.corestandards.org/resources).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade level** based on a qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

Passage Title	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
“Natural Resource” (red circle on chart)	Lexile: 800-900L	FK: 9.4
“Power of the Wind” (green circle on chart)	Lexile: 900-1000L	FK: 8.6

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 Lexile and the Reading Maturity 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 ⁴	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 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

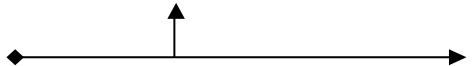
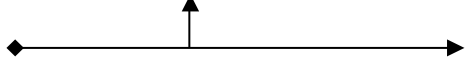

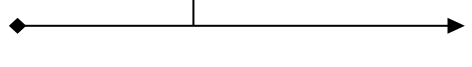
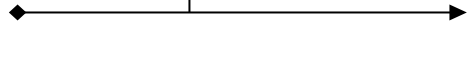
The quantitative data show a difference between two measures. Qualitative data will help clarify the difference in the two measures and narrow the text complexity to a specific grade level.

¹ For higher-stakes tests, it is recommended that two corresponding text complexity measures be used to place a text in a grade band. When two measures are used, both placing the text in the same **band**, the results provide additional assurance that the text selected is appropriate for the band.

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

Qualitative Analysis	"Natural Resource"	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid 6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The overall structure of the text is main idea/supporting details. The text begins with a definition of natural resources, and follows with an explanation of supply, demand, and availability of various natural resources. The author also defines key ideas within the sub-sections of text. The author uses a cause and effect structure in the "Availability" section of the text (what happens when there is a lack of natural resources). The multiple structures within the text add complexity.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The author uses a variety of domain-specific vocabulary terms (refined oil, hydro-electric), only some of which (perpetual, deforestation, etc.) are defined in the text. While some words are undefined, they serve as examples and are not essential for understanding. The author uses a variety of sentence structures, some complex and some simple, which adds to the complexity of the text.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	Knowledge demands of this text are high. The text includes information about various types of natural resources, and key terms regarding natural resources, that may be unfamiliar to students. Students who are familiar with reusable energy will have an easier time accessing this text, but all challenging concepts are explained through the author's description of natural resources.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The purpose of this text is primarily singular with the author is providing readers with information about natural resources. A subtle persuasive reference is noted as the author points of the importance of protecting natural resources.						
Overall placement: Grade 6	The quantitative measures place this in the middle school (6 th -8 th) complexity band. The challenging structures, language usage, and knowledge demands, coupled with the singular purpose, make this text most appropriate for grade 6, most likely mid-year.						

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

Qualitative Analysis	"Power of the Wind"	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid 6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The overall structure of the text is main idea/supporting details, as the text provides an explanation of wind power and wind turbines. The article also uses an argumentative structure, identifying the arguments for and against the use of wind power. The text is organized into sub-sections with sub-headings that will help the reader understand the information.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The author includes some domain-specific terms that might not be familiar to all students (e.g., turbine, voltage); other domain-specific terms are defined and explained in the text (wind turbine, etc.). Sentence structure is complex, but the author also uses many simple sentences to allow readers to make meaning of the text.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	The text includes information on wind farms, wind turbines, and other types of power that may be unfamiliar to students, but the author explains these concepts in detail. Though students who are familiar with wind power and alternative energy will have an easier time with this text, the difficult content is explained in such a way that all students will be able to make meaning.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	This text has two purposes: the more explicit purpose is to provide information about wind power. The more subtle purpose, conveyed primarily through the author's word choice and the details she chooses to emphasize, is to provide a positive view of wind farms in support of the argument that wind power should be used more. The more subtle purpose adds a level of complexity for readers.						
Overall placement: Grade 6	The quantitative measures place this text in the middle school (6 th -8 th) grade band. The complex structure and purpose, coupled with the more simple language and knowledge demands, make this text most appropriate for 6 th grade students, most likely mid-year.						

Question Annotations: Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1	B	RI.6.4, RI.6.1, L.6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Although “required” fits into the context of the sentence, as it’s an adjective, the “suitable” substitutes referenced in the sentence are those materials that are “acceptable” replacements for natural resources. B. This is the correct answer. “Suitable” substitutes are “acceptable” replacements for natural resources. C. Although “respectable” fits into the context of the sentence, as it’s an adjective, the “suitable” substitutes referenced in the sentence are those materials that are “acceptable” replacements for natural resources. D. Although “balanced” fits into the context of the sentence, as it’s an adjective, the “suitable” substitutes referenced in the sentence are those materials that are “acceptable” replacements for natural resources.
2	C	RI.6.6., RI.6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Although the author mentions in this sentence that “a resource that would take a very long time to come back,” the statement is a fact and has no personal connection to the author; therefore, it does not establish a point of view. B. Although the sentence includes some negative ideas (“can go completely out of use” and “people do not want it anymore”), those statements are not meant to establish the author’s point of view but rather the relationship between natural resources and related demands for them. C. This is the correct answer. The sentence states that “we need to protect our resources,” which is a value statement on the part of the author. D. Although the sentence tells what “many people” do in regard to usage of resources “so that others can use them in the future,” the author does not include him or herself in the statement; therefore, it does not establish the author’s point of view.

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
3 Part A	C	RI.6.2, RI.6.1	<p>A. Although the article addresses renewable and non-renewable resources, the idea that both are in short supply is not a main focus.</p> <p>B. Although the article mentions humans’ use of natural resources, the idea of people having a tremendous impact on availability is not a main focus.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The article discusses the difference between renewable and non-renewable resources and explains how both serve important roles in the world.</p> <p>D. Although the article mentions demands around resources, this idea is not a main focus.</p>
3 Part B	D		<p>A. Although this sentence mentions coal, an important non-renewable natural resource, it does not help develop the idea that both renewable and non-renewable resources serve important roles in the world.</p> <p>B. Although this sentence mentions resources, it is developing the idea of perpetual resources rather than how both types of resources have important roles in the world.</p> <p>C. Although this sentence mentions resources, it only speaks to the changing demands for particular resources and does not develop the idea that both kinds of resources serve important roles in the world.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. It gives an overall impact statement for what happens when people do not have some natural resources, showing they serve important roles in the world.</p>
4	A	RI.6.7, RI.6.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. The images show where the resources are located in nature, building on the text’s main point of resources coming from nature and further adding that the resources can be found all across the planet.</p> <p>B. Although some of the resources in the images have been wasted by humans, that point is not a major topic in the text nor is any shortage related to the resources in the images.</p> <p>C. Although some of the images show some more readily available resources, not all the resources in the images are perpetual, or lasting forever.</p> <p>D. Although it is likely true people across the world tend to use the same natural resources, the images do not support this point nor is that idea a key point in the text that needs to be supported.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
5 Part A	A	RI.6.4, RI.6.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. In the context of the sentence, scientists are working ways to lower the costs of “generating,” or “creating,” electricity.</p> <p>B. Although electricity is often used in the “building” of things, in the sentence, “generating” means “creating.”</p> <p>C. Although scientists are “focusing” on ways to reduces costs of creating electricity, “generating” means “creating” in the sentence.</p> <p>D. Although scientists may “discover” new ways of reducing costs of creating electricity, “generating” means “creating” in the sentence.</p>
5 Part B	D		<p>A. “Working to improve” describes the efforts that scientists are putting into technology associated with wind power rather than the act of “generating” or “creating” wind power.</p> <p>B. “Lower the cost” describes the expense associated with “generating” or “creating” wind power rather than the act of actually creating it.</p> <p>C. “Where the researchers look” relates to the purpose of the laboratory in not causing harm to the environment as they try to discover new ways to create energy rather than the act of “generating” or “creating” energy.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. “Power our lives” relates to the “generating” or “creating” of power for use by humans.</p>
6	C	RI.6.3, RI.6.1	<p>A. Although the author includes a story about a positive experience with wind, it is a hypothetical posed to the audience rather than her actual personal experience.</p> <p>B. Although the author includes specific examples of wind power, she does not use those examples to say it is an easy solution to power. In fact, she presents a balanced approach to the issue by presenting both pros and cons.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. In paragraph 1, the author references “wind in your hair, on your face, against your body” and the related sensory details to connect readers with the idea that they’ve felt the power of the wind before.</p> <p>D. Although the author gives examples of humans using the wind, she doesn’t do so in a way that establishes a point of view that wind power is essential. Rather, she takes an impartial stance on the issue.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
7	B, C	RI.6.8, RI.6.1	<p>A. Although the sentence speaks to wind power as energy, it does not speak to the potential of wind power but rather to the fact that the U.S. currently doesn't rely heavily on electricity generated by the wind.</p> <p>B. This is a correct answer. The sentence shows that one single state could provide 1/3 of the power for the whole country, showing that the potential for wind power is huge.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. This sentence speaks on a more global level, focusing on the world's use of energy and how electricity generated by wind power would eclipse that number.</p> <p>D. Although the sentence mentions wind, it does not focus on the potential power. In fact, it focuses on the fact it isn't always blowing, pointing out a negative to using wind power.</p> <p>E. Although the sentence mentions wind, it focuses on the lack of consistency at single locations, pointing out that it is sometimes difficult to know where to place windmills for maximum power.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
8	<p>“take up a lot of space,” “they’re just plain ugly,” and “would ruin the natural beauty of the area”</p>	<p>RI.6.8, RI.6.1</p>	<p>Correct answers: The phrases “take up a lot of space,” “they’re just plain ugly,” and “would ruin the natural beauty of the area” all highlight what people against the idea of building wind farms consider to be negative aspects of the construction of windmills.</p> <p>Incorrect answers:</p> <p>“More personal” hints at the idea that people have personal opinions about wind power but does not necessarily support the negative criticisms surrounding wind power as well as the noted correct answers do.</p> <p>“Most controversial” develops the idea that one particular proposed site seemed more troublesome than others but does not necessarily support the negative criticisms surrounding wind power as a whole as well as the noted correct answers do.</p> <p>“Can be highly productive” is actually a positive feature of wind power rather than a criticism.</p> <p>“Consistently fierce” describes the winds coming off the ocean rather than a negative aspect of wind power.</p> <p>“Has yet to build one” speaks to the lack of a wind farm being built, likely due to criticisms, rather than the negative aspects of wind power itself.</p>
9	<p>D</p>	<p>RI.6.4, RI.6.1</p>	<p>A. Although when one is “consuming” something, it usually results in “reducing” the supply, “consuming” means “using.”</p> <p>B. Although sometimes when one is “consuming” something, it is done in a way that ends up “wasting” part of the supply, “consuming” means “using.”</p> <p>C. Although the act of “absorbing” can be one way of “using” something, “consuming” means “using” as used in the text.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The text says, “Instead of consuming energy,” meaning “using” energy, windmills run a generator that “produces” or “makes” energy.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
10	C	RI.6.9, RI.6.1	<p>A. Although wind power is mentioned as a natural resource in Article 1, the idea of wind power being an increasingly valuable source of energy is not a central idea of the first text.</p> <p>B. Although it is true that without electricity, there would be no conveniences such as TV and cell phones, this is not a central idea of Article 1.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. One central idea of Article 1 is that some resources are renewable and some are non-renewable.</p> <p>D. Although wind power is mentioned as a natural resource in Article 1, the idea of using wind power to avoid dangerous waste products being left behind is not a central idea of the first text.</p>

			Article	Author's point of view	How author developed point of view	How author developed point of view
			"Natural Resource"	Natural resources are varied and some are limited and need to be conserved.	By presenting many examples of natural resources	Through an article based primarily on facts
			"Power of the Wind"	Renewable resources have value and should be used to create power.	Through the use of facts and the opinions of others	By focusing on one specific natural resource
11	See last column.	RI.6.6, RI.6.1	<p>Correct answers for "Natural Resource":</p> <p>The author of "Natural Resource" illustrates the point of view that there are many different natural resources, some of which are non-renewable and some of which are renewable but take a long time to regenerate; therefore, attention needs to be paid to conservation for the ones that are limited. The point of view is developed through the author's presentation of the many types of natural resources and facts about them.</p> <p>Correct answers for "Power of the Wind":</p> <p>The author of "Power of the Wind" illustrates the point of view that renewable resources, specifically wind, can be valuable in the creation of power. The point of view is developed through facts (data) about how much energy could be created via wind (e.g., enough to power the world), how little is currently being created (much less than 1%), and then opinions of others, such as Paul White, whose whole life is powered by the wind. Additionally, the author focuses solely on wind to illustrate its usefulness.</p> <p><i>(contd. on next page)</i></p>			

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
			<p>Incorrect answers:</p> <p>Points of view: Neither author develops the idea that renewable resources are more valuable than non-renewable resources. And while it may be likely that the authors may feel humans play a role in destroying natural resources, neither develops that point of view in the articles in a key way.</p> <p>Ways the points of view are developed: Neither author presents what the world would be like if all natural resources were completely used up.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">12 (Optional Writing Prompt)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">See top-score bullets in the right column.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W.6.1, W.6.4, W.6.9, RI.6.6, RI.6.8, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3</p>	<p>A strong student response will include:</p> <p>Pro (the world makes the best use of its natural resources)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 1 mentions that people “gather them [natural resources] from the earth,” showing that people have learned the value of using natural resources enough to spend effort retrieving them. The author sites air, water, wood, oil, wind energy, iron, and coal as examples of resources people collect. • Article 1 also gives examples of ways people have used natural resources. Paragraph 2 mentions “burning oil to cook” and “using wind energy to make electricity.” • Article 1 also mentions “recycling” in paragraph 3, showing that people have created a process to help conserve natural resources. • Article 1, paragraph 6 speaks to people’s resourcefulness in finding resources they need: they can replace the preferred resource with another, or trade with someone who has access to the resource. • Article 1 explicitly states that “many people carefully save their natural resources.” • Article 1, images 2–4 show that humans have left some areas of resources untouched, showing humans realize they shouldn’t use all available resources until they are gone. • Article 2, paragraph 2 mentions that wind is becoming “an increasingly valuable source of energy.” • Article 2, paragraph 3 shows that people are trying to find better ways to use resources: scientists are working on better ways to generate electricity. • Article 2, paragraph 5 speaks to how humans have realized wind is a powerful natural resource, making it “the fastest growing source of electricity in the world.” • Article 2, paragraph 6 shows that people have realized that wind power doesn’t damage the environment, and that’s one argument being made for its use. • Article 2, paragraphs 9–10 give specific examples of humans wisely using wind power throughout history. • Article 2, paragraph 17 shows that humans have been thoughtful about the best ways to create efficiencies when using wind power, having it go directly into the power grid. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(contd. on next page)</i></p>
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Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
			<p>Con (the world does not make the best use of its natural resources)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 1, paragraph 2 mentions the continued use of coal and the fact that one day there will be no more use of coal. That implies we should start finding alternatives and we may not be making the best use of our resources. • Article 1, paragraph 7 describes what happens when people run out of an important natural resource. For example, dirty water makes people sick, and too many cut trees lead to deforestation. The fact that we know what happens when resources run out shows we have sometimes not been careful with their use. • Article 2, “Potential power” section speaks to the fact that while wind power could be extremely helpful, it is currently not being used as much as it could be (e.g., North Dakota could supply about 1/3 of the country with energy and the world’s winds could generate 15x the amount of energy needed, but the U.S. currently gets less than 1 percent of its energy from wind power) • Article 2 also speaks to the fact that some people worry more about how the windmills make the land look ugly rather than prioritizing what wind power could do for us (e.g., “ease the world’s dependence on fossil fuels and clean up the environment”).

Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners (ELLs)

Mini-Assessment Design and English Language Learners

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Administration Guidelines for ELLs

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

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

Teachers **may** choose to make accommodations that meet the unique needs of ELLs. Prior to delivering any practice assessment, especially if the mini-assessment is to be used in a more formal setting (e.g., as

part of a district benchmark assessment), teachers should research what accommodations will be available to students during their state’s summative assessment. For example, some states allow ELLs to use a bilingual dictionary during an assessment; other states do not allow this. Ensure your ELLs are practicing with the accommodations they can expect to see on the summative. Some examples of appropriate accommodations include:

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

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

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

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

Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation

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

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- See the Text Complexity Collection on www.achievethecore.org

Shift 2 – Evidence: *Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational*

- See Close Reading Exemplars for ways to engage students in close reading on
<http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>
- See the Basal Alignment Project for examples of text-dependent questions
<http://www.achievethecore.org/basal-alignment-project>

Shift 3 – Knowledge: *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction*

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

Sample Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing Prompts:

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