The PARCC Difference
Middle School

PARCC

PARCC tests reflect what students must know each year as they build toward the knowledge and skills needed for college and careers.

By letting students know they are on track long before they graduate, PARCC opens the door to college and careers and gives them a ticket to entry directly into credit-bearing courses. This can save students and families money and help ensure that they have access to college.

In English language arts/literacy, students at every grade (3–11) must read one or more texts (and sometimes watch a video), write about what they read and/or viewed, and provide evidence drawn from the reading — skills that are critically important for students in college and in the workplace. In the past, students have typically been asked to write only once in each grade span in elementary, middle, and high school. PARCC measures writing at every grade because it is key to college and career readiness. **In middle school,** as students learn to read and integrate ideas from several passages and to write about what they have learned from multiple texts, they develop the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in multiple disciplines.

In mathematics, students must reason mathematically, make sense of quantities and their relationships to solve real-world problems, and show their understanding. Many previous assessments focused mostly on rote procedure. **In middle school,** students develop procedural skills, conceptual understanding, and modeling and application skills with a particular focus on broadening number sense into rational numbers, ratios, and proportions while transitioning to algebraic skills including working with expressions, equations, and graphs.

English Language Arts/Literacy, Grade 7

🖊 OLD TEST ITEM	🖥 PARCC TEST ITEM
Writing Prompt: Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students. Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing. Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.	Writing Prompt You have read a website entry and an article, and viewed a video describing Amelia Earhart. All three include information that supports the claim that Earhart was a brave, courageous person. The three titles are: • "The Biography of Amelia Earhart" • "Earhart's Final Resting Place Believed Found" • "Amelia Earhart's Life and Disappearance" (video) Consider the argument each author uses to demonstrate Earhart's bravery. Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments related to Earhart's bravery in at least two of the three supporting materials. Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

Writing prompts on past assessments often did not require a careful reading of the passages associated with them or, as in this case, include a reading passage. In this example, students are asked to write a persuasive essay, which is good, but with nothing more than their opinions as "evidence."	PARCC's writing prompts address both reading and writing standards, giving students the opportunity to show their analytical skills.

Mathematics, Grade 6

OLD TEST ITEM	PARCC TEST ITEM

OLD TEST ITEM

Ms. August's class went to the museum on February 14th and they had an ice-cream party on March 2nd. How many days were there between the museum trip and ice-cream party? (Not a leap year)

PARCC TEST ITEM

Mr. Ruiz is starting a marching band at his school. He first does research and finds the following data about other local marching bands.

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
Number of Brass Instrument Players	123	42	150
Number of Percussion Instrument Players	41	14	50

PART A: Enter your answer in the box.

Mr. Ruiz realizes there are ☐ brass instrument player(s) per percussion player.

PART B: Mr. Ruiz has 210 students who are interested in joining the marching band. He decides to have 80% of the band be made up of percussion and brass instruments. Use the unit rate you found in Part A to determine how many students should play brass instruments.

Show or explain all your steps.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

This is a simple counting question that only requires students to read a calendar and provide an answer. Little to no mathematical reasoning is expected.

This focuses on the college- and career-ready concept of data analysis and expects students to provide justification of reasoning. There are several options for solving the problem. This item takes students through a staircase of smaller tasks that leads them to the final answer.

Try out the practice tests at parcconline.org/practice-tests

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