

Smarter Balanced Assessments English Language Arts/Literacy: Claim 1 Reading

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Rationale for Assessing Reading

“At the heart of the Common Core State Standards is a focus on literacy instruction that centers on careful examination of the texts- Reading closely and drawing evidence from the text to support inferences and judgments made.”



Claim 1

Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Claim 1 and CAT Assessment Targets

Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational text.

Targets 1-7: Literary Text

Targets 8-14: Informational Text

Targets
1 and 8:
KEY DETAILS

Targets
2 and 9:
CENTRAL
IDEAS

Targets
3 and 10:
WORD
MEANINGS

Targets
4 and 11:
REASONING
and
EVIDENCE

Targets
5 and 12:
ANALYSIS
WITHIN AND
ACROSS
TEXTS

Targets
6 and 13:
TEXT
STRUCTURES
AND
FEATURES

Targets
7 and 14:
LANGUAGE
USE

Reading Stimuli Specifications



Reading Stimuli Specifications

Stimuli must:

- be rich enough to support well-developed questions;
- meet the demands of grade-level interest and appropriateness;
- have an appropriate text complexity level for Claim 1 Reading literary and informational passages on the CCSS grade band;
- adhere to descriptions and the level of quality set forth in the Common Core State Standards, the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Content Specifications for ELA*, and *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium English Language Arts & Literacy Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) Stimulus Specifications for ELA*

Reading Stimuli Specifications

Stimuli must:

- Adhere to descriptions and level of quality set forth in the CCSS standards, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Content Specifications for ELA and the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Stimulus Specifications
- Consider accessibility concerns refer to the SBAC Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines and the SBAC Consortium Bias and Sensitivity Guidelines

Quality Criteria for Stimuli



Passage Text Length by Grade

GRADE	WORD COUNT RANGE (short text)	WORD COUNT RANGE (long text)
3	200-487	488-650
4	450-562	563-750
5	450-562	563-750
6	650-712	713-950
7	650-712	713-950
8	650-712	713-950
11	800-825	826-1100

Literary Texts and Informational Texts

- **Literary** includes stories, drama, and poetry
- **Informational** includes literary nonfiction and a broad range of texts and topics.
 - Literary nonfiction conveys factual information
 - may or may not employ a narrative structure or personal perspective
 - literary nonfiction considered informational
 - expert judgment used to evaluate each text - in some cases, a literary nonfiction text belongs with literary text
 - story structure and/or employs literary devices

Literary Texts				Informational Texts		
Text Types	Grades 3–5	Grades 6–8	High School	Text Types	Grades 3–5	Grades 6–8 & High School
Stories	Includes children’s adventure stories, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth	Includes the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, science fiction, realistic fiction, parodies, and satire	Includes the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels	Literary Nonfiction and Historical, Scientific, and Technical Texts	Includes biographies and autobiographies; books about history, social studies, science, and the arts; technical texts, including directions, forms, and information displayed in charts or maps; and digital sources on a range of topics	Includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience
Dramas	Includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes	Includes one-act and multi-act plays				
Poetry	Includes the subgenres of narrative poems and free-verse poems	Includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free-verse poems, and ballads	Includes the subgenres of lyrical poems, free-verse poems, sonnets, and odes			

Measures to Determine Text Complexity



Measures to Determine Text Complexity

- The Common Core State Standards require students to read increasingly complex texts with greater independence and proficiency as they progress toward career college readiness.
- Three-part model for select texts
 1. Quantitative Measures
 2. Qualitative Measures
 3. Considerations for Passage Selection

Text Complexity: Three Part Model

- Quantitative
 - Grade level equivalent
 - Lexile
 - Flesch-Kincaid
- Qualitative
 - Levels of meaning
 - Levels of purpose
 - Structure, organization
 - Language conventionality/clarity
 - Prior knowledge demands
- Reader and Task becomes Considerations for Passage Selection
 - Accessibility
 - Sentence and text structures
 - Archaic language, slang, idioms, or other language challenges
 - Background knowledge
 - Bias and sensitivity issues
 - Word count



Quantitative Measures

What are quantitative measures?

- Traditional measures of text complexity (i.e., readability metrics and word count)

What are Lexiles?

- Offer readabilities for whole texts from which shorter texts may be taken. Lexiles may be used as one part of the evidence to determine whether a passage meets appropriate complexity criteria.

What is the Flesch-Kincaid index?

- Available in Microsoft Word, this index provides counts of a number of passage attributes and the average numbers of sentences per paragraph, words per sentence and characters per word. It provides readability data: the number of passive sentences, Flesch Reading Ease score and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for the passage (calculated using the number of syllables in the passage). This metric may underestimate the readability levels of informational passages because it does not account for specialized vocabulary.

Qualitative Measures: Considerations

- It is not possible to produce accurate readability estimates for certain types of stimuli (e.g., poems, passages with extensive dialogue, use of nontraditional features/formats)
- Complex narrative fiction can pose a challenge for all readability indices.
 - Consider John Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.
 - Steinbeck used simple words to express complex ideas.
 - Flesch-Kincaid and Lexiles rated it appropriate for grades 2-3. Yet, children at this grade-band may not truly understand the complexity of ideas.

Quantitative Analysis

Grade Band	Current Lexile Band	“Stretch” Lexile Band
K-1	N/A	N/A
2-3	450L-725L	420L-820L
4-5	645L-845L	740L-1010L
6-8	860L-1010L	925L-1185L
9-10	960L-1115L	1050L-1335L
11-CCR	1070L-1220L	1185L-1385L

What Are Considerations for Passage Selection?

Recognize potential challenges:

- Accessibility
- Sentence and text structures
- Archaic language, slang, idioms, or other language challenges
- Background knowledge
- Bias and sensitivity issues
- Word count

Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric Literary Texts

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning: Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; there is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning: Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; there is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning: More than one level of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; there is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning: One level of meaning; there is obvious and revealed early in the text.
Text Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization: Organization is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines, and detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization: Organization may include subplots, time shifts, and more complex characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization: Organization may have two or more storylines and is occasionally difficult to predict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization: Organization of text is clear, chronological, or easy to predict
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, a few illustrations that support the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, extensive illustrations that directly support and assist in interpreting the written text

Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric Literary Texts, Continued

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Language Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand, with some occasions for more complex meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
Knowledge Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Experiences: Explores complex, sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Experiences: Explores themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: A few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements

Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric Informational Texts

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Subtle, implied, difficult to determine; intricate, theoretical elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Implied, but easy to identify based upon context or source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Explicitly stated; clear, concrete with a narrow focus
Text Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between an extensive range of ideas or events are deep, intricate, and often implicit or subtle; organization of the text is intricate or specialized for a particular discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between an expanded range of ideas, processes or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle; organization may contain multiple pathways and may exhibit traits common to a specific discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is clear or chronological or easy to predict
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features: If used, are essential in understanding content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features: If used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features: If used, enhance the reader's understanding of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features: If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, extensive, intricate, essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, etc., necessary to make meaning of text; also may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, etc.; may occasionally be essential to understanding the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, graphics mostly supplementary to understanding of the text, such as indexes, glossaries; graphs, pictures, tables, and charts directly support the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Graphics: If used, simple graphics, unnecessary to understanding the text but directly support and assist in interpreting the written text

Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric Informational Texts, Continued

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Language Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
Knowledge Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject Matter Knowledge: Extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge; range of challenging abstract and theoretical concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject Matter Knowledge: Moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday, practical knowledge; simple, concrete ideas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertextuality: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertextuality: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertextuality: A few references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertextuality: No references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc.

Grade 11 Reading Paired-Text Sample Item Solar Energy



Paired-Text: Solar Energy (Stimulus 1)

Energy Digest, June 1980

The Homeowner's Salvation: Solar Power

by Daniella Rayez

In the wake of rising energy costs and depleted resources, President Carter initiated an aggressive program to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels like oil and coal. Congress passed Carter's Public Utility Policies Act in 1978, giving tax credits to homeowners who install solar energy cells in their home. The Energy Tax Act encouraged homeowners to invest in energy conservation by giving them a tax credit of up to \$2,000 for home solar devices installed after April 20, 1977.

Today, these solar cells are primarily used to heat water in the home. When sensors attached to the water tank detect that water temperatures are too low, the water is circulated in pipes where heat absorbed by solar energy is transferred to the water. This requires an array of solar panels attached to the home's roof. Initial cost of these panels is quite high, but the money saved through tax credits and monthly energy bills make it a plausible option.

Affordable hot water is a herald of progress; it is hoped that solar energy will soon provide all power a homeowner needs. Dennis Hayes, executive director of the Solar Energy Resource Institute, recently said, "Solar power will offer the United States a clean energy future, decrease our dependence on petroleum, and offer a decentralized approach to solving our energy problems." With added advantages, the cost of a residential-use solar system will certainly go down, giving the people of the United States a cost-effective way to power their homes.

Paired-Text: Solar Energy (Stimulus 2)

Energy Digest, November 2003

What Happened to Solar Power for Home Use?

by Richard Mueller

A 1979 poll in *The New York Times* indicated that 42% of Americans believed solar energy would solve all of the country's energy problems by 1984. President Carter set a goal in his Proposed Energy Policy that solar energy would be used in 2.5 million homes by 1985. Carter's Public Utilities Policies Act in 1978 and the enormous tax credits that went along with it fueled these ideas.

At the time, energy costs were skyrocketing due to the oil embargo of 1973. Citizens were looking for alternatives to petroleum for power and fuel, and solar energy became a focal point. It was clean and inexpensive, not to mention safe. The disasters of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl during the 1980s scared people away from nuclear energy, and the influx of solar systems in residences began. However, the popularity of solar power waned by the 1990s. Carter's tax credits ended in 1986 when President Reagan chose to let commerce dictate the direction of renewable energy sources.

Simultaneously, petroleum prices dropped significantly, further crippling the solar power industry. By 2000, the costs of installing and maintaining a set of residential solar cells were too high, and home use dwindled. Neither Carter nor the citizens of the late 1970s were right. Solar power is not used in over two million homes. It has not solved the country's energy problems. Harnessing the sun was a romantic idea that simply was not realistic.

It may be possible that, in the future, we will revisit the idea of using renewable energy sources like the sun to power our homes, businesses, and perhaps even our cars. For now, though, fossil fuels continue to be the cheapest and most efficient energy source.

Solar Energy Sample Item 62984

Preamble

Read the sentences from "What Happened to Solar Power for Home Use?"

Simultaneously, petroleum prices dropped significantly, further crippling the solar power industry. By 2000, the costs of installing and maintaining a set of residential solar cells were too high, and home use dwindled.

Question

Based on the sentences, what can a reader conclude about the author's predictions in "The Homeowner's Salvation: Solar Energy"? Support your answer with evidence from that text.

Solar Energy Sample Item 62984 Rubric

<i>Rubric</i>		
Score	Rationale	Exemplar
2	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provides the conclusion that the author's predictions were incorrect -Gives sufficient evidence to support the conclusion by citing specific examples <p>Examples may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Carter's Public Utility Policies Act in 1978 or Energy Tax Act or tax credits making solar a plausible option --the statement that costs for residential solar systems will decrease --the statement that residential solar systems will become cost-effective 	<p>Although Rayez clearly believed that the combination of rising energy costs and the passing of the Public Utility Policy Act would serve to inspire a conversion to solar energy, this information clearly disproved her predictions. Once petroleum prices dropped, a situation Rayez failed to predict, solar energy became more costly to build and maintain than the fuel was to purchase. Ultimately, Rayez fell short in her predictions that solar power would eventually replace fossil fuels, and did not take in to account, not only the cheaper fuel prices, but also the prohibitive costs of maintaining a solar cell system.</p>
1	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provides the conclusion that the author's predictions were incorrect -Gives limited evidence to support the conclusion with general reference to examples like those identified in the two-point rubric 	<p>The reader can tell that the first writer's predictions were wrong. Solar energy got to be too expensive for the average person. This is because fuel had been costly, but then fuel became cheaper than having all the solar equipment.</p>
0	<p>A response receives no credit if it does not provide the conclusion that the author's predictions were incorrect.</p>	<p>The author was wrong about changing energy. The prices got cheaper instead of worse.</p>

Solar Energy Sample Item 62988

Question

How does including the quotation in the third paragraph of "The Homeowner's Salvation: Solar Power" help strengthen the author's argument? Select **all** that apply.

Alternative: A

It predicts an end to the use of fossil fuels.

Alternative: B

It lends support to the information previously stated.

Alternative: C

It references a professional in the field of solar energy.

Alternative: D

It illustrates that solar energy has many positive aspects.

Alternative: E

It contradicts what some people have said about solar energy.

Solar Energy Sample Item 62988: Key

Question

How does including the quotation in the third paragraph of "The Homeowner's Salvation: Solar Power" help strengthen the author's argument? Select **all** that apply.

Alternative: A

It predicts an end to the use of fossil fuels.

Alternative: B ✓

It lends support to the information previously stated.

Alternative: C ✓

It references a professional in the field of solar energy.

Alternative: D ✓

It illustrates that solar energy has many positive aspects.

Alternative: E

It contradicts what some people have said about solar energy.

Accessibility and Accommodations



Accessibility and Accommodations Considerations for Claim 1

- Accommodations may need to be considered for students with motor impairments because students may use word processing tools (a mouse and keyboard) when responding to some items for Claim 1.
- Students with visual impairments may need accommodations as well.
- Stimuli will be carefully screened to ensure their appropriateness for each student and every population
- Construct-relevant terminology will be indicated in item specifications.
- Item stems will model simple, clear, grade-appropriate language.
- Task Models will be identified as more appropriate for populations with motor or visual disabilities.

Questions



Reflect on Guiding Questions

1. What do educators need to do to support student learning?
2. What do educators need to do to ensure that students are prepared for the Smarter Balanced assessments?