



Grade 8

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

2017 Released Items

2017 Released Items: Grade 8 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 8 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 8

Text Type: Paired Info		
Passage(s): “A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan”/ “What Is an Epic? Sing Through Me, O Muse, of That Man, Who Wandered Far and Wide”		
Item Code	Answer(s)	Standards/Evidence Statement Alignment
VH085224	Item Type: EBSR Part A: B Part B: C	RI 8.1.1 L 8.4.1 RI 8.4.1
VH085226	Item Type: EBSR Part A: B Part B: A	RI 8.1.1 RI 8.3.2
VH085229	Item Type: EBSR Part A: C Part B: A	RI 8.1.1 RI 8.5.1
VH085216	Item Type: EBSR Part A: D Part B: A	RI 8.1.1 RI 8.3.2
VH085215	Item Type: EBSR Part A: B Part B: D	RI 8.1.1 RI 8.2.1 RI 8.2.2
VH085248	Item Type: EBSR Part A: A Part B: B	RI 8.1.1 RI 8.9.1
VH085211	Item Type: EBSR (additional item) Part A: B Part B: C	RI 8.1.1 RI 8.4.1

Today you will read two articles about a type of literature called the epic. As you read the articles, think about the connections between them. Then answer the questions.

Read this article titled "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan" and answer the questions.

A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan

by Stephen Kinzer

- 1** On most days, 11-year-old Azamat Malikov spends at least an hour or two doing what comes naturally to many people in Kyrgyzstan. He works at memorizing what is said to be the world's longest epic poem.
- 2** One sunny afternoon, Azamat, resplendent in a dark blue velvet robe, chanted the story of a battle so vividly that he even frightened a visitor who could speak no Kyrgyz. Azamat rocked to and fro, waved his arms and changed his expressions wildly to illustrate the text.
- 3** "My grandfather asked me to please learn the Manas epic," Azamat said afterward. "He told me that if I did, I would become a very good person."
- 4** Scholars who have studied this epic call it as stirring as "The Iliad," as episodic as "Don Quixote" and as rich in moral guidance as the Gospels. It tells the story of an ancient hero who fought to establish and defend a homeland for the Kyrgyz people. His resolute commitment to virtue makes the epic a textbook of moral values as well as an enthralling story.
- 5** It is also the main cultural treasure of the Kyrgyz people, and has played a central role in their history. Lacking a strong religious or political tradition, the Kyrgyz use the legend of Manas to define their collective identity.
- 6** It is what binds them together as a people and, some believe, what has allowed them to survive while other Asian peoples have vanished into history.

- 7** Although the Manas epic is many centuries old, it was first written down in fragments less than 150 years ago. It is a quintessentially oral work, passed down across many generations by Manaschis, masters of recitation who chant it at festivals and other gatherings. Most of these Manaschis have been men and women with strong constitutions—able to go on for hours or days at a time and often slipping into a kind of trance as they chant.
- 8** Because there has never been an authoritative text, each Manaschi can weave in original lines, and even episodes and characters. The greatest of them are revered as prodigious creators in their own right. Over the centuries, they have forged a culture of memorization that is as strong as any in the world.
- 9** Perhaps because the Manas tradition is oral rather than written, it has proved impossible to suppress. Czarist conquerors and later the Soviet authorities sought to manipulate its message of Kyrgyz self-determination. But the tradition is thriving today, thanks in part to support from the Kyrgyz authorities.
- 10** Since Kyrgyzstan emerged from the debris of the Soviet Union in 1991, its educational system has been in ruins. The authorities have decided to concentrate on an elite of talented children and have opened up several schools for them. Most of them—like the Meerim School in Osh, the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan—offer courses on the Manas legend.
- 11** Meerim’s pupils are selected from among the gifted and ambitious. Most come from poor families. Once accepted, some choose to learn ceramics, computer technology or other skills. But the group that concentrates on Manas has a special cachet.
- 12** “For us Manas is not just about history,” said the school’s director, Sayrakan Usupova. “It teaches the importance of being good. Naturally these kids are excited to be the center of attention when they perform at weddings and parties. They take their competitions very seriously.”

- 13** “But this is not really about show,” Ms. Usupova said. “It’s about teaching moral principles for the present day. No child who studies Manas will ever grow up to be dishonest or negative or unproductive.”
- 14** The eponymous hero of this epic is described as a towering figure who could uproot any tree and hurl boulders from the heights of the Tian Shan mountain range. He vowed at age 12 to free his people from oppression, and lived a noble life until he was treacherously killed. His burial place is secret, and when anyone seeking it comes too close, a storm is said to break out that can only be calmed by reciting the epic.
- 15** No one knows when this story was first told. Kyrgyz clans moved into the territory they now inhabit following epic battles in the ninth century, and feats performed then may have been the basis for some episodes. The 300 years that followed proved to be a rich period for Kyrgyz life and culture. Not only the Manas poem but also more than a dozen other epics, some of them still performed today, emerged during this period.
- 16** The figure of Manas is not known to be based on any single individual.
- 17** By one count, his life story has been told in more than 60 versions.
- 18** Parts of the original text have undoubtedly been lost forever, but scholars say more than half a million lines survive. That would make this epic more than 30 times as long as “The Odyssey.”
- 19** No definitive version of the surviving epic exists, but the government is collecting material and hopes to publish one in the next few years, first in Kyrgyz, then in Russian and perhaps in English.

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1. Part A

In paragraph 9 of “A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan,” it is stated that the Manas epic **has proved impossible to suppress**. What does this phrase say about the Kyrgyzstan epic tradition?

- A. Those who study it cannot remember all the lines.
- B. No ruling powers have been able to put an end to it.
- C. Some important parts of it may never be recovered.
- D. No other cultures have produced a story quite like it.

Part B

Which sentence from the article **most** helps the reader understand this phrase?

- A. “He works at memorizing what is said to be the world’s longest epic poem.” (paragraph 1)
- B. “Because there has never been an authoritative text, each Manaschi can weave in original lines, and even episodes and characters.” (paragraph 8)
- C. “But the tradition is thriving today, thanks in part to support from the Kyrgyz authorities.” (paragraph 9)
- D. “No child who studies Manas will ever grow up to be dishonest or negative or unproductive.” (paragraph 13)

2. Part A

Why does the article “A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan” draw a connection between the Manas epic and famous writings like “The Odyssey,” “Don Quixote,” and the Gospels?

- A. to demonstrate that just like these texts, the Manas epic is read all over the world
- B. to suggest that the Manas epic shares traits that qualify it as a literary classic in its own right
- C. to highlight some key differences between the Manas epic and these more familiar texts
- D. to prove that the Manas epic draws much of its content from these earlier texts

Part B

What sentence from the article further supports the idea about the Manas epic expressed in the answer to Part A?

- A. “His resolute commitment to virtue makes the epic a textbook of moral values as well as an enthralling story.” (paragraph 4)
- B. “Although the Manas epic is many centuries old, it was first written down in fragments less than 150 years ago.” (paragraph 7)
- C. “Not only the Manas poem but also more than a dozen other epics, some of them still performed today, emerged during this period.” (paragraph 15)
- D. “No definitive version of the surviving epic exists, but the government is collecting material and hopes to publish one in the next few years, first in Kyrgyz, then in Russian and perhaps in English.” (paragraph 19)

3. Part A

How does paragraph 2 of “A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan” help to develop a key concept of the article?

- A. by describing the hero Manas who is the main character of the epic
- B. by showing how the Manas epic inspires its audience to be good
- C. by demonstrating how involved the performers become when reciting the Manas epic
- D. by emphasizing the role children play in the Manas epic’s narrative

Part B

Which piece of evidence from later in the article develops the key concept in a similar way?

- A. “Most of these Manaschis have been men and women with strong constitutions—able to go on for hours or days at a time. . . .” (paragraph 7)
- B. “Meerim’s pupils are selected from among the gifted and ambitious.” (paragraph 11)
- C. “It’s about teaching moral principles for the present day.” (paragraph 13)
- D. “The figure of Manas is not known to be based on any single individual.” (paragraph 16)

Read this article titled “What Is an Epic? Sing Through Me, O Muse, of That Man, Who Wandered Far and Wide” and answer the questions.

What Is an Epic? Sing Through Me, O Muse, of That Man, Who Wandered Far and Wide

by Rosalie F. Baker

- 1** Thus begins the Greek epic poem the *Odyssey*. Homer, the ancient bard to whom this world-renowned poem is attributed, followed the accepted practice of poets throughout the ancient Greek world when, in the opening lines, he acknowledged his need for inspiration. Such an undertaking required that he ask the goddess of eloquence and epic poetry for help. The goddess’ name was Calliope, but ancient poets always referred to her as Muse, for she was one of the nine goddesses known as Muses who promoted and patronized the arts and sciences.
- 2** The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the two epic poems credited to Homer, became the models for the epic style. Originally, epics began as verses recited orally by bards. Often these professional poets sang the verses to the accompaniment of a musical instrument called a lyre. The tales were passed from generation to generation, with each bard adapting them to suit the times. Gradually, grand poems encompassing these tales evolved, and eventually the epics were written down. In ancient Greece, schoolboys had to memorize the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and throughout the ages, teachers and philosophers have included these epic poems in their curricula.
- 3** By definition, an epic focuses on a national hero who performs incredible feats. The tale is historical, legendary, or mythological—or a combination of the three. An epic is usually longer and more involved than other poems and stories. To complement the seriousness of the theme, the epic poet used a specific literary style and formal language.
- 4** Long-established rules and customs governed the style of an epic. The use of meter was standard and appropriate, since epics were

originally sung. The rhythmic quality of the various meters is particularly suited to this type of literature, and epic poets chose their words carefully to describe specific actions and sound effects. Sound was extremely important to the epic, as it could be used to convey the mood of the speaker or heighten the dramatic effect of the passage.

- 5** Figures of speech, especially simile, metaphor, and allegory, are used throughout. Certain epithets are used repeatedly to describe deities and heroes—for example, rosy-fingered Dawn and crafty Odysseus.
- 6** Often the epic begins in the middle of the story and then flashes back to events leading up to the action at the beginning. This technique brings the listener or reader immediately into the middle of the tale, adding to its drama and excitement.
- 7** Typically, an epic contains scenes and passages that by themselves are short stories. Modern writers, artists, and filmmakers often use passages and phrasing from these colorful scenes in their works.
- 8** Epics were created to instill a sense of national pride in the heroes' descendants. Since gods and goddesses play major roles in most epics, descendants were encouraged to feel honored that a particular deity favored, protected, and aided their ancestors.
- 9** Epic heroes and heroines are humans endowed with superhuman qualities. They are leaders, admired and followed by their comrades. Their strengths are bravery, courage, and cunning mixed with a gentleness toward their loved ones and friends. Yet, because they are human, epic heroes feel pain, anger, and sorrow. Epic heroes also die. The widespread popularity of the epic is due to the timelessness of its themes. It describes feelings and experiences that are familiar to all people, such as joy, sorrow, fear, revenge, treachery, love for family and friends, and death. The fact that a tale's action is set in a certain time period does not

seem to matter. People need heroes, and epics provide heroes who fight against injustice and immorality. Action-packed scenes carry the reader to a fantasy world, much like the science fiction novels and movies of the 21st century.

- 10** People of all ages and backgrounds enjoy epics because the stories have many different levels of meaning. The simplest involves listening or reading for pure enjoyment. No attempt is made to analyze or criticize the story or the characters. On another level, epics reveal much about a nation’s people. Careful reading and analysis of both an epic and a nation’s history help readers to understand the world in which the epic was set as well as current issues. Finally, epics often have a moral or spiritual message about human nature, life, and a person’s role in the community.
- 11** With so much expected of an epic, it is no wonder that epic poets called upon the Muse Calliope for assistance.

“What Is an Epic? Sing Through Me, O Muse, of That Man, Who Wandered Far and Wide” by Rosalie F. Baker from CALLIOPE, Carus Publishing Co. © 2007.

4. Part A

What distinction does “What Is an Epic?” make between traditional epic poetry and written forms of literature?

- A. Epic poems more often begin right in the middle of a story.
- B. Epic poems contain more exciting scenes full of action.
- C. Epic poems are usually more popular with readers.
- D. Epic poems rely more on sound to develop mood and dramatic effects.

Part B

Which paragraph from “What Is an Epic?” supports the answer to Part A?

- A. paragraph 4
- B. paragraph 6
- C. paragraph 9
- D. paragraph 10

5. Part A

Which statement expresses a central idea of “What Is an Epic?”

- A. Greek epic poets would call upon the Muse Calliope for help in their difficult task.
- B. More than just exciting stories, epic poems also teach people about themselves.
- C. Epics, like most forms of literature, use figures of speech, metaphors, and other devices.
- D. The Iliad and The Odyssey are two epic poems that have long served as examples of the form.

Part B

Which sentence from the article provides a supporting detail for this central idea?

- A. “Such an undertaking required that he ask the goddess of eloquence and epic poetry for help.” (paragraph 1)
- B. “Originally, epics began as verses recited orally by bards.” (paragraph 2)
- C. “Certain epithets are used repeatedly to describe deities and heroes—for example, rosy-fingered Dawn and crafty Odysseus.” (paragraph 5)
- D. “It describes feelings and experiences that are familiar to all people, such as joy, sorrow, fear, revenge, treachery, love for family and friends, and death.” (paragraph 9)

6. Part A

Which statement expresses a difference in the way the topic of epic poems is presented in the two articles?

- A. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan" introduces an epic from a different cultural tradition, while "What Is an Epic?" focuses on the Greek epic tradition.
- B. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan" argues that only one epic provides moral guidance, while "What Is an Epic?" suggests that all epics influence people's morals.
- C. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan" claims that epics do not need to make use of literary devices, while "What Is an Epic?" proves otherwise.
- D. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan" shows how epics turn ordinary people into heroes, while "What Is an Epic?" describes epics about famous national heroes.

Part B

Which paragraphs from the two articles **most clearly** support the answer to Part A?

- A. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan": paragraph 1 "What Is an Epic?": paragraph 1
- B. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan": paragraph 5 "What Is an Epic?": paragraph 2
- C. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan": paragraph 8 "What Is an Epic?": paragraph 4
- D. "A Legendary Hero Guides a Reborn Kyrgyzstan": paragraph 14 "What Is an Epic?": paragraph 3

7. Part A

What does the word **attributed** mean as it is used in paragraph 1 of “What Is an Epic?”

- A. acknowledged as traditional in a given culture
- B. regarded as having been created by someone or something
- C. supported and inspired by supernatural powers
- D. named after or in honor of someone or something

Part B

Which words from the article help the reader understand the word **attributed**?

- A. “. . . the accepted practice of poets” (paragraph 1)
- B. “. . . who promoted and patronized the arts and sciences.” (paragraph 1)
- C. “. . . the two epic poems credited to Homer” (paragraph 2)
- D. “. . . passed from generation to generation” (paragraph 2)

