



# What Is This New Test, and What Does It Mean for Us?

---

Justin Wells  
Envision Learning Partners

# Old Test or New Test?

Examine each of the following test questions.

Then guess: Does it come from the old California “STAR” test or the new Smarter Balanced test?

*Note: Don't worry about answering the questions; some of them don't come with their corresponding reading passages.*



# **What Is This New Test, and What Does It Mean?**

---

Justin Wells

Stanford University, Envision Learning Partners

# SBAC or STAR: The Answers

1	STAR
2	SBAC
3	STAR
4	SBAC
5	STAR
6	SBAC
7	SBAC

**Generalizations?**

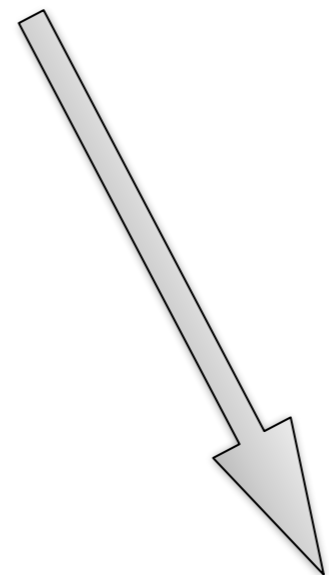
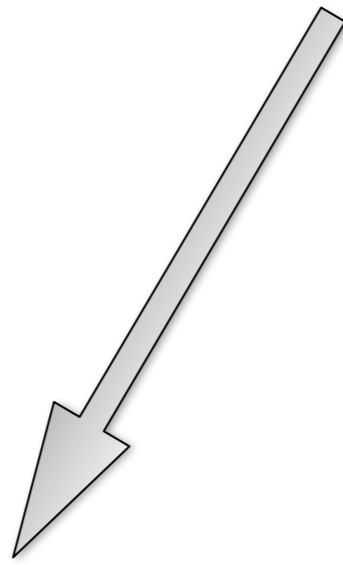
[tiny.cc/muse](https://tiny.cc/muse)



<http://teacher.justinwells.net/EnvisionLearning/writing-performance-assessments>



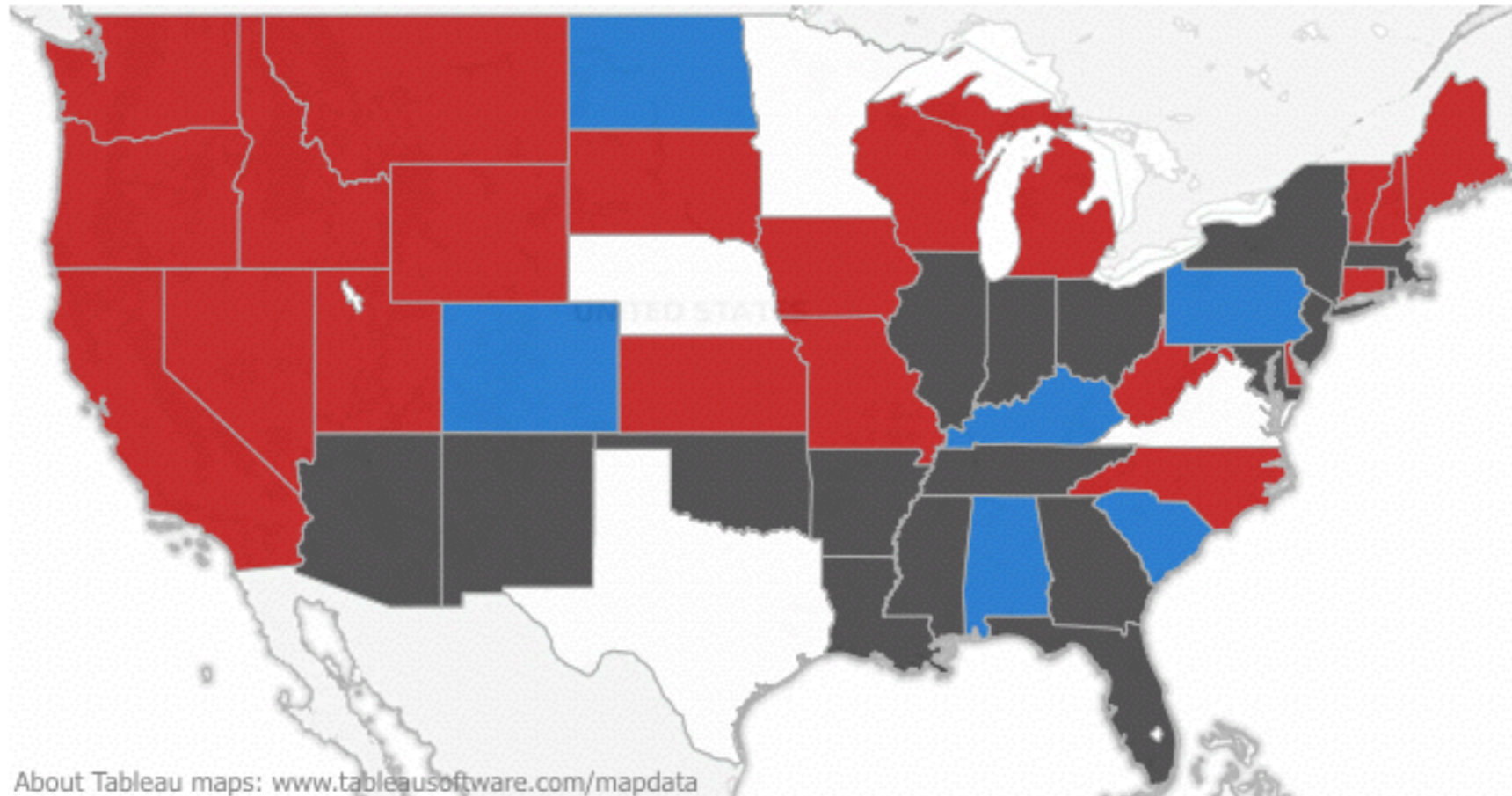
**COMMON CORE**  
STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE  
PREPARING AMERICA'S STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE & CAREER



## Common Core Assessment Consortia

### Consortium:

- SMARTER Balanced
- PARCC
- Both
- None



NOTE: Alaska is not a member of a consortium. Hawaii is part of the SMARTER Balanced consortium.



# Key Shifts in the CCSS

- 1. Complexity:** Regular practice with complex text and its academic language
- 2. Evidence:** Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
- 3. Knowledge:** Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction

## CCSS Implications for Assessment

FROM:	TO:
Focusing only on reading skills	Focusing on complexity of what students can read too
Students moving quickly through a text	Students taking time to read and reread, study, and ponder
Assessing literary terminology	Assessing academic vocabulary
Mostly assessing through SR items that do not require specific reference to textual evidence	Assessing through range of items that require students to draw evidence from text; use CR items to require a variety of complex performances
Mainly writing to de-contextualized prompts	Focusing on text-based writing prompts (arguments and informative essays)
Measuring ELA only	Measuring literacy across disciplines


# The Smarter Balanced ELA/Literacy Claims

- **Claim #1**—Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.
- **Claim #2**—Students can produce effective writing for a range of purposes and audiences.
- **Claim #3**—Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
- **Claim #4**—Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

# They say SBAC is different. How so?

- The Common Core mandate: shifting center of gravity from content to applied skills
- Speaking and listening
- A computer adaptive test
- Performance tasks

# They say SBAC is different. How so?

- The Common Core mandate: shifting center of gravity from content to applied skills
- Speaking and listening
- A computer adaptive test
- **Performance tasks** 



# STUDENT DIRECTIONS

## Penny Argumentative Performance Task

### Issue:

In recent years, there has been a heated debate emerging about one aspect of the United States monetary system. This particular debate is not about what we should do to solve the multi-trillion dollar national debt or to fix the recent problems on Wall Street. Surprisingly, it is about whether we should keep producing and using pennies.

This issue is one of the topics of your school's yearly mock (something meant to look like the real thing) Congressional Session for all 8th graders. You have been appointed as the lead for the subcommittee on financial issues, and you need to research the arguments for and against keeping the penny. As a part of your research, you have found four sources.

1



Provide **three** arguments from the sources you just read that support the position that the penny should be preserved. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

Type your answer in the space provided.

2



Now provide **three** arguments from the sources that support the position that the penny should be eliminated. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

Type your answer in the space provided.

# What is an SBAC performance task?

Take 10 minutes to look at some examples.

What strikes you?

What generalizations can you make?

# Basic Structure of an ELA Performance Task

Part 1

- Classroom Activity
- Establish the PT context (without revealing full-write prompt)
- Stimuli (or “the Sources”)
- Three Research Items

Part 2

- Motivating Task Set-Up
- Full Write



**Claim 2: Students can produce effective writing for a range of purposes and audiences.**

## 3 Writing “Purposes”

- **Argumentative** (Grades 6–8, 11)
- **Explanatory** (Grades 6–8, 11)
- **Narrative** (Grades 3–8)

# General Principles of “RQ”s

- Three
- “Short Answer”
- Bridge between texts and essay
- Range
- Research (not reading comprehension)

# Question-Answer Relationships, or QAR

- Right There
- Think and Search
- Author and Me
- On My Own

# Rejected CR Question

- What can archaeologists learn about ancient civilizations through the discovery of their artifacts and homelands? Include two details from Source #1, “Ancient Inca: Archaeology Unlocks the Secrets of the Past” and Source #2, “Mesa Verde: Ancestral Puebloans and Their World” in your response.

This is mainly a comprehension item and, while it uses two texts, it does not require students to look across the texts but treats each as an isolated source.

# Rejected CR Question

- What are two ways in which increased cell phone use has helped solve problems created by geographic isolation of the population in Kenya. Be sure to name at least two sources in your response.

This question measures reading comprehension, not research.  
Rewrite.

# Tech & Reading: Research Question #1

This question has two parts. Answer both parts in a short paragraph:

Part 1: Summarize what the sources tell you is the difference between how a person reads a printed text and how a person reads text that is on the Internet.

Part 2: According to the theories of some scientists, how does this difference in reading possibly affect the brain?

# Tech & Reading: Research Question #2

Across the four sources you have reviewed, many claims are made both in support of and in opposition to the Internet's influence on reading skills. Identify four sentences that express the possible benefits of Internet reading and four sentences that express the asserted dangers of Internet reading. Draw your sentences from at least two different sources.

Drag and drop your selected sentences into the appropriate boxes on the table below.

# Tech & Reading: Research Question #3

Many arguments are rooted in the evidence that comes from research studies, but by themselves, research studies often can't settle a debate because, for various reasons, they do not provide a complete picture. The incomplete part of the picture may be suggested but is still open to interpretation.

Two major research studies are cited in the sources you have reviewed: one conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, and another by the Pew Research Center. Go back and analyze the findings of these two studies in order to answer the questions in the following tables.



# 3rd Grade Narrative

Each student gets to take the hermit crab home for a weekend. Now it's your turn! Along with the hermit crab, a class storybook about the adventures of the hermit crab is sent home to each family. You have decided to write a story about what happens when the hermit crab gets loose. Write a story that is several paragraphs long. Make sure your story includes a setting, gives information about the characters, and describes what happens. Remember to use words that describe and don't just tell. Your story should have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

# implications

- “text set”
- non-fiction
- argument vs. explanation  
(Common Core style)

# text sets

- short pieces
- multi-modal
- gaps and/or contradictions

## do now:

- play with an idea for a “text set” and associated essay prompt

# The New York Times

MARCH 5, 2014

## *Major Changes in SAT Announced by College Board*

“ Every exam will include, in the reading and writing section, source documents from a broad range of disciplines, including science and social studies, and on some questions, students will be asked to select the quote from the text that supports the answer they have chosen.

”

# The New York Times

MARCH 5, 2014

## *Major Changes in SAT Announced by College Board*

“ . . . the scoring will revert to the old 1600 scale, with a top score of 800 on math and what will now be called “Evidence-Based Reading and Writing.”

”

# The New York Times

MARCH 5, 2014

## *Major Changes in SAT Announced by College Board*

“ [in the essay, students will] read a passage and analyze how its author used evidence, reasoning and stylistic elements to build an argument. ”