Frequently Asked Questions about the K-2 ELA Formative Tasks

What are the key features of the resource?

- **What are the key features to be found in every ELA task?**

Every ELA task has several key features. These features include an opportunity for students to engage with an authentic, engaging text, activities designed to demonstrate teacher modeling, student practice, and student demonstration of grade-level ELA standards, checklists and/or rubrics and sample annotated scoring responses to provide teachers with information to use these tools to gather information about student strengths and needs around targeted standards, and a variety of tips/ideas for how teachers can further support student learning based on student responses to included activities. The PARCC Professional Learning Module on K-2 Formative Tasks includes more information on the key features to be found in every ELA task.

- **What is the purpose of the Performance Task at a Glance charts?**

These charts have two purposes. First, these charts serve as an overview of the critical work that will be done throughout implementation of the tasks. Second, teachers who wish to create their own tasks can use the charts as models for how to structure their performance tasks.

- **What is the purpose of the Reflection Journal?**

The reflection journal provides ideas for ways teachers can capture their thoughts and ideas for refinement of task implementation for future task administrations.

- **What is the purpose of the If/Then chart?**

The If/Then chart, which is embedded within each performance task, is a resource for teachers. It lists the standards that have been an area of focus in the performance task, as well as suggested activities to engage in with students who need more support, practice, and/or instruction with a particular standard. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, nor is the expectation that teachers would engage in the additional suggested activities within the performance task. It simply offers suggestions that teachers may find helpful with other texts as the school year progresses.

- **How do I use the L1 & L2 Knowledge of Language and Conventions Checklist?**

This checklist can be used by teachers in a number of ways. If helpful, teachers could keep the checklist in each student's portfolio and record when each student demonstrates command of a specific language or convention standard. Having multiple copies of the completed checklist for each student may be helpful in looking at the progression of learning as well as the retention of skills over an extended period of time.

How does one access the resource?

- **How does one gain access to the PDF files for the K-2 tasks?**

The K-2 tasks are accessible from the Partnership Resource Center and are located in the Instructional Tools section.

How is the resource designed to support student learning?

- **When should I use these tasks with my students?**

The teachers who reviewed and piloted the tasks made recommendations on whether the tasks are likely best suited for the first half or second half of the academic year based on text and task complexity, but teachers can do the tasks when they fit best in their curricular implementation and based on their students' needs.

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- **Can I use the checklists and rubrics both formatively and summatively?**

Yes. One way to capture this information would be, when completing a checklist or rubric, to record the level of support provided to each student: little/no support, moderate support, extensive support.

- **What if I am not able to collect information (CI) on every student for oral responses during every Performance Task?**

The K-2 Performance Tasks are meant to be on-going throughout the school year. There should be multiple opportunities to collect information about each student's level of mastery of the standards during the school year. The central goal is to use the information collected to inform instruction.

- **Is there flexibility in grouping my students for the Performance Tasks?**

Yes. The K-2 CCSS for reading do not specify any group sizes. Use your professional judgment to best meet the needs of your students in regards to group sizes.

- **Are the tasks designed to engage students in learning so that the teacher can attend to other tasks?**

No. The tasks are designed for you (teacher) and your students to be actively engaged *together*. The observation checklists are provided so that you can record student data while the students are completing the task.

How is the resource designed to support educator ease of use and professional learning?

- **How can I communicate with other teachers at my grade level about my experience with the K-2 Performance Tasks?**

Reflection opportunities are provided at the end of each Performance Task. Consider sharing relevant reflections with other educators to build capacity and a deeper understanding of the CCSS.

- **Where can I go to learn more about the K-2 standards, evidences, and shifts?**

You may find the following links helpful:

- [Common Core State Standards](#)
- [Key Shifts in English Language Arts](#)
- [PARCC K-2 English Language Arts/Literacy Model Content Frameworks](#)
- [Evidence Tables](#)

- **Can I make tweaks and slight adjustments to the tasks?**

The tasks, as presented, have been field tested by many 5 – 7 year olds and their teachers. However, if you find something that will work better for you and your students, adjust the task as you see fit. Remember to refer to the K-2 Model Content Frameworks and the PARCC K-2 Evidence statements when making tweaks, to make sure you stay aligned to the standards.

What do key terms mean?

- **Is there a glossary to define the terms used in the K-2 ELA tasks?**

PARCC has created a glossary to assist teachers in understanding key terms used throughout the K-2 ELA tasks. One can access each glossary (Kinder Glossary, Grade 1 Glossary, Grade 2 Glossary) in the Instructional Tools section of the Partnership Resource Center.

- **Why is vocabulary broken into three categories (fast instruction, focused instruction, words needed to discuss the text)?**

Based on research, best practice, and understanding gained from the piloting of the tasks, PARCC decided to provide guidance on ways to consider instructional efficiencies for the teaching of vocabulary. Words taught through fast instruction are ones which students need to know to make meaning of the text under study, but are not ones designed to allow for teaching and assessing of reading and/or language standards. Words in the focused instruction category are those that are linked to activities in the task that specifically allow for teaching and assessing of reading and/or language standards. Words needed to discuss the text are typically words with domain specific meanings relevant to English Language Arts instruction.

Any tips on best practice for using the resource?

- **How can I account for the amount of support given to students when completing a checklist or rubric?**

Consider noting on the rubric the level of support provided to each student: little/no support, moderate support, or extensive support. Some standards in the earliest grades do not hold the expectation will demonstrate those standards with complete independence by the end of the school (i.e. the standards say "With prompting and support…), while other standards are written with an expectation of demonstration of student independence and mastery by the end of the academic year. Use of the "level of support" feature on the checklists and/or rubrics can assist teachers in gauging student progress as students work throughout the year on the same standards, but with more complex texts and/or tasks.

- **Can I use the rubrics and checklists created for the K-2 performance tasks with my own text-based lessons?**

Yes. The performance tasks, including the checklists and rubrics were designed to support teachers and students with the K-2 CCSS.

- **Should I expect to complete the Performance Tasks in the time allotted?**

The times suggested for the performance tasks are for planning purposes. The focus should be on student understanding of the content and the development of grade level appropriate skills, not on completing a performance task in the suggested time period noted in the task. In addition, a lesson may be given in more than one sitting. For example, if a lesson is suggested to be completed in 40 minutes, a teacher could divide the lesson into two 20 minute sessions.

Other?

- **What is the relationship between the K-2 ELA formative tasks and the PARCC Model Content Frameworks for ELA, K-2?**

PARCC developed the PARCC Model Content Frameworks for ELA, K-2 prior to the development of the K-2 formative tasks. The frameworks provided the developers and reviewers of the tasks guidance on interpretation of the standards in relation to research and best practice in early childhood education. Teachers will likely find a review of the frameworks prior to administration of the tasks helpful, as these frameworks give contextual meaning to the design features built into the tasks.

- **What is the relationship between the K-2 ELA formative tasks and the K-2 Speaking and Listening performance tasks?**

Both sets of tools are built on the ideas in the PARCC Model Content Frameworks for ELA, K-2. Though there are opportunities for practice of Speaking and Listening standards built into the K-2 ELA formative tasks, these standards are not targeted for measurement in the K-2 ELA formative tasks. Similarly, though there opportunities for reading, writing, and language standards practice in the Speaking and Listening performance tasks, these are not the standards targeted for measurement in those tasks. Nonetheless, teachers may find it helpful to use the checklists and rubrics designed for use with one set of tasks useful when implementing the other set of tasks. Taken together, the two sets of performance tasks provide models for integrated instruction and assessment of the full breadth of the ELA standards for K-2.