Guide to English Language Arts/Literacy Released Items: Understanding Scoring

1.0 Task Types, Scoring Rubrics, Anchor Sets and Annotations Overview

1.1 Background
Administrations of the PARCC assessment included three Prose Constructed Responses (PCR), one per task for English Language Arts/Literacy. This document is designed to help educators understand the scoring of constructed response items.

1.2 Materials Included in Released Items Packet
- PDF documents containing released item sets with associated materials
- Alignment documents, answer keys, rubrics
- Anchor papers with annotations
- Additional scored responses that are not annotated

1.3 ELA/Literacy Task Types
There are three task types: Research Simulation Task (RST), Literary Analysis Task (LAT), and Narrative Writing Task (NWT).

Research Simulation Task (RST)

For the RST, students are asked to analyze an informational topic presented through several texts or multimedia stimuli. Students engage with the texts by answering a series of questions and writing an analytic response to a prompt, synthesizing information from multiple sources.

Literary Analysis Task (LAT)

For the LAT, students read and analyze two pieces of literature. Types of texts include short stories, novels, poems, or other types of literature. Students write an analytic response to a prompt based on the literary texts.

Narrative Writing Task (NWT)

For the NWT, students read a literary text from a grade-appropriate short story, novel, poem, or other type of literature. Students write a narrative response to a prompt based on this literary text.

1.4 ELA/Literacy Scoring Rubrics, Anchor Sets, and Annotations
A **scoring rubric**, which was created and refined with educator input, describes the level of achievement a response demonstrates at each score point. There are PARCC ELA/Literacy scoring rubrics provided for grade 3, grades 4-5, and grades 6-11. There is one rubric for RST and LAT task types and one rubric for the NWT task type. Scoring rubrics describe the elements that are evaluated.

The PARCC ELA/Literacy items are scored using **multi-trait holistic rubrics**. These rubrics describe the characteristics of individual traits, focusing on the overall performance. The PARCC rubric for RST and LAT task types include two traits: Reading Comprehension and Written Expression (combined) and Conventions. The PARCC rubric for the NWT task types includes two traits: Written Expression and Conventions.

Example of the Reading Comprehension and Written Expression trait from the grades 6-11 rubric:

- **Score Point 4**
  - **The student response**
    - demonstrates **full** comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and inferentially by providing an **accurate** analysis;
    - addresses the prompt and provides **effective and comprehensive** development of the claim or topic that is **consistently appropriate** to task, purpose, and audience;
    - uses **clear** reasoning supported by **relevant** text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic;
    - is **effectively** organized with clear **and coherent** writing;
    - establishes and maintains an **effective** style.
- **Score Point 3**
  - **The student response**
    - demonstrates comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a **mostly accurate** analysis;
    - addresses the prompt and provides **mostly effective** development of claim or topic that is **mostly appropriate** to task, purpose, and audience;
    - uses **mostly clear** reasoning supported by relevant text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic;
    - is organized with **mostly clear and coherent** writing;
    - establishes and maintains a **mostly effective** style.
- **Score Point 2**
  - **The student response**
    - demonstrates **basic** comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a **generally accurate** analysis;
    - addresses the prompt and provides **some** development of claim or topic that is somewhat appropriate to task, purpose, and audience;
    - uses **some** reasoning and text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic;
    - demonstrates **some** organization with **somewhat** coherent writing;
    - has a style that is **somewhat** effective.
- **Score Point 1**
  - **The student response**
    - demonstrates **limited** comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a **minimally** accurate analysis;
    - addresses the prompt and provides **minimal** development of claim or topic that is **limited in its appropriateness** to task, purpose, and audience;
    - uses **limited** reasoning and text-based evidence;
    - demonstrates **limited** organization and coherence;
    - has a style that is **minimally** effective.
- **Score Point 0**
  - **The student response**
    - demonstrates **no** comprehension of ideas by providing **inaccurate** or **no** analysis;
    - is **undeveloped and/or inappropriate** to task, purpose, and audience;
    - includes little to no text-based evidence;

- **lacks** organization and coherence;
- has an **inappropriate** style.

Note: Scoring rubrics vary by grade, but the scoring process is the same. This includes a difference in the number of score points per trait.

The rubric tables are available here: https://prc.parcconline.org/library/parcc-elaliteracy-scoring-rubrics.

Anchor sets are clear and representative examples of student performance at every score point and are used to ensure that scorers interpret rubrics consistently. Anchor sets include **annotations** that reference both the rubric and examples from the student response to explain why the response received a particular score. All scorers have access to the anchor set during training and are required to refer to it regularly, in conjunction with the rubrics, as they evaluate student responses and determine scores. Reading Comprehension and Written Expression anchor sets are created for each individual task. Knowledge of Language and Conventions anchor sets include examples from multiple tasks.

2.0 Scoring Process Overview

2.1 Establishing Standards for Scoring
PARCC's scoring standards are established by educators from PARCC states during rangefinding meetings. Educators read student responses and use the rubric criteria to come to consensus on scores. These committee-scored responses are then used to create the scorer training sets.

Scorers are trained to apply only those scoring standards established by the rangefinding committee. This ensures consistency and accuracy in scoring, regardless of who scores the response.

2.2 Scoring Training Process
All PARCC scorers must complete training and pass qualification sets prior to scoring student responses. Qualification sets are used to confirm that PARCC scorers have comprehended the scoring criteria and are able to assign scores to student responses accurately.

During training, scorers review the item to which they are assigned and the associated scoring rubric. Next, scorers review the anchor set and annotations that explain the rationale for the score point that was assigned to each response.

After a thorough review of the anchor set responses, practice sets are used to help scorer trainees develop experience using the rubric and anchor sets to score student responses. Practice sets provide guidance and practice for trainees in defining the line between score points, as well as in applying the scoring criteria to a wider variety of responses. Some practice responses clearly reinforce the scoring guidelines presented in the anchor set, while others are selected because they are more difficult to evaluate and/or represent different approaches to the task.

After completing practice sets, scorer trainees then score qualification sets in order to confirm that they have comprehended the scoring criteria and are able to assign the range of scores to student responses accurately. The responses in these sets are selected to clearly represent the scoring criteria illustrated in the anchor sets. Scorer trainees must demonstrate acceptable performance on these sets by meeting a pre-determined standard for accuracy in order to qualify to score the PARCC assessment. As scorers continue scoring, there are additional quality checks built in throughout the process.

3.0 Released Items

3.1 Using Released Items

This item release includes PCR items for various grades. In most cases, two anchor papers for each score point are included for each of the constructed-response items. These student responses, which are grouped by score point, represent the range of approaches that students take when responding to each PCR item in English Language Arts/Literacy. All student responses appear as the students wrote them. One task also includes annotations for the anchor sets that explain the rationale for the score assigned. A Conventions anchor set that includes one to two sample responses at each score point is provided for each grade level.

Practice Responses

Each constructed-response item released includes a set of five responses that can be used to practice scoring with the rubric and anchor set responses. The PARCC-approved scores for the practice responses are included in a key that directly follows the practice responses.

Anchor and practice responses are available here: https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items.

To practice scoring these student responses:

- Review the anchor papers, annotations, and rubric.
- Look for the anchor paper that most closely resembles the level of achievement reached in the response being scored.
- Using the anchor papers, rubric, and annotations as a guide, determine the score each paper would receive for each of the traits in the rubric.

Note: Keep in mind, anchors are clear examples and define the lines between score points. Anchor papers do not represent every possible way to achieve each score point.

3.2 ELA/Literacy Annotation Example

Annotation example from the grade 6 RST released set: