K CC Sample Tasks

Reading Literary

#5 Students read two texts on the topic of pancakes (Tomie DePaola’s *Pancakes for Breakfast* and Christina Rossetti’s “Mix a Pancake”) and distinguish between the text that is a *storybook* and the text that is a *poem*.

#7Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) *describe the relationship between* key events *of the overall story* of *Little Bear* by Else Holmelund Minarik to the corresponding scenes illustrated by Maurice Sendak.

# 9 Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) *compare and contrast the adventures and experiences* of the owl in Arnold Lobel’s *Owl at Home* to those of the owl in Edward Lear’s poem “The Owl and the Pussycat.”

Reading Informational

#2 Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) read “Garden Helpers” in *National Geographic Young Explorers* and demonstrate their understanding of *the main idea of the text*—not all bugs are bad—by *retelling key details*.

#4 Students *ask and answer questions about* animals (e.g., hyena, alligator, platypus, scorpion) they encounter in Steve Jenkins and Robin Page’s *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?*

#3 Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) *describe the connection between* drag and flying in Fran Hodgkins and True Kelley’s *How People Learned to Fly* by performing the “arm spinning” experiment described in the text.

#6 Students identify Edith Thacher Hurd as the *author* of *Starfish* and Robin Brickman as the *illustrator* of the text and *define* the role and materials *each* contributes to the *text*.

Grade 1 CC Sample Tasks

Reading Literary

#1 Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) when listening to Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House in the Big Woods ask questions about* the events that occur (such as the encounter with the bear) and *answer* by offering *key details* drawn from the *text*.

#2 Students *retell* Arnold Lobel’s *Frog and Toad Together* while *demonstrating* their *understanding of a central message or lesson of the story* (e.g., how friends are able to solve problems together or how hard work pays off).

#3 After listening to L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, students *describe* the *characters* of Dorothy, Auntie Em, and Uncle Henry, the *setting* of Kansan prairie, and *major events* such as the arrival of the cyclone.

#4 Students *identify words and phrases* within Molly Bang’s *The Paper Crane* that *appeal to the senses* and *suggest the feelings* of happiness experienced by the owner of the restaurant (e.g., clapped, played, loved, overjoyed).

#6 Students *identify* the *points* at which different characters are *telling the story* in the *Finn Family Moomintroll* by Tove Jansson.

Reading Informational

#1 After listening to Gail Gibbons’ *Fire! Fire!*, students *ask questions about* how firefighters respond to a fire and *answer* using *key details* from the *text*.

#5 Students *locate key facts or information in* Claire Llewellyn’s *Earthworms* by *using various text features (headings, table of contents, glossary)* found in the text.

#7 Students use the *illustrations* along with *textual details* in Wendy Pfeffer’s *From Seed to Pumpkin* to *describe* the *key idea* of how a pumpkin grows.

#8 Students *identify* the reasons Clyde Robert Bulla gives in his book *A Tree Is a Plant* in *support* of his *point* about the function of roots in germination.

Grade 2

Literary

#2 Students read *fables* and *folktales from diverse cultures* that represent various origin tales, such as Rudyard Kipling’s “How the Camel Got His Hump” and Natalie Babbitt’s *The Search for Delicious*, and paraphrase *their central message, lesson, or moral*.

#3 Students *describe how the character* of Bud in Christopher Paul Curtis’ story *Bud, Not Buddy responds* to a *major event* in his life of being placed in a foster home.

#5 Students *describe the overall story structure* of *The Thirteen Clocks* by James Thurber, *describing how* the interactions of the characters of the Duke and Princess Saralinda *introduce the beginning of the story* and how the suspenseful plot comes to an *end*.

Informational

#1 Students read Aliki’s description of *A Medieval Feast* and *demonstrate* their *understanding* of all that goes into such an *event* by *asking questions* pertaining to *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* such a meal happens and by *answering using key details*.

#4 Students *determine the meanings of words and phrases* encountered in Sarah L. Thomson’s *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*, such as *cub*, *den*, blubber, and *the Arctic*.

#6 Students read Selby Beeler’s *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions Around the World* and *identify what* Beeler *wants to answer* as well as explain the *main purpose of the text*.

#7 Students *explain how* the *specific image* of a soap bubble and *other* accompanying *illustrations* in Walter Wick’s *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder contribute to and clarify* their understanding of bubbles and water.

#8 Students *describe the reasons* behind Joyce Milton’s statement that bats are nocturnal in her *Bats: Creatures of the Night* and how she *supports the points* she is *making in the text*.

Grade 3

Literary

#1 Students *ask and answer questions* regarding the plot of Patricia MacLachlan’s *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, *explicitly referring to the book* to form the *basis for their* answers.

#4 Students read Paul Fleischman’s poem “Fireflies,” determining the meaning of *words and phrases in* the poem, particularly focusing on identifying his use of *nonliteral language* (e.g., “light is the ink we use”) and talking about how it suggests meaning.

#6 When discussing E. B. White’s book *Charlotte’s Web*, students *distinguish their own point of view* regarding Wilbur the Pig *from* that of Fern Arable as well as *from* that of *the narrator*.

#7 Students *explain* how Mark Teague’s *illustrations* contribute to what is conveyed in Cynthia Rylant’s *Poppleton in Winter* to *create the mood and emphasize aspects of characters and setting* in the story.

Informational

#2 Students *explain how the main idea* that Lincoln had “many faces” in Russell Freedman’s *Lincoln: A Photobiography* is *supported by key details* in the text.

#3 Students read Robert Coles’s retelling of *a series of historical events* in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. *Using* their knowledge of how *cause and effect* gives order to *events*, they *use* specific *language* to *describe* the *sequence* of events that leads to Ruby desegregating her school.

#5 Students *use text features*, such as the table of contents and headers, found in Aliki’s text *Ah, Music!* to identify relevant sections and *locate information relevant to a given topic* (e.g., rhythm, instruments, harmony) *quickly and efficiently*.

Grade 4

Literary

#1 Students *explain* the selfish behavior by Mary and make *inferences* regarding the impact of the cholera outbreak in Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden* by *explicitly referring to details and examples from the text*.

#3 Students read Natalie Babbitt’s *Tuck Everlasting* and *describe in depth* the idyllic *setting* of the story, *drawing on specific details in the text*, from the color of the sky to the sounds of the pond, to describe the scene.  
#5 Students *refer to the structural elements (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) of* Ernest Lawrence Thayer’s “Casey at the Bat” when analyzing the *poem* and contrasting the impact and *differences* of those *elements* to a *prose* summary of the *poem*.

Informational

#2 Students *determine the main idea* of Colin A. Ronan’s “Telescopes” and create a *summary* by *explaining how key details support* his distinctions regarding different types of telescopes.

#4 Students *determine the meaning of domain-specific words or phrases*, such as *crust, mantle, magma*, and *lava*, and important *general academic words and phrases* that appear in Seymour Simon’s Volcanoes.   
#6 Students *compare and contrast a firsthand account* of African American ballplayers in the Negro Leagues to *a secondhand account* of their treatment found in books such as Kadir Nelson’s *We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball*, attending to the *focus* of each account *and the information provided* by each.

#7 Students *interpret* the visual *chart* that accompanies Steve Otfinoski’s *The Kid’s Guide to Money: Earning It, Saving It, Spending It, Growing It, Sharing It* and *explain how the information* found within it *contributes to an understanding of* how to create a budget.

#8 Students *explain how* Melvin Berger *uses reasons and evidence* in his book *Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet* to *support particular points* regarding the topology of the planet.

Grade 5

Literary

#2 Students *summarize* the plot of Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s *The Little Prince* and then reflect on the *challenges* facing the *characters in the story* while employing those and other *details in the text* to discuss the value of inquisitiveness and exploration as *a theme* of the *story*.

#4 Students *determine the meaning of* the *metaphor* of a cat in Carl Sandburg’s poem “Fog” and contrast that *figurative language* to the meaning of the *simile* in William Blake’s “The Echoing Green.”

#6 Students *describe how* the *narrator’s point of view* in Walter Farley’s *The Black Stallion influences how events are described* and how the reader perceives the character of Alexander Ramsay, Jr.

#9 Students *compare and contrast* coming-of-age *stories* by Christopher Paul Curtis (*Bud, Not Buddy*) and Louise Erdrich (*The Birchbark House*) by identifying *similar themes* and examining the stories’ *approach* to the topic of growing up.

Informational

#1 Students *quote accurately and explicitly from* Leslie Hall’s “Seeing Eye to Eye” to *explain statements* they make and ideas they *infer* regarding sight and light.

#3 Students *explain the relationship between* time and clocks using *specific information* drawn from Bruce Koscielniak’s *About Time: A First Look at Time and Clocks*.

#5 Students identify *the overall structure of ideas, concepts, and information* in Seymour Simon’s *Horses* (based on factors such as their speed and color) and *compare and contrast* that scheme to the one employed by Patricia Lauber in her book *Hurricanes: Earth’s Mightiest Storms*.

Grade 6 CC Sample Tasks

Literary

#1 Students *cite explicit textual evidence* as well as draw *inferences* about the drake and the duck from Katherine Paterson’s *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks to support* their *analysis* of the perils of vanity.

#5 Students *analyze how* the opening *stanza* of Robert Frost’s“The Road Not Taken” *structures* the rhythm and meter for the poem and how the *themes* introduced by the speaker *develop* over the course *of the text*.

#6 Students *explain how* Sandra Cisneros’s choice of words *develops the point of view of the* young *speaker in* her story “Eleven.”

#7 Students *compare and contrast* the effect Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *poem* “Paul Revere’s Ride” has on them to the effect they experience from a *multimedia* dramatization of the event presented in an interactive digital map (http://www.paulreverehouse.org/ride/), *analyzing* the impact of different *techniques* employed that are *unique to each medium*.

Informational

#3 Students *analyze in detail how* the early years of Harriet Tubman (as related by author Ann Petry) contributed to her later becoming a conductor on the Underground Railroad, attending to how the author *introduces, illustrates, and elaborates* upon the events in Tubman’s life.

#8 Students *trace* the line of *argument* in Winston Churchill’s “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” address to Parliament and *evaluate* his *specific claims* and opinions *in the text*, *distinguishing* which *claims* are *supported by* facts, *reasons, and evidence*, and which *are not*.

Grade 7 CC Sample Tasks

Literary

#3 Students *analyze* how the playwright Louise Fletcher uses *particular elements of drama* (e.g., setting and dialogue) to create dramatic tension in her play *Sorry, Wrong Number*.

#9 Students *compare and contrast* Laurence Yep’s *fictional portrayal of* Chinese immigrants in turn-of-the-twentieth-century San Francisco in *Dragonwings* to *historical accounts of the same period* (using materials detailing the 1906 San Francisco earthquake) in order to glean a deeper *understanding* of *how authors use or alter historical sources* to create a sense of *time* and *place* as well as make fictional *characters* lifelike and real.

Informational

#4 Students *determine* the *figurative and connotative meanings* of *words* such as *wayfaring, laconic*, and *taciturnity* as well as of *phrases* such as *hold his peace* in John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*. They *analyze* how Steinbeck’s *specific word choices* and diction impact the *meaning and tone* of his writing and the characterization of the individuals and places he describes.

#6 Students *determine* the *point of view* of John Adams in his “Letter on Thomas Jefferson” and *analyze how* he *distinguishes* his position *from* an alternative approach articulated by Thomas Jefferson.

Grade 8 CC Sample Tasks

Reading Literary

#2 Students *summarize the development* of the morality of Tom Sawyer in Mark Twain’s novel of the same name and analyze its connection to themes of accountability and authenticity by noting how it is conveyed *through characters, setting, and plot*.

#4 Students *analyze* Walt Whitman’s“O Captain! My Captain!” to uncover the poem’s *analogies* and *allusions*. They *analyze the impact of specific word choices* by Whitman, such as *rack* and *grim*, and *determine* how they contribute to the overall *meaning and tone* of the poem.

Informational

#2 Students *provide an objective summary of* Frederick Douglass’s Narrative. They *analyze* how *the central idea* regarding the evils of slavery is *conveyed through supporting ideas* and *developed over the course of the text*.

9-10 CC Sample Tasks

Reading Literary

#2 Students *analyze in detail the theme* of relationships between mothers and daughters and how that *theme develops over the course of* Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*. Students search the text for *specific details* that show how the *theme emerges* and *how it is shaped and refined* over the course of the novel.

#3 Students *analyze how* the *character* of Odysseus from Homer’s *Odyssey*—a “man of twists and turns”—reflects *conflicting motivations* through his *interactions with other characters* in the epic poem. They articulate how his conflicting loyalties during his long and complicated journey home from the Trojan War both *advance the plot* of Homer’s epic and *develop themes*.

#5 Students *analyze* how Michael Shaara in his Civil War novel *The Killer Angels* creates a sense of *tension* and even *surprise* regarding the outcome of events at the Battle of Gettysburg through *pacing, ordering of events,and* the overarching *structure* of the novel.

#7 Students *analyze how* artistic *representations* of Ramses II (the pharaoh who reigned during the time of Moses) vary, basing their analysis on *what is emphasized or absent in different* treatments of the pharaoh in works of art (e.g., images in the British Museum) and in Percy Bysshe Shelley’s poem “Ozymandias.”

#9 Students *analyze how* the Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa in his film *Throne of Blood draws on and transforms Shakespeare’s play Macbeth* in order to develop a similar plot set in feudal Japan.

Reading Informational

#3 Students *analyze how* Abraham Lincoln in his “Second Inaugural Address” *unfolds* his examination of the *ideas* that led to the Civil War, paying particular attention to *the order in which the points are made, how* Lincoln *introduces and develops* his points, *and the connections that are drawn between them*.

#6 Students *determine the purpose* and *point of view* in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, “I Have a Dream” speech and *analyze* how King *uses rhetoric to advance* his position.

#8 Students *evaluate* the *argument and specific claims* about the “spirit of liberty” in Learned Hand’s “I Am an American Day Address,” *assessing the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and the validity of his reasoning*.

#9 Students compare George Washington’s Farewell Address to other foreign policy statements, such as the Monroe Doctrine, and *analyze* how both texts *address similar themes and concepts* regarding “entangling alliances.”

11-12 CC Sample Tasks

Reading Literary

#1 Students *cite strong and thorough textual evidence* from John Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” to *support* their *analysis* of what the poem says explicitly about the urn as well as what can be *inferred* about the urn from *evidence* in the poem. Based on their close reading, students *draw inferences from the text* regarding what meanings the figures decorating the urn convey as well as noting *where the* poem *leaves matters about the urn and its decoration uncertain*.

#2 Students *provide an objective summary* of F. Scott’s Fitzgerald’s *Great Gatsby* wherein they analyze how *over the course of the text* different characters try to escape the worlds they come from, including whose help they get and whether anybody succeeds in escaping.

#3 Students *analyze* the first impressions given of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet in the opening chapter of *Pride and Prejudice* based on *the setting* and how the *characters are introduced*. By comparing these first impressions with their later understanding based on how *the action is ordered* and the *characters develop* over the course of the novel, students understand *the impact of* Jane Austen’s *choices* in *relating elements of a story*.

#4 Students compare and contrast the *figurative and connotative meanings* as well as *specific word choices* in John Donne’s “Valediction Forbidding Mourning” and Emily Dickinson’s “Because I Would Not Stop for Death” in order to *determine how* the metaphors of the carriage and the compass *shape the meaning and tone* of each poem. Students *analyze* the ways both poets use *language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful* to convey the *multiple meanings* regarding death contained in each *poem*.

#5 Students *analyze* how Anton Chekhov’s choice of *structuring* his *story* “Home” by *beginning* in “midstream” *shapes the meaning of the text* and *contributes to its overall* narrative arc.

#6 Students *analyze* Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Moliere’s *Tartuffe* for how *what is directly stated in a text differs from what is really meant*, comparing and contrasting the *point of view* adopted by the protagonist in each work.

#7 Students compare two or more *recorded or live productions* of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* to the written text, *evaluating* how *each version interprets the source text* and debating which aspects of the enacted *interpretations* of the play best capture a particular character, scene, or theme.

#9 Students compare and contrast how the protagonists of Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd* and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter* maintain their integrity when confronting authority, and they relate their *analysis* of that *theme* to other portrayals in *nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature* they have read.

Reading Informational

#2 Students *provide an objective summary* of Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* wherein they *analyze how* he articulates *the central ideas* of living simply and being self-reliant and how those ideas *interact and build on one another* (e.g., “According to Thoreau, how specifically does moving toward complexity in one’s life undermine self-reliance?”)

#4 Students *analyze how* the *key term success* is interpreted, *used, and refined over the course of* G. K. Chesterton’s essay “The Fallacy of Success.”

#6 Students determine Richard Hofstadter’s *purpose and point of view* in his “Abraham Lincoln and the Self-Made Myth,” *analyzing* how both Hofstadter’s *style* and *content contribute* to the *eloquent* and *powerful* contrast he draws between the younger, ambitious Lincoln and the sober, more reflective man of the presidential years.

#8 Students *delineate* and *evaluate* the *argument* that Thomas Paine makes in *Common Sense*. They *assess the reasoning* present in his analysis, including the *premises and purposes* of his essay.

#9 Students *analyze* Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, identifying its *purpose* and evaluating *rhetorical features* such as the listing of grievances. Students compare and contrast the *themes* and argument found there to those of other *U.S. documents of historical and literary significance*, such as the Olive Branch Petition.