Grade 6
English Language Arts/Literacy
Research Simulation Task

2017 Released Items
2017 Released Items: Grade 6 Research Simulation Task

The Research Simulation Task requires students to analyze an informational topic through several articles or multimedia stimuli. Students read and respond to a series of questions and synthesize information from multiple sources in order to write an analytic essay.

The 2017 blueprint for PARCC’s grade 6 Research Simulation Task includes Evidence-Based Selected Response/Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response items as well as one Prose Constructed Response prompt.

Included in this document:

- Answer key and standards alignment
- PDFs of each item with the associated text(s)

Additional related materials not included in this document:

- Sample scored student responses with practice papers
- PARCC Scoring Rubric for Prose Constructed Response Items
- Guide to English Language Arts/Literacy Released Items: Understanding Scoring 2016
- PARCC English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment: General Scoring Rules for the 2016 Summative Assessment
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Part A: D  
Part B: A | RI 6.1.1  
RI 6.4.1  
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| 3528_A    | Item Type: TECR  
Part A: D  
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RI 6.1.3 |
| 3531_A    | Item Type: TECR  
Part A: B  
Part B: | RH 6.2.5  
RI 6.1.1  
RI 6.2.3  
RI 6.1.3 |

**Summary of "American Indians in the United States Army"**

- During World War I and World War II, the United States military found a way to keep the enemy from understanding military communications.
- Native American soldiers created secret codes using their native languages.
- The enemies of the United States were unable to break the Native American codes.
- The Native American codes were so successful that they were kept classified until fairly recently.
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Today you will research the use of secret codes to communicate messages. You will read a passage from *Navajo Code Talkers*. Then you will read the article “American Indians in the United States Army” and the passage “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?” As you review these sources, you will gather information and answer questions about secret codes and the contributions of Native Americans to the U.S. military so you can write an analytical essay.

Read the passage from *Navajo Code Talkers* about the use of the Navajo language during World War II. Then answer the questions.

*from Navajo Code Talkers*

*by* Andrew Santella

1 Their long history of harsh treatment by the U.S. government did not stop the Navajos from answering their country’s call during World War II. In fact, Marine recruiters at the reservation met long lines of candidates in 1942. The Navajo code project was top secret, so the Navajos didn’t know they were signing up to be code talkers. They knew only that they were joining the Marines and helping to defend the United States. Some Navajos who were still in their early teens told recruiters they were 18, the minimum age for Marines. One was accepted even though he was really just 15. None of the Navajos knew what awaited them as Marines.

**MILITARY TRAINING**

2 The first task for any new Marine is completing the Marine Corps training course, sometimes called boot camp. In May 1942, the new Marines from the Navajo reservation were sent to the Marine Corps Recruit Training Depot in San Diego. For many, the trip west marked their first time on a bus. Some had never left the reservation before. Most had never been in a big city. Like most Marines, they struggled to complete the seven exhausting weeks of training.

3 In the training course, Marine recruits endure difficult physical fitness tests. They complete long marches carrying heavy packs. They spend hour after hour practicing basic drills. The goal is to make the training
course so difficult that it will turn new recruits into disciplined Marines who are ready for anything. Marine training instructors were surprised to find that the Navajos had little trouble with the fitness tests. Many had grown up herding sheep and hauling water on ranches. They were used to hard work and exercise. However, other parts of boot camp were more difficult to get used to.

4 In some ways, the training course clashed with Navajo traditions. Many Navajos wore their hair in thick braids, but as Marine recruits they had to shave off their hair. Marine drill instructors insisted on looking directly into the eyes of recruits, but in the Navajo culture this is considered rude. Even wearing a military uniform seemed foreign to some of the Navajos. Despite the difficulties, the 29 Navajos completed boot camp and graduated to the next step in their training. They were about to become code talkers.

CREATING THE CODE

5 After boot camp, the Navajos were sent to Camp Elliott, a Marine Corps post in Southern California. There, they received training in radio communications and basic electronics. They learned to use, care for, and repair the radios that would send their coded messages. Only at Camp Elliott did it become clear to the Navajos what their special mission would be. Finally, it came time to create the unbreakable code.

6 A Navajo code talker named Chester Nez later recalled how the code came to be. “We were told to use our language to come up with words representing each letter, from A to Z,” he explained. “And they also told us to come up with code words for military terms. They put us all in a room to work it out and first everyone thought we’d never make it. It seemed impossible, because even among ourselves, we didn’t agree on all the right words.”

7 However, the Navajos devised a code that worked extremely well. They made a list of Navajo words that would represent each letter in the English language alphabet. For example, the Navajo word for apple (be-la-sana) stood for the letter A. The Navajo word for bear (shush) stood
for the letter B, and the Navajo word for cat (moasi) stood for the letter C. The code talkers sent messages by using Navajo code words to spell out words in English. For example, to say, “Navy,” code talkers would say the Navajo words that stood for each letter: Nesh-chee (or nut, for N), wol-la-chee (or ant, for A), a-keh-di-glini (or victor, for V), and tsah-as-zih (or yucca, for Y).

Later, the Navajos made the code more difficult to crack by adding more code words. Some English letters could be represented by as many as three different Navajo words. For example, for the letter A, code talkers could use wol-la-chee (ant), be-la-sana (apple), or tse-nill (ax).

Not all words had to be spelled out letter by letter, however. The code talkers came up with a list of Navajo words or phrases that could be used to represent common military terms. Many of these code words came from the Navajo knowledge of the natural world. Fighter planes flew quickly and made a buzzing noise, so they were given the code name dah-he-tih-hi, which is the Navajo word for hummingbird. Dive bombers were named for chicken hawks, or gini. The bombs they dropped were given the code name a-ye-shi, the Navajo word for eggs.

Battleships were called lo-tso, or whales in Navajo. Submarines were called besh-lo, which translates as iron fish. The code word for the United States was ne-he-mah, which means “our mother” in Navajo.

To start with, the code had about 200 such words, but by the end of the war it had grown to include about 600 words. The code talkers had to memorize the entire code before being shipped out for active duty. To keep the code secret, no written lists were allowed outside Marine training centers. Code talkers also practiced sending and translating messages quickly. They practiced until they could send and translate a three-line message in just 20 seconds. Most important of all, they learned to send and translate messages without errors. The slightest mistake could change the meaning of a message and place troops in danger.

Marine Corps leaders were so pleased with the code that they expanded the code talker program. Philip Johnston was placed in charge of
recruiting more Navajos. Some came from the reservation, and some transferred to the Marines from other branches of the armed forces. From the original 29 code talkers, the program grew to include about 400 Navajos.

From NAVAJO CODE TALKERS by Andrew Santella, copyright © 2004 BY Capstone. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
1. **Part A**

What does the word *endure* mean as it is used in paragraph 3 of the passage from *Navajo Code Talkers*?

A. easily finished  
B. decline to take  
C. help create  
D. suffer through

**Part B**

Which evidence helps the reader understand the meaning of *endure*?

A. “... long marches carrying heavy packs.” (paragraph 3)  
B. “... disciplined Marines who are ready for anything.” (paragraph 3)  
C. “... the Navajos had little trouble with the fitness tests.” (paragraph 3)  
D. “Many Navajos wore their hair in thick braids. . . .” (paragraph 4)
2. **Part A**

How does the author present information about the training process in the passage from *Navajo Code Talkers*?

A. by presenting the training as a solution to a problem  
B. by comparing the different aspects of the training  
C. by describing the effects of the training  
D. by explaining the sequence of the training

**Part B**

What did a person have to do to become a Navajo code talker?

Drag and drop the steps in the correct order into the diagram to illustrate the process.
3. **Part A**

What is a central idea of the passage from *Navajo Code Talkers*?

A. During World War II, the Marine Corps used Navajo recruits to create a successful code for communication.
B. The Navajo Marines often had trouble adapting to the strict culture of the Marine Corps.
C. During World War II, the Navajo bravely volunteered for military service in the Marine Corps.
D. The code created by the Navajo was the most successful code ever used by the Marine Corps.

**Part B**

Based on the answer in Part A, which **two** sentences belong in a summary of the passage?

A. The Navajo recruits trained by carrying heavy packs on long marches.
B. Some recruits lied about their ages in order to join the Marine Corps code talker program.
C. The Navajo code had 200 words that represented common military terms.
D. The code talker program was expanded due to the success of the Navajo code.
E. The code used the Navajo word for bear to represent the letter B.
F. The Navajo recruits invented an unbreakable code by using their native language.
Read the article “American Indians in the United States Army.” Then answer the questions.

American Indians in the United States Army
Comanche Code Talkers of the 4th Signal Company
(U.S. Army Signal Center and Ft. Gordon)

1 Napoleon once said, “the secret of war lies in the communications.” If he were around today, he might have revised it to, “secure communications.”

2 During World Wars I and II, the military needed a quick and reliable means of protecting its radio, telephone and telegraphic messages from enemy intelligence. American Indian tribes had their own languages and dialects that few outside the tribes understood, and many of their languages were not even written down. Their languages were ideal for the task at hand and fortunately, a large number of Indians had joined the armed forces.

World War I

3 In France during World War I, the 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, had a company of Indians who spoke 26 languages and dialects. Two Indian officers were selected to supervise a communications system staffed by 18 Choctaw. The team transmitted messages relating to troop movements and their own tactical plans in their native tongue. Soldiers from other tribes, including the Cheyenne, Comanche, Cherokee, Osage and Yankton Sioux also were enlisted to communicate as code talkers. Previous to their arrival in France, the Germans had broken every American code used, resulting in the deaths of many soldiers. However, the Germans never broke the Indians’ “code,” and these soldiers became affectionately known as “code talkers.”

World War II

4 During World War II, the Army used Indians in its signal communications operations in both the European and Pacific theaters of operations. Student code talkers were instructed in basic military communications techniques. The code talkers then developed their own words for military
terms that never existed in their own native tongue. For instance, the word for “colonel” was translated to “silver eagle,” “fighter plane” became “hummingbird,” “minesweeper” became “beaver,” “half-track” became “race track,” and “pyrotechnic” became “fancy fire.”

5 The Army and Marine Corps used a group of 24 Navajo code talkers in the Pacific Theater, who fought in the many bloody island campaigns. In North Africa, eight soldiers from the Meskwaki tribe in Iowa served as code talkers in the 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Division. In Europe, the 4th Signal Company, 4th Infantry Division, was assigned 17 Comanche code talkers. From the D-Day landings at Normandy in June 1944, to the liberation of Paris and the Battle of the Bulge, they kept the lines of communications secure.

6 Soldiers from other tribes, including the Kiowa, Winnebago, Chippewa, Creek, Seminole, Hopi, Lakota, Dakota, Menominee, Oneida, Pawnee, Sac, Fox and Choctaw served during the war. Some were killed and wounded and at least one was taken prisoner. As a testament to their professionalism, the enemy was never able to break the code talkers’ communications.

7 Many of the code talkers continued in their military careers, serving during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Belated Recognition

8 For many years, the code talkers’ work remained classified. Then on June 18, 2002, Congress passed the Code Talkers Recognition Act to recognize the important part that these soldiers played in “performing highly successful communications operations of a unique type that greatly assisted in saving countless lives and in hastening the end of World War I and World War II.” The act further states that the code talkers operated “under some of the heaviest combat action . . . around the clock to provide information . . . such as the location of enemy troops and the number of enemy guns.”

9 Congress recognized the remarkableness of the code talkers’ achievements, despite societal discrimination against them. The act
states that at “. . . a time when Indians were discouraged from practicing their native culture, a few brave men used their cultural heritage, their language, to help change the course of history.”

“American Indians in the United States Army: Comanche Code Talkers of the 4th Signal Company”—Public Domain
4. **Part A**

What meaning of **intelligence** is used in paragraph 2 of “American Indians in the United States Army?”

A. a high mental capacity  
B. the knowledge of an event  
C. the ability to understand information  
D. a group that intercepts military information

**Part B**

Which sentence from the article provides an example of the type of **intelligence** discussed in paragraph 2?

A. “Previous to their arrival in France, the Germans had broken every American code used, resulting in the deaths of many soldiers.” (paragraph 3)  
B. “The code talkers then developed their own words for military terms that never existed in their own native tongue.” (paragraph 4)  
C. “From the D-Day landings at Normandy in June 1944, to the liberation of Paris and the Battle of the Bulge, they kept the lines of communications secure.” (paragraph 5)  
D. “Congress recognized the remarkableness of the code talkers’ achievements, despite societal discrimination against them.” (paragraph 9)
5. **Part A**

What is the central idea of “American Indians in the United States Army”?

A. A secure way of communicating is the most important element in achieving a military victory.

B. Native Americans made great contributions to United States military operations in the field of communications.

C. A code using Native American words to replace military terms helped keep soldiers safe during wartime.

D. Native Americans have served in combat positions in the United States military in recent wars.

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Part B
Select the sentences that are most important to include in a summary of the article.

Drag and drop the sentences into the diagram in the correct order to create a summary of the article.

Napoleon once said that being able to communicate with the army was the most important element in winning a war.

The Kiowa, Winnebago, Seminole, and Hopi tribes were just some of the Native American tribes represented in the military.

During World War I and World War II, the United States military found a way to keep the enemy from understanding military communications.

The Native American codes were so successful that they were kept classified until fairly recently.

Native American soldiers created secret codes using their native languages.

The enemies of the United States were unable to break the Native American codes.

Navajo code talkers were used in the Pacific during World War II.

The Native American code talkers faced a great deal of discrimination.

Summary of “American Indians in the United States Army”
Read the passage “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?” Then answer the questions.

What’s So Special About Secret Codes?
by Mary Colson

1 Secret codes are powerful ways of sending messages and keeping information hidden. Cracking a code is about being a detective and outwitting your opponents. Creating, carrying, and cracking codes can be exciting and dangerous, and can even save lives.

2 Codes have brought down monarchs and whole armies and, today, they can make computers work or cause them to crash. Using a code makes sure that messages are understood only by the people they are intended for—from soldiers to popes. Some codes are written in letters, some in numbers, some in symbols, and some are only spoken or appear in music. Codes can also be found in pictures, in smoke, and even in string.

A very old art

3 Codes have been used since ancient times. The word cryptography means the “science of codes.” It comes from the Greek words kryptos (secret) and graphos (writing). Cryptographers make and break codes. Many modern cryptographers use computer languages or codes to help them encrypt and decrypt their messages.

Early codes

4 Hiding a message is the earliest form of code and it is called steganography. In the 400s BCE, a man named Demaratus wrote an urgent message on a tablet and then covered it with wax. He sent the tablet to some Greek friends, who removed the wax and saw the hidden writing telling them the Persian army was going to invade!

5 Around 2,000 years ago, the Chinese wrote secret messages on hard-boiled eggs. “Invisible” ink sank into the shell, and the message was revealed on the hard white of the egg once the shell was removed.
“Doll in a hula skirt”

6 Secret messages were still being used in the 1900s. In 1941 the Japanese unexpectedly bombed the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, killing many U.S. service people and damaging many ships. A spy for the Japanese named Velvalee Dickinson owned a doll store in New York City. She used doll orders to send messages back to the Japanese. She once wrote: “Doll in a hula skirt is in the hospital and doctors are working around the clock.” This really meant: “USS Honolulu is badly damaged and undergoing around-the-clock repairs.” Dickinson was eventually caught and convicted of espionage (spying) against the United States.

Making codes

7 Throughout history, people have wanted to keep their messages secret. But hidden writing is risky, because once the messenger or device is searched, the message is revealed easily. Codes are more secure. A code is a system of symbols, letters, words, or signals that are used instead of ordinary words and numbers to send secret messages or store information.

From SECRET CODES, DESTROY AFTER READING by Mary Colson, copyright © 2011 by Capstone. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
6. **Part A**

What does the word *encrypt* mean in paragraph 3 of the passage from “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?”

A. reveal  
B. observe  
C. destroy  
D. hide

**Part B**

What are two examples of *encrypting* in the passage?

A. In the 400s BCE, Demaratus wrote a message on a tablet and covered it with wax.  
B. Demaratus’s friends removed the wax from the tablet and found out the Persian army was going to invade.  
C. The Chinese wrote secret messages on hard-boiled eggs using “invisible” ink.  
D. People could read the message on the egg by removing the shell.  
E. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii in 1941.  
F. The United States convicted Velvalee Dickinson of spying for the Japanese.
7. **Part A**

In paragraph 5 of the passage from “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?” the author describes the method used by the Chinese 2,000 years ago to hide codes. Which steps need to be followed in order to hide and show a message using this method?

A. First, the sender writes a message on an egg. The recipient boils the egg to reveal a message written in invisible ink.

B. First, the sender boils an egg in water. Next, the sender peels the egg and writes a message on it. The recipient reads the message on the egg.

C. First, the sender boils an egg in water. Next, the sender writes a message on the shell in invisible ink. The recipient peels the shell off the egg and reads the message on the egg.

D. First, the sender boils an egg in water. Next, the sender writes a message on the shell. The recipient uses special ink to reveal the message under the shell.

**Part B**

How does paragraph 5 contribute to the reader’s understanding of secret codes?

A. It illustrates a common method of hiding messages still used today.

B. It demonstrates that people have been hiding messages for many centuries.

C. It shows how people have used wax to hide messages in the past.

D. It explains some of the reasons why people need to send messages.
8. **Part A**

In paragraph 5 of the passage from “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?” the author describes the method used by Chinese people 2,000 years ago to hide codes. What steps need to be followed in order to hide and show a message using this method?

Drag and drop the steps into the diagram in the correct order.

- The recipient translates the message into numeric code.
- The sender boils the egg in water.
- The recipient peels the shell off of the egg.
- The sender covers the egg with a coating of wax.
- The sender writes the message with invisible ink on the shell.
- The recipient reads the message on the egg.

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Part B
How does paragraph 5 contribute to the reader’s understanding of secret codes?

A. It illustrates a common method of hiding messages still used today.
B. It demonstrates that people have been hiding messages for many centuries.
C. It shows how people have used wax to hide messages in the past.
D. It explains some of the reasons why people need to send messages.
9. You have read a passage from *Navajo Code Talkers*, the article “American Indians in the United States Army,” and the passage “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?”

Write an article to display at a local history museum that explains the authors’ purposes for writing. Include an explanation of each author’s purpose and what information the author includes to convey that purpose. Consider how the authors’ purposes are similar and different.
10. Part A

How does the author of the passage from Navajo Code Talkers most effectively illustrate the concept of the Navajo code?

A. by describing how other soldiers learned the code
B. by stating that the code had a certain number of words
C. by quoting a person who helped create the code
D. by translating a word into code as an example

Part B

Which evidence from the passage provides support for the answer in Part A?

A. “We were told to use our language to come up with words representing each letter, from A to Z,’ he explained.” (paragraph 6)
B. “For example, to say, 'Navy,’ code talkers would say the Navajo words that stood for each letter: Nesh-chee (or nut, for N), wol-la-chee (or ant, for A), a-keh-di-glini (or victor, for V), and tsah-as-zih (or yucca, for Y).” (paragraph 7)
C. “To start with, the code had about 200 such words, but by the end of the war it had grown to include about 600 words.” (paragraph 11)
D. “The code talkers had to memorize the entire code before being shipped out for active duty. To keep the code secret, no written lists were allowed outside Marine training centers.” (paragraph 11)
11. **Part A**

How does the organization of “American Indians in the United States Army” help readers understand the central idea?

A. The use of comparison and contrast shows how Native Americans were treated differently from other citizens.
B. The use of problem and resolution illustrates that effective communication is essential to victory.
C. The use of cause and effect provides information about the roles Native Americans played in ending U.S. wars.
D. The use of chronological order describes the value of Native Americans to military efforts throughout U.S. history.

**Part B**

What information in the article supports the answer to Part A?

A. the discussion about Native American contributions to World Wars I and II, followed by an explanation of the importance of those contributions
B. the quotation from Napoleon about the importance of communications during war
C. the list of Native American tribes that contributed to different American war efforts
D. the explanation that in World War II, America’s enemies were unable to crack the Native Americans’ code
12. **Part A**

According to “American Indians in the United States Army,” which characteristic of Native Americans **most** influenced the military’s decision to recruit them to create secret codes?

A. Their native languages were unknown outside of their tribes.
B. Their training allowed them to break enemy codes.
C. They tended to volunteer for service in large numbers.
D. They had a high degree of professionalism about their jobs.

**Part B**

Which fact presented in the article supports the answer to Part A?

A. Members from numerous tribes served in the military during wartime.
B. The code talkers were used in many different theaters of operations.
C. Military leaders kept information about the codes classified for decades.
D. There was no written record of Native American languages.
13. **Part A**

Which sentence from the passage “What’s So Special About Secret Codes?” expresses the central idea of the passage?

A. “Secret codes are powerful ways of sending messages and keeping information hidden.” (paragraph 1)
B. “Codes have brought down monarchs and whole armies and, today, they can make computers work or cause them to crash.” (paragraph 2)
C. “Hiding a message is the earliest form of code and it is called steganography.” (paragraph 4)
D. “A code is a system of symbols, letters, words, or signals that are used instead of ordinary words and numbers to send secret messages or store information.” (paragraph 7)

**Part B**

Based on the answer in Part A, which sentence from the passage states an idea that should be included in a summary of the passage?

A. “Creating, carrying, and cracking codes can be exciting and dangerous, and can even save lives.” (paragraph 1)
B. “Using a code makes sure that messages are understood only by the people they are intended for—from soldiers to popes.” (paragraph 2)
C. “Many modern cryptographers use computer languages or codes to help them encrypt and decrypt their messages.” (paragraph 3)
D. “But hidden writing is risky, because once the messenger or device is searched, the message is revealed easily.” (paragraph 7)
14. Part A

What is the central idea of “American Indians in the United States Army”?

A. The Code Talkers Recognition Act improved relations between Native Americans and the United States government.
B. Native Americans made great contributions to the United States military operations in the field of communications.
C. A code using Native American words to replace military terms helped keep soldiers safe during wartime.
D. Native Americans have served in combat positions in the United States military in recent wars.

Part B

Which option provides the best summary of the central idea of “American Indians in the United States Army”?

A. During World Wars I and II, the military needed a reliable way to protect its communications. A company of Native Americans in France during World War I spoke 26 languages and dialects. They transmitted messages relating to troop movements.
B. Native American soldiers helped create secret codes during World Wars I and II. The soldiers fought Congress to gain recognition for their work during wartime. They wanted to be recognized for bringing an end to the wars quickly.
C. Napoleon is considered the first person to create a secret code. The Native American tribes that participated in World War I were the Cheyenne, Comanche, Cherokee, Osage, and Yankton Sioux. Some soldiers from the Kiowa and Winnebago tribes were killed during World War II.
D. During World War I and World War II, the United States military found a way to keep the enemy from understanding military communications. Native American soldiers created secret codes using their native languages. The enemies of the United States were unable to break the Native American codes.