

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry

(K-1)

- Students (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. [RL.K.7]
- 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). [RL.1.2]
- 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." [RL.K.9]
- 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*. [RL.K.5]
- 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. [RL.1.3]
- 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. [RL.1.1]
- Students identify the points at which different characters are telling the story in the *Finn Family Moomintroll* by Tove Jansson. [RL.1.6]
- 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). [RL.1.4]

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

(K-1)

- 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. [RI.1.8]
- 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. [RI.K.6]
- 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. [RI.K.2]
- 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. [RI.1.1]
- 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. [RI.1.5]
- 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?* [RI.K.4]
- 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. [RI.1.7]
- 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. [RI.K.3]

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry (2-3)

- 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. [RL.3.1]
- 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. [RL.3.7]
- 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. [RL.2.2]
- 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. [RL.2.5]
- 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. [RL.3.6]
- 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. [RL.2.3]
- 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. [RL.3.4]

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts (2-3)

- Students read Aiki'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. [RI.2.1]
- 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. [RI.2.8]
- 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. [RI.2.6]
- 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*. [RI.2.4]
- 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. [RI.3.2]
- 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. [RI.3.3]
- 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. [RI.2.7]
- Students use text features, such as the table of contents and headers, found in Aiki's text *Ah, Music!* to identify relevant sections and locate information relevant to a given topic (e.g., rhythm, instruments, harmony) quickly and efficiently. [RI.3.5]

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry (4-5)

- Students *make connections* between the *visual presentation* of John Tenniel's illustrations in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the text of the story to *identify* how the pictures of Alice reflect *specific descriptions* of her in the text. [RL.4.7]
- 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*. [RL.4.1]
- 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. [RL.5.6]
- Students *summarize* the plot of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry'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. [RL.5.2]
- 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. [RL.4.3]
- 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. [RL.5.9]
- 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*. [RL.4.5]
- 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." [RL.5.4]

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts (4-5)

- 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. [RI.4.8]
- 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*. [RI.5.5]
- 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. [RI.4.7]
- 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*. [RI.5.3]
- 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*. [RI.4.4]
- 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. [RI.4.6]
- 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. [RI.5.1]
- 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. [RI.4.2]

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories, Drama, and Poetry

(6-8)

- 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*. [RL.8.2]
- 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. [RL.7.9]
- 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. [RL.6.1]
- Students *explain how* Sandra Cisneros's choice of words *develops the point of view of the young speaker* in her story "Eleven." [RL.6.6]
- 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*. [RL.7.3]
- 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*. [RL.6.7]
- 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. [RL.8.4]
- 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*. [RL.6.5]

APPENDIX

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: English Language Arts

(6-8)

- 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. [RI.7.6]
- 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*. [RI.8.2]
- 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*. [RI.6.8]
- 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. [RI.6.3]
- 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. [RI.7.4]

APPEN

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: History/Social Studies & Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects**(6-8)**

- Students analyze the governmental structure of the United States and *support* their *analysis* by *citing specific textual evidence* from *primary sources* such as the Preamble and First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as well as *secondary sources* such as Linda R. Monk's *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. [RH.6-8.1]
- Students evaluate Jim Murphy's *The Great Fire* to *identify* which *aspects of the text* (e.g., *loaded language* and the *inclusion of particular facts*) *reveal* his purpose; presenting Chicago as a city that was "ready to burn." [RH.6-8.6]
- Students *describe how* Russell Freedman in his book *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* *integrates and presents information* both *sequentially* and *causally* to explain how the civil rights movement began. [RH.6-8.5]
- Students *integrate* the *quantitative or technical information expressed* in the *text* of David Macaulay's *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction* with the information conveyed by the *diagrams* and *models* Macaulay provides, developing a deeper understanding of Gothic architecture. [RST.6-8.7]
- Students construct a holistic picture of the history of Manhattan by *comparing and contrasting the information gained from* Donald Mackay's *The Building of Manhattan* with the *multimedia sources* available on the "Manhattan on the Web" portal hosted by the New York Public Library (<http://legacy.www.nypl.org/branch/manhattan/index2.cfm?Trg=1&d1=865>). [RST.6-8.9]
- Students learn about fractal geometry by reading Ivars Peterson and Nancy Henderson's *Math Trek: Adventures in the Math Zone* and then generate their own fractal geometric structure by *following the multistep procedure* for creating a Koch's curve. [RST.6-8.3]