2016 Released Items: Grade 4 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 2016 blueprint for PARCC’s grade 4 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
**Text Type: RST**

**Passage(s):** from “Great White Shark” / from *Face to Face with Sharks/Shark Life*

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| B1419     | Item Type: PCR  
Refer to Grade 4 Scoring Rubric | RI 4.1.1  
RI 4.7.1 |
Today you will research sharks. You will read a passage from "Great White Shark." Then you will read passages from Face to Face with Sharks and Short Life. As you review these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about sharks so you can write a response.

Read the passage from "Great White Shark." Then answer the questions.

Sharks are much older than dinosaurs. Their ancestry dates back more than 400 million years, and they are one of evolution’s greatest success stories. These animals are uniquely adapted to their ocean environment with a high level of evolution. (Many species are capable of being pregnant, giving birth, and caring for their offspring in the water.) As the top predators in the ocean, white sharks (Carcharodon carcharias) face only one real threat to their survival: us. The assaults are many. By-catch: the accidental killing of sharks by fishermen’s long lines and harpoons. Legal poisoning: selling shark fins for soup. Illegal hunting: sport fishing for shark jaws as trophies. Nazca: placed along coastlines to keep sharks away from beaches. Pollution: toxins and heavy metals that build up in the shark’s body. In some areas, great white populations have plummeted by over 70%. If it stops, it could lead to the extinction of the ancient species.

Great white sharks are powerful swimmers, capable of going 55 mph. [Image]

Brain over the Brain

Many scientists now believe that great white sharks are intelligent, highly inquisitive creatures. When great whites gather, they seem to show different behaviors, from open-mouthed gaping at one another to assortive body-alarms. These sharks are top predators throughout the world’s oceans, preying on other marine predators. Great whites migrate long distances. Some make journeys from the Hawaiian Islands to California, and one shark that swam from South Africa to Australia made the longest recorded migration of any fish.

The torpedo-shape of the great white is built for speed: up to 36 miles per hour (13 kilometers per hour). And then there are the teeth—320 total in up to seven rows.

But more than the brain, the great white shark has a tremendous brain that coordinates all the highly developed senses of this efficient hunter. Its prey, including seals and dolphins, are very clever animals, and the shark has to have enough brains to outsmart them. Despite their reputation as lone hunters, great whites will cooperate with one another, hunting in groups and sharing the spoils. And some researchers have been surprised by how fast they learn.

Sharks have six highly refined senses: smell, hearing, touch, taste, sight, and electromagnetism. These finely honed senses, along with a sleek, torpedo-shaped body, make most sharks highly skilled hunters.

Shark Sense

Great white became the ocean’s top hunters through the evolution of extremely sensitive senses and physiology.

SMELL

Great white shark’s most acute sense is smell. If there were just a single drop of blood floating in 10 billion drops of water, they could smell it! Their nostrils are on the underside of the snout and lead to an organ called the olfactory bulb. The great white’s olfactory bulb is reported to be the largest of any shark.

HEARING

Short external ears are hard to see: they are just two small openings behind and above the eyes. The ears may be small, but they’re powerful. Inside, there are cells that can sense even the tiniest vibration in the surrounding water. Sharks also have an “ear stone” that responds to gravity, giving the animal clues as to where it is in the water: head up, head down, right side up, or upside-down.

VISION

A great white shark has great vision. The retina of the eye is divided into two areas—one adapted for day vision, the other for low-light and night. To protect itself, the great white shark can roll its eye backward into the socket when threatened.

ELECTRO-RECEPTION

Sharks have a sense that humans can only be in awe of—they can sense an electrical field. A series of jaws on the shark’s snout are filled with cells called the Ampullae of Lorenzini that can feel the power and direction of electrical currents. Scientists have discovered that sharks can use this sense to navigate through the open ocean by following an electrical “map” of the magnetic fields that compass the Earth’s crust.

TASTE

Great white sharks are opportunistic eaters. Depending on the season, sex or age, they will hunt seals and sea lions, fish, squid, and even other sharks. They have taste buds inside their mouths and throats that enable them to identify the food before swallowing.

TOUCH

Great white sharks have an elaborate sense of touch through what’s called the lateral fin—a line that extends along the middle of the shark’s body from its tail to its head. This fin, which is found in all fish, is made of cells that can perceive vibrations in the water. Sharks can detect both the direction and amount of movement made by prey, even from as far as 630 feet (250 meters) away.
Today you will research sharks. You will read a passage from "Great White Shark." Then you will read passages from Face to Face with Sharks and Shark Life. As you review these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about sharks so you can write a response.

Read the passage from "Great White Shark." Then answer the questions.

**Great White Shark**
by the Ocean Portal Team

Sharks are much older than dinosaurs. Their ancestry dates back more than 400 million years, and they are one of evolution's greatest success stories. These animals are uniquely adapted to their ocean environment with six highly refined senses of smell, hearing, touch, taste, sight, and even electromagnetism. As the top predators in the ocean, great white sharks (Carcharodon carcharias) face only one real threat to their survival: us. The seas are many. By-the-catch: the accidental killing of sharks by fishermen's long lines and trawlers. Illegal poisoning: selling shark fins for soup. Illegal hunting: sport-hunting for shark jaws as trophies. Here: placed along coastlines to keep sharks away from beaches. Pollution: toxins and heavy metals that build up in the shark's body. In some areas great white populations have plummeted by over 75%. If not stopped, it could lead to the extinction of the ancient species.

**Great white sharks are powerful swimmers, capable of going 55 kph/35 mph.**

**Brain over Brain**

Many scientists now believe that great white sharks are intelligent, highly social creatures. When great whites gather, they seem to show different behaviors, from open-mouthed gapping at one another to assertive body-alarms. These sharks are top predators throughout the world's ocean, predominately in temperate and subpolar waters. Great whites migrate long distances. Some make journeys from the Hawaiian Islands to California, and one shark that swam from South Africa to Australia made the longest recorded migration of any fish.

The torpedo-like shape of the great white is built for speed; up to 36 miles per hour (50 kilometers per hour). And then there are the teeth—300 total in up to seven rows. But more than brown, the great white shark has a tremendous brain that coordinates all the highly developed senses of this efficient hunter. Its prey, including seals and dolphins, are very clever animals, and the shark has to have enough brains to outsmart them. Despite their reputation as lone hunters, great whites will cooperate with one another; hunting in groups and sharing the spoils. And some researchers have been surprised by how fast they swim.

**Sharks have six highly refined senses: smell, hearing, touch, taste, sight, and electromagnetism. These finely honed senses, along with a sleek, torpedo-shaped body, make great white sharks highly skilled hunters.**

**Shark Sense**

Great whites became the ocean's top hunters through the evolution of highly adapted senses and physiology.

**SMELL**

Great white sharks' most acute sense is smell. If there were just a single drop of blood floating in 10 billion drops of water, they could smell it. Their nostrils are on the underside of the snout and lead to an organ called the olfactory bulb. The great white's olfactory bulb is reported to be the largest of any shark.

**HEARING**

Short external ears are hard to see; they are just two small openings behind and above the eyes. The ears may be small, but they're powerful. Inside, there are cells that can sense even the tiniest vibration in the surrounding water. Sharks also have an "ear stone" that responds to gravity, giving the animal clues as to where it is in the water: head up, head down, tight side up, or upside down.

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**TASTE**

Great white sharks are opportunistic eaters. Depending on the season, area and age, they will hunt seals and sea lions, fish, squid, and even other sharks. They have taste buds inside their mouths and throats that enable them to identify the food before swallowing.

**TOUCH**

Great white sharks have an elaborate sense of touch through what's called the lateral line—a line that extends along the middle of the shark's body from its tail to its head. This line, which is found in all fish, is made of cells that can perceive vibrations in the water. Sharks can detect both the direction and amount of movement made by prey, even from as far as 630 feet (250 meters) away.

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Part A

What is a main idea of the passage from "Great White Shark"?

☐ A. Great white sharks can swim quickly and for long distances.

☐ B. Great white sharks have several different types of batteaux.

☐ C. Great white sharks could face extinction for several reasons.

☐ D. Great white sharks have many features that make them top predators.

Part B

How does the author best support the main idea identified in Part A?

☐ A. by using a specific shark to illustrate the migration of great white sharks

☐ B. by giving examples of the special characteristics of great white sharks

☐ C. by describing how great white sharks act around one another

☐ D. by giving examples of different dangers to great white sharks
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Shark Senses

Great whites became the ocean’s top hunters through the evolution of supremely adapted senses and physiology.

SMELL

Great white sharks’ most acute sense is smell. If there were just a single drop of blood floating in 10 billion drops of water, they could smell it! Their nostrils are on the underside of the snout and lead to an organ called the olfactory bulb. The great white’s olfactory bulb is reported to be the largest of any shark.

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TOUCH

Great white sharks have an elaborate sense of touch through what’s called the lateral line—a line that extends along the middle of the shark’s body from its head to its tail. This line, which is found in all fish, is made of cells that can perceive vibrations in the water. Sharks can detect both the direction and amount of movement made by prey, even from as far as 800 feet (250 meters) away.
Today you will research sharks. You will read a passage from “Great White Shark.” Then you will read passages from Face to Face with Sharks and Shark Life. As you review these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about sharks so you can write a response.

Read the passage from Face to Face with Sharks. Then answer the questions.

from Face to Face with Sharks
by David Doubilet and Jennifer Hayes

We have photographed hundreds of sharks around the world. Different shark species have different personalities. Sand tiger sharks are calm, and we can swim with them. Great white sharks are very fast, aggressive predators, so we photograph them from a special shark cage. We are always excited to see a shark while we are diving, but we are always careful and cautious because we are visitors in their world.

We have never been bitten by a shark. However, some sharks try to bite our camera strobe lights. The sharks sense the camera’s electric charge, and they think the strobes are alive and might good.

We never know when you will discover a shark. One day we were swimming in eight-foot-deep water off the coast of Tasmania, a large island south of Australia. We looked down and saw more than 15 sawsharks with long snouts, called rostrums, hiding in green algae. We were shocked to see them there because sawsharks usually live in over 100 feet of water. These female sharks may have come into shallow water to birth their pups.

Shark expert Mark Addison named this shark Barbara Ann. She and many other tiger sharks migrate to Aliwal Shoal off South Africa every year. Tiger sharks have beautiful stripes, but like tigers, they can be aggressive and unpredictable.

We had our favorite shark dive on a very calm day off Gansbaai, South Africa. We got in our round metal cage and went in. Right away, a 15-foot great white swam out of the gloom and smashed our cage hard enough to knock us down. She came back to the cage again and again, showing us her razor-sharp teeth and a mouth that could swallow us whole. More and more great whites appeared out of nowhere. Four sharks circled our cage at the same time. We stayed in the cage until the sun went down, even though we were cold. That day, 17 different great white sharks came to check us out. It was the best day ever!

© National Geographic Society
Photo: Hawaii, Tiger Shark Over Reef. Sundance (Bleeker) Couvier © Dave Fleetham/Design Pics/Corbis
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2. We have never been bitten by a shark. However, some sharks try to bite our camera strobe lights. The sharks sense the batteries’ electric charge, and they think the strobes are alive and might taste good.

3. You never know when you will discover a shark surprise. One day we were swimming in eight-foot-deep water off the coast of Tasmania, a large island south of Australia. We looked down and saw more than 15 sawfish, called rostrums, hiding in green algae. We were shocked to see them there because sawfish usually live in over 100 feet of water. These female sharks may have come into shallow water to birth their pups.

4. We had our favorite shark dive on a very calm day off Gansbaai, South Africa. We got in our round metal cage and went in. Right away, a 15-foot great white swam out of the gloom and smashed our cage hard enough to knock us down. She came back to the cage again and again, showing us her razor-sharp teeth and a mouth that could swallow us whole. More and more great whites appeared out of nowhere. Four sharks circled our cage at the same time. We stayed in the cage until the sun went down, even though we were cold. That day, 17 different great white sharks came to check us out. It was the best day ever!

© National Geographic Society
Photo: Howie, Tiger Shark Over Reef. Sunbunis (Galeocerdo cuvier) © Dave Fleetham/Design Pics/Corbis

Part A
Which sentence in the passage from Face to Face with Sharks expresses the main idea of the passage?

- A. “Different shark species have different personalities.” (paragraph 1)
- B. “We have never been bitten by a shark.” (paragraph 2)
- C. “You never know when you will discover a shark surprise.” (paragraph 3)
- D. “We had our favorite shark dive on a very calm day off Gansbaai, South Africa.” (paragraph 4)

Part B
How do the authors support the main idea?

- A. by describing some unexpected experiences with sharks
- B. by explaining safety measures they use when diving with sharks
- C. by providing examples of various types of shark behavior
- D. by describing the best adventure they have had with sharks
Today you will research sharks. You will read a passage from “Great White Shark.” Then you will read passages from Face to Face with Sharks and Shark Life. As you review these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about sharks so you can write a response.

Read the passage from Face to Face with Sharks. Then answer the questions.

_from Face to Face with Sharks_
_by David Doubilet and Jennifer Hayes_

1. We have photographed hundreds of sharks around the world. Different shark species have different personalities. Sand tiger sharks are calm, and we can swim with them. Great white sharks are very fast, aggressive predators, so we photograph them from a special shark cage. We are always excited to see a shark while we are diving, but we are always careful and cautious because we are visitors in their world.

2. We have never been bitten by a shark. However, some sharks try to bite our camera strobe lights. The sharks sense the batteries’ electric charge, and they think the strobes are alive and might taste good.

3. You never know when you will discover a shark surprise. One day we were swimming in eight-foot-deep water off the coast of Tasmania, a large island south of Australia. We looked down and saw more than 15 sawharks with long snouts, called rostrums, hiding in green algae. We were shocked to see them there because sawharks usually live in over 100 feet of water. These female sharks may have come into shallow water to birth their pups.

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4. We had our favorite shark dive on a very calm day off Gansbaai, South Africa. We got in our round metal cage and went in. Right away, a 15-foot great white swam out of the gloom and smashed our cage hard enough to knock us down. She came back to the cage again and again, showing us her razor-sharp teeth and a mouth that could swallow us whole. More and more great whites appeared out of nowhere. Four sharks circled our cage at the same time. We stayed in the cage until the sun went down, even though we were cold. That day, 17 different great white sharks came to check us out. It was the best day ever!

 Part A
How do the authors organize information in paragraph 4 of the passage from Face to Face with Sharks?

- A. by contrasting types of great white sharks
- B. by describing events in the order they happened
- C. by explaining the causes and effects of shark behavior
- D. by presenting the problem of a dangerous dive and offering a solution

 Part B
Which sentence in paragraph 4 best demonstrates the answer to Part A?

- A. “We had our favorite shark dive on a very calm day off Gansbaai, South Africa.”
- B. “Four sharks circled our cage at the same time.”
- C. “We stayed in the cage until the sun went down, even though we were cold.”
- D. “That day, 17 different great white sharks came to check us out.”
Today you will research sharks. You will read a passage from “Great White Shark.” Then you will read passages from Face to Face with Sharks and Shark Life. As you review these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about sharks so you can write a response.

Read the passage from Shark Life. Then answer the questions.

from Shark Life
by Peter Benchley

1. Something was moving against the blue. Something dark. It was there and gone there again. It wasn’t coming from the side or circling me. It was coming straight at me, slowly, deliberately, unhurried, emerging from the mist.

2. I stopped breathing—not intentionally but reflexively, as if by stopping my breath I could stop all movement. I heard my pulse hammering in my ears. I wasn’t afraid, exactly. I had been afraid, before, on the boat, but by now I had passed through fear. I was in a state of excitement and something like shocked disbelief.

3. There it is! Feel the pressure in the water as the body moves through it. The size of it! My God, the size!

4. The animal kept coming, and now I could see all of it: the pointed snout, the steel gray upper body in stark contrast with the ghostly white belly, the symmetry of the pectoral fins, the awful knife blade of the dorsal fin. The tail fin swung powerfully back and forth, propelling the enormous body toward me. It came slowly, steadily, as if it had no need for speed, for it knew it could not be stopped.

5. It did not slow, did not hesitate. Its black eyes showed no interest or excitement. As it drew within a few feet of me, it opened its mouth. I saw first the lower jaw, crowded with jagged, needle-pointed teeth; then, as the upper jaw detached from the skull and dropped, the huge, triangular cutting teeth, each side serrated like a saw blade.

6. The great white’s mouth opened wider and wider, until it seemed it would swallow the entire cage, and me within it. I stared into the huge pink and white cavern that narrowed into a black hole, the gullet. I could see rows and rows of spare teeth buried in the gum tissue. Each tooth was a holstered weapon waiting to replace a tooth lost in battle. Far back on each side of the massive head, gill flaps fluttered open and shut, letting in flickering rays of light.

7. A millisecond before the mouth would have banged into the cage, the great white bit down and was rammed forward by a sudden thrust of its powerful tail. The upper teeth struck four inches from my face. They scraped noisily—horribly—against the aluminum bars. Then the lower teeth gnashed quickly, looking for something solid to sink into.

8. I shrank back, stumbling, until I could cringe in relative safety in a far corner of the cage.

9. My brain shouted, You... you of all people ought to know: HUMAN BEINGS DO NOT BELONG IN THE WATER WITH GREAT WHITE SHARKS!

Part A
What is the overall structure of the passage from Shark Life?

A. explaining an event and then describing the effects
B. describing the experiences in the order that they happened
C. comparing and contrasting sharks with human beings
D. stating a problem with sharks and then offering a solution

Part B
Which two quotations from the passage best demonstrate the answer to Part A?

A. “I stopped breathing—not intentionally but reflexively, as if by stopping my breath I could stop all movement.” (paragraph 2)
B. “I had been afraid, before, on the boat, but by now I had passed through fear.” (paragraph 2)
C. “There it is! Feel the pressure in the water as the body moves through it. The size of it! My God, the size!” (paragraph 3)
D. “... I could see all of it: the pointed snout, the steel gray upper body in stark contrast with the ghostly white belly, ...” (paragraph 4)
E. “I saw first the lower jaw, crowded with jagged, needle-pointed teeth; ...” (paragraph 5)
F. “My brain shouted, You... you of all people ought to know...” (paragraph 9)
Part A
Which statement explains the main difference between the passage from Face to Face with Sharks and the passage from Shark Life?

- A. The authors have different reasons for being in the water with a shark.
- B. The authors have different reactions to being in the water with a shark.
- C. The authors share experiences with different types of sharks.
- D. The authors' experiences with sharks have different outcomes.

Part B
Which sentences from the passages support the answer to Part A? Select one sentence from each passage.

- A. "...great white’s mouth opened wider and wider, until it seemed it would swallow the entire cage." (Shark Life, paragraph 6)
- B. "A millisecond before the mouth would have banged into the cage, the great white bit down and was rammed forward by a sudden thrust of its powerful tail." (Shark Life, paragraph 8)
- C. "...human beings do not belong in the water with great white sharks!" (Shark Life, paragraph 8)
- D. "...we looked down and saw more than 1500 sand-hawks with long snouts, called rostrums, hiding in green algae. We were shaken to see them there, because sand-hawks usually live in over 100 feet of water. These female sharks may have come into shallow water to birth their pups." (Face to Face with Sharks, paragraph 3)
- E. "She came back to the cage again and again, showing us her razor-sharp teeth and a mouth that could swallow us whole." (Face to Face with Sharks, paragraph 4)
- F. "It was the best day ever!" (Face to Face with Sharks, paragraph 4)
B1419

Today you will research sharks. You will need a passage from "Great White Shark" and their prey articles from Fish in the Sea with Sharks and Fish Life. As you review these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about sharks as we are as we write a response.

"Great White Shark" by David Bladen and Jennifer Hamer

Sharks are much older than dinosaurs. Their ancestry dates back more than 400 million years, and they are one of the oldest living aquatic animals. These animals are adapted to their marine environment with an array of highly specialized traits that allow them to swim and feed in the vast ocean.

Today you will put the information from previous lessons to use. You will need to answer the questions in the boxes below.

1. Great white sharks are powerful predators in the ocean. What are they known for?
2. What are some unique adaptations that allow great white sharks to survive in the ocean?
3. How do great white sharks hunt their prey?
4. What is the maximum speed of a great white shark?
5. Where do great white sharks typically live?

To answer these questions, you will need to consult the text provided.

"Great White Shark" by the Discovery Channel

Great white sharks are known for their speed and力量. When they hunt, they can reach speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. Their streamlined bodies and sharp teeth make them a formidable predator in the ocean.

Great white sharks are found in the warm waters of the world, particularly in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Their diet consists mainly of other fish and marine mammals. They have a unique ability to sense the electric fields of other organisms, which allows them to locate prey from a distance.

To answer these questions, you will need to consult the text provided.

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To answer these questions, you will need to consult the text provided.

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