



**The New York City
Department of Education**

**Grade 4 English Language Arts
(ELA) Benchmark Assessment**

**Teacher Guide
Fall 2012**

November 26, 2012–January 11, 2013



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Test Design and Instructional Purpose

The English Language Arts (ELA) Benchmark Assessment is designed to help you collect *some* information about your students' progress toward meeting the Common Core expectations for fourth grade.

There are two ELA Benchmark Assessments available—one for the fall and one for the winter. The question types and complexity of the texts reflect what we anticipate will be on the Grade 4 Common Core Learning Standards-aligned New York State test over the next two years. The test contains the following item types:

- Multiple choice
- Short answer constructed response
- Extended response/performance task

These items are designed to provide evidence of students' skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and answering text-dependent questions. The extended response/performance task items require comparison, analysis, synthesis, and/or opinion or argumentation.

These Benchmark Assessments provide an objective measure of your students' performance on cognitively rich tasks based on complex grade-level texts without scaffolding or support. In other words, these assessments provide information on what your students can accomplish independently and their mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards. They look at how well students can transfer skills they've learned to new situations. Additionally, the assessments allow grade-level teams to look at student work across classes to identify learning trends and to develop strategies to address key areas of need.

No single test, including this Benchmark Assessment, can cover all skills and concepts contained within the Common Core Learning Standards. Therefore, it is best to analyze this assessment along with evidence collected from daily observation, class work, homework, and school- or teacher-made assessments.

Test Content

The ELA Benchmark Assessment is designed to take two full 40-minute class periods. On the first day, students read two passages and answer 6–10 multiple-choice questions and two short-response questions. On the second day, students re-read the same two passages and complete an extended response/performance task linking the two passages.

The passages and questions of the ELA Benchmark Assessment are designed to embody three key shifts at the heart of the ELA Literacy Standards:

- *Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text(s).* The multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response/performance task questions are designed to provide students opportunities to make explicit the evidence that supports their close analysis of a specific text and, in some cases, of multiple texts.

- *Regular practice with complex text and academic vocabulary.* Texts were selected in accordance with the quantitative and qualitative requirements of the Common Core Learning Standards.
- *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts.* Text passages represent a greater emphasis on nonfiction and informational texts.¹

Passages

This Grade 4 Benchmark Assessment has two passages:

- *Nothing:* a myth about a bored king who learns the value of work.
- *King Midas and the Golden Touch:* a myth about a greedy king who learns that wealth does not buy true happiness.

These passages were chosen to align to genres and text types specified in the Grade 4 PARCC Model Content Framework.²

Standards Alignment

The items associated with this assessment are aligned to the following Common Core Learning Standards:

4.RL.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

4.RL.2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

4.RL.3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

4.RL.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

4.W.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

¹ In Grades 3–5, the Fall Benchmark Assessments focus on fiction passages, and the Winter Benchmark Assessments focus on informational and nonfiction passages. In Grades 6–8, both the Fall and Winter Benchmark Assessments focus on informational and nonfiction passages.

² The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a collaborative effort among 23 states to develop a common set of K–12 assessments in English and Math that align to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The PARCC Model Content Frameworks, designed by content experts, are voluntary resources to support implementation of the CCSS and to guide development of assessments in Grades 3–12. For more information, refer to:
http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCC%20MCF%20for%20ELA%20Literacy_Fall%202011%20Release%20%28rev%29.pdf

4.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

4.L.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Rubrics for Scoring Short-Response and Extended-Response/Performance Task Items

Item # 4

Key Elements	
<u>How the first king may behave if he became king again:</u>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He would enjoy his free time and would not spend all of his money trying to entertain himself. 2. He would cherish what he has. 3. If he once again spent money on things that did not make him happy, he would realize his mistake and have another new outlook on life. 4. or any other reasonable text-based response 	
Criteria	
2	<p>Proficient A <i>proficient</i> response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to determine the effect of something that happened • Includes specific inferences that make clear reference to the text • Adequately supports the inferences with clearly relevant details from the text
1	<p>Partial A <i>partial</i> response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives limited evidence of the ability to determine the effect of something that happened • Includes some inferences that make reference to the text • Supports the inferences with limited details from the text
0	<p>No credit A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to determine the effect of something that happened, includes no relevant information from the text, or is vague.</p>
Exemplars	
2	<p>If given the chance to be king again, I believe the king would act differently than he did in the beginning of the story. He would not waste his money on things and activities such as smashing a glass house or setting off fireworks to get rid of his boredom. Instead, he would enjoy doing nothing and appreciate what he has.</p>
1	<p>The king would stop spending all his money so that he wouldn't lose his kingdom.</p>
0	<p>He blew up the circus.</p>

Item # 9

Key Elements	
<u>Details from the story:</u>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dionysius sees King Midas rolling in a great pile of gold coins. He looks like a pig wallowing in mud. The ridiculous sight makes Dionysius laugh, telling the king he looks silly. 2. Dionysius thinks Midas is foolish for believing more gold would make him happier. 3. Dionysius thinks Midas is being selfish/greedy. 4. or any other reasonable text-based response 	
Criteria	
2	<p>Proficient A <i>proficient</i> response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to describe a character, setting, or event in a story • Includes specific inferences that make clear reference to the text • Adequately supports the inferences with clearly relevant details, examples, and/or information from the text
1	<p>Partial A <i>partial</i> response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives limited evidence of the ability to describe a character, setting, or event in a story • Includes some inferences that make reference to the text • Supports the inferences with limited details, examples, or information from the text
0	<p>No credit A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to describe a character, setting, or event in a story, includes no relevant information from the text, or is vague.</p>
Exemplars	
2	Dionysius feels that the king acts both selfishly and foolishly over his love of gold. After seeing the king roll around in a pile of gold coins, Dionysius suggests to the king that it would be better to give some money to poor, hungry people instead of keeping it himself. He feels that King Midas is foolish for thinking that more gold would make him happier. So Dionysius teaches King Midas a lesson by giving him the Golden Touch.
1	Dionysius thinks that King Midas is greedy because of his love of gold.
0	Everything the king touched turned to gold.

Item # 10

Key Elements	
<p><u>Lessons from "Nothing":</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. True happiness lies in being happy with what you have.2. Always wanting more won't bring you happiness.3. or any other reasonable text-based response <p><u>Supporting details from "Nothing":</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The king was bored with constant entertainment.2. He only truly became happy when he started to enjoy his free time.3. or any other reasonable text-based response <p><u>Lessons from "King Midas and the Golden Touch":</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Money can't buy happiness.2. Money isn't everything.3. Some things are more important than money.4. or any other reasonable text-based response <p><u>Supporting details from "King Midas and the Golden Touch":</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. He realizes that having all the gold in the world makes him miserable if he can't enjoy the things he truly cares about.2. Everything he enjoyed in life—his garden, dog, food, daughter—turns to gold, depriving him of joy.3. He gives away all his money to his people, so no one goes hungry or is poor.4. He is no longer the richest king, but everyone is happy.5. or any other reasonable text-based response	
Criteria	
4	<p>Meets Standard (Meets criteria at grade level):</p> <p>Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides a clear introduction to topic or text.• States an opinion.• Creates organizational structure that groups related ideas to support the writer's purpose. <p>Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details. <p>Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>). <p>Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

	<p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3	<p>Near Standard (Mostly meets criteria):</p> <p>Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a mostly clear introduction to topic or text. • States an opinion. • Creates organizational structure that mostly groups related ideas to support the writer’s purpose. <p>Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reasons that are mostly supported by facts and details. <p>Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly links opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>). <p>Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a concluding statement or section mostly related to the opinion presented. <p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates fairly good command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
2	<p>Approaching Standard (Partially meets criteria):</p> <p>Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a partially clear introduction to topic or text. • States an opinion. • Creates organizational structure that partially groups related ideas to support the writer’s purpose. <p>Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reasons that are partially supported by facts and details. <p>Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially links opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).

	<p>Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a concluding statement or section partially related to the opinion presented. <p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
1	<p>Below Standard (Barely meets criteria):</p> <p>Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a vague introduction to topic or text. Opinion unclearly stated. Provides only general text structure or organizational framework (e.g., intro/body). No indication of writer’s purpose. <p>Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides reasons largely unsupported by facts and details. <p>Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing contains few explicit connections among opinion and reasons. <p>Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a concluding statement or section barely related to the opinion presented. <p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
0	<p>Far Below Standard:</p> <p>Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides no introduction to topic or text. Statement not constructed as opinion. Writing contains little, if any, organizational structure. No indication of writer’s purpose. <p>Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides no reasons that are supported by facts and details.

	<p>Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides little, if any, explicit connection among statements. <p>Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No concluding statement or section provided. <p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates no command of standard English writing mechanics.
Exemplars	
4	<p>I would suggest the story "King Midas and the Golden Touch." I think the lesson that some things are more important than money is an important one in order to be a good king. In the story, King Midas learned that when his wish was granted, and what he loved turned to gold when he touched it, he could no longer enjoy it. If all the king cares about is money, he won't enjoy his life or be able to do good things for his people. He'll just spend all of his time thinking about how to get more money. Instead, he should share what he has and then he and his people will be happy.</p> <p>The lesson in "Nothing" is that you should be happy with what you have and enjoy your free time. The first king loses everything because he does not follow this. I think this is not as important a lesson for the young king, because it is mostly about how you can be happy with your life, but not necessarily how to rule wisely.</p>
3	<p>The young king should read the story "King Midas and the Golden Touch," because the king learns how to make everyone in his kingdom happy. When the golden touch makes him miserable, he gives away all of his money to his people. If everyone in the king's land had food, clothing and shelter, they would be happy and life would be peaceful.</p> <p>The other story doesn't tell how to be a wise ruler, it only tells how to live a happy life by not wanting more than what you already have. So I would not suggest "Nothing."</p>
2	<p>The story about King Midas can tell the young king how to make his people happy, by not keeping all of his money to himself. Then they will have what they need and he will have a happy kingdom. The story "Nothing" would help him be a better king if he is bored with everything around him.</p>
1	<p>I would choose the story about King Midas so the king can see that he should give his money away to make people happy. I would not choose the story about the king who lost everything because in the end he still has nothing.</p>
0	<p>The story about King Midas tells how he's not happy when everything he has turns to gold.</p>



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