

## Grade 11 Literature Mini-Assessment

### Paired excerpts from “The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne and from “The Pit and the Pendulum” by Edgar Allan Poe

This grade 11 mini-assessment is based two excerpts, one from “The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne and one from “The Pit and the Pendulum” by Edgar Allan Poe. These texts are considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meet the expectations for text complexity at grade 11. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will employ quality, complex texts such as these.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students’ time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the texts. Questions also may address several standards within the same question because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis. In this mini-assessment there are twelve items that address the reading standards listed below. There is also one optional constructed-response item that addresses Reading, Writing, and Language Standards.

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

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

#### The questions align to the following standards:

<b>RL.11-12.1</b>	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
<b>RI.11-12.2</b>	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
<b>RL.11-12.3</b>	Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
<b>RL.11-12.4</b>	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
<b>RL.11-12.5</b>	Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
<b>RL.11-12.9</b>	Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
<b>W.11-12.2</b>	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

<b>W.11-12.4</b>	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
<b>W.11-12.9</b>	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
<b>L.11-12.1</b>	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
<b>L.11-12.2</b>	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
<b>L.11-12.3</b>	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

## Contents

Grade 11 Mini-Assessment – <i>Print for students</i> .....	p. 4
Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Text .....	p. 16
Question Annotations: Correct Answer(s) and Distractor Rationales.....	p. 19
Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners.....	p. 27
Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation .....	p. 30

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

[www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org)

## Grade 11 Mini-Assessment

### Excerpts from “The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne and from “The Pit and the Pendulum” by Edgar Allan Poe

Today you will read excerpts from two short stories. You will then answer several questions based on the texts. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions. You will notice as you answer the questions that some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B, but you may go back and change your answer to Part A if you want to.

Take as long as you need to read and answer the questions. If you do not finish when class ends, come see me to discuss the ways you may have additional time.

Now read the stories and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read the texts.

#### Text 1: excerpt from “The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

- 1 The sexton stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house pulling lustily at the bell-rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children with bright faces tripped merrily beside their parents or mimicked a graver gait in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week-days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper’s door. The first glimpse of the clergyman’s figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.
- 2 “But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?” cried the sexton, in astonishment.
- 3 All within hearing immediately turned about and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper pacing slowly his meditative way toward the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper’s pulpit.
- 4 “Are you sure it is our parson?” inquired Goodman Gray of the sexton.
- 5 “Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper,” replied the sexton. “He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute of Westbury, but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, being to preach a funeral sermon.”
- 6 The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday’s garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed

about his forehead and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him good Mr. Hooper walked onward at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

- 7 "I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton.
- 8 "I don't like it," muttered an old woman as she hobbled into the meeting-house. "He has changed himself into something awful only by hiding his face."
- 9 "Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold.
- 10 A rumor of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads toward the door; many stood upright and turned directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance with that hushed repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandsire, who occupied an arm-chair in the centre of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder till Mr. Hooper had ascended the stairs and showed himself in the pulpit, face to face with his congregation except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath as he gave out the psalm, it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page as he read the Scriptures, and while he prayed the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?
- 11 Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister as his black veil to them.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Text 2: excerpt from “The Pit and the Pendulum” by Edgar Allan Poe**

1        So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and what I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be nothing to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings<sup>1</sup>, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed; and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence;—but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the autos-da-fe<sup>2</sup>, and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This I at once saw could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

2        A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period, I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a tomb. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

3        And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollection a thousand vague rumors of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated—fables I had always deemed them—but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew

---

<sup>1</sup> an extremely harsh system for determining justice and punishment, which often involved torture until a confession was provided

<sup>2</sup> A public ceremony where judgment is made and punishment for a crime announced

too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

- 4 My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry—very smooth, slimy, and cold. I followed it up; stepping with all the careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set out, without being aware of the fact; so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket, when led into the inquisitorial chamber; but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although, in the disorder of my fancy, it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem from the robe and placed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at least I thought: but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.
  
- 5 Upon awaking, and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher with water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward, I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell I had counted fifty-two paces, and upon resuming my walk, I had counted forty-eight more;—when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault; for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

## QUESTIONS

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

**Part A:** What is the best definition of *intercept* as it is used in paragraph 6 of Text 1, “The Minister’s Black Veil”?

- A. block
- B. enhance
- C. correct
- D. divert

**Part B:** Which phrase from Text 1 helps establish the meaning of *intercept*?

- A. “so low as to be shaken by his breath”
- B. “it seemed to consist of two folds of crape”
- C. “to give a darkened aspect to all living an inanimate things”
- D. “With this gloomy shade before him”

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

**Part A:** Which two sentences state themes from Text 1?

- A. Evil can have a strong hold on a person.
- B. Powerful anxiety about the unknown can change everything.
- C. Religion plays an important role in determining values.
- D. Physical appearance impacts how a person is perceived.
- E. Personal choices require careful consideration.
- F. Sin carries a heavy burden of guilt.

**Part B:** Which two quotations from Text 1 best support the correct answers to Part A?

- A. “The old people of the village came stooping along the street.”
- B. “When the throng had mostly streamed onto the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper’s door.”
- C. “‘Of certainty it is good Mr. Hooper,’ replied the sexton.”
- D. “‘He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute of Westbury, but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, being to preach a funeral sermon.’”
- E. “He has changed himself into something awful only by hiding his face.”
- F. “Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house.”

3. How does Hawthorne’s choice to begin Text 1 with a description of activities that take place Sunday morning before church services impact the story?

- A. It highlights social structures that exist between men and women in the town.
- B. It reveals the reason Parson Hooper is out with his veil.
- C. It emphasizes the importance of the church in the community.
- D. It hints at the activities Parson Hooper will speak about during his sermon.



4. Throughout Text 1, Hawthorne uses specific language to shift the tone. Three paragraphs are listed below. From the box, select both the tone of the paragraph and the quotation that best reveals that tone. You will not use all tones or supporting quotations.

Paragraph	Tone	Quotation that <u>best</u> Reveals the Tone
Paragraph 1		
Paragraphs 2-5		
Paragraph 6		

Potential Tones	Supporting Quotations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The references to the sexton create a reflective tone which adds to the confusion.</li> <li>• The description of the veil creates a bleak tone which heightens the suspense.</li> <li>• The flurry of activity among the villagers creates a positive and hopeful tone.</li> <li>• The lack of movement creates a sense of confusion and misunderstanding.</li> <li>• The explanation of the villager's actions creates a disappointed tone which builds the tension.</li> <li>• The reference to the sermon create a reverent tone.</li> </ul>	<p>"The sexton stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house pulled lustily at the bell-rope."</p>
	<p>"Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week-days."</p>
	<p>"With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit."</p>
	<p>"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton."</p>
	<p>"The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight"</p>
	<p>"On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things."</p>

5. Which quotation from Text 1 best reveals the relationship Parson Hooper had with his community before the incident with the veil?
- A. "With this gloomy shade before him good Mr. Hooper walked onward at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps."
  - B. "'Our parson has gone mad!' cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold."
  - C. "A rumor of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house and set all the congregation astir."
  - D. "Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister as his black veil to them."

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

**Part A:** What does *supposition* mean in paragraph 1 of Text 2, "The Pit and the Pendulum"?

- A. likely truth
- B. factual understanding
- C. incorrect hypothesis
- D. chance encounter

**Part B:** Which three phrases from Text 1 help establish the meaning of *supposition*?

- A. "with a wild desperation"
- B. "quickly unclosed"
- C. "struggled for breath"
- D. "exercise my reason"
- E. "brought to mind"
- F. "attempted from that point to deduce"
- G. "a very long interval of time"

7. Which option provides the most complete summary of Text 2?

- A. The narrator wakes up, uncertain of what has happened and where he is. As he realizes he is imprisoned and begins to explore his cell, he becomes more fearful of what will happen to him.
- B. The narrator opens his eyes in a jail cell. He realizes that it is completely dark, so he decides to explore his cell in the hopes that he will find some source of light.
- C. The narrator wakes up and begins to think about how he got to be imprisoned. He decides to explore his cell and discovers that it is approximately 100 paces around.
- D. The narrator wakes up and is afraid of where he has been sent. He falls asleep and wakes up several more times before deciding to explore his cell.

**8. How does the author's choice to reveal the setting from the eyes of the narrator impact Text 2?**

- A. The speaker's carefully worded descriptions highlight his frustration with the small size of the cell.
- B. The speaker's limited understanding of his surroundings emphasizes the terror he feels as he explores his cell.
- C. The speaker's internal dialogue about the cell reveals his ability to thoughtfully consider new situations.
- D. The speaker's step by step analysis of his cell demonstrates his understanding that he will stay there for an extended period of time.

**9. The following question has two Parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.**

**Part A: In Text 2, how does the narrator's inability to see impact the story?**

- A. It is the primary source of the narrator's despair; it builds tension by preventing the narrator from understanding his surroundings.
- B. It is the central source of the narrator's frustration; it builds annoyance by preventing the narrator from figuring out where he is.
- C. It is the main explanation for the narrator's anger; it builds disorientation by preventing the narrator from determining the dimensions of his cell.
- D. It is the initial explanation for the narrator's suspicion; it builds uncertainty by preventing the narrator from discovering who placed him in the cell.

**Part B: Which two quotations from Text 2 best support the correct answer to Part A?**

- A. "I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision."
- B. "I dreaded the first glance at the objects around me."
- C. "I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason."
- D. "This I at once saw could not be."
- E. "The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light."
- F. "The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although, in the disorder of my fancy, it seemed at first insuperable."

10. Throughout Text 2 the speaker asks several questions that introduce new understandings about where he is. These questions are listed below. Write one option from the “Impact of the Question” box that explains how the question impacts the text.

Question	Impact of the Question
“Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence;--but where and in what state was I?”	
“Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months?”	
“Was I left to perish in starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me?”	
<b>Impact of the Question</b>	
<p>The narrator believes that he will receive fair punishment.</p> <p>The narrator does not know how much time has passed.</p> <p>The narrator does not believe he will be fed.</p> <p>The narrator has little hope for the future.</p> <p>The narrator has an idea as to where he is imprisoned.</p> <p>The narrator has some understanding that the future may not have a positive outcome.</p>	

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

**Part A: In paragraph 4 of Text 2, the speaker falls asleep. How does this event impact the text?**

- A. His overpowering need for rest shows how extremely dark his jail cell is.
- B. His desire to rest demonstrates his anticipation of the exhausting days that will be coming in the near future.
- C. His inability to stay awake heightens the confusion and emphasizes the disorientation he feels with his surroundings.
- D. His many naps reveal the horrible ordeal he has been through prior to finding himself in the cell.

**Part B: Which quotation from Text 2 best supports the correct answer to Part A?**

- A. “I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard.”
- B. “A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period, I once more relapsed into insensibility.”
- C. “My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and soon sleep overtook me as I lay.”
- D. “I was much too exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity.”

12. Choose two quotations, one from each text, that show each author addressing a theme common to both texts.

- A. "Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a carefully wife had starched his band and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb." (Text 1)
- B. "He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandshire, who occupied an arm-chair in the centre of the aisle." (Text 1)
- C. "Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister as his black veil to them." (Text 1)
- D. "I brought to mind my inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition." (Text 2)
- E. "I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a tomb." (Text 2)
- F. "Shortly afterward, I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil came at last upon the fragment of the serge." (Text 2)

**13. In each story, the character’s actions explore the role of fear in human life. Write an explanatory essay that analyzes how each author introduces and develops this idea. Use details from both passages to support your answer.**

Your response will be scored on how well you:

- Demonstrate your understanding of the ideas of the text
- Use evidence from the text to help develop and support your ideas
- Organize your response in a logical manner
- Demonstrate an appropriate writing style through the use of precise word choice and varied sentences
- Use standard conventions for writing

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

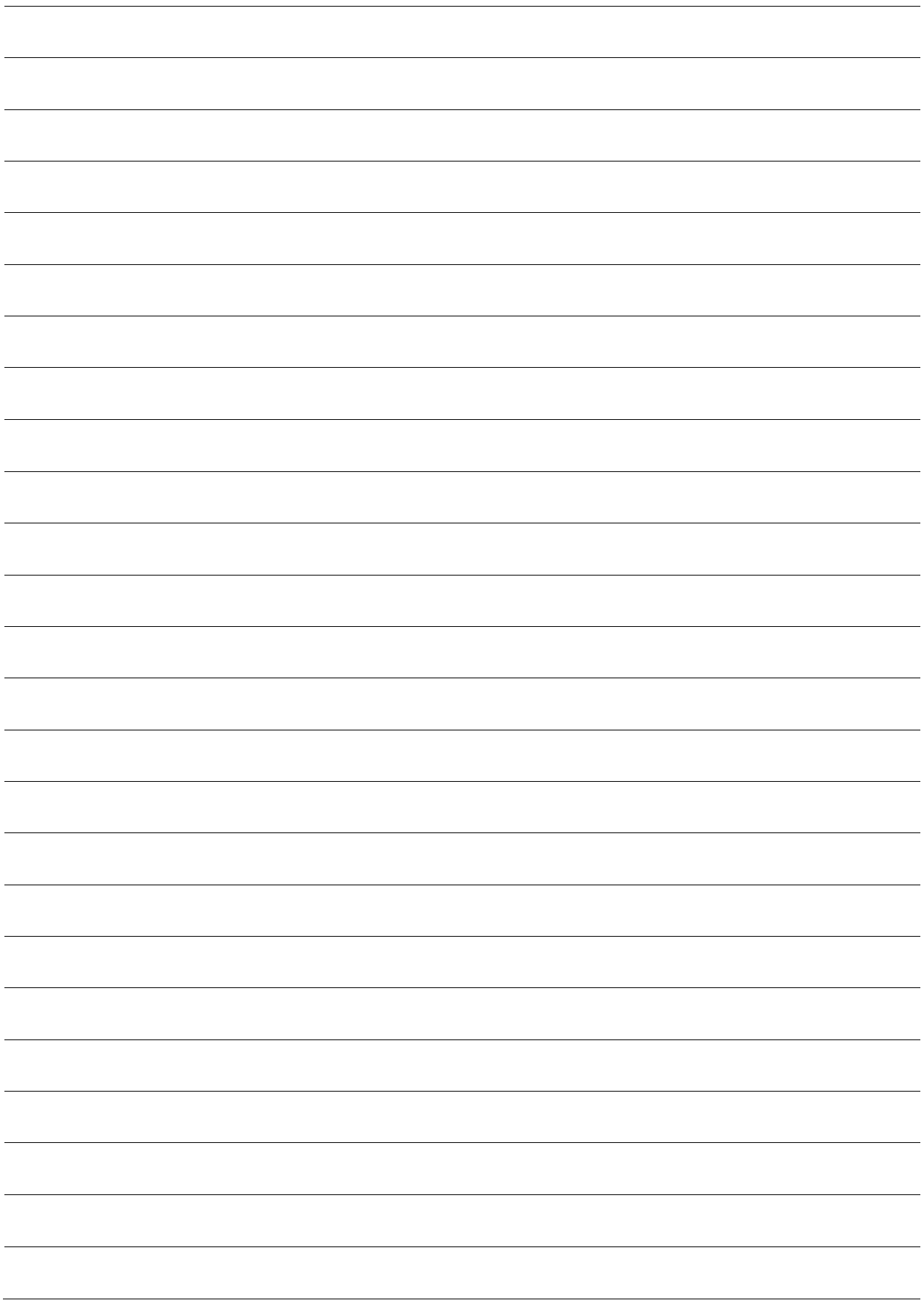
---

---

---

---

---



## Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Text

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness. The texts for this mini-assessment are placed at grade 11 for the purpose of this exemplar. This section of the exemplar explains the process that was used to place the text at grade 11 and the reasons that it meets the expectations for text complexity in Reading Standard 10. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.corestandards.org/resources)).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade-level** based on a qualitative analysis.

	Quantitative Measure #1: Lexile	Quantitative Measure #2: SourceRater
<i><b>The Minister’s Black Veil (Blue)</b></i>	1270	12.6
<i><b>The Pit and the Pendulum (Orange)</b></i>	860	13.5

After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the “Supplement to Appendix A” ([www.corestandards.org/resources](http://www.corestandards.org/resources)) and determine the **grade band** of the text. **Note: With literature, it is sometimes true that the quantitative measures indicate grade bands that are lower than one would expect. In these rare cases, qualitative reviews will show the text really belongs in a higher grade band.**

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

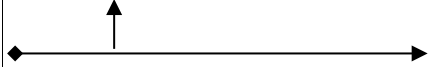

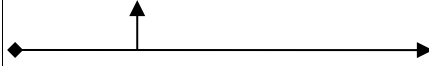
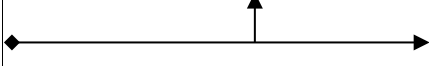

**Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures<sup>7</sup>**

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	Flesch-Kincaid <sup>4</sup>	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup>	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 <sup>th</sup> – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	10.57 – 12.0	12.30 – 14.50

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



To find the **grade-level** of the text within the designated grade band, engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of the text. The characteristics that should be analyzed by doing a qualitative analysis, a sample of which can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)).

Qualitative Analysis	Excerpt from “The Minister’s Black Veil”	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too Low	Early-mid 11	Mid-end 11	Early-mid 12	End 12	NOT suited to band
Structure: (both story structure or form of piece)	The text is structured chronologically. Hawthorne begins with a description of the events on a typical Sunday morning and then narrates the events as Reverend Hooper appears, walks through town, and begins his sermon.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language of the text is quite complex. The vocabulary Hawthorne uses is accessible through sufficient context for students but is often archaic (e.g., <i>semblance</i> , <i>swathed</i> , <i>folds of crape</i> , etc.). Additionally, Hawthorne uses many long sentences (e.g., see the second and fourth sentences of paragraph 6).						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	Although the text requires students understand the significance of the church on the Puritan community, Hawthorne provides sufficient context to help students understand the importance of the church. No prior knowledge is needed.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The text has several levels of meaning, as Hawthorne explores multiple themes, including the role fear plays in our lives and the way physical appearance impacts how a person is perceived. Hawthorne uses the first appearance of Reverend Hooper’s veil to explore the role that fear can play in how a person is perceived.						
<b>Overall placement: Grade 11</b>	<b>Though the text has a simple structure, the complex language and multiple, complex themes make it most appropriate for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.</b>						

Qualitative Analysis	Excerpt from “The Pit and the Pendulum”	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too Low	Early-mid 11	Mid-end 11	Early-mid 12	End 12	NOT suited to band
Structure: (both story structure or form of piece)	The text structure is chronological. The plot begins with the narrator waking up in his cell after an undetermined amount of time. As time moves forward, the narrator gradually recalls why he has been imprisoned, and he begins to explore his cell. Some complexity is added as the narrator has a small flashback, in paragraph 1, to his trial.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language of complex. The narrator uses archaic language (e.g., <i>blood in torrents, thronging upon my recollection, subterranean world of darkness</i> ). He also uses many long sentences, (e.g., sentence six of paragraph two, sentence three of paragraph four). There are two words that do not have sufficient context to allow students to determine meaning, but both have a footnote.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	Although students might benefit from some knowledge of events like the Spanish Inquisition, prior knowledge is not needed to understand the text. The term is footnoted for student understanding.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The text has multiple levels of meaning. The actual plot events (for example, the narrator’s exploration of his cell), reveal the deeper themes around the role fear can play in a person’s life.						
<b>Overall placement: Grade 11</b>	<b>Though the structure of the text is relatively simple, the complex language and multiple themes make this text most appropriate for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.</b>						

## Question Annotations: Correct Answer(s) and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1, Part A	A	RL.11–12.4, RL.11–12.1	<p><b>A.</b> This is the correct answer. The author notes that the veil does not <i>intercept</i>, or block, the minister’s sight.</p> <p><b>B.</b> To <i>enhance</i> means to raise to a higher degree or to make better. This is not the same as <i>intercept</i>, which, as used in Text 1, means to block something.</p> <p><b>C.</b> To <i>correct</i> means to right a wrong. This is not the same as <i>intercept</i>, which, as used in Text 1, means to block something.</p> <p><b>D.</b> To <i>divert</i> means to deflect or to change a path or a course. This is not the same as <i>intercept</i>, which, as used in Text 1, means to block something.</p>
1, Part B	C		<p><b>A.</b> This quotation refers to how long the veil was and what parts of the minister’s face the veil covered. It does not describe how the veil impacted the minister’s vision.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This quotation describes what the veil is made of. It does not describe how the veil impacted the minister’s vision.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This is the correct answer. This quotation shows how the veil impacted the minister’s vision by explaining that the veil does not completely block his vision; instead, it simply obscures it.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This quotation describes the veil itself as “gloomy.” It does not, however, show how the veil impacts the minister’s vision.</p>
2, Part A	B, D	RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> Although the villagers do not like the veil, even going as far as to call the Reverend “awful” for wearing it, the text does not describe the veil as evil in any way.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This is a correct answer. The villagers have tremendous fear about the veil, partially because they do not understand why the Reverend has chosen to wear it. As such, their fear of the unknown changes their entire worldview.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Although the text emphasizes the role of the church in this community’s life, importance of religion to the community is not discussed in detail.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This is a correct answer. The villagers’ perception of Reverend Hooper entirely changes once he puts on the veil.</p> <p><b>E.</b> Although it can likely be inferred that Reverend Hooper was thoughtful in his decision to wear the veil, this idea is not explored in the text.</p> <p><b>F.</b> Although the story describes the activities surrounding a Sunday sermon, sin and guilt are not mentioned.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
2, Part B	E, F		<p><b>A.</b> This quotation describes some of the people who came to hear Parson Hooper preach; it does not reveal one of the themes of the text.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This quotation shows how the community acted as they waited for the Parson Hooper to appear. It does not reveal the role of fear or physical appearance in the text.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This quotation simply shows recognition of Parson Hooper’s appearance; it does not reveal one of the themes of the text.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This quotation explains why there was initially a question as to who was walking toward the community; it does not reveal the role fear or changing physical appearance plays in the text.</p> <p><b>E.</b> This is the correct answer. This quotation shows that the people no longer like the appearance of Parson Hooper; he is now “something awful,” simply because he has added a shroud covering his face to his wardrobe.</p> <p><b>F.</b> This is a correct answer. The veil, especially the uncertainty around what it is for and why the Reverend Hooper has put it on, creates great fear in the community, so much that one woman is “forced” to leave the church services.</p>
3	C	<b>RL.11-12.5,</b> <b>RL.11-12.1</b>	<p><b>A.</b> Although it is noted that the “spruce bachelors” admire the “pretty maidens,” the initial paragraph show how the community members interact on a Sunday morning in order to build a contrast between what life was like before and after the appearance of the veil.</p> <p><b>B.</b> The initial paragraph mentions the community members waiting for Parson Hooper, in order to build the anticipation for his appearance. This develops the idea that the veil is shocking, it does not provide hints as to why he is wearing the veil.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This is the correct answer. The flurry of activity as the townspeople gather for Sunday services reveals the importance of the church in the life of the community. This introduction helps develop the contrast between the villagers before and after the appearance of the veil, further developing the theme.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Although there is much activity described in paragraph one (the pulling of the bell-rope, the villagers gathering around the church, etc.), the activity is included to create a contrast with the lack of movement after Hooper appears with the veil. Further, there is no indication that this activity will be the subject of Parson Hooper’s sermon.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options		
			Paragraph	Tone	Supporting Quotation
4	See Right Column	RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.1	Paragraph 1	<p>The flurry of activity creates a positive and hopeful tone.</p> <p><i>Rationale: The initial paragraph is full of motion and joy, revealing the hope that the villagers felt at the start of a new Sabbath day.</i></p>	<p>“Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week-days.”</p> <p><i>Rationale: This quotation shows the hope felt by the young men as they admired the young woman. It also reveals the activity, the chance for young people to get together and “admire” one another.</i></p>
			Paragraphs 2-5	<p>The lack of movement creates a sense of confusion and misunderstanding.</p> <p><i>Rationale: As Reverend Hooper appears, all movement stops. The community members express confusion as to why he has the veil on his face. The tone shifts from positive to more uncertain.</i></p>	<p>“With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper’s pulpit.”</p> <p><i>Rationale: This quotation reveals the fact that the villagers are acting together (“with one accord”) and feeling great confusion as to the appearance of Parson Hooper.</i></p>
			Paragraph 6	<p>The description of the veil creates a bleak tone which heightens the suspense.</p> <p><i>Rationale: In paragraph 6, the tone of the text completely shifts to dark and gloomy. The suspense surrounding the meaning of the veil begins in this paragraph.</i></p>	<p>“On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This quotation describes the veil. It notes that it gave a “darkened” aspect to Reverend Hooper’s view, and “concealed” his face, building the suspense around the purpose and meaning of the veil.</i></p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
5	A	RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> This is the correct answer. This quotation shows that Hooper was a thoughtful man who looks kindly on his parishioners. In return, they look to him as the leader of their community, as is noted in the fact that they “...waited on the meeting-house steps.”</p> <p><b>B.</b> This quotation reveals the reaction that one of the villagers has upon seeing the veil. It does not show how Goodman Gray felt about Parson Hooper before the incident.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This quotation shows that the members of the community felt strongly about Parson Hooper, as the veil is surprising enough to provoke a reaction. It does not, however, reveal the types of feelings that Hooper has toward his community, or the depth of respect the members of the community felt for him.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This quotation gives some insight into Parson Hooper’s mind as he delivers the sermon. It does not, however, reveal what his relationship with the community was like before the incident.</p>
6, Part A	C		<p><b>A.</b> Although one may believe a supposition to be an inference that is likely true, a <i>supposition</i> is actually an incorrect guess.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Although a supposition may be based on factual understandings, a <i>supposition</i> is actually an incorrect guess.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This is the correct answer. A <i>supposition</i> is a guess, an incorrect hypothesis. The narrator notes that he made the <i>supposition</i> that he was dead, but quickly realized that to be untrue.</p> <p><b>D.</b> A <i>supposition</i> may be based on, or even about, a chance encounter. But, it is actually an incorrect guess.</p>
6, Part B	D, E, F	RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> This quotation describes how the narrator feels as he makes his supposition. It does not, however, describe what a supposition actually is.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This quotation describes what the narrator did as he made his supposition. It does not, however, describe what a supposition actually is.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This quotation describes what the narrator did as he made his supposition. It does not, however, describe what a supposition actually is.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This is a correct answer. This quotation discusses the kind of thinking, “reason,” the narrator used to realize that his supposition is incorrect.</p> <p><b>E.</b> This is a correct answer. This quotation reveals the narrator’s thinking as he realized that his supposition was, in fact, incorrect.</p> <p><b>F.</b> This is a correct answer. This quotation shows how the narrator was thinking as he tried to figure out where he was. It shows him understanding that his initial supposition, that he was dead, was incorrect.</p> <p><b>G.</b> This quotation shows how long the narrator was thinking when he made his supposition; it does not reveal what a supposition actually is.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
7	A	RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> This is the correct answer. These sentences describe the key events of the excerpt from Text 2.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Although these sentences mentions some of the central ideas from Text 2, the narrator does not explore the cell in the hopes of finding light; he explores the cell in the hopes of learning more about its size and shape.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Although these sentences contain some of the details in the text, they do not summarize the key events of the text. They focus, instead, on minor details.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Although these sentences contain some details from the text, they do not summarize the entire excerpt. Rather, they focus on minor details.</p>
8	B	RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> Although the speaker is very careful and thorough in his description of what he discovers as he explores the cell, the descriptions do not reveal frustration; rather, the descriptions show a curiosity mixed with fear as the narrator discovers where he is.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This is the correct answer. The speaker does not know where he is or what his cell is like. As such, his descriptions are colored with details that reveal the fear he feels as he wakes up and explores his cell.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Although the speaker reveals his own thoughts about his surroundings, his consideration of the cell is more limited to discovering what it is like than considering its contents.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Although the speaker explores his cell, he is not methodical in his approach. Further, he makes it clear that he does not know how long he will be there.</p>
9, Part A	A	RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.1	<p><b>A.</b> This is the correct answer. The fact that the narrator cannot see builds the tension of the text by preventing the narrator from understanding his surroundings. With every move he makes, his fear grows because he does not know what will happen to him or what dangers await.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Although the narrator is clearly disturbed by his surroundings, his inability to see does not make him frustrated or annoyed. Rather, it prevents him from understanding where he is, building his fear for what will happen next.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Although the narrator is clearly uncertain as to what the cell is exactly like, he is able to make some guesses in the final paragraphs. Further, he is not shown to be angry at his situation; rather, he is fearful of what is yet to come.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Although the narrator’s inability to see builds his uncertainty, he is not uncertain about who placed him in the cell. Rather, he knows he was placed there because of the “inquisitorial proceedings.”</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options									
9, Part B	E, F		<p><b>A.</b> Although this quotation mentions vision, it shows that the narrator wants to be able to see, not how his inability to see impacts the vision.</p> <p><b>B.</b> This shows the narrator’s fear of what will happen when he opens his eyes; it does not show what happens once he realizes that he cannot see.</p> <p><b>C.</b> This quotation shows the narrator not making any attempt to understand what is going on around him. He is not despairing yet; he is simply trying to understand his surroundings.</p> <p><b>D.</b> This is a correct answer. The narrator moves about his cell attempting to understand where he is, but he cannot see anything or find any “faint hope” of light.</p> <p><b>E.</b> This is a correct answer. The narrator’s inability to see makes the difficulty of finding a starting point to determine the size of the cell much more difficult than it should actually be.</p>									
10	See Right Column	RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.5, RL.11-12.1	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="613 596 1178 639">Question</th> <th data-bbox="1178 596 1948 639">Impact of the Question</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="613 639 1178 797">“Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence;--but where and in what state was I?”</td> <td data-bbox="1178 639 1948 797"> <p>The narrator has an idea as to where he is imprisoned.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator understands he is not dead. It reveals his understanding that he is in a prison somewhere.</i></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="613 797 1178 980">“Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months?”</td> <td data-bbox="1178 797 1948 980"> <p>The narrator does not know how much time has passed.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator does not know how much time has passed, as he does not understand when the next “sacrifice” will occur.</i></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="613 980 1178 1198">“Was I left to perish in starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me?”</td> <td data-bbox="1178 980 1948 1198"> <p>The narrator has some understanding that the future may not have a positive outcome.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator understands that he does not have much hope for his future. He predicts only negative outcomes, starving to death or something “even more fearful.”</i></p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Question	Impact of the Question	“Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence;--but where and in what state was I?”	<p>The narrator has an idea as to where he is imprisoned.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator understands he is not dead. It reveals his understanding that he is in a prison somewhere.</i></p>	“Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months?”	<p>The narrator does not know how much time has passed.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator does not know how much time has passed, as he does not understand when the next “sacrifice” will occur.</i></p>	“Was I left to perish in starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me?”	<p>The narrator has some understanding that the future may not have a positive outcome.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator understands that he does not have much hope for his future. He predicts only negative outcomes, starving to death or something “even more fearful.”</i></p>
Question	Impact of the Question											
“Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence;--but where and in what state was I?”	<p>The narrator has an idea as to where he is imprisoned.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator understands he is not dead. It reveals his understanding that he is in a prison somewhere.</i></p>											
“Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months?”	<p>The narrator does not know how much time has passed.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator does not know how much time has passed, as he does not understand when the next “sacrifice” will occur.</i></p>											
“Was I left to perish in starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me?”	<p>The narrator has some understanding that the future may not have a positive outcome.</p> <p><i>Rationale: This question shows that the narrator understands that he does not have much hope for his future. He predicts only negative outcomes, starving to death or something “even more fearful.”</i></p>											



Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
11, Part A	C	RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.1	<p>A. Although the cell is extremely dark, this does not appear to be related to how exhausted the narrator is.</p> <p>B. Although the narrator does fall asleep several times, he makes it clear that he does not know what the future holds. So, it is uncertain if the coming days will be exhausting or not.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The narrator cannot stay awake, which only further muddies his understanding of how much time has passed or where he is.</p> <p>D. Although the narrator hints that his prior experience has not been positive (through his vague memory of the experience at the inquisitorial proceedings), the constant falling asleep does not reveal what the ordeal actually was like.</p>
11, Part B	B		<p>A. This shows how the narrator acts upon waking; it does not reveal the confusion he experiences as a result of constantly falling asleep.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. His fear forces him to “collapse,” and he is further confused (“into insensibility”) as a result.</p> <p>C. This quotation simply shows the narrator as tired and falling asleep. It does not reveal how this impacts his understanding of his surroundings.</p> <p>D. Although this quotation reveals that the narrator is exhausted, it does not show how his exhaustion impacts his ability to understand where he is.</p>
12	C, F	RL.11-12.9, RL.11-12.1	<p>A. This quotation shows what the Reverend Hooper was wearing; it does not reveal the shared theme of the powerful role fear can have in a person’s or community’s life.</p> <p>B. This quotation shows how the Reverenced Hooper walked into the meeting hall; it does not reveal the shared theme of the powerful role fear can have in a person’s or community’s life.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. Just as the community fears Reverend Hooper, he too fears them. This quotation reveals the theme of the powerful role fear can have in a community, a theme that is shared with Text 2.</p> <p>D. This quotation shows the narrator remembering how he got to be in the cell; it does not reveal the shared theme of the powerful role fear can have in a person’s or community’s life.</p> <p>E. This quotation shows the narrator trying to understand where he is and why he is there. It does not reveal the shared theme that fear can have a powerful role in a person’s or community’s life.</p> <p>F. This is a correct answer. The narrator is terrified of moving forward. This quotation reveals the theme that fear can play a powerful role in a person’s life. This theme is shared with Text 1.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
13	<i>See Right Column</i>	<b>RL.11-12.9,</b> <b>RL.11-12.2,</b> <b>RL.11-12.1,</b> <b>W.11-12.9,</b> <b>W.11-12.4</b> <b>W.11-12.2,</b> <b>L.11-12.3,</b> <b>L.11-12.2,</b> <b>L.11-12.1</b>	<p>A top score response will include:</p> <p>In Text 1, Hawthorne creates a shift in tone and builds suspense to develop the theme of fear of the unknown. This shift allows the theme to build throughout the text, to the terror that is felt by the parishioners (and perhaps by the Reverend himself).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The text begins with the joy and hope of a bright Sabbath day. The author uses words like “bright faces” and “merrily beside” to emphasize the happiness the community feels in anticipation of the Sabbath services.</li> <li>• The movement and action stops when Parson Hooper enters, and the village is shocked at his outward appearance (paragraphs 2-5).</li> <li>• The tone of the text shifts as the veil is described, and a sense of foreboding builds. Hawthorne uses words like “darkened,” “gloomy,” and describes Hooper’s pace as “slow and quiet” to highlight the distinct shift. This tonal shift introduces the fear, which stands in stark contrast to the earlier joy.</li> <li>• As the parson progresses into the church and begins the service, Hawthorne’s description of the reaction of the oldest parishioner serves to build the fear. The excerpt ends with both the questions of the parishioners as well as the question Hooper asks of himself. This serves to highlight the fear of the unknown, and demonstrates the idea that this fear is felt by BOTH the parishioners (towards the veil) and Hooper (towards “the dread Being whom he was addressing.”)</li> </ul> <p>In Text 2, however, Poe introduces the fear almost in the first line, and the confusion the narrator feels about his surroundings only serves to build the fear of death throughout the excerpt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The text begins with the narrator’s lack of understanding of his location, and opening his eyes to blackness. The narrator wants to “employ his vision” but he cannot because it is so dark.</li> <li>• The narrator introduces some context for where he is, by describing his limited memory of the hearing, though the confusion continues because the speaker does not explain WHY he was on trial beyond the “inquisitorial proceedings.”</li> <li>• The confusion continues as the narrator begins to examine his cell; he cannot complete the circuit, but the reader does not know why he is so exhausted (paragraph 4).</li> <li>• The excerpt concludes with a glimmer of understanding, in that the speaker discovers the size of the cell, though even that is left vague, as the speaker notes that “...I could form no guess at the shape of the vault...”</li> </ul>

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

### Mini-Assessment Design and English Language Learners

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Feature a variety of academic words:*

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

### **Administration Guidelines for ELLs**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation

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

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

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

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

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

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_B.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf)

### **Sample Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing**

**Prompts:** [http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring\\_Rubric\\_for\\_Text-Based\\_Writing\\_Prompts.pdf](http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf)