

Assessment Passage Quality Criteria Checklist – ELA/literacy Grades 3-12

The following criteria are designed to help reviewers determine if a passage aligns to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The criteria to evaluate the passages are set up in a gated manner so that reviewers can quickly and systematically determine if and where the passage strays from the expectations of the CCSS.

Review the text against the criteria in order, and place a “Y” or an “N” in the middle column, labeled “Y/N”. Please use the “Explanation” column to clarify when a passage receives an “N.” If a criterion does not apply to a particular passage, leave the columns blank.

If a text does not meet all of the criteria in the first gate, it should be removed from consideration. If it does meet the criteria in the first gate, review it according to the criteria in the second gate. Then make a recommendation whether to accept, accept with conditions, or reject the passage.

The third and fourth gates apply to pairs or groups of texts. Each text should pass through the first and second gates before being reviewed against the criteria in the third and fourth gates. Again, reviewers will be asked to make a judgment whether to accept, accept with conditions, or reject the passage pairs or multi-stimulus texts.

Criteria for Evaluating Texts for CCSS-Aligned Assessments		
1. FIRST GATE: SINGLE TEXT – The text must meet all of the criteria in the first gate to be considered further.	Y/N	Explanation
1.A Text Quality: Is the text worthy of close analytic reading? A text worthy of close reading exemplifies all of the following traits: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illustrates superior, professional-quality literary or informational writing, e.g., demonstrates coherence, thorough development of ideas, clear use of evidence and details, and effective structure. 2. Reflects a professional editing process, e.g., demonstrates mature use of syntax and diction and is polished and error-free. 3. If an excerpt from a larger work, carries a sense of completeness and maintains the author’s original intent. 4. If informational text, is content rich, factually accurate, and a strong example of the text genre required by the Standards. 		
1.B Text Type: Does the text meet the specific requirements of the task model, blueprint, or specifications?		
1.C Text Complexity: Are at least two quantitative measures and a qualitative analysis included with the text, justifying its inclusion in the grade band [see Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity for more information on Common Core grade-bands: http://corestandards.org/resources]		
1.D Potential for Questions Worth Asking: Does the text contain testable points that will assess the Standards, evidence statements, and/or targets to be assessed?		
If the text does not have a “Y” in all of the criteria above, remove it from consideration. If the text does meet the criteria in the first gate, proceed to the second gate.		
2. SECOND GATE: SINGLE TEXT – A text that passes the first gate must meet the following criteria, as applicable:	Y/N	Explanation
2.A Exceptional quality: Is the text an exceptional example of the quality of the passages that should be used in assessments? (Of the texts that made it through the first gates, “exceptional” is defined as being in the top 25 percent of the selections.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, place a “Y” in the column to the right to request top priority for seeking and paying for copyright permission and for special consideration if there are potential bias and sensitivity. • If the text is not in the top 25 percent, place an “N” in the column to the right and justify retaining the text for use on a CCSS 		

assessment in the “Explanation” column.		
2.B Grade Placement: Do the two quantitative measures and qualitative analysis support the text placement in the proposed grade?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, place a “Y” in the column to the right. • If a different grade would be appropriate, place an “N” in the column to the right and indicate the preferred grade and reasons for the change in the Explanation column. 		
2.C Bias and Sensitivity: Is the passage expected to pass a bias and sensitivity review?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, place a “Y” in the column to the right. • If there are potential concerns, place an “N” in the column to the right and note the concerns in the Explanation column. If the text is in the top 25%, add comments to justify keeping the text despite concerns. 		
2.D Visual Elements: If there are visual elements, do they add value by aiding student understanding of the text or by providing important additional information? (Merely decorative elements should not be used.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the visual elements add value, place a “Y” in the column to the right. • If the visual elements do not add value, place an “N” in the column to the right and recommend replacing or omitting the element(s) in the Explanation column. 		
2.E Text structure: If an informational text is structured chronologically, is there sufficient justification for its use (e.g., rich enough historical account, exceptional text quality, numerous testable points)? (Most of the informational texts on CCSS assessments should use informational rather than narrative structures.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the text has a narrative structure but has sufficient justification for inclusion on a test, place a “Y” in the column to the right. Give the reasons for retaining the text in the Explanation column. • If the text has a narrative structure but should not be used, place an “N” in the column to the right. 		
2.F Word Count: Does the text fall within the acceptable range for word count?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, place a “Y” in the column to the right. • If the text does not fall within the word count limits, place an “N” in the column to the right. In the Explanation column, indicate whether or not edits could be made for length. (Edits for length usually should occur at the beginning or end of the text, not in patchwork fashion, and they must be done without distortion of the author’s intent. 		
2.G Introductory text: If the text is presented with introductory material (e.g., information about the author or the context in which the text is written), does the introduction avoid explaining the meaning of the text or giving students answers to questions?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, place a “Y” in the column to the right. • If the introductory text provides too much information, suggest edits in the Explanation column. 		
Accepted (all “Y’s”) <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted conditionally, with comments to be addressed <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/>		

3. THIRD GATE: PAIRS OR MULTI-TEXT STIMULI – To be evaluated by the criteria in the third gate, texts must have been accepted after the first two gates. Texts must meet all of the criteria in this gate to be considered further.	Y/N	Explanation
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3.A Text Genres/Characteristics: Do the texts or other stimuli in the set clearly reflect the specific requirements of the relevant paired or multi-text standards or targets, the item or task model, and/or the test blueprint? For an explanation of CCSS requirements for paired or multi-text stimuli, see the website www.ccssitemdevelopment.org and download the Paired Passages Essay: http://www.ccssitemdevelopment.org/downloads/Essay%20on%20Paired%20Passages_September%202012.pdf		
3.B Relationships Among Texts: Do the texts/stimuli have a clear and meaningful relationship, with testable points arising from significant points of comparison or integration of ideas?		
3.C Video or Audio: If the text is a video or audio stimulus, does it meet the same quality criteria as for other texts? In addition, is the quality of sound and/or video appropriate for use on assessments?		
If, as a set, the texts do not have a "Y" in all of the criteria above, remove them from consideration. If the texts do meet the criteria in the third gate, proceed to the fourth gate		
4. FOURTH GATE: PAIRS OR MULTI-TEXT STIMULI – A set of texts that passes the third gate must meet the following criteria, as applicable.	Y/N	Explanation
4.A Anchor Text: For tasks that simulate research, is one text clearly appropriate to be the anchor text, providing foundational knowledge and leading naturally to additional reading and exploration? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, place a "Y" in the column to the right. • If the first text does not meet the requirements for an anchor text, place an "N" in the column to the right and suggest a reassignment for an existing text in the Explanation column or remove the set from consideration until an appropriate anchor passage is located. 		
4.B Audio or Visual Elements: Do the multimedia elements add value to the set? (Audio or visual elements should provide testable points of comparison or integration, rather than simply entertainment.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, please a "Y" in the column to the right. • If the audio or visual material does not add value, make recommendations for changes in the Explanation column. 		
Accepted (all "Y's") Accepted conditionally, with comments to be addressed Rejected		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>