Core Exemplars for Informational and Narrative Texts from Iowa Common Core, Appendix B

Grades K-1 p 28

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry

• 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

• 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]

Grades 2-3 p.53

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry

• 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]

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Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

• Students read Aliki’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, , 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 Aliki’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]

Grades 4-5 P 70, 76

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry

• 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

• 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

Grade 6 Exemplars

Sample Performance Tasks for Stories, Drama, and Poetry

• 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]

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: English Language Arts

• 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]

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: History/Social Studies & Science,

Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

• 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