2015 Released Items: Grade 4 Performance-Based Assessment Narrative Writing Task

The Narrative Writing Task focuses on one literary text. Students read the text, answer questions, and write a narrative response that is tied to and draws on the text.

The 2015 blueprint for PARCC’s grade 4 Narrative Writing Task includes five Evidence-Based Selected Response/Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response items as well as one Prose Constructed Response prompt. This document includes a complete Narrative Writing Task from an online summative assessment form.

Included in this document:

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

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
- PARCC English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment: General Scoring Rules for the 2015 Summative Assessment
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Today you will read the story ‘Sally's Rescue.’ As you read, pay close attention to the characters and events as you answer the questions to prepare to write a narrative story.

Read the story ‘Sally's Rescue.’ Then answer the questions.

Sally's Rescue
by Roderick J. Robison

1. Sitting at the cabin's breakfast table, Anna and Jim could see the sun's rays flickering on the calm water in the bay. It was a welcome sight after the storm. During the two days of heavy wind and rain, they hadn't left the cabin.

2. ‘We're going down to the beach,’ said Anna, hardly able to contain her excitement.

3. ‘Have fun. I hope you find something good washed up on the shore,’ her mother replied.

4. The two children bolted out the front door and ran down the hill to the gravel beach. A strange grayish lump looked out of place in the seaweed that had washed ashore. As they drew closer they noticed it was moving! There, at the water's edge, a baby seal swiveled her head and peered up at them. Underneath her, strewn about on the rocks, was a section of fishnet.

5. ‘Hello, gir. What a beautiful seal you are!’ said Anna.

6. The seal tilted her head at the sound of Anna's voice.

7. ‘She looks so sad,’ said Jim. ‘Maybe she's hurt. I'll get Mom and Dad.’ Moments later he was back with his parents.

8. ‘She's just a pup, probably less than a month old,’ said Mom.

9. ‘H'm. Appears to be caught in the net,’ added Dad as he knelt down and gently untangled the netting. ‘There. That does it.’ He placed the seal in the shallow water.

10. ‘Good-bye, gir,’ said Anna.

11. ‘Good-bye, seal,’ said Jim.

12. The seal didn't swim off as they expected. She just looked up at them with sadness in her two dark, beady eyes. Mom waded out into the water and gently pushed the seal toward the sea, but she just swam back to the shore.

13. ‘I'm going to name her Sally,’ said Anna. ‘Can we keep her? Please?’

14. Before her parents could reply, Jim interrupted. ‘What are those?’ he asked, pointing at two dark bumps bobbing way out on the surface of the sea.

15. Dad lifted his binoculars and focused them. ‘They're seals,’ he replied.

16. ‘Do you think they're Sally's parents?’ asked Anna.

17. ‘They very well could be,’ replied Mom. ‘If they are, they're probably looking for her right now.’

18. ‘They must miss her very much,’ said Jim.

19. ‘And she must miss them very much,’ added Anna.

20. ‘Seals are shy around people,’ said Dad. ‘Let's go away so they can come and get her.’

21. Anna and Jim watched from the cabin window, but by low tide no seals had come to Sally. Finally Dad carried a wood-slatted fish box to the water's edge. Anna put a sardine inside and backed away. After a while, Sally made her way into the box and gobbled the sardine.

22. They loaded the box with Sally in it onto the boat and motored out into the bay, in search of her family. Sally sat up front in the bow, looking out alertly over the water, sniffing the salt air.

23. Dad cut the motor as they approached the first group of rocks, where six dark seals were sunning themselves.

24. ‘I don't think that's them,’ said Jim, as the seals dove into the water.

25. They motored further up the bay and then drifted toward a large rock. Only a single seal sat on it, and he was white and whiskery.

26. ‘H'm,’ said Dad, scanning a small, rocky ledge up ahead. On the ledge were two spotted gray seals.

27. Sally whimpered as the boat approached the ledge and, before anyone could bid her farewell, scrambled out of the fish box and dove into the water to join the two seals.

28. That night at the dinner table, just before sunset, Anna said, ‘How do we know for sure that those were Sally's parents on that ledge?’

29. ‘Oh, I don't think we need to worry about that,’ said Jim, pointing out to the bay. Three gray seals poked their heads above the surface and lingered for a few moments as if to say thank you. Then they dove under as the sun disappeared below the horizon.

Part A
Which best describes why Jim says, "I'll get Mom and Dad" in paragraph 7?

- A. to ask for their help with the lost seal
- B. to ask for their permission to keep the seal
- C. to ask for a boat ride to see the seal's parents
- D. to ask for binoculars to look for the seal's parents

Part B
Which paragraph in the story best supports the answer to Part A?

- A. paragraph 6
- B. paragraph 9
- C. paragraph 13
- D. paragraph 14
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3. “Have fun. I hope you find something good washed up on the shore,” her mother replied.

4. The two children bolted out the front door and ran down the hill to the gravel beach. A strange grayish lump looked out of place in the seaweed that had washed ashore. As they drew closer they noticed it was moving! There, at the water’s edge, a baby seal waved its head and peered up at them. Underneath her, strung about on the rocks, was a section of fishnet.

5. “Hello, girl. What a beautiful seal you are!” said Anna.

6. The seal tilted her head at the sound of Anna’s voice.

7. “She looks so sad,” said Jim. “Maybe she’s hurt. I’ll get Mom and Dad.” Moments later he was back with his parents.

8. “She’s just a pup, probably less than a month old,” said Mom.


10. “Good-bye, girl,” said Anna.


12. “The seal didn’t swim off as they expected. She just looked up at them with sadness in her two dark, beady eyes. Mom waded out into the water and gently pushed the seal toward the sea, but she just swam back to the shore.

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21. Anna and Jim watched from the cabin window, but by low tide no seals had come to Sally. Finally Dad carried a wood-slatted fish box to the water’s edge. Anna put a sardine inside and backed away. After a while, Sally made her way into the box and gobbled the sardine.

22. They loaded the box with Sally in it onto the boat and motored out into the bay, in search of her family. Sally sat up front in the bow, looking out alertly over the water, sniffing the salt air.

23. Dad cut the motor as they approached the first group of rocks, where six dark seals were sunning themselves.

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25. They motored further up the bay and then drifted toward a large rock. Only a single seal sat on it, and he was white and whiskery.

26. “Hrm,” said Dad, scanning a small, rocky ledge up ahead. On the ledge were two spotted gray seals.

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2. “We're going down to the beach,” said Anna, hardly able to contain her excitement.

3. “Have fun. I hope you find something good washed up on the shore,” their mother replied.

4. The two children bolted out the front door and ran down the hill to the gravel beach. A strange grayish lump looked out of place in the seaweed that had washed ashore. As they drew closer they noticed it was moving! There, at the water’s edge, a baby seal swiveled her head and peered up at them. Underneath her, strewn about on the rocks, was a section of fishnet.

5. “Hello, girl. What a beautiful seal you are!” said Anna.

6. The seal tilted her head at the sound of Anna’s voice.

7. “She looks so sad,” said Jim. “Maybe she’s hurt. I’ll get Mom and Dad.” Moments later he was back with their parents.

8. “She’s just a pup, probably less than a month old,” said Mom.


10. “Good-bye, girl,” said Anna.


12. The seal didn’t swim off as they expected. She just looked up at them with sadness in her two dark, beady eyes. Mom waded out into the water and gently patted the seal toward the sea, but she just swam back to the shore.

13. “I’m going to name her Sally,” said Anna. “Can we keep her? Please?”

14. Before her parents could reply, Jim interrupted. “What are those?” he asked, pointing at two dark bumps bobbing way out on the surface of the sea.

15. Dad lifted his binoculars and focused them. “They’re seals,” he replied.

16. “Do you think they’re Sally’s parents?” asked Anna.

17. “They very well could be,” replied Mom. “If they are, they’re probably looking for her right now.”

18. “They must miss her very much,” said Jim.

19. “And she must miss them very much,” added Anna.

20. “Seals are shy around people,” said Dad. “Let’s go away so they can come and get her.”

21. Anna and Jim watched from the cabin window, but by low tide no seals had come to Sally. Finally Dad carried a wood-slatted fish box to the water’s edge. Anna put a sardine inside and backed away. After a while, Sally made her way into the box and gobbled the sardine.

22. They loaded the box with Sally in it onto the boat and motored out into the bay, in search of her family. Sally sat up front in the bow, looking out alertly over the water, sniffing the salt air.

23. Dad cut the motor as they approached the first group of rocks, where six dark seals were sunning themselves.

24. “I don’t think that’s them,” said Jim, as the seals dove into the water.

25. They motored further up the bay and then drifted toward a large rock. Only a single seal sat on it, and he was white and whiskery.

26. “Hrm,” said Dad, scanning a small, rocky ledge up ahead. On the ledge were two spotted gray seals.

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23. Dad cut the motor as they approached the first group of rocks, where six dark seals were sunning themselves.

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25. They motored further up the bay and then drifted toward a large rock. Only a single seal sat on it, and he was white and whiskeys.

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