

Assessment for Learning Series

Module 1: Understanding and Using Constructed Response Items in Elementary Classrooms

***Georgia Department of Education
Assessment and Accountability Division***



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"
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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

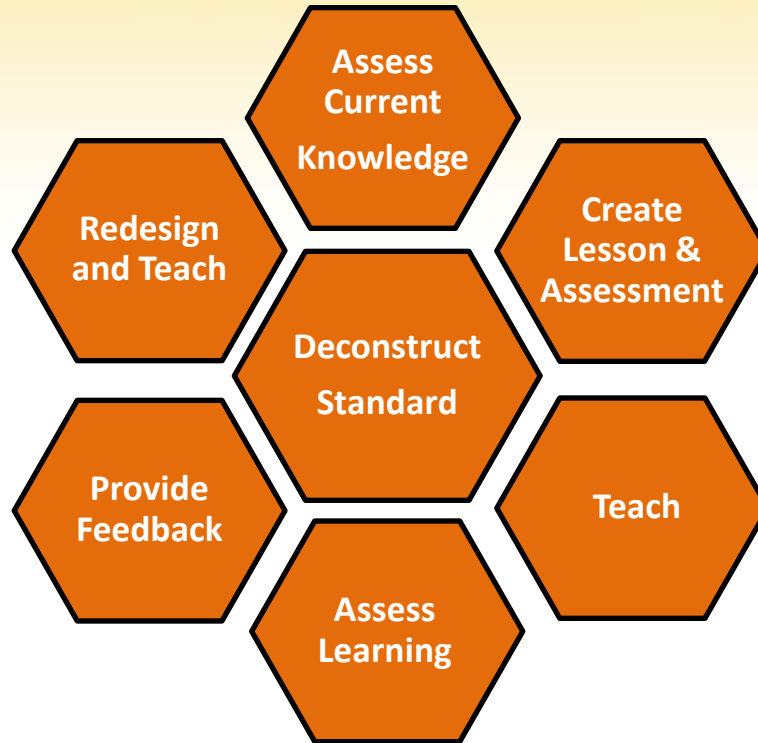


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Using Assessment for Learning in Classrooms: A Continuous Cycle



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English Language Arts (ELA) Sample Item Set Grade 3



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Standards to be Assessed

ELACC3RL1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

ELACC3W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

ELACC3L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

ELACC3L2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.



Passage

For this item, the students are asked to read a poem entitled, “Healthy Cookies.” The poem is about a girl whose mom purchased a healthy cookie snack in an attempt to replace the daughter’s preferred sugary cookie. The daughter was initially reluctant to try the healthy cookie, but eventually tasted the new cookie and decided it wasn’t that bad.



ELA Task

ELACC3RL1, ELACC3W2, ELACC3L1 and ELACC3L2

Explain why the speaker believes that the healthy cookies will taste bad. Write your explanation in a paragraph that includes many supporting details from the text.

Answer with complete sentences, and use correct punctuation and grammar.



Rubric

Score	Designation	Description
4	Thoroughly Demonstrated	The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the question and the text by completely explaining why the reader expects the healthy cookies to taste bad using details from the poem as support. The student's response uses complete sentences and correct punctuation and grammar.
3	Clearly Demonstrated	The student demonstrates a clear understanding of the question and the text by providing an explanation of why the reader expects the healthy cookies to taste bad and uses some details from the poem as support. The student's response uses mostly complete sentences and mostly correct punctuation and grammar.
2	Basically Demonstrated	The student demonstrates a basic understanding of the question and the text by providing a general explanation about why the speaker expects the healthy cookies to taste bad. However, the student offers little support from the poem. The student's response uses some complete sentences and some correct punctuation and grammar.
1	Minimally Demonstrated	The student demonstrates a weak understanding of the question and provides a minimal explanation of why the speaker expects the healthy cookies to taste bad OR the student provides no details from the poem for support. The student's response uses mostly incomplete sentences and mostly incorrect punctuation and grammar.
0	Incorrect or Irrelevant	The response is incorrect or irrelevant.



Exemplar Response

One thing the speaker thinks will make the healthy cookies taste bad is the ingredients list on the box. These include “Vitamins and fiber, with no sugar to be found...” The speaker likes sweet snacks such as “Choco-Wonder-Treats and goo-filled Tasty Rings.” Since she likes sweet snacks she does not expect cookies that do not have sugar to taste good. Also she thinks that cookies that are low fat and have no preservatives will “taste like wood!”

The student clearly explains why the reader expects the healthy cookies to taste bad. This explanation is supported with direct evidence from poem.

Note: Other exemplary responses could include a different reason that the healthy cookies might taste bad. The student must provide a clear explanation supported by evidence and specifics from the poem.

Remember: There can be multiple correct responses for constructed-response items, just as there can be more than one way at arriving at a correct answer.



Student Response

Score 3

The speaker thinks that the cookies will taste bad because they are healthy cookies. The reason the speaker thinks that the cookies taste bad is because they have healthy stuff in it. The girl thinks they might taste bad is because she likes junk food. The girl says in the middle of the poem that the cookies were good. At the end of the poem the girl said, "No more junk food."

The student response provides an explanation of why the speaker expects the healthy cookies to taste bad (*because they are healthy cookies*).

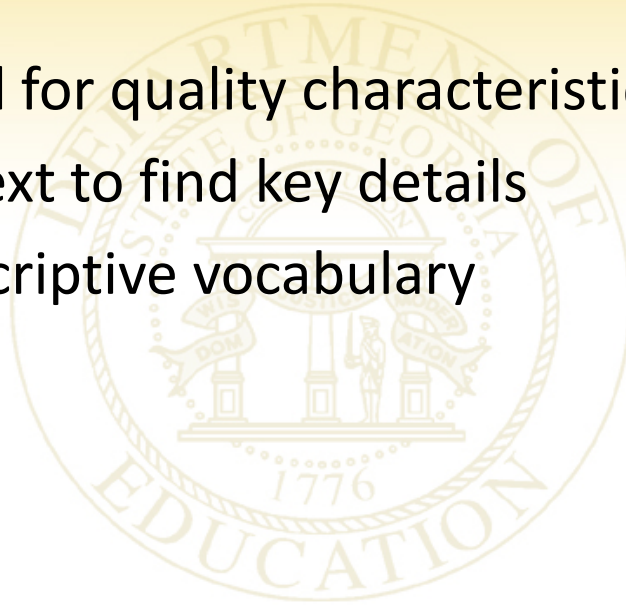
The student provides some details from the poem that support the explanation (*she likes junk food...At the end of the poem she said, 'No more junk food'*).

The student uses complete sentences as well as correct punctuation and grammar in most of the writing.



Teacher Feedback for Score Point 3

- Commend for quality characteristics
- Re-read text to find key details
- More descriptive vocabulary



Student Response

Score 2

She thinks the healthy cookies will taste bad because they don't have a lot of sugar and it has a lot of vitamins in the cookies. The girl is used to unhealthy cookies not healthy cookies. If she would try them she might would like them.

The student provides a general explanation of why the speaker expects the healthy cookies to taste bad (*they don't have a lot of sugar and it has a lot of vitamins in the cookies*), but offers little support from the poem.

The student uses complete sentences as well as correct punctuation and grammar in most of the writing.



Teacher Feedback for Score Point 2

- Use ideas from exemplar response
- Attention to details in text
- Improvement to written language
- Vocabulary development



Student Response

Score 1

Because she eat sweets. So she thought it was going to taste bad.

The student provides a minimal explanation of why the speaker expects the healthy cookies to taste bad (*she eat sweets...it was going to taste bad*) with no details from the poem as support.

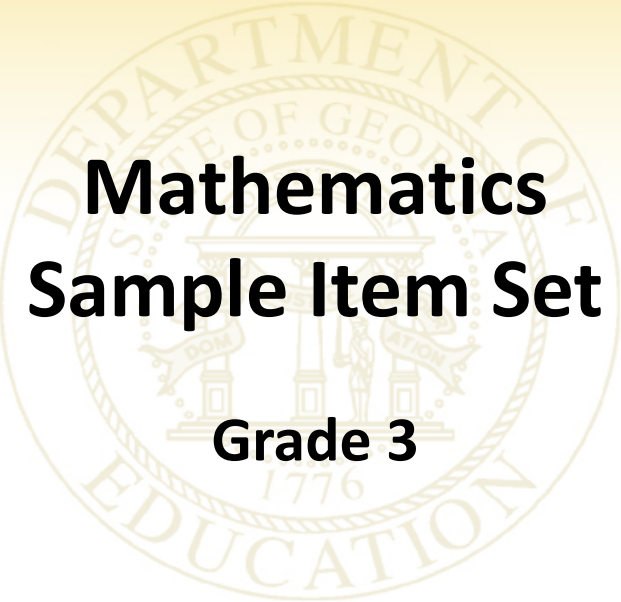
The student response uses incomplete sentences.



Teacher Feedback for Score Point 1

- Improve attention to detail
- Chunk text to improve comprehension
- Use of graphic organizer
- Work with high performing peer





Mathematics Sample Item Set

Grade 3



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Standard to be Assessed

MCC.3.NF.3.d: Compare two fractions with the same numerator or the same denominator by reasoning about the size. Recognize that comparisons are valid only when the two fractions refer to the same whole. Record the results of comparisons with the symbols $>$, $=$, or $<$, and justify the conclusions, e.g., by using visual fraction model.



Mathematics Task

MCC.3.NF.3d

Think carefully about the following question. Write a complete answer. You may use drawings, words, and numbers to explain your answer. Be sure to show all of your work.

- José ate $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pizza.
- Ella ate $\frac{1}{2}$ of another pizza.

José said that he ate more pizza than Ella, but Ella said they both ate the same amount. Use words and pictures to show that José could be right.



Rubric – Qualitative Example

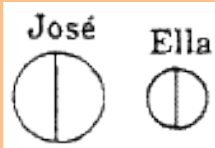
Score & Description

Extended

Student fully explains and mentions relative size of the pies. (Must say José's is larger.)

Satisfactory

Gives a picture where sizes are different, but gives no explanation.



(Can have with no comparison.)

Partial

Statement such as "José's pizza had bigger pieces."

Minimal

Student answers $\frac{1}{2}$ is always equal to $\frac{1}{2}$.

OR

refers to the relative number of pieces of pizza, or toppings.

Incorrect/Off Task

The work is completely incorrect, irrelevant, or off task.

e.g., a picture without a comparison with pizzas appearing about the same size.



Exemplar Response

Meets “Extended” Criteria

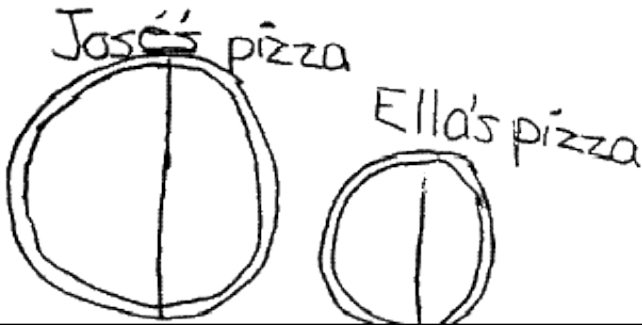
Extended - Student Response

José ate $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pizza.

Ella ate $\frac{1}{2}$ of another pizza.

José said that he ate more pizza than Ella, but Ella said they both ate the same amount. Use words and pictures to show that José could be right.

José could be right because his pizza could be bigger than Ella's.

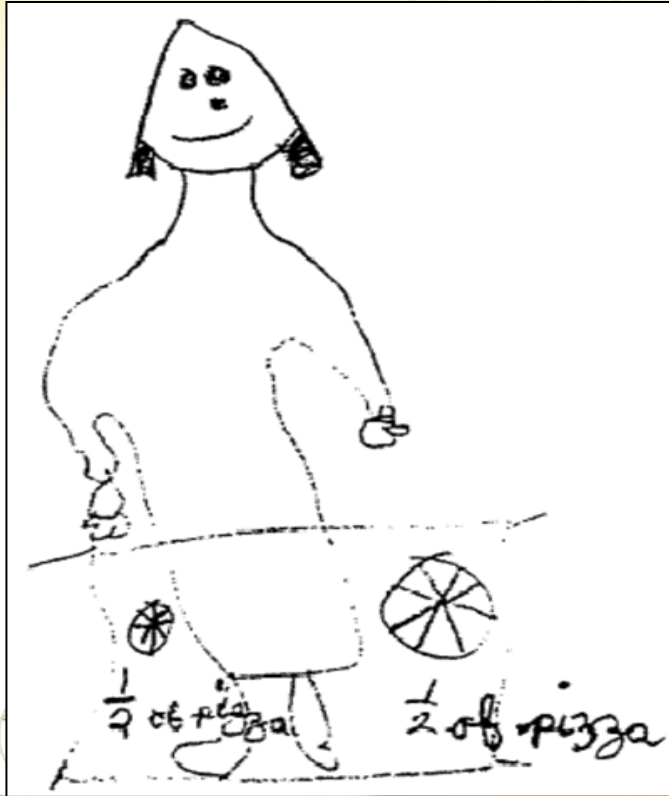


Student fully explains and mentions relative size of the pies (his pizza could be bigger).



Sample Student Response

Meets “Satisfactory” Criteria



Gives a picture where sizes are different, but gives no explanation.

Teacher Feedback for “Satisfactory” Response

- Commend attention to detail in drawings
- Better written sentences to represent drawing
- More original word choices



Sample Student Response

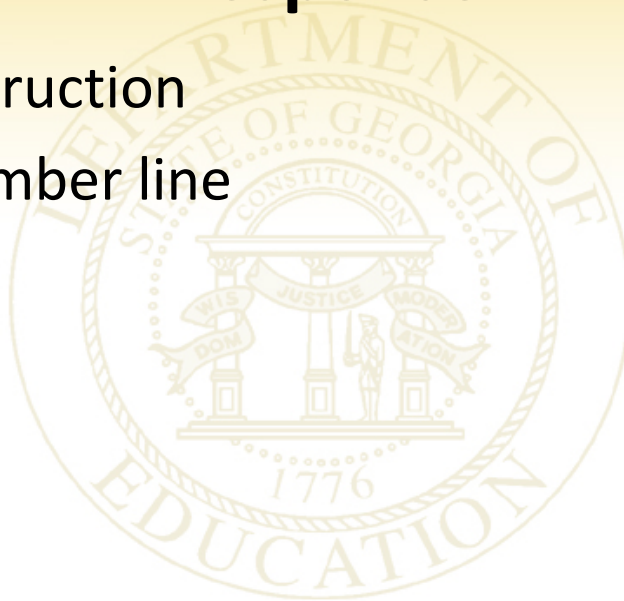
Meets “Minimal” Criteria



Student draws a picture showing that $\frac{1}{2}$ is always equal to $\frac{1}{2}$.

Teacher Feedback for Minimal Response

- Direct instruction
- Use of number line



Teaching Plan Based on Formative Assessment Results

Extended } Student 1
Satisfactory } Student 2

Minimal } Student 3
Partial } Student 4
Irrelevant } Student 5

Appropriately use symbols in a visual fraction model

Compare fractions, make judgments about their size in relationship to the same whole

Ways to Use Constructed Response Items

- Demonstration lesson with active discussion
- Whole class instruction/direct instruction
- Small, cooperative group activity where students examine sample responses and their rubric components
- Parent conferences
- Inclusion classes with multiple adult supervisors/coaching
- Homework (only following extensive explanation and experience with open-ended items provided by the teacher in the classroom)
- Parent Night activity where parents and their children work together
- No grades----rubric score accompanied by written and/or oral feedback highly suggested because students are in the process of learning the standards and improving based on feedback



How Teachers Use Student Responses

- Determine students' progress towards mastery of standards and readiness to proceed to next level
- Provide students with oral and written feedback specific to the standard
- Design instructional next steps, which includes re-teaching, remediation, and differentiation
- Self-assess professional growth needs, such as additional professional learning, collaboration, classroom materials and resources



Close-out

- Constructed response items require students to construct an answer for the formative task and are scored based on criteria defined in rubrics.
- Constructed response items can be used formatively to learn how well students are progressing in mastery of standards.
- Student performance on constructed response items gives teachers information to adjust instruction and know if students are able to demonstrate complex thinking.



References

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