1. Text Complexity

The PARCC complexity framework reflects the importance of text complexity as it relates to the CCSS, which indicates that 50 percent of an item’s complexity is linked to the complexity of the text(s) used as the stimulus for that item. Consequently, to determine students’ performance levels, it is critical to identify the pattern of responses when students respond to items linked to passages with distinct text complexities. To this end, PARCC has developed a clear and consistent model to define text complexity and has determined to use three text complexity levels: readily accessible, moderately complex, or very complex. For more information on text complexity, refer to the CCSS Appendix A (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy) and Appendix B (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).

PARCC uses two components for determining text complexity for all passages:

a. Two quantitative text complexity measures (Reading Maturity Metric and Lexile) will be used to analyze all reading passages to determine an initial recommendation for placement of a text into a grade band and subsequently a grade level.

b. Text Analysis Worksheets (http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents), one for informational text and one for literary text, are then used to determine qualitative measures. Trained evaluators use these worksheets to determine a recommendation for qualitative text complexity within the grade level, with each text defined as readily accessible, moderately complex, or very complex.

For multimedia texts, qualitative judgments from one or both of the “optional” categories in the Complexity Analysis Worksheet will be combined with judgments in the other categories to make a holistic determination of the complexity of the material.
2. Range of Accuracy

There are three types of items on the PARCC summative assessments. For Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR) and Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response (TECR) items, the design is such that the items help contribute to an understanding of how accurately students comprehend text (demonstrate mastery of CCSS Reading Standards 2-10). Some of these items offer opportunities for students to receive partial credit based on the range of accuracy. For Prose-Constructed Response (PCR) items, PARCC has developed draft scoring rubrics (http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents) that include a Reading dimension to measure comprehension. Scores on the PCR items contribute to an evaluation of the degree to which a student can accurately comprehend a text.

The PARCC assessment Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) describe five levels of accuracy at grades 9-11 that are determined using the reading data collected through EBSR, TECR, and PCR items:

**Accurate** – The student is able to accurately state both the general ideas expressed in the text(s) and the key and supporting details. The response is complete, and the student demonstrates full understanding.

**Mostly accurate** – The student is able to accurately state most of the general ideas expressed in the text(s) and the key and supporting details, but the response is incomplete or contains minor inaccuracies. The student demonstrates understanding.

**Generally accurate** – The student is able to accurately state the gist of the text(s) but fails to accurately state the key and supporting details in the text or to connect such details to the overarching meaning of the text(s). The student demonstrates basic understanding.

**Minimally accurate** – The student is unable to accurately state the gist of the text(s) but is able to minimally state some of the key or supporting details with accuracy. The student does not connect the specific details of the text to the overarching meaning(s) of the text. The student demonstrates minimal understanding.

**Inaccurate** – The student is unable to accurately state either the gist of the text or the key and supporting details evident in the text. The student demonstrates limited understanding.

3. Quality of Evidence

All items are designed to contribute to an understanding of how students “read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it” and “cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text” (CCSS Anchor Reading Standard 1). Some items offer opportunities for students to receive partial credit based on the quality of evidence provided. Students support their comprehension with explicit and/or inferential evidence:

**Explicit evidence** – Students show how the explicit words and phrases (details) from the text support statements made about the meaning of the text.

**Inferential evidence** – Students show how inferences drawn from the text support statements made about the meaning of the text.
### Grade 9 PARCC English Language Arts/Literacy Performance Level Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Sub-Claims</th>
<th>Reading Literature</th>
<th>Reading Information</th>
<th>Vocabulary Interpretation and Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**EVIDENCES:** Students are expected to produce responses that demonstrate the skills and content listed in the evidence tables at the accuracy level and with the quality of evidence as described for students at each level.

**EVIDENCES:** See Literary Evidence Table [http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents](http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents)

**EVIDENCES:** See Informational Evidence Table [http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents](http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents)

**EVIDENCES:** See Vocabulary Evidence Table [http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents](http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/test-specifications-documents)

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**Level 5**

- A student who achieves at **Level 5 exceeds expectations** for the assessed standards.

**Level 4**

- A student who achieves at **Level 4 meets expectations** for the assessed standards.

**Level 3**

- A student who achieves at **Level 3 approaches expectations** for the assessed standards.

**Level 2**

- A student who achieves at **Level 2 partially meets expectations** for the assessed standards.

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**In reading,** the pattern exhibited by student responses indicates:

- With **very complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **mostly accurate** analyses of the text, showing understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text and when supporting sound inferences drawn from the text.
- With **moderately complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **mostly accurate** analyses of the text, showing understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text and when supporting sound inferences drawn from the text.
- With **readily accessible text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **accurate** analyses of the text, showing understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text and when supporting sound inferences drawn from the text.

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**In reading,** the pattern exhibited by student responses indicates:

- With **very complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **generally accurate** analyses of the text, showing **basic** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text and when supporting sound inferences drawn from the text.
- With **moderately complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **generally accurate** analyses of the text, showing **basic** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text and when supporting sound inferences drawn from the text.
- With **readily accessible text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **mostly accurate** analyses of the text, showing understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text and when supporting sound inferences drawn from the text.

---

**In reading,** the pattern exhibited by student responses indicates:

- With **very complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **minimally accurate** analysis of the text, showing **minimal** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text.
- With **moderately complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **minimally accurate** analyses of the text, showing **minimal** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text.
- With **readily accessible text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **minimally accurate** analyses of the text, showing **minimal** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text.

---

**In reading,** the pattern exhibited by student responses indicates:

- With **very complex text**, students demonstrate the inability to do an accurate analysis of the text, showing limited understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text.
- With **moderately complex text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **minimally accurate** analysis of the text, showing **minimal** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text.
- With **readily accessible text**, students demonstrate the ability to do **minimally accurate** analyses of the text, showing **minimal** understanding of the text when referring to explicit details and examples in the text.
## Writing Sub-Claim for Written Expression:

Students produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

### EVIDENCES:

Students are expected to produce responses that demonstrate the skills and content listed in the evidence tables at the accuracy level and with the quality of evidence as described for students at each level.

See Writing Evidence Table


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 5 exceeds expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 4 meets expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 3 approaches expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 2 partially meets expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In writing,</strong> students address the prompts and provide effective development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, while demonstrating effective coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion.</td>
<td><strong>In writing,</strong> students address the prompts and provide adequate development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, while demonstrating coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion.</td>
<td><strong>In writing,</strong> students address the prompts and provide partial development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, while demonstrating partial coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion.</td>
<td><strong>In writing,</strong> students address the prompts and provide limited development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, while demonstrating limited coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Provides effective development of the claim, topic, and/or narrative elements, using clear reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description.</td>
<td>● Provides development of the claim, topic, and/or narrative elements, using reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description.</td>
<td>● Provides partial development of the claim, topic, and/or narrative elements, using some reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description.</td>
<td>● Provides minimal development of the claim, topic, and/or narrative elements, using limited reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Develops claim, topic, and/or narrative elements in a manner that is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>● Develops claim, topic, and/or narrative elements in a manner that is generally appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>● Develops claim, topic, and/or narrative elements in a manner that is limited in its appropriateness to the task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>● Develops claim, topic, and/or narrative elements in a manner that is inappropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Demonstrates coherence, clarity, and cohesion and includes an introduction, conclusion, and a logical progression of ideas.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates some coherence, clarity, and cohesion and includes an introduction, conclusion, and logically grouped ideas.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates partial coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion, and includes some evidence of an introduction, conclusion, and logically grouped ideas.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates limited coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion, making the writer’s progression of ideas somewhat unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Establishes and maintains an effective style, while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.</td>
<td>● Establishes and maintains a mostly effective style, while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.</td>
<td>● Establishes and maintains a style that is partially effective, with some awareness of the norms of the discipline.</td>
<td>● Establishes and maintains a style that has limited effectiveness, with limited awareness of the norms of the discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Effectively draws evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
<td>● Draws evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
<td>● Draws partial evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
<td>● Draws minimal evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Revised October 2015*
## Writing Sub-Claim for Written Expression (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<th>Level 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 5 exceeds expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 4 meets expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 3 approaches expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 2 partially meets expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
<td>The student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Includes precise language, including descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, linking and transitional words, words to indicate tone, and/or domain-specific vocabulary.</td>
<td>- Includes mostly precise language, including descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, linking and transitional words, words to indicate tone, and/or domain-specific vocabulary.</td>
<td>- Includes some description, sensory details, linking or transitional words, words to indicate tone, or domain-specific vocabulary.</td>
<td>- Includes limited description, sensory details, linking or transitional words, words to indicate tone, or domain-specific vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Writing Sub-Claim for Knowledge of Language and Conventions:** Students demonstrate knowledge of conventions and other important elements of language.

EVIDENCES: Students are expected to produce responses that demonstrate the skills and content listed in the evidence tables at the accuracy level and with the quality of evidence as described for students at each level.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 5 exceeds expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 4 meets expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 3 approaches expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
<td>A student who achieves at <strong>Level 2 partially meets expectations</strong> for the assessed standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In <strong>writing</strong>, the student demonstrates command of the conventions of Standard English consistent with edited writing. There may be some errors in grammar and usage that do not impede understanding, demonstrating control over language.</td>
<td>In <strong>writing</strong>, the student demonstrates <strong>moderate</strong> command of the conventions of Standard English consistent with edited writing. There are a few <strong>patterns of errors</strong> in grammar and usage that may occasionally impede understanding, demonstrating adequate control over language.</td>
<td>In <strong>writing</strong>, the student demonstrates <strong>partial</strong> command of the conventions of Standard English consistent with edited writing. There are <strong>patterns of errors</strong> in grammar and usage that impede understanding, demonstrating <strong>partial</strong> control over language.</td>
<td>In <strong>writing</strong>, the student demonstrates <strong>limited</strong> command of the conventions of Standard English consistent with edited writing. There are <strong>multiple patterns of errors</strong> in grammar and usage that <strong>frequently</strong> impede understanding, demonstrating <strong>minimal</strong> control over language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Writing Evidence Table  