



**The New York City  
Department of Education**

**Grade 7 English Language Arts  
(ELA) Benchmark Assessment**

**Teacher Guide  
Fall 2012**

**November 26, 2012–January 11, 2013**



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## Test Design and Instructional Purpose

The English Language Arts (ELA) Benchmark Assessment is designed to help you collect *some* information about your students' progress toward meeting the Common Core expectations for seventh grade.

There are two ELA Benchmark Assessments available—one for the fall and one for the winter. The question types and complexity of the texts reflect what we anticipate will be on the Grade 7 Common Core Learning Standards-aligned New York State test over the next two years. The test contains the following item types:

- Multiple choice
- Short answer constructed response
- Extended response/performance task

These items are designed to provide evidence of students' skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and answering text-dependent questions. The extended response/performance task items require comparison, analysis, synthesis, and/or opinion or argumentation.

These Benchmark Assessments provide an objective measure of your students' performance on cognitively rich tasks based on complex grade-level texts without scaffolding or support. In other words, these assessments provide information on what your students can accomplish independently and their mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards. They look at how well students can transfer skills they've learned to new situations. Additionally, the assessments allow grade-level teams to look at student work across classes to identify learning trends and to develop strategies to address key areas of need.

No single test, including this Benchmark Assessment, can cover all skills and concepts contained within the Common Core Learning Standards. Therefore, it is best to analyze this assessment along with evidence collected from daily observation, class work, homework, and school- or teacher-made assessments.

## Test Content

The ELA Benchmark Assessment is designed to take two full 40-minute class periods. On the first day, students read two passages and answer 6–10 multiple-choice questions and two short-response questions. On the second day, students re-read the same two passages and complete an extended response/performance task linking the two passages.

The passages and questions of the ELA Benchmark Assessment are designed to embody three key shifts at the heart of the ELA Literacy Standards:

- *Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text(s).* The multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response/performance task questions are designed to provide students opportunities to make explicit the evidence that supports their close analysis of a specific text and, in some cases, of multiple texts.

- *Regular practice with complex text and academic vocabulary.* Texts were selected in accordance with the quantitative and qualitative requirements of the Common Core Learning Standards.
- *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts.* Text passages represent a greater emphasis on nonfiction and informational texts.<sup>1</sup>

## Passages

This Grade 7 Benchmark Assessment has two passages:

- *The Ride of Her Life:* an informational passage about Sybil Ludington’s nighttime ride in New York State during the American Revolution.
- *Deborah Samson Gannett:* an informational passage that describes Samson who, disguised as a man, fought against the British during the American Revolution.

These passages were chosen to align to genres and text types specified in the Grade 7 PARCC Model Content Framework.<sup>2</sup>

## Standards Alignment

The items associated with this assessment are aligned to the following Common Core Learning Standards:

7.RI.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

7.RI.2. Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

7.W.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

7.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

7.L.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> In Grades 3 to 5, the Fall Benchmark Assessments focus on fiction passages, and the Winter Benchmark Assessments focus on informational and nonfiction passages. In Grades 6–8, both the Fall and Winter Benchmark Assessments focus on informational and nonfiction passages.

<sup>2</sup> The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a collaborative effort among 23 states to develop a common set of K–12 assessments in English and Math that align to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The PARCC Model Content Frameworks, designed by content experts, are voluntary resources to support implementation of the CCSS and to guide development of assessments in Grades 3–12. For more information, refer to:

[http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCC%20MCF%20for%20ELA%20Literacy\\_Fall%202011%20Release%20%28rev%29.pdf](http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCC%20MCF%20for%20ELA%20Literacy_Fall%202011%20Release%20%28rev%29.pdf)

If you have any questions, contact the NYC Acuity Helpdesk at 866-NYC-6550 or [NYCAcuity@ctb.com](mailto:NYCAcuity@ctb.com).

## Rubrics for Scoring Short-Response and Extended-Response/Performance Task Items

### Item # 3

Key Elements	
<p><b>Details from the text:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The British were setting fire to houses and supplies.</li> <li>2. Colonel Ludington's militia was the closest group of soldiers.</li> <li>3. Sybil's mission was to alert the militia members that the British were invading and they needed to gather.</li> <li>4. Colonel Ludington's militia marched 20 miles to fight the British.</li> <li>5. Americans won the battle and the British retreated.</li> <li>6. other relevant text-based detail</li> </ol>	
Criteria	
2	<p><b>Proficient</b> A <i>proficient</i> response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to evaluate details that support a text-based conclusion</li> <li>• Includes specific information that makes clear reference to the text</li> <li>• Adequately supports the specified conclusion with clearly relevant details from the text</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Partial</b> A <i>partial</i> response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives limited evidence of the ability to evaluate details that support a text-based conclusion</li> <li>• Includes some information that makes reference to the text</li> <li>• Supports the specified conclusion with limited relevant details from the text</li> </ul>
0	<p><b>No credit</b> A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to evaluate details that support a text-based conclusion, includes no relevant information from the text, or is vague.</p>
Exemplars	
2	<p>During the American Revolution, Americans were fighting to win their freedom from the British. When the British invaded Connecticut they burned houses and American supplies. Colonel Ludington's militia was the closest group of soldiers who could stop the British. It was important for Sybil to ride and risk her life because the men in the militia needed to gather and prepare for battle. If Ludington's militia hadn't held them off, the British might have continued setting fire to other nearby towns. Sybil's own town, Fredericksburg, might have also been attacked if Sybil hadn't been able to complete her mission. If it were not for Sybil's bravery, the militia would not have been able to win the battle.</p>
1	<p>Sybil was a good rider and could handle a horse. She took a 30-mile ride alone at night during the American Revolution. It was important for her to ride because the British were burning houses.</p>

0	Sybil risked her life because she was the only one who could ride her horse. And she was the oldest so it was her responsibility.
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**Item # 6**

<b>Key Elements</b>	
<b><u>Details from the passage that show Deborah Samson was respected for her contributions:</u></b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Samson was honorably discharged from the army.</li> <li>2. Neither the doctor who discovered she was a woman nor her commanding officer revealed her secret to anyone else.</li> <li>3. She was awarded a small sum of money by the Massachusetts legislature in recognition of her service.</li> <li>4. Massachusetts Governor John Hancock signed the document that awarded her the money.</li> <li>5. Paul Revere talked with President George Washington about her service.</li> <li>6. President George Washington invited her to the capital.</li> <li>7. He granted her land and a pension in gratitude for her service.</li> <li>8. She was the first woman granted a federal pension.</li> <li>9. She traveled the country in her old uniform and gave talks about the war.</li> <li>10. Advertisements hailed her as "The American Heroine."</li> <li>11. other relevant text-based detail</li> </ol>	
<b><u>Details from the passage that show Deborah Samson was not respected for her contributions:</u></b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When Samson was discovered, she was discharged.</li> <li>2. Samson was given a "small sum" for her service and a small pension, but not enough for her needs.</li> <li>3. Samson had to petition the court in order to receive the funds that were awarded to all male soldiers.</li> <li>4. other relevant text-based detail</li> </ol>	
<b>Criteria</b>	
2	<b>Proficient</b> <i>A proficient response</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to analyze key ideas inferred from a text</li> <li>• Includes specific information that makes clear reference to the text</li> <li>• Adequately supports the specified point with clearly relevant details from the text</li> </ul>
1	<b>Partial</b> <i>A partial response:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives limited evidence of the ability to analyze key ideas inferred from a text</li> <li>• Includes some information that makes reference to the text</li> <li>• Supports the specified point with limited relevant details from the text</li> </ul>
0	<b>No credit</b> A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to analyze key ideas inferred from a text, includes no relevant information from the text,

	or is vague.
<b>Exemplars</b>	
2	Deborah Samson was respected for her contributions to the war effort because she received an honorable discharge from the army. She was awarded some money from the State of Massachusetts in recognition of her service. President Washington also granted her land and a federal pension in appreciation for what she had done. These details show that Samson was respected and appreciated for her contributions to the war effort.
1	Deborah Samson was not respected for her contributions. When she was discharged she was only given a little money that wasn't enough to live off. She should have been given more money.
0	Deborah was respected because when she was wounded the doctor took him to his home to help her.

### Item # 7

<b>Key Elements</b>
<p><b><u>Details from "The Ride of Her Life":</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sybil Ludington showed how much she loved her country by being willing to take risks to support and defend it.</li> <li>2. She was 16 years old when she went on a dangerous horseback ride to warn others of enemy danger.</li> <li>3. She risked being caught by the British and being considered a spy.</li> <li>4. She risked being robbed by outlaws who roamed the countryside.</li> <li>5. During the ride on horseback, she was able to inform the members of her father's militia to gather at her house.</li> <li>6. She helped Americans defeat the British in a battle during the American Revolution.</li> <li>7. Sybil Ludington's contributions were part of everyone's efforts, not only men's, to form the Union.</li> <li>8. other relevant text-based detail</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Details from "Deborah Samson Gannett":</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deborah Samson showed how much she loved her country by being willing to take risks to support and defend it.</li> <li>2. She wanted to do more to defend her country than women were allowed to do at that time.</li> <li>3. She was willing to sacrifice her life as a woman to be able to fight for her country.</li> <li>4. She disguised herself as a man and enlisted in the Continental army during the American Revolution.</li> <li>5. While she was in the army, she was courageous and loyal and showed skill in fighting.</li> <li>6. In an ambush by the British, Samson's forehead was cut and a musket ball pierced her thigh.</li> <li>7. Samson showed how dedicated she was to her country by using her knife to dig the musket ball from her leg so it would not be discovered that she was a woman.</li> <li>8. After she was discharged from the army, Samson traveled around the country in her uniform and gave patriotic speeches about the war.</li> <li>9. Samson's contributions were part of everyone's efforts, not only men's, to form the</li> </ol>

Union. 10. other relevant text-based detail	
Criteria	
4	<p><b>Meets Standard (Meets criteria at grade level):</b></p> <p><b>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information by using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a clear introduction that previews what is to follow in the writing.</li> <li>• Writing is organized effectively by using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish and maintain a formal style.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes and maintains a formal style.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the information presented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Near Standard (Mostly meets criteria):</b></p> <p><b>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information by using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a basic introduction to the topic.</li> <li>• Writing contains clear evidence of an organizational structure.</li> <li>• Strategies are mostly effective in their capacity to organize ideas, concepts, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish and maintain a formal style.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes and maintains a formal style in most of the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a concluding statement or section that mostly follows from the information presented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates fairly good command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Approaching Standard</b> (Partially meets criteria):</p> <p><b>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information by using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a basic introduction to the topic.</li> <li>• Writing contains some evidence of an organizational structure.</li> <li>• Strategies are somewhat effective in their capacity to organize ideas, concepts, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops the topic partially with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses some domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish and maintain a formal style.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes and maintains a formal style in portions of the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a concluding statement or section that partially follows from the information presented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates partial command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</li> </ul>

1	<p><b>Below Standard</b> (Barely meets criteria):</p> <p><b>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information by using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a minimal introduction to the topic.</li> <li>• Writing contains minimal organizational structure.</li> <li>• Any use of strategies are minimally effective in their capacity to organize ideas, concepts, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops the topic minimally, with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples being largely absent.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses minimal domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish and maintain a formal style.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal and sporadic use of formal style.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a concluding statement or section that barely follows from the information presented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates minimal command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</li> </ul>
0	<p><b>Far Below Standard:</b></p> <p><b>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information by using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides little or no introduction to the topic.</li> <li>• Writing contains little, if any, organizational structure.</li> <li>• Does not compose or supply any information about topic; no apparent use of strategies is present.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides no development of the topic; no relevant information or examples are included.</li> <li>• Demonstrates no understanding of the text or topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish and maintain a formal style.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not establish a formal style.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides no concluding statement or section that sums up main points.</li> </ul> <p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates no command of standard English writing mechanics.</li> </ul>
<b>Exemplars</b>	
4	<p>During the American Revolution, Americans were fighting the British for their freedom. Sybil Ludington and Deborah Samson stand out as patriots in the revolution because they both took on jobs that were usually reserved for men. They prove Susan B. Anthony's statement that all people formed the Union, not just the men, because they both put their country first. Their brave actions contributed to Americans' victory.</p> <p>Sybil Ludington was only 16 when she agreed to undertake a dangerous horseback ride to warn others of danger. She could have been caught by the British or had her horse stolen by outlaws, but that didn't stop her. She was ready to do what she had to do to help defend her country. Her actions helped defeat the British during the American Revolution, but she was never talked about because she was just a girl. Maybe if she had been a man, everyone would have heard about her.</p> <p>Deborah Samson had such a strong desire to help defend her country that she disguised herself as a man so she could join the army. She was willing to sacrifice her life as a woman in order to fight for her country. While she was in the army, she was courageous and loyal and showed a skill for fighting. Even when she was wounded, she used her own knife to remove the musket ball from her leg because she wanted to be able to stay in the army. After she was discharged, she traveled around the country giving patriotic speeches about the war.</p> <p>The behavior of both these women shows how devoted they were to their country. What they did is proof that Susan B. Anthony was correct—both men and women formed the Union.</p>
3	<p>Sybil Ludington and Deborah Samson stand out as patriots during the war because they both did things that women usually didn't do. Like Susan B. Anthony said, they both helped to form the union because they were both willing to defend their country. They both put themselves in dangerous situations because they loved their country. Their sacrifices helped America win the war.</p> <p>Sybil Ludington went on a difficult horse ride to help save her country. Samson disguised herself as a man so she could fight for her country. She did fight in one battle where she was wounded. She could have gotten into trouble if others discovered she was a woman.</p> <p>Sybil Ludington and Deborah Samson both helped their country during the American Revolution. They could have been injured or killed. All of this proves that they are stand-out patriots.</p>

2	<p>Sybil Ludington and Deborah Samson both showed courage to help form the union. This makes them stand out as citizens and patriots. Ludington was able to ride a horse at age 16. She road her horse to help, she road it for three hours. Deborah Samson worked as schoolteacher. Then she joined the army so that she could help defeat the British in the American Revolution. The country is better off because of these two women.</p>
1	<p>Sybil Ludington and Deborah Samson were women who helped form the union, they our patriots because the did some brave things during the American Revolution, they both were recognized for what they did.</p>
0	<p>Sybil Ludington and Deborah Samson were women, American Revolution women.</p>









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