

Grade 4 Literary Mini-Assessment

Walk Two Moons

This grade 4 mini-assessment is based on a text from *Walk Two Moons*, a novel by Sharon Creech. This book is considered to be a text worthy of students' time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at grade 4. It was awarded the 1995 Newbery Medal for the most distinguished American children's book. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will employ quality, complex texts such as this.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students' time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the text. Questions also may address several standards within the same question because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis. In this mini-assessment, there are selected-response questions that address the Reading Standards listed below and one constructed-response question that addresses the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards. There are also items that replicate how technology may be used on assessments, but adapted to paper and pencil format.

We encourage educators to give students the time that they need to read closely, answer the questions, and write to the source. While we know that it is helpful to have students complete the mini-assessment in one class period, we encourage educators to allow additional time as necessary.

The questions align to the following standards:

RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
RL.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
RL.4.3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
RL.4.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
W.4.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
W.4.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.4.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.4.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.4.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.4.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

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The assessment questions in this document align with the CCSS and reflect the instructional shifts implied by the standards. To learn more about these topics, please go to the following link:

www.achievethecore.org

Grade 4 Mini-Assessment – Excerpt from *Walk Two Moons*

Today you will read an excerpt from the novel *Walk Two Moons*. You will then answer several questions based on the text. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions. You will notice as you answer the questions that some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B, but you may go back and change your answer to Part A if you want to.

Take as long as you need to read and answer the questions. If you do not finish when class ends, come see me to discuss the ways you may have additional time.

Now read the excerpt and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read.

Excerpt from *Walk Two Moons*
by Sharon Creech

Salamanca Tree Hiddle, “Sal,” is traveling with her grandparents. Along the way, they stop in Wyoming so that her grandmother can see Old Faithful, the famous geyser located in Yellowstone National Park.

- 1 Gramps was already up, but Gram was lying on the bed, staring at the ceiling. “Did you ever go to sleep?” I asked.
- 2 “No,” she said, “I didn’t feel like sleeping. I can sleep later.” She climbed out of bed. “Let’s go see that Old Faithful. I’ve waited my whole entire life to see Old Faithful.”
- 3 “You’ve sure got your heart set on that, don’t you, you stubborn gooseberry?” said Gramps.
- 4 “I sure do,” Gram said.
- 5 We parked the car and walked up a low hill. I was afraid Gram was going to be disappointed because it didn’t look like much at first. There was a rope fence around a mound on the side of the hill. The ground was scabbly dirt, and in the center of the rope enclosure, about twenty feet away, was a hole.
- 6 “Heck,” Gram said, “can’t we get any closer than this?”
- 7 Gramps and I walked over to read a sign about Old Faithful. A park ranger rushed past us yelling, “Ma’am! Ma’am!”
- 8 “Gol-dang,” Gramps said.
- 9 Gram was crawling under the rope. The ranger stopped her. “Ma’am, there’s a reason for that rope,” he said.
- 10 Gram brushed off her dress. “I just wanted a better look.”

- 11 "Don't worry," the ranger said. "You'll get a good look. Please stay behind the rope."
- 12 The sign said that Old Faithful was due to erupt in fifteen minutes. More and more people gathered around the rope. There were people of all ages: little babies crying, grannies sitting on folding stools, teenagers plugged into radio headsets, couples smooching. There were people speaking languages other than English: next to us was a tour group of Italians; across the way was a group of Germans.
- 13 Gram tapped her fingers together, getting more and more excited. "Is it time?" she kept saying. "Is it almost time?"
- 14 The crowd became quiet a few minutes before Old Faithful was due to go off. Everyone stared at the hole. Everyone was listening.
- 15 "Is it time?" Gram said.
- 16 There was a faint noise and a little spit shot out of the hole. The man next to me said, "Aww, is that all—" Another noise, this time a little louder, a grating and crunching sound like walking on gravel. Two fitful spits. "Aww—" the man said.
- 17 Then it was like the radiator boiling over or the tea kettle blowing its top. Old Faithful hissed and steamed. A sudden spout of water shot out, maybe three feet high.
- 18 "Aww—" the man said. "Is that all—"
- 19 More steam, boiling and hissing, and a huge jing-bang spray of water surged out, climbing and climbing, and then more and more, until it looked like a whole river of water was shooting straight up into the air. "It looks like an upsidey-down waterfall!" Gram said. All the while there was a walloping hissing, and I could have sworn the ground rumbled and trembled underneath us. The warm mist blew toward us and people started backing away.
- 20 All except Gram. She stood there grinning, tilting her face up to the mist, and staring at that fountain of water. "Oh," she said. "Oh, huzza, huzza!" She shouted it into the air and noise.
- 21 Gramps wasn't watching Old Faithful. He was watching Gram. He put his arms around her and hugged her. "You like this old geyser, don't you?" he said.
- 22 "Oh!" Gram said. "Oh yes, I do."
- 23 The man next to me was staring open-mouthed at Old Faithful. "Lordy," he said. "Lordy, that's amazing."
- 24 Gradually, Old Faithful slowed down. We watched it undo itself and retreat into its hole. We stood there even after everyone else had drifted away. At last Gram sighed and said, "Okay, let's go."

- 25 We were inside the car and about to leave when Gram started to cry. “Gol-dang—”
Gramps said. “What’s the matter?”
- 26 Gram sniffed. “Oh, nothing. I’m so happy I got to see Old Faithful.”
- 27 “You old gooseberry,” Gramps said, and on we went.

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QUESTIONS

1. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: In paragraph 19, what does the phrase surged out mean?

- A. suddenly burst forth
- B. increased in width
- C. rapidly got hot
- D. grew much louder

Part B: Which two phrases from paragraph 19 best help the reader to know the meaning of surged out?

- A. “grating and crunching”
- B. “more steam”
- C. “climbing and climbing”
- D. “whole river of water”
- E. “straight up into the air”
- F. “three feet high”

2. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Which statement best describes a main theme of the story?

- A. We should be generous to our loved ones.
- B. Life can be exciting at any age.
- C. Staying safe is more important than having adventures.
- D. The childhood years are the best in life.

Part B: Which character from the story acts as the best example of this theme?

- A. Sal
- B. the ranger
- C. Gramps
- D. Gram

3. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: How does Gram feel as she waits for the eruption?

- A. Gram is impatient and can hardly wait for the event to take place.
- B. Gram is nervous that it will not be as special as she’s dreamed it would be.
- C. Gram is more interested in watching the people around her.
- D. Gram is worried that she may get hurt.

Part B: Which words from the text best supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “I was afraid Gram was going to be disappointed . . .”
- B. “Gram brushed off her dress. . .”
- C. “There were people of all ages . . .”
- D. “Gram tapped her fingers together . . .”

4. What does the reader learn from the words of the man standing next to the narrator?

- A. that people are being especially noisy when they are looking at the eruption
- B. that people are disappointed when they see the first signs of the eruption
- C. that the eruption is later than the expected fifteen minutes
- D. that the eruption is not as exciting as it could have been

5. When the family first arrives at Old Faithful, Sal says, “I was afraid Gram was going to be disappointed because it didn’t look like much at first.” Circle three paragraphs that show that Gram was not disappointed in Old Faithful.

6. In paragraphs 16–19, the author includes several descriptions of the many sounds that Old Faithful makes. Why are these descriptions important to the story?

- A. They help the reader understand the science behind the eruption.
- B. They help to develop a theme of how nature is mightier than humans.
- C. They help to build the setting so that the reader can better imagine the site.
- D. They help the reader understand the dangers the characters face.

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Text

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The articles for this mini-assessment have been placed at grade 4, and the process used to determine this grade level placement is described below. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one¹ quantitative measure according to the research-based conversion table provided in the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” (www.corestandards.org/resources).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade level** based on a qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

Excerpt from <i>Walk Two Moons</i>	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
	FK: 2.9	Lexile: 560

After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the Supplement to Appendix A (www.corestandards.org/resources) and determine the **grade band** of the text. *Note: With literature, it is sometimes true that the quantitative measures indicate grade bands that are lower than one would expect. In these rare cases, qualitative reviews will show the text really belongs in a higher grade band.*

Figure 1 reproduces the conversion table from the Supplement to Appendix A, showing how the initial results from Flesch-Kincaid and the Lexile measure were converted to grade bands.

Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power [®]	Flesch-Kincaid ^d	The Lexile Framework [®]	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 nd – 3 rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 th – 5 th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 th – 8 th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 th – 10 th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

Quantitative data shows that placement between grades 2 and 3 would be appropriate. However, because the text is literary, qualitative analysis may push the text slightly higher.

¹ For higher stakes tests, it is recommended that two corresponding text complexity measures be used to place a text in a grade band. When two measures are used, both placing the text in the same **band**, the results provide additional assurance that the text selected is appropriate for the band.

To find the **grade level** of the text within the designated grade band, engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of the text. The characteristics that should be analyzed during a qualitative analysis can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. (www.corestandards.org)

Qualitative Analysis of the excerpt from *Walk Two Moons*.

Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Where to place within the band?				
		Too low for band	early to mid 4	mid- 4 to low 5	Mid to high 5	NOT suited to band
Structure: (both story structure or form of piece)	The structure of this text is chronological, starting with the family awakening in the morning, following them to the site of the geyser, and then ending after the geyser erupts and they leave. The author uses many details to build this organizational structure, such as describing the first small spurts of water and then following through until the geyser fully “surged out” with all its might.					
Language Clarity and Conventions (including vocabulary load)	The language used in this excerpt is mostly literal, conversational, and conventional, which helps make the text accessible for students. The sentences are straightforward and vary between simple and complex. The vocabulary should mostly be familiar to students, and words that are unfamiliar or colloquial (“huzza, huzza” and “Lordy” for example) are not required for comprehension or are explained either directly or through use of context. However, those particular words increase the complexity of the text and may be a bit distracting for students.					
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	No prior knowledge is needed to understand this text, as the author develops each point through sufficient use of evidence. Even if students don’t know what a geyser is, the author provides enough details for them to figure it out.					
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/Purpose (chiefly informational)	The theme of the text is implicit: Gram wants to live life to the fullest extent possible and doesn’t let anything stop her. She savors each experience. Although this theme is rather mature for students in elementary school, close reading and use of textual evidence should lead them to it.					
Overall placement:	Justification: The organizational structure is chronological, the language is conversational, and no prior knowledge is needed to answer the questions. The theme is implicit and rather mature for grade 4, but should be accessible because of strong details included. The use of colloquial language increases the complexity of the text, as does the mature theme. Although quantitative data indicates this text belongs in the 2/3 band, qualitative data suggests it be placed slightly higher, in early to mid 4th grade.					

Correct Answers and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	
1 Part A	A		<p>A. This is the correct answer. “Suddenly burst forth” describes the direction and force of the water coming out the Earth through Old Faithful.</p> <p>B. Although “increased” implies there must be force behind the eruption, the term more specifically explains the size of the water stream rather than the force behind it and direction it travels.</p> <p>C. “Rapidly got hot” explains the effect of the increased steam coming from the geyser rather than the force of the water.</p> <p>D. “Grew much louder” describes the sound of the geyser nearing eruption, not the force or direction of the water.</p>
1 Part B	C, E	RL.4.4, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although “grating and crunching” are sounds Old Faithful makes before erupting, those words do not describe how the water “surges out.”</p> <p>B. Although “more steam” was created when the water “surged out,” this phrase describes an accompanying effect of the eruption, not the rapid, upward movement of the water.</p> <p>C. This is a correct answer. “Climbing and climbing” explains the upward direction of the water erupting from the geyser.</p> <p>D. “Whole river of water” explains the large amount of rushing water but not the upward direction or force behind it.</p> <p>E. This is a correct answer. Although the water did go “straight up into the air,” the phrase describes the direction of the water, not the volume and force of it.</p> <p>F. Although the water at first went “three feet high,” the phrase describes the height of the initial eruption, not the force of the water in the main eruption.</p>
2 Part A	B	RL.4.3; RL.4.2; RL.4.1	<p>A. Although the characters are emotionally generous to each other, this idea is not prevalent enough to be considered a theme.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The repeated details about Gram’s anticipation and enthusiasm for seeing Old Faithful establish that Gram, even though she is not young, is excited about an adventure.</p> <p>C. Although visitors are required to stay behind the rope, staying safe is not emphasized as being more important than the adventure itself.</p> <p>D. Although the narrator is a child, the focus of the excerpt is on Gram’s enjoyment of the experience rather than the narrator’s.</p>

2 Part B	D		<p>A. Although the story is told from Sal’s perspective, the excerpt focuses on Gram’s excitement of visiting Old Faithful.</p> <p>B. The ranger is a minor character who emphasizes rules and order rather than adventure.</p> <p>C. Gramps supports Gram’s desire to see Old Faithful, but Gram is the driving force behind the experience.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Gram’s excitement makes viewing Old Faithful an adventure.</p>
3 Part A	A	RL.4.3, RL.4.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. Gram is so excited for the eruption to start that she keeps tapping her fingers and asking when it will begin.</p> <p>B. Although the narrator grows concerned while walking up the hill to Old Faithful because the scene was unimpressive, Gram never gets nervous that the event won’t be special.</p> <p>C. Although the crowd is large and diverse, Gram is not interested in them. She is anxiously awaiting the eruption.</p> <p>D. Although the ranger and Gramps seem to be worried that Gram may get hurt, Gram herself remains unconcerned.</p>
3 Part B	D		<p>A. This option shows the narrator is fearful that Gram will be disappointed but does not show Gram thinking this was a possibility.</p> <p>B. This option shows what Gram did after attempting to get a better view but does not reflect her impatience.</p> <p>C. This option shows that there were many excited people present, but does not show Gram’s impatience for the event to begin.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Gram taps her fingers together because she is excited and impatient for the event to begin.</p>
4	B	RL.4.3, RL.4.1	<p>A. Although people are noisy before the eruption, the reader doesn’t learn that fact from the man next to the narrator.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The man’s words clearly show his disappointment when he thinks the first seconds of the eruption are all there is to the event.</p> <p>C. Although the eruption has not started, it is not “later than expected,” as the sign clearly indicates when the event will start.</p> <p>D. Although at first the event, as documented by the man next to the narrator, doesn’t seem exciting, when the geyser fully erupts, he is amazed.</p>

5	<p>Possible correct paragraphs:</p> <p>Paragraph 20</p> <p>Paragraph 21</p> <p>Paragraph 22</p> <p>Paragraph 24</p> <p>Paragraph 25</p> <p>Paragraph 26</p>	RL.4.3, RL.4.1	<p>Paragraph 20: This paragraph describes Gram smiling as she views the eruption, enjoying the mist while others back away from it, and cheering.</p> <p>Paragraph 22: This paragraph is Gram’s positive response to Gramps asking if she enjoys the geyser.</p> <p>Paragraph 21: This paragraph shows Gramps observing Gram’s joy at seeing the geyser. He sees how much she likes it.</p> <p>Paragraph 24: This paragraph illustrates how long Gram stayed at the scene and her reluctance to leave long after the eruption was over.</p> <p>Paragraph 25: This paragraph explains how Gram cried when she left Old Faithful.</p> <p>Paragraph 26: This paragraph is a line of dialogue explaining Gram’s grateful attitude toward the experience.</p>
6	C	RL.4.3, RL.4.1	<p>A. These paragraphs focus on relating the scene by comparing the sounds of the eruption to familiar things (like a tea kettle) rather than explaining the scientific reason for the eruption.</p> <p>B. Although the description of the sounds does indicate the power of Old Faithful, these paragraphs do not demonstrate a theme of nature being mightier than humans.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. These paragraphs help the reader better understand the scene by describing the sounds the geyser makes through the eruption.</p> <p>D. The dangers of the geyser relate to the characters’ distance from the geyser, not the sounds it produces.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Optional Writing Prompt</p>	<p>See bullets to the right for possible details that would be included in a top-score response</p>	<p>W.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9, RL.4.3, RL.4.1, L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3</p>	<p>A good student response will include all or most of the following points from the story:</p> <p>Gram’s stubborn nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No,” she said, “I didn’t feel like sleeping. I can sleep later.” • “You’ve sure got your heart set on that, don’t you, you stubborn gooseberry?” said Gramps. “I sure do,” Gram said. • “Heck,” Gram said, “can’t we get any closer than this?” • Gram was crawling under the rope. <p>Gram’s sense of adventure and excitement about Old Faithful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Let’s go see that Old Faithful. I’ve waited my whole entire life to see Old Faithful.” • Gram tapped her fingers together, getting more and more excited. “Is it time?” she kept saying. “Is it almost time?” • “Is it time?” Gram said. • ...people started backing away. All except Gram. She stood there grinning, tilting her face up to the mist, and staring at that fountain of water. “Oh,” she said. “Oh, huzza, huzza!” She shouted it into the air and noise. • “I’m so happy I got to see Old Faithful.”
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Additional Resources For Assessment and CCSS Implementation

Shift 1 – Complexity: *Regular practice with complex text and its academic language*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- See the Text Complexity Collection on www.achievethecore.org

Shift 2 – Evidence: *Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational*

- See Close Reading Exemplars for ways to engage students in close reading on
<http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>
- See the Basal Alignment Project for examples of text-dependent questions
<http://www.achievethecore.org/basal-alignment-project>

Shift 3 – Knowledge: *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Sample Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing Prompts:

http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf