



Grade 7

**English Language Arts/Literacy
End of Year Paired Text Set**

2017 Released Items

2017 Released Items: Grade 7 End of Year Paired Text Set

The paired text set requires students to read two texts that are purposely paired. Students read the texts and answer questions about each text and about the texts as a pair.

The 2017 blueprint for PARCC's grade 7 End of Year Paired Text Set includes Evidence-Based Selected Response/Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response items.

Included in this document:

- Answer key and standards alignment
- PDFs of each item with the associated text(s)

Additional related materials not included in this document:

- Guide to English Language Arts/Literacy Released Items: Understanding Scoring
- PARCC English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment: General Scoring Rules for the 2015 Summative Assessment

PARCC Release Items Answer and Alignment Document
ELA/Literacy: Grade 7

Text Type: Paired Mixed		
Passage(s): "Fields of Flashing Light" / "Sifting Through the Dust"		
Item Code	Answer(s)	Standards/Evidence Statement Alignment
VF889285	Item Type: EBSR Part A: B Part B: B	RL 7.1.1 RL 7.6.1
VF889294	Item Type: EBSR Part A: A Part B: D	RL 7.1.1 RL 7.5.1
VF889260	Item Type: EBSR Part A: A Part B: B	RI 7.1.1 L 7.4.1
VF889263	Item Type: EBSR Part A: C Part B: A	RI 7.1.1 RI 7.6.2
VF889270	Item Type: EBSR Part A: A Part B: C	RI 7.1.1 RI 7.8.1
VF889304	Item Type: EBSR Part A: B Part B: A	RI 7.1.1 RL 7.9.1
VF889315	<p>Item Type: TECR (additional item)</p> <p>The methods people used to cope with dust storms</p> <p>The different ways that people reacted to a dust storm</p> <p>Both</p> <p>What people may have been thinking during a dust storm</p> <p>Field of Flashing Light (poem)</p> <p>How farmers recover after the dust storms</p> <p>Sifting Through the Dust (passage)</p>	RL 7.1.1 RL 7.9.1

VF889279	Item Type: EBSR (additional item) Part A: D Part B: B	RL 7.1.1 RL 7.2.1
VF889274	Item Type: EBSR (additional item) Part A: B Part B: B	RL 7.1.1 L 7.5.2 RL 7.4.1

Today you will read a poem and a passage about the “Dust Bowl,” experienced in the central part of the United States during the 1930s when dry conditions caused large clouds of dust to form.

Read the fictional poem “Fields of Flashing Light.” Then answer the questions.

Fields of Flashing Light

by Karen Hesse

Copyright restrictions prevent the poem "Fields of Flashing Light" by Karen Hesse from being displayed in this format. Please refer to page 31 from OUT OF THE DUST by Karen Hesse, © 1997, published by Scholastic, Inc., accessible through your local library.

1. Part A

In "Fields of Flashing Light," how does the author **best** demonstrate a difference between the speaker and the speaker's parents?

- A. by explaining how the characters feel about the wind
- B. by describing how the characters respond to the wind
- C. by describing how the characters prepare for the wind
- D. by explaining how the characters work during the wind

Part B

Which pair of lines from the poem **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. "I heard the wind rise," (line 1)
"and covered her face." (line 46)
- B. "I watched the plants," (line 18)
"He ran into the storm," (line 33)
- C. "cover the beds," (line 37)
"but our relief didn't last." (line 53)
- D. "dampen the rags around the windows." (line 39)
"waiting for Daddy to come in." (line 42)

2. Part A

Which statement **best** describes how the structure of “Fields of Flashing Light” allows the reader to imagine what is happening in the poem?

- A. Short lines help the reader to focus on important images.
- B. Long lines help the reader to understand the time period of the storm.
- C. The alliteration in the lines helps the reader to picture how much dust entered the house.
- D. The rhythm of the lines helps the reader to compare the feelings of the characters.

Part B

Which line from the poem **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. line 8
- B. line 19
- C. line 25
- D. line 63

Read the nonfiction passage "Sifting Through the Dust." Then answer the questions.

Sifting Through the Dust

by Roberta Baxter

- 1** The devastation to the land on the Great Plains in the 1930s was extreme. By 1934, thirty-five million acres on the Great Plains had lost topsoil. Another 225 million acres had suffered severe erosion. What caused such incredible destruction? Four ecological reasons were behind the Dust Bowl.
- 2** The plowing of grasses native to the area, combined with the planting of wheat, served to aid in the creation of the Dust Bowl. Straight furrow plowing, along with the lack of trees to slow down the wind, allowed the moving air to pick up grains of dirt. And, wheat roots did not anchor the soil as well as grass roots. They also used up nutrients in the soil each year without replenishing them. This produced long-term damage.
- 3** Farm animals were another factor in the Dust Bowl. Their grazing on pasture lands pushed many more animals into smaller spaces than were available in the days of the free-ranging buffalo. During the dry years, the hungry cattle dug up grass by its roots, leaving nothing to grow or tie down the soil.
- 4** There also was an extreme lack of rain. Most of the Great Plains averaged 15 to 20 inches of rain in a year. In the 1930s, however, rainfall amounts decreased markedly, sometimes down to only one or two showers' worth in a year. Twenty states in the Great Plains set drought records that still exist today.
- 5** Farmers tended to make the situation worse by trying to offset the scarcity of rain with different "dry farming" methods. In their efforts to make the little rain that did fall go the furthest, farmers tried disc plowing the soil. This broke down the soil into the finest possible consistency. When rain fell, it was able to travel quickly through the soil. But, when it did not rain, the powdery dirt was more easily picked up by the wind.

- 6** Finally, there was the wind, which could blow up to fifty miles an hour for many hours. Wind was common on the Great Plains, but it worsened the drought by evaporating what little moisture there was. The result of drought plus wind was that the particles of soil were ground smaller and smaller.
- 7** Try this experiment to see the difference between normal soil and soil that has been broken down into minuscule parts. Put a spoonful of sugar in your hand and blow it into a sink. Next, try the same thing with flour. Which blew more easily?
- 8** The flour has finer particles, so it is lighter and easier to blow. Now you can imagine what happened to the soil in the Dust Bowl: The finer and lighter particles were easier for the wind to pick up and send flying. Incredibly, dust from the Great Plains fell as far away as New York City and Washington, D.C., and even onto ships in the Atlantic Ocean.
- 9** As the wind picked it up, the soil clouded the sky with huge dust storms that even sandblasted the paint off the sides of houses and other buildings. Visibility was reduced to zero in a “black blizzard.” At times, soil on the ground drifted into dunes high enough to cover a house or barn.
- 10** The soil also would filter through every crack in a house. Oily rags were hung over windows and tucked under doors in an attempt to keep the dust out of houses. After the storms, women still had to shovel piles of dirt from their floors.
- 11** The tiny soil particles lodged in people’s lungs, making it hard to breathe and causing “dust pneumonia.” Children slept with wet cloths tied over their noses and mouths. The dust even managed to get into the most tightly covered water barrels and wells.
- 12** Plants that already were struggling to survive smothered under the dust. The dirt collected in the noses and eyes of the starving animals. Chickens suffocated in dust that piled up higher than their pens. Even the usually hardy jackrabbits looked scrawny and dirty.

13 Even though the farmers' fields were ruined and their source of income gone, some struggled on, continuing to believe that "one good rain" would bring back good crops and prosperity. Finally, new methods of farming were introduced to reduce the wind erosion. And, fortunately, in 1938 the rains returned.

"Sifting Through the Dust" by Roberta Baxter from COBBLESTONE, Carus Publishing Co.
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3. Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 1 of “Sifting Through the Dust.”

The devastation to the land on the Great Plains in the 1930s was extreme.

What does **devastation** mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. a state of being ruined
- B. a state of being very dry
- C. a state of being overused
- D. a state of being worn away

Part B

Which phrase from paragraph 1 **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of **devastation**?

- A. “. . . on the Great Plains . . .”
- B. “. . . incredible destruction . . .”
- C. “. . . ecological reasons . . .”
- D. “. . . behind the Dust Bowl.”

4. Part A

What is the **most likely** reason the author wrote “Sifting Through the Dust”?

- A. to persuade readers to use safe farming practices
- B. to describe the problems created by the Dust Bowl
- C. to inform readers about the causes of the Dust Bowl
- D. to explain how easily the environment can be harmed

Part B

Which sentence from “Sifting Through the Dust” **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. “The plowing of grasses native to the area, combined with the planting of wheat, served to aid in the creation of the Dust Bowl.” (paragraph 2)
- B. “Most of the Great Plains averaged 15 to 20 inches of rain in a year.” (paragraph 4)
- C. “As the wind picked it up, the soil clouded the sky with huge dust storms that even sandblasted the paint off the sides of houses and other buildings.” (paragraph 9)
- D. “Finally, new methods of farming were introduced to reduce the wind erosion.” (paragraph 13)

5. Part A

In "Sifting Through the Dust," how does the author **most** strongly develop the idea that disc plowing contributed to the Dust Bowl?

- A. by comparing the size of soil to flour
- B. by listing the effects of the strong winds
- C. by describing traditional farming methods
- D. by explaining what damages root systems

Part B

Which sentence from "Sifting Through the Dust" **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. "And, wheat roots did not anchor the soil as well as grass roots." (paragraph 2)
- B. "When rain fell, it was able to travel quickly through the soil." (paragraph 5)
- C. "The flour has finer particles, so it is lighter and easier to blow." (paragraph 8)
- D. "The tiny soil particles lodged in people's lungs, making it hard to breathe and causing 'dust pneumonia.'" (paragraph 11)

6. Part A

Which statement **best** explains how the poem and the article each help the reader to learn about the Dust Bowl?

- A. The poem shows why storms would occur, while the article focuses on biographical information.
- B. The poem describes what one family's experience might have been like during a storm, while the article gives scientific and historical information.
- C. The poem focuses on where the storms took place, while the article describes the reasons people decided to stay on their farms.
- D. The poem explains the steps necessary for recovering after a storm, while the article emphasizes what life was like for families after the 1930s.

Part B

Which details from the poem and the article **best** support the answer in Part A?

- A. "I sensed it before I knew it was coming. / I heard it, / smelled it, / tasted it. / Dust." ("Fields of Flashing Light," lines 8–12)
"Four ecological reasons were behind the Dust Bowl." ("Sifting Through the Dust," paragraph 1)
- B. "tearing up fields where the winter wheat, / set for harvest in June, / stood helpless." ("Fields of Flashing Light," lines 15–17)
"Children slept with wet cloths tied over their noses and mouths."
("Sifting Through the Dust," paragraph 11)
- C. "It wasn't until the dust turned toward the house," ("Fields of Flashing Light," line 25)
". . . some struggled on, continuing to believe that 'one good rain' would bring back good crops and prosperity." ("Sifting Through the Dust," paragraph 13)
- D. "Ma told me to / cover the beds," ("Fields of Flashing Light," lines 36–37)
"And, fortunately, in 1938 the rains returned." ("Sifting Through the Dust," paragraph 13)

7. The poem and the passage both help the reader understand the Dust Bowl, but each text does this in a different way.

Drag and drop the labels to show whether the reader learns about each element from the poem, the passage, or from both texts.

“Fields of Flashing Light” (poem)

“Sifting Through the Dust” (passage)

Both

The methods people used to cope with dust storms

The different ways that people reacted to a dust storm

What people may have been thinking during a dust storm

How farmers recovered after the dust storms

8. Part A

Which sentence **best** states a theme of “Fields of Flashing Light”?

- A. Determination will often lead to change.
- B. Difficulties await those who are unprepared.
- C. Knowledge is often gained through experience.
- D. People are sometimes powerless against nature.

Part B

Which detail from “Fields of Flashing Light” **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. “While Ma and Daddy slept, / the dust came,” (lines 13–14)
- B. “He ran into the storm, / his overalls half-hooked over his union suit. / ‘Daddy!’ I called. ‘You can’t stop dust.’” (lines 33–35)
- C. “The wind snatched that snow right off the fields, / leaving behind a sea of dust,” (lines 54–55)
- D. “If he had cried, / his tears would have been mud, too, / but he didn’t cry.” (lines 66–68)

9. Part A

In line 26 of “Fields of Flashing Light,” what does the phrase **like a fired locomotive** suggest about the dust?

- A. The dust cloud looks as frightening as a train.
- B. The dust is moving as fast as a train.
- C. The dust cloud is as large as a train.
- D. The dust makes the same sound as a train.

Part B

Which detail from the poem **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. “It wasn’t until the dust turned toward the house,” (line 25)
- B. “. . . I fled, / barefoot and breathless, back inside,” (lines 27–28)
- C. “until it ratcheted the roof,” (line 31)
- D. “that Daddy woke.” (line 32)

