



Answering Constructed Response Questions:

Preparing students for the
Georgia Milestones Assessment
System

Your Presenter is..

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- Former Title I Needs Improvement School Improvement Specialist, West Ga. RESA
- Former administrator
- Former curriculum specialist
- Former K-5 teacher

Learning Targets:



- I can explain the importance of teaching students how to answer constructed response questions.
- I can define constructed response questions and the types of constructed response questions.
- I can explain the components of exemplary constructed response questions.
- I can explain specific strategies to use in the classroom to teach students how to answer constructed response questions.
- I can score a constructed response question using a rubric and give feedback.

Why do I need to teach my students how to answer CRQ's?

- Federal requirements for Race to the Top states (by 2014-2015 school year): High quality assessments
- Consolidate ELA, Reading, Writing into a single measure
- Increase rigor to align with college and career expectations
- Consistent alignment with external measures



HOW DO WE MEASURE UP?

Achievement of Georgia Students in Mathematics 2013

NAEP – Grade 8: 29% at/above proficient

CRCT – Grade 8: 83% met/exceeded

Coordinate Algebra EOCT: 37% met/exceeded

SAT – Class of 2013: 42% college ready benchmark*

ACT – Class of 2013: 38% college ready benchmark**

2012

PSAT – sophomores: 35% on track to be CCR

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Overall ELA Phase II Pilot Summary Data

Grade	Number and Percent of Students Achieving Each Score Point					Total Student N/ %
	0	1	2	3	4	
3	812	1107	762	174	26	2881
	28.18%	38.42%	26.45%	6.04%	0.90%	100%
4	906	1145	765	168	63	3047
	29.73%	37.58%	25.11%	5.51%	2.07%	100%
5	839	948	1294	537	183	3801
	22.07%	24.94%	34.04%	14.13%	4.81%	100%
6	626	1467	1028	408	86	3615
	17.32%	40.58%	28.44%	11.29%	2.38%	100%
7	695	1002	1035	515	140	3387
	20.52%	29.58%	30.56%	15.21%	4.13%	100%
8	1116	1534	827	391	80	3948
	28.27%	38.86%	20.95%	9.90%	2.03%	100%
9 - 10	1262	1816	559	106	9	3752
	33.64%	48.40%	14.90%	2.83%	0.24%	100%
11 - 12	739	1389	1175	388	131	3822
	19.34%	36.34%	30.74%	10.15%	3.43%	100%

Overall Mathematics Phase II Pilot Summary Data

Grade	Number and Percent of Students Achieving Each Score Point					Total Student N / %
	0	1	2	3	4	
3	1378	1152	539	121	47	3237
	42.57%	35.59%	16.65%	3.74%	1.45%	100%
4	1323	1264	325	83	25	3020
	43.81%	41.85%	10.76%	2.75%	0.83%	100%
5	1351	1049	391	64	15	2870
	47.07%	36.55%	13.62%	2.23%	0.52%	100%
6	1579	1171	370	135	53	3308
	47.73%	35.40%	11.19%	4.08%	1.60%	100%
7	1602	856	219	72	36	2785
	57.52%	30.74%	7.86%	2.59%	1.29%	100%
8	1529	1049	619	217	88	3502
	43.66%	29.95%	17.68%	6.20%	2.51%	100%
9 - 12	2570	1435	299	59	23	4386
	58.60%	32.72%	6.82%	1.35%	0.52%	100%

Why do you think students do so poorly on constructed response questions?

Discuss with a partner.....



Some of the reasons kids do poorly on CRQ's...

- Many students don't answer the question.
- Some responses are very shallow and need more details.
- Some students get off topic.
- Spelling and handwriting may impact scores.
- Students don't understand what the question is asking.
- Instead of writing about what the passage was about , students write about what they know about the topic.
- Students don't think about their audience.

Definition

Constructed response is a general term for items that require the student to generate a response as opposed to selecting a response. **Constructed response** items require more elaborate answers and explanations of reasoning. They allow for multiple correct answers and/or varying methods of arriving at the correct answer.

Examples of skills required on constructed response tasks include, but are not limited to:

- English Language Arts
 - Utilize close analytic reading
 - Compare and contrast ideas and themes
 - Synthesize ideas and concepts across a single or multiple texts
- Mathematics
 - Apply mathematical procedures and skills to real world problems
 - Express mathematical reasoning by showing work or explaining an answer

Georgia Milestones: Unique Features

Item Types

- **Selected-Response** [aka, multiple-choice]
 - all content areas
 - evidence-based selected response in ELA
- **Constructed-Response**
 - ELA and mathematics
- **Extended-Response**
 - ELA and mathematics
- **Technology Enhanced**
 - to begin in 2016-2017

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Constructed response is a general term for assessment items that require the student to generate a response as opposed to selecting a response. Extended-response items require more elaborate answers and explanations of reasoning. They allow for multiple correct answers and/or varying methods of arriving at the correct answer. Writing prompts and performance tasks are examples of extended-response items.

Georgia Milestones

General Test Parameters: ELA

Criterion-Referenced

Total Number of Items: 44 / Total Number of Points: 55

Breakdown by Item Type:

- 40 Selected Response (worth 1 point each; 10 of which are aligned NRT)
- 2 Constructed Response (2 points each)
- 1 Constructed Response (worth 4 points)
- 1 Extended Response (worth 7 points)

Norm-Referenced

- Total Number of Items: 20 (10 of which contribute to CR score)

Embedded Field Test

- Total field test items: 6

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Total number of items taken by each student: 60

Georgia Milestones

Writing at Every Grade

- All students will encounter a constructed-response item allowing for **narrative** prose, in response to text, within first or second section of the test.
- Within the writing section of the test, students will read a pair of passages and complete a series of “warm-up” items:
 - 3 selected-response items asking about the salient features of each passage and comparing/contrasting between the two passages
 - 1 constructed-response item requiring linking the two passages
 - 1 writing prompt in which students must cite evidence to support their conclusions, claims, etc.

Warning: Students who simply rewrite excerpts from the passage(s) to illustrate their point(s) will not receive favorable scores.

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Genres

Writing prompts will be **informative/explanatory** or **opinion/argumentative** depending on the grade level. Students could encounter either genre.

Georgia Milestones

General Test Parameters: Mathematics

Criterion-Referenced

Total Number of Items: 53 / Total Number of Points: 58

Breakdown by Item Type:

- 50 Selected Response (worth 1 point each; 10 of which are aligned NRT)
- 2 Constructed Response (worth 2 points each)
- 1 Constructed Response (worth 4 points)

Norm-Referenced

- Total Number of Items: 20 (10 of which contribute to CR score)

Embedded Field Test

- Total field test items: 10

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Total number of items taken by each student: 73

What's in a Prompt?

- **Background information**

“Birds’ babies hatch from eggs. Birds have wings, but not all adult birds fly. They live all over the world, even in Antarctica.”

- **Petitions**

“**Explain** how birds protect themselves.”

- **Questions**

“What is migration?”



Better Answers: Written Performance That Looks Good and Sounds Smart, Ardith Davis Cole

Academic Vocabulary

- Traits (most students below grade 7 struggle with this word)
 - Qualities
 - Evidence
 - Sequence
- Stanza
- Line
- Infer
- Point of View
- Support
- Simile
- Metaphor
- Figurative language



Strategies for Answering CRQ

- RACE
- ACE (math)



RACE steps for answering CRQ

- **R**eword/restate the question
- Provide an **A**nswer
- **C**ite using evidence from text
- **E**xplain how the evidence supports your answer

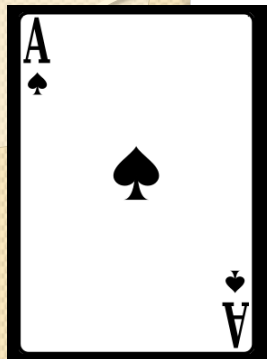


RACE Checklist

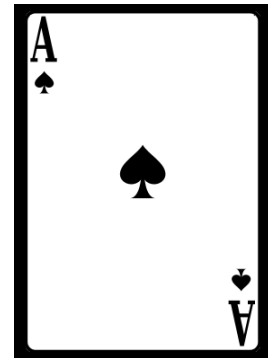


Name _____ Date _____

	Minimally	Partially	Completely
	1	2	3
Restates question	_____	_____	_____
Develops a broad Answer	_____	_____	_____
Cites using details	_____	_____	_____
Draws conclusion	_____	_____	_____
Stays on topic	_____	_____	_____
Writes neatly	_____	_____	_____
Uses proper Conventions	_____	_____	_____



What about MATH?



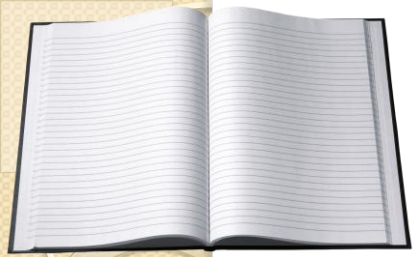
Already know (highlight key terms, identify what you already know)

Compute your work (show your work, label, draw a model)

Explain in writing how you got your answer (step by step details, mathematical terminology used- how and why?)

How do you score?

- Select one person at your table to read the fable and the prompt.
- Read the student response.
- Score using your rubric. Discuss the feedback you would give this student.
- Be prepared to share.



Ideas for Teaching

- Have your students answer your EQ as their exit ticket.
- Add constructed response questions to each test or quiz you give.
- What other key words (Tier 2 or Tier 3 vocabulary) are important to teach?
- How do you know that your students fully understand the vocabulary?
- Teach students not to skip these questions!

More Ideas.....



- In math, practice using Exemplars using the gradual release model. Model, guided practice, and independent.
- Let your students struggle!!
- Begin with simple questions.
- Require students to answer questions (orally and written) in complete sentences.
- Ask WHY questions
- Look at sample questions

Where can I find sample questions?

- New York
- North Carolina
- Louisiana
- Oregon
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
- PARCC
- Kentucky
- Formative Item Bank
- NAEP
- Eliciting Evidence of Student Learning
- West Georgia RESA Monthly Webinars



Excellent Resources for CRQ...

- http://writingfix.com/RICA/constructed_response.htm
- Tests that Teach, by Karen Tankersley
- Better Answers, by Ardith Cole



Possible Follow-Up Sessions

- Academic vocabulary
- Informational texts, paired passages
- Developing your own constructed response questions
- Scoring constructed response answers
- Lesson plan application
- Modeling
- Observations and feedback

Thank You!



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