**Plymouth Public Schools**

**English Language Arts K-5**

**Constructed Response and PARCC**

The best way to prepare our students for the demands of the CCSS and the writing component of PARCC is to follow the Units of Study. Our Units of Study teach children to write across text types and for a variety of purposes with attention to both craft and conventions.

Where our students may need more practice is in applying what they’ve learned about narrative, essay and informational writing to writing in response to specific texts. Written response no longer looks like the “Open Response” of MCAS and in the case of PARCC, students will not write about their own personal experiences.

* For a summary of the prompts and language used for Constructed Responses on the PARCC practice tests, see your grade level version of *Constructed Responses from the Sample PARCC Assessment*.
* For the rubrics used to assess students’ performance on the PARCC Assessment, see <http://www.ppsliteracycoachconnect.com/parcc.html>
* For suggestions in preparing students to write well-developed long responses connected to texts (Constructed Responses), see the following suggestions:

**Preparing for Research Simulation Task**:

* The *Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project* (TCRWP) has created pre- and post-assessments that align to the CCSS and to the Research Simulation Tasks included on the PARCC practice tests. While at this time PARCC has only released examples for Grades 4 and 5, we anticipate that the Grade 3 PARCC task will be similar. For this reason, if you have not already engaged students in these tasks, we highly recommend you do so and use the assessment resources as teaching tools. If you did the pre-assessment, you can now return to the post-assessment tasks. <http://ppsgrade3.weebly.com/assessment8.html>

<http://ppsgrade4.weebly.com/assessment4.html>

<http://ppsgrade5.weebly.com/assessment4.html>

* For those schools that have subscriptions to *Scholastic News*, each feature article is paired with a video that often has background information on the topic of the article. You could use these paired texts to engage students in talking, thinking, and writing about the main idea and supporting details across the two texts.
* Students will need practice planning for a constructed response on plain paper (which they will have during the actual PARCC Assessment), then drafting the written response on the computer using that plan.
  + Through the nonfiction writing units of study, students learn to use “boxes and bullets” to organize their writing. Provide students with short nonfiction texts paired with a constructed response prompt, such as those found in *Constructed Responses from the Sample PARCC Assessment*. Using the gradual release, teach students to plan for their writing, using boxes and bullets, a table, or another organizer appropriate to the task. Model using chart paper and marker. Over several days, with several different short texts and prompts, allow students to plan for writing on the plain paper.
  + Following this practice, use one of the chart paper plans to model drafting longer off the plan. Model the drafting on the computer, so students can see the transfer from paper plan to drafting digitally. Give students an opportunity to take one or two of their plans to draft longer on the computer.

**Preparing for the Narrative Writing and Literary Analysis Tasks**:

* Provide students with practice in determining the central message and themes of texts. Engage students in discussing these ideas through read-alouds, short passages, or familiar texts. If students are not able to talk about these ideas specifically and with evidence to support their ideas, focus on developing their talk. Demonstrate how this talk can be written in a response through shared writing. Demonstrate how boxes and bullets can be used to plan for an organized response comparing themes, characters, and/or specific literary elements across texts.
* If you have not yet conducted the pre- and post-assessments suggested for the Character, Series, Interpretation Text Sets and/or Biography units (depending on your grade level), you can also use these assessments as teaching opportunities and opportunities for practice. In particular, you will see that the Biography and Interpretation Text Sets Unit pre- and post-assessments are available in a digital format. These assessments give students the chance to read and compose a response online.
* Help children understand point of view. Return to a scene from familiar read-alouds and ask students to turn-and-talk from different perspectives. For example, “Trisha is the narrator of this story. What if Ritchie was the one describing this scene? How might it go?” This will most likely require modeling with one scene and inviting students to turn and talk through a second scene. Patricia Polacco books provide many opportunities for this work, as do the short texts used for the Character and Interpretation Text Sets pre-and post-assessments. You may want to model using a timeline or story mountain to plan out a constructed response like this, tracking the events on one side of the timeline or story mountain, and the character’s feelings/reactions (the internal story) on the other. Using short narrative texts found in *Storyworks,*  your collection of Test Prep texts, or other mentor texts you have used this year, allow students to plan out a story from a different character’s perspective, similar to the suggestions listed above under Research Simulation. Follow the same suggestions for teaching students to draft on the computer using the paper plan.