



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PARCC SAMPLE ITEM AND TASK PROTOTYPES

1. What is a sample item or task prototype?

A sample item or task prototype is an early model of what future PARCC assessment items and tasks may look like. For the purpose of this website, “sample” and “prototype” are being used interchangeably.

2. Do the prototypes mirror future PARCC assessments?

No. The item and task prototypes were developed primarily for the purposes of communications and training. They are not drawn from actual assessments, and they are not meant to mirror full-length assessments.

Because the prototypes have been developed and selected to illustrate the instructional shifts called for by the CCSS, they may not appear exactly in the form they will take when included on actual PARCC assessments.

3. What is the purpose of releasing sample item and task prototypes?

The primary purpose of sharing item and task prototypes is to provide information and to support educators as they transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the PARCC assessments.

The dynamic, online prototypes presented on the PARCC website are designed to shine a light on how critical content in the standards may be manifested on PARCC’s next-generation, technology-based assessments.

4. Who developed the sample item and task prototypes and how were they selected?

The sample items and tasks were drawn from a number of sources including the Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburg, the Illustrative Math Project at the University of Arizona, as well as ETS and Pearson. ETS and Pearson have been contracted to develop items and tasks for the PARCC assessments that will become operational in 2014-2015.

K-12 and higher education content experts from across the PARCC states reviewed these items, made suggestions for revision, and helped to pare down those items that best represent the key concepts in content and assessment PARCC expects for its summative assessment. Each item and task has been reviewed by the PARCC

Leadership Team, Achieve staff, and CCSS writers, to ensure they are high quality and well aligned to the standards.

PARCC chiefs and other state education agency staff reviewed items, tasks, and supporting material on the PARCC website. These are the first items of a larger set of items that PARCC will release to help educators and others understand the critical content to be measured and means of assessment for the upcoming PARCC assessments.

5. Were teachers involved in the process to create and review these items and tasks?

Teachers were involved in the creation and review of these items. The Institute for Learning and Dana Center teams purposefully included both current classroom teachers and higher education faculty with extensive knowledge of both the CCSS and the content areas for which they were producing sample items and tasks. Then, state reviews of the items and tasks included educators from across the grade levels.

For the operational PARCC assessments planned for 2014-2015, the item development contractors will utilize item writers who were former classroom teachers, and each item will be reviewed by classroom teachers and higher education teachers in the specific content. Additionally every item will be reviewed both before and after field testing of the item, so PARCC can be assured that the items are valid, reliable, and usable.

6. Are any plugins or special software required to run the prototypes?

No. The prototypes accessed through the parconline.org site and those accessed through the website of the Dana Center are designed to be compatible with most standard web browsers without requiring additional software or plugins.

7. Can I download the prototypes for use offline?

The prototypes are not currently designed to be downloaded for use outside the PARCC or Dana Center websites. However, each prototype is accompanied by a supporting PDF document that includes a graphic representation of the item or task, along with annotations describing alignment to the CCSS and highlighting key advances in assessment quality. These PDF documents can be downloaded.

8. Can I use these prototypes for professional development purposes in my state/region/district/school?

These prototypes are designed for just this purpose! To make it easier to plan professional development with the prototype items, PARCC has provided PDF files for the ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Overview PowerPoint presentations, the

generic rubrics, and the additional specific information for each item. These PDF files can be downloaded and presented when Internet is not available. You may also find it helpful to use these materials in conjunction with the Model Content Frameworks, which are available on the www.parcconline.org website <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks/>

Users of this site are encouraged to view the prototypes in conjunction with annotations associated with each prototype that explain the connection between the prototype and the CCSS, as well as how the item embodies assessment and technological advancements.

9. How many sample item and task prototypes will PARCC release?

This initial release of 26 sample item and task prototypes is just the beginning. Over time, additional sample item and task prototypes and rubrics will be posted to the website to represent the full range of assessment tasks that will be included on actual PARCC assessments beginning in 2014-2015. These new additions will help to provide a more complete picture of the PARCC assessment design in each content area and grade level.

10. How will PARCC items and tasks be made accessible to students with disabilities, English language learners, etc.?

PARCC is committed to providing all students with equitable access to its high quality assessments. PARCC assessment items and tasks are being developed using principles of Universal Design. Universal Design principles are applied in all kinds of environments to make things as usable as possible by all, regardless of age, ability, or life status.

In the area of student assessment, this means writing items and tasks free of design features that are irrelevant to the construct being assessed. In its commitment to Universal Design, PARCC will ensure accessible test administration, as well as accessible assessment design. Accordingly, PARCC will take advantage of its computer-based assessment to build in supports that are not possible with paper-based tests. Some of those supports are contained in the current sample tasks; others will be shown as additional sample tasks are released over time.

While external accommodations may still be needed for some students to demonstrate what they know and can do, use of principles of Universal Design and the built-in supports will increase access to the greatest number of students taking the assessments, and greatly reduce the burden on school staff to provide extensive accommodations during testing.

11. Do the prototypes use the full range of technology enhancements that will be used for the full assessment in 2014-2015?

No. The selected prototypes demonstrate a variety of item question and response styles, uses of technology, and student interactivity. The prototypes range from simple to more complex, reflecting the diversity of items that will be necessary for constructing the full assessment. The examples provided are intended to model different assessment technologies. They are not fully functional items—nor do they reflect the final display, wording, or interactivity that assessment items will ultimately contain.

12. If my school computers can open and run the prototypes, can I assume that they are ready to operate the full assessment in 2014-15?

No. While online and technology-enhanced interactivity is demonstrated in the prototypes, these illustrative items and tasks do not reflect the final technical specifications, hardware and software requirements, input and output device allowances, online security guidelines, or computer-based display options of the actual PARCC assessment. The computer and connectivity requirements necessary to access and interact with the prototype site should not be assumed to be the requirements for the final PARCC assessment.

For more information about PARCC's Technology Guidelines, see <http://www.parccone.org/technology>.

13. I have questions about the prototypes. Who should I contact?

For questions about the release of these item and task prototypes, please contact your state education agency. For questions from the media on prototypes, contact Chad Colby (ccolby@achieve.org) at Achieve.

14. How can I keep up with PARCC news? Can I get more involved in PARCC?

Join our PARCC mailing list! Keep up with what's happening at PARCC by signing up on www.parccone.org. The PARCC Newsletter will let you know when there are opportunities to provide feedback, attend events, and more. For state-based involvement, contact your PARCC state lead found on the state pages of the website.