English Language Arts / English Language Development

Collaborative Discourse

Performance Task | Teacher Document

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Overview of Performance Task

This performance task evaluates students’ understanding of the following key Big Idea within a grade nine English language arts (ELA) and English language development (ELD)-based course:

* **Collaborative Discourse**: Contributing ideas in collaborative discussions about complex text and topics

This performance task is divided into items, each targeting a specific component of the Big Idea and corresponding standards. Additionally, this task outlines key considerations for selected anchor texts and topics to drive the assessments without dictating to the field the texts or topics that should be selected, giving educators, schools, and districts flexibility to select rigorous texts and topics most aligned to the perspectives, values, and interests of the students and communities’ educators serve. The project team constructed the performance task module in this way to allow the Big Idea provided by the subject matter experts to be mixed and matched depending on the unit planning, district-adopted curricula, and the overall local context and needs of students. For more on the standards supporting each Big Idea please refer to the *ELA/ELD Guidance Document: Big Ideas and Standards Alignment.*

In addition to incorporating a modular design based on the course’s Big Idea, this performance task offers accessible strategies and examples of how students can demonstrate proficiency with the concepts. Various tools, mediums, and connections are provided for teachers to customize the task to the unique needs, cultures, interests, and abilities of their students, promoting an inclusive and relevant educational experience.

When preparing and customizing these performance tasks, it is recommended to distinguish between the flexible and fixed elements based on what the standards require within the tasks to ensure students have multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge without compromising the depth and rigor within the standards. Furthermore, educators should always consult a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure that all required accommodations and supplementary aides are provided during this performance task since it is considered an assessment.

Administering the Performance Task and Embedding Resources for Students

This task is broken into a series of items. This section provides guidance to the educator on how to administer the task and supports the student in demonstrating their understanding of the Big Idea. As you are planning to administer this performance task, review these recommendations as they offer associated key vocabulary, appropriate and inappropriate resources, and potential alternative means of expression.

Key Vocabulary Terms

The key vocabulary terms provided below are essential to the concepts within the Big Ideas. It is expected that these vocabulary terms have been taught to students before completing this task. Therefore unless otherwise noted, the vocabulary cannot be taught during the completion of the task. Assessment via this performance task is not a time for teaching. It is a time for close observation by teachers so that they may learn what instructional needs students have that can be addressed in future lessons.

* theme, literary devices, rhetorical moves and devices, collaborative discussion, close reading, analysis

Strategies for Supporting Students

The following sections describe appropriate and inappropriate resources teachers can provide to students as they complete a task.

Appropriate Resources

Appropriate resources maintain the rigor of the standards while also accommodating student difficulties such as confusion and anxiety or providing material resources as specific accommodations identified in a student’s IEP that the student could use to complete the task without compromising the standard or Big Idea:

* reading the item to the student
* answering clarifying questions related to key vocabulary (for example, to clarify the *theme*, a teacher could ask, “What idea seems to appear regularly as you read this text?” or for *evidence*, a teacher could say, “Where in the text can you find a sentence that supports your response to the question?”
* helping the student to make sense of the item by asking questions such as, “What is this question asking you to figure out? What important information does the question give you? Are there any words you want to ask about or look up?”
* offering manipulatives and tools to support expressing knowledge and proficiency such as pictures or objects that represent a setting or a character in the text
* helping the student to access classroom or web-based resources that support a greater understanding of ELA/ELD Big Idea terms
* providing multiple copies of the content
* printing images or content on larger sheets
* allowing students to complete different items over an extended period of time (versus completing an entire task in one sitting)
* providing a graphic organizer for students to take notes before a discussion
* providing a blank outline for students to plan their narrative prior to writing or a collaborative conversation
* providing a brainstorming template for students to jot down their ideas for writing or a collaborative conversation
* providing multiple choices for where and how students can complete the performance task (for example a quiet area in the classroom, at the student’s desk but with headphones emitting white noise, on a computer, or by hand)

Inappropriate Resources

This section describes resources that, when applied, modify the task by supporting the student in a facet of the task they need to do themselves to develop the skills and proficiency. These resources should be avoided as they may alter the rigor of the standards and negatively impact the student’s ability to independently demonstrate proficiency.

* explaining to students how to use resources such as a notetaking template or an outline for their writing
* reteaching ELA/Literacy and ELD Big Idea concepts such as theme and rhetorical analysis
* retelling students how to complete the concepts being assessed
* providing students with sentence stems to use as a framework for their writing task
* translating materials for students into another language or allowing students to write their narrative in a language other than English
* offering multiple comprehensive prompts for each question that lead the student to the answer

Potential Alternative Means of Expression

The following options provide various ways students might demonstrate their knowledge or skills of the standards being assessed. As an important note, there will likely be other ways students can express their understanding beyond the list below. For an option to be viable, it must allow for each element defined as necessary in a proficient response to be assessed.

When analyzing literature from diverse perspectives students can demonstrate their thinking and learning by:

* writing short responses with pen and paper or a word-processing application
* communicating their understanding verbally
* creating an infographic or other visualization
* creating a multimedia presentation

When writing narratives, students can be supported with the following options for demonstrating their skills and knowledge:

* using digital software to type the content
* using text-to-speech or speech-to-text to complete the content
* annotating a paper or digital copy of the answer
* verbally expressing the response
* creating a multimedia presentation such as a PowerPoint presentation or YouTube video
* dictating to a scribe[[1]](#footnote-2)

When engaging in collaborative discourse, students can be supported with the following options:

* having notes or a brainstorming template available to refer to during the discourse

Big Idea: Collaborative Discourse—Contributing Ideas in Collaborative Discussions About Complex Texts and Topics

The ELA/ELD performance tasks are presented as two approaches to using an alternate mean to assess the Big Ideas: (1) combined supertasks that combine multiple Big Ideas into a multi-part performance task or (2) modular tasks that decouple the combined Big Ideas into singular tasks for one Big Idea. ELA/Literacy and ELD teachers in collaboration with their special education service providers should consider both options before deciding which fits the strengths, needs, and preferred expression options of their students. If a student, such as a student with a disability, has demonstrated proficiency through conventional means in one or more of the Big Ideas but has yet to demonstrate proficiency in all Big Ideas given support and equitable access, completing a module task may prove to be a beneficial option. However, if a student with a disability has not demonstrated proficiency in the conventional manner with many of the Big Ideas, a combined supertask may be best suited as an alternate means of expression for that student.

This performance task is a modular task for ELA/Literacy and ELD Big Idea Collaborative Discourse. It is suggested that the team of educators review this task and its corresponding activities to ensure that they are choosing the best option for their students.

Integration of Collaborative Discourse with Other Big Ideas

The *Collaborative Discourse: Contributing ideas in collaborative discussions about complex texts and topics* Big Idea focuses on assessing students’ ability to engage in lively discussions about complex texts and topics. To be proficient in the knowledge and skills needed to carry out collaborative discussions, students need to be able to gather knowledge from an array of sources, have the skills to answer and ask questions within conversations, and be able to actively listen. Students should also be able to summarize the points of others—defining where they agree, disagree, or make connections within a conversation. Being successful in this Big Idea, including its evidence statements and their related standards, means that students can apply these skills across a wide range of topics and content areas. This performance task can stand alone as a modular option for assessing collaborative discourse. However, this Big Idea is best assessed when combined with one of the Big Ideas below to provide students with the topics, prompts, or general points of discussion needed to provide the content by which students will have their lively conversations.

* **Rhetorical Literary Analysis:** Using knowledge of rhetoric to analyze literature from diverse perspectives and write narratives
* **Analyzing and Writing Arguments:** Using knowledge of rhetoric to analyze arguments from diverse perspectives and write arguments

In addition to ELA/Literacy and ELD-driven content, this Big Idea can also be applied to other content areas. For example, students could engage in collaborative discussions around the application of key concepts in the *Investigating Data* Big Idea in the Algebra 1 coursework, the ethics of various topics within the *From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes* Big Idea for Biology, or the *Immigration, Urbanization, Industrialization, and Progressive Reform* Big Idea in U.S. History. Lively collaborative discussions are highly transferable across a range of content areas and because the ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework defines specific ELA/Literacy and ELD content standards across the other content areas, educators should feel empowered to apply this Big Idea to other content areas as well. For more on the standards supporting each Big Idea please refer to the *ELA/ELD Guidance Document: Big Ideas and Standards Alignment.*

Performance Task—Collaborative Discourse

This section of the performance task outlines the following:

* associated standards that will be assessed
* assessment items
* rubrics that assess each item
* sample student responses

Teachers should refamiliarize themselves with the related standards, review the student task, explore each item’s rubric, and view the sample student responses to sufficiently prepare students to use this performance task to show proficiency in this task. Additionally, teachers must be careful to incorporate any IEP-defined supplementary aids and services specific to individual students with disabilities taking this performance task.

Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards

The central idea of this Big Idea is Collaborative Discourse. Here, teachers should emphasize the importance of structured classroom conversations of students preparing, engaging actively, and building on each other’s ideas. Before discussions, students interact with complex texts and conduct research to inform their contributions. During discussions, they practice active listening, respond thoughtfully to peers’ ideas, and collaborate to deepen understanding. These daily interactions are crucial for enhancing content learning and language development, enabling students to effectively participate in diverse discussions, engage with different viewpoints, and articulate their own thoughts clearly.

Weaving Other Topics, Big Ideas, and Content Areas

The Collaborative Discourse Big Idea is unique because it focuses on equipping students with the knowledge and competencies for engaging in rich and culturally responsive discussions about texts, key concepts, and other Big Ideas inside and outside the ELA/Literacy and ELD content area. This Big Idea **must** coincide with content from other Big Ideas, topics, or content areas for students to have something to discuss and develop their discussion skills. The California ELA/Literacy and ELD Framework[[2]](#footnote-3) references dual integration, which is the idea that discourse ought to support language development in all content areas, while also allowing students to learn deeply about content through their discourse. The *Inclusive Access to a Diploma* initiative therefore requires other Big Ideas to be defined as the content or the topic of conversations as students are assessed within this performance task.

Big Idea: Collaborative Discourse—Contributing Ideas in Collaborative Discussions About Complex Texts and Topics

When students engage in collaborative discussions, they put into practice numerous skills that they have learned through previous collaborative tasks that have taken place. Students come to discussions having engaged with complex texts and having researched and planned their reactions. During the conversation, students engage meaningfully by listening actively, responding to others’ comments and ideas, and building on others’ ideas. Daily, sustained collaborative discussions are integral to content learning and language development because they strengthen students’ abilities to participate effectively in a range of discussions, interact with diverse partners and perspectives, and express their own ideas and perspectives (ELA/ELD Framework, pp. 690–694).

Related Standards

**Evidence Statement 1 (Preparing for Conversations) –** Students prepare for collaborative discussions by reviewing notes from reading, research, or previous discussions. They contribute thoughtful comments that demonstrate comprehension and express opinions. (*Items 1, 2, and 3*)

* **ELA.SL.9-10.1a** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades nine through ten topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
* **ELA.RL and RI.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.
* **ELA.PI.9-10.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades nine through ten topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.5.Br** Demonstrate comprehension of oral presentations and discussions on a variety of social and academic topics by asking and answering detailed and complex questions that show thoughtful considerations of the ideas or arguments, with light support.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.6a.Br** Explain ideas, phenomena, processes, and relationships within and across texts (for example, compare/contrast, cause/effect, themes, evidence-based argument) based on close reading of a variety of grade-level texts, presented in various print and multimedia formats, using a variety of detailed sentences and a range of general academic and domain-specific words.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.6b.Br** Explain inferences and conclusions drawn from close reading of grade-level texts and viewing of multimedia using a variety of verbs and adverbials (for example, creates the impression that, consequently).
* **ELD.PII.9-10.2b.Br** Apply knowledge of familiar language resources for linking ideas, events, or reasons throughout a text (for example, using connecting/transition words and phrases, such as “on the contrary,” “in addition,” “moreover”) to comprehending grade-level texts and to writing cohesive texts for specific purposes and audiences.

**Evidence Statement 2 (Propelling Conversations) –** Using appropriate registers, students propel conversations in collaborative discussions by connecting them to broader themes, actively involving others, and challenging ideas when necessary, including through negotiation and persuasion. (*Items 1, 2, and 3*)

* **ELA.SL.9-10.1c** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades nine through ten topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.1.Br** Contribute to class, group, and partner discussions, sustaining conversations on a variety of age and grade-appropriate academic topics by following turn-taking rules, asking and answering relevant, on-topic questions, affirming others, and providing coherent and well-articulated comments and additional information.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.3.Br** Negotiate with or persuade others in conversations in appropriate registers (for example, to acknowledge new information in an academic conversation but then politely offer a counterpoint) using a variety of learned phrases, indirect reported speech (for example, “I heard you say \_\_\_, and I haven’t thought about that before. However, \_\_\_”), and open responses to express and defend nuanced opinions.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.7.Br** Explain how successfully writers and speakers structure texts and use language (for example, specific word or phrasing choices) to persuade the reader (for example, by providing well-worded evidence to support claims or connecting points in an argument in specific ways) or create other specific effects, with light support.

**Evidence Statement 3 (****Summarizing the Thoughts of Others) –** During collaborative discussions, students respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement while they qualify or justify their own views. Students make new connections based on evidence and reasoning presented during discussions. (*Items 1, 2, and 3*)

* **ELA.SL.9-10.1d** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades nine through ten topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
* **ELA.SL.9-10.3** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
* **ELA RI.9-10.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.3.Br** Negotiate with or persuade others in conversations in appropriate registers (for example, to acknowledge new information in an academic conversation but then politely offer a counterpoint) using a variety of learned phrases, indirect reported speech (for example, “I heard you say \_\_\_, and I haven’t thought about that before. However, \_\_\_”), and open responses to express and defend nuanced opinions.
* **ELD.PI.9-10.4** Adjust language choices according to the task (for example, group presentation of a research project), context (for example, classroom, community), purpose (for example, to persuade, to provide arguments or counterarguments), and audience (for example, peers, teachers, college recruiter).
* **ELD.PI.9-10.11a.Br** Justify opinions or persuade others by making connections and distinctions between ideas and texts and articulating sufficient, detailed, and relevant textual evidence or background knowledge, using appropriate register.
* **ELD.PII.9-10.2b.Br** Apply knowledge of familiar language resources for linking ideas, events, or reasons throughout a text (for example, using connecting/transition words and phrases, such as “on the contrary,” “in addition,” “moreover”) to comprehending grade-level texts and to writing cohesive texts for specific purposes and audiences.
* **ELD.PII.9-10.6.Br** Combine clauses in a variety of ways to create compound and complex sentences that make connections between and link concrete and abstract ideas, for example, to make concession (for example, “While both characters strive for success, they each take different approaches through which to reach their goals”), or to establish cause (for example, “Women’s lives were changed forever after World War II as a result of joining the workforce”).

Performance Task—Directions

The teacher provides a series of sources (that include grade-level texts) giving students a topic drawn from one content area and some related prompts to have a collaborative discussion around. The focus of discussions should center on key elements being assessed related to the provided topic within that content area. Assessment of students’ knowledge of the provided topics or content areas **is not the focus** of this performance task. Instead, topics within a content area are a vehicle for assessing students’ knowledge and skills related to collaborative discourse. Therefore, the three items contained in this Module center on the **“talk moves”** students use within the discussion. The term “talk moves” refers to the actions the speaker will utilize within a conversation to keep the momentum going. This can include revoicing (summarizing what another person said but in their own words), repeating (repeating what another said to ensure it was heard), and adding on (providing additional information to something that was said.)

Keeping Assessments Culturally Responsive and Inclusive

When assessing students’ skills and abilities related to initiating and sustaining collaborative discourse, it is essential for teachers to respect and value all forms of formal and informal communication students use to express themselves. The wide range of languages, dialects, and cultural communication norms within California is vast and it is essential to respect and support students to see the value in these forms of communication, both for themselves and as they learn from others in this area. Lastly, when specifically considering students with disabilities, teachers should be flexible and inclusive to a varied array of communication strengths, needs, and preferences including those defined within their IEP.

Selecting Prompts for Discussions

The prompts selected to drive a discussion are highly contextualized to the content and topic the students are having a conversation about. It is important for teachers to, therefore, select open-ended prompts, require students to research a topic, and wherever possible elicit different perspectives. Furthermore, topics and prompts that welcome students’ interests or facilitate a rich array of engaging response types (remaining true to the content) are essential to cultivating the conditions for students to practice lively discussions.

Setting Up Performance Task

The details below describe how to set up the discussion parameters of this Performance Task.

* **Step 1 –** Frontload the topic of discussion by providing students with the identified resources that support students in developing a deep range of understanding about the focus topic. Teachers should select a wide array of complex texts across diverse perspectives and content-specific concepts (for example historic sources, model texts, phenomena, key concepts from other content areas, and text types). Teachers should consider the cultural background and linguistic resources of their students, ensuring resources that are chosen to engage and inspire students and capture the skills being assessed for this performance task. For more information on how to select complex texts please review “Selecting and Scaffolding Complex Texts” created by the *Inclusive Access to a Diploma: Reimagining Proficiency for Students with Disabilities* initiative or visit the California Department of Education’s website on Recommended Literature List <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/>.
* **Step 2 –** Students explore resources provided to frontload the discussion including reading, analyzing, and annotating any text that has been provided to reinforce the topic of discussion. Teachers may provide discussion prompts based on the topic to students before their exploration. Students may take notes to use in the Collaborative Discussion. Students are encouraged to critique the resources and share their understanding of how resource creators presented the content in ways that are accessible to the reader.
  + In step 2, teachers may opt to provide students with a “[note catcher](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11qudZNqKjvO-kDeal--_OcQZBlzNQqfUE-Oilxe97Tc/edit?usp=sharing)”—a graphic organizer for students to write their ideas and gather textual evidence to be used in their discussion.
* **Step 3 –** The teacher creates situations that naturally facilitate discussions (for example partnerships, small groups, and teacher-driven discussions), telling them to engage in collaborative discussions around the key prompts integral to the topic of conversation focus as defined by the teacher. To meet proficiency in this Big Idea, students’ talk moves must show evidence of the following skills and competencies:
  + **Preparation (Evidence Statement 1)** – Students’ language decisions show evidence of their preparation to discuss the topic. For example, they reference research they have done about the topic, have topic-relevant talking points to draw from in conversations, and show understanding of the topic, demonstrating knowledge of the difference between facts and opinions related to the topic. Item 1 provides a rubric for this area.
  + **Propelling Conversations (Evidence Statement 2)** – Students make language decisions that support propelling conversations collaboratively by staying on topic and involving others in the conversation to share ideas. Students actively listen to the thoughts and ideas of others and show evidence of this by restating, incorporating, challenging, negotiating, or persuading others using references to ideas they heard. Item 2 provides a rubric for this area.
  + **Summarizing the Thoughts of Others (Evidence Statement 3)** – Students summarize the thoughts and ideas of others clearly and without judgment—while still (when necessary) communicating the areas of agreement or disagreement with others’ points of view. Additionally, when summarizing, students can restate the sources other students use in the discussion and weave connections to their own sources. Item 3 provides a rubric for this area.

A Note on Assessing “Talk Moves”

When assessing students’ abilities to engage in collaborative discussions, it is important for teachers to **not** facilitate the specific talk moves being assessed within the discussion, including discussions engaging the teacher in a part of the conversation. Discussions being used as formal assessments are not the time for teaching, as students must be independent within the conversation. Students should come into discussions knowing the competencies that make up high-quality discussions because they have been taught lessons that explicitly call out, model, guide, and offer feedback before being formally assessed in this area.

Focusing on Real Collaborative Discourse

Due to prompts varying depending on the topic of discussion, the items for this performance task **are summarized by the item rubrics designed to be utilized while observing a discussion, and therefore, there are no items for this part of the assessment.** To aid teachers in this task, a rubric has been created with all competencies being assessed by this Big Idea in a printable rubric (see Appendix A). Teachers should use this rubric to assess a student’s skills in discussions in real time regardless of the content or topic of discussion. The rubric is based on the related standards for this big idea and aligns across the following evidence statements:

* **Evidence Statement 1 (Preparing for Conversations)** – Students prepare for collaborative discussions by reviewing notes from reading, research, or previous discussions. They contribute thoughtful comments that demonstrate comprehension and express opinions.
* **Evidence Statement 2 (Propelling Conversations)** –Using appropriate registers, students propel conversations in collaborative discussions by connecting them to broader themes, actively involving others, and challenging ideas when necessary, including through negotiation and persuasion.
* **Evidence Statement 3 (Summarizing the Thoughts of Others)** –During collaborative discussions, students respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement while they qualify or justify their own views. Students make new connections based on evidence and reasoning presented during discussions.

Lastly, teachers need to refer to the IEP plans for any students with disabilities to understand and include any IEP-defined supplementary aids and services these students need within the discussion to make sure they can be appropriately assessed in ways that include their communication strengths and needs.

No Items – Engage in a Conversation (Student Document, p. 1)

For this part of the performance task, the **discussion** is the item to complete. Your teacher will create the conditions for you to engage in a conversation about a recent topic of study. During this discussion, it will be important to apply the learning you have gathered regarding best practices for discussion about a text or topic of study. You will be assessed on the following “**talk moves**” you bring into the conversation:

* **Preparation**: The degree to which you are prepared to engage in this conversation by having read key texts for the topic and/or explored source materials.
* **Propelling Conversations**: Your ability within a discussion to keep the discussion going while staying on topic and grounded in the prompt. This skill may require active listening, restating, negotiating, and even persuading others.
* **Summarizing the Thoughts of Others**: Your skill in summarizing what you are hearing in the thoughts of others and even bringing the thoughts of others into your own points all while staying on topic.

There are no sub-items for this part because your teacher will be assessing your ability to engage in a productive conversation with your peers about a topic of your teacher’s choosing. Please remember to review the “talk moves” you will be assessed on to show proficiency in this performance task.

Assessing—Preparation for Conversations

Please refer to the “Setting Up Part 1” section of this performance task to ensure students are prepared to engage in a formal discussion about a topic of the teacher’s choosing.

A Rubric for Assessing Students’ Preparation for Conversations

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/ELD Framework, pp. 689, and 690–694, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/ELD courses.The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards for evidence statement 1 in the “Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards” section covering standards **ELA.SL.9-10.1a**, **ELA.RL and** **RI.9-10.1**, **ELD.PI.9-10.1**, **ELD.PI.9-10.5.Br**, **ELD.9-10.6a.Br and** **ELD.9-10.6b.Br**, and **ELD.PII.9-10.2b.Br** of this performance task.

Rubric for Assessing Students’ Preparation for Conversations

| Criteria | Attempted | Approaching | Proficient |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evidence Statement 1**  (Preparing for Conversations)  Students prepare for collaborative discussions by reviewing notes from reading, research, or previous discussions. They contribute thoughtful comments that demonstrate comprehension and express opinions. | The student does not have any research references when participating in discussions.  The student either does not participate or only provides their opinions within a discussion about a topic requiring research.  The student does not show an understanding of relationships within key elements of a topic in conversations. | With some peer or teacher assistance, the student can participate in a conversation about a topic and reference some pre-work or research.  The student is inconsistent or vague regarding the research they reference in discussions to support their claims or thoughts about a topic, relying too heavily on their opinions within discussions.  When referencing relationships between topics, the student is inconsistent or inaccurate with key connections in showing proficiency with the topics of discussion. | The student can participate in a discussion covering an array of relevant elements while staying aligned to one clear topic.  Within discussions, the student references their research related to the topic and supporting details, states any claims or reasoning about the discussion prompt, and can do so in ways that address individuals or groups within a discussion.  When referencing their research, the student is able to clearly describe relationships between concepts and use key terms and terminology related to a topic independently. |

Assessing—Propelling Conversations

Please refer to the “Setting Up Part 1” section of this performance task to ensure students are prepared to engage in a formal discussion about a topic of the teacher’s choosing.

A Rubric for Assessing Students’ Ability to Propel Conversations

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/ELD Framework, pp. 689, and 690–694, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/ELD courses.The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards for evidence statement 1 in the “Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards” section covering standards **ELA.SL.9-10.1c**, **ELD.PI.9-10.1.Br**, **ELD.PI.9-10.3.Br**, and **ELD.PI.9-10.7.Br** of this performance task.

Rubric for Assessing Students’ Ability to Propel Conversations

| Criteria | Attempted | Approaching | Proficient |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evidence Statement 2**  (Propelling Conversations)  Using appropriate registers, students propel conversations in collaborative discussions by connecting them to broader themes, actively involving others, and challenging ideas when necessary, including through negotiation and persuasion. | The student is unable to participate in conversations whether with individuals or in groups.  The student shows little to no knowledge of the topic in conversations.  The student is unable to monitor themself with regard to when they speak or do not speak. The student struggles with asking questions or restating the ideas of others in the conversation. | With support, the student can initiate conversations with individuals and groups about a given prompt or topic.  The student inconsistently expresses their opinions of key elements about a topic, confuses fact with opinion, incorrectly cites research, or does not cite research at all within a discussion.  The student is inconsistent in their ability to participate in a discussion, either not participating at all or over participating and not leaving room for others in the conversation. | The student independently initiates conversations with individuals and groups about a given prompt or topic.  The student can express their own opinion of key elements or ideas about a topic open to interpretation in persuasive ways and reference research conducted about a topic, including ways prominent thinkers of a topic have understood the topic as evidenced by their sources.  The student shows evidence of monitoring their turn-taking, listening, and ability to balance creating a statement with posing a question—including showing evidence of active listening through restating or quoting others in the discussion. |

Assessing—Summarizing the Thoughts of Others

Please refer to the “Setting Up Part 1” section of this performance task to ensure students are prepared to engage in a formal discussion about a topic of the teacher’s choosing.

A Rubric for Assessing Students’ Ability to Summarize the Thoughts of Others

The points below are derived from standards contained in the ELA/ELD Framework, pp. 689, and 690–694, which outline the guidelines for grade nine ELA/ELD courses.The following success criteria are used to assess proficiency in the performance task according to the related standards for evidence statement 1 in the “Task Alignment to Key Elements of Big Ideas and Standards” section covering standards **ELA.SL.9-10.1d**, **ELA.SL.9-10.3**, **ELA RI.9-10.8**, **ELD.PI.9-10.3.Br**, **ELD.PI.9-10.4**, **ELD.PI.9-10.11a.Br**, **ELD.PII.9-10.2b.Br**, and **ELD.PII.9-10.6.Br** of this performance task.

Rubric for Assessing Students’ Ability to Summarize the Thoughts of Others

| Criteria | Attempted | Approaching | Proficient |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evidence Statement 3**  (Responding in Conversations)  During collaborative discussions, students respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement while they qualify or justify their own views. Students make new connections based on evidence and reasoning presented during discussions. | The student cannot state their point of view about a topic in a way that is supported with evidence.  The student struggles to create an argument to show a thorough understanding of the topic or take into account different interpretations.  There is one linking of ideas in the student’s conversation.  The student does not ask clarifying questions within conversations. | With support from others, the student can restate the points of view of others but inconsistently communicates if they agree or disagree with those points.  The student inconsistently creates arguments about a topic of conversation, having trouble reinforcing their claim with evidence either from research or others.  The student does not consistently use language that links ideas together, instead statements only communicate thoughts in segmented ways.  The student inconsistently asks others to restate their claims when they are unclear about them. | The student can restate others’ points of view about a topic of conversation and can evaluate whether they agree, disagree, or can build on those ideas to create more clarity on the core ideas of a topic.  Within conversations, the student can create an argument to support their point of view about facets of a topic that are open for interpretation. Additionally, when constructing arguments, the student can adjust their language decisions as needed to make their points clearer, link ideas together, and/or use language conventions such as *on the contrary, in addition, moreover,* and so on.  The student also asks those they are speaking with to restate statements that they find unclear and/or ask follow-up questions. |

Performance Task—Sample Student Response

The content below provides a sample of proficient responses from a student. The text that leads with “Student Voice” is an example of how a student might respond to each item. This section should only serve as a model—different students will arrive at solutions in different ways. . Additionally, due to this performance task measuring something as variable as discussion, the teacher is required to use their knowledge of the topic **and** talk moves to score student responses. Prompts used to drive discussions will be highly contextual based on the topic of conversations but should allow students to exhibit their skills in each of the assessed “talk moves” identified within this task. The student voice examples for each item below are created based on the novel, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.[[3]](#footnote-4) Each item has a **topic-specific prompt that serves as the basis for the conversation**. Student A is modeling the proficient response.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Assessing—Preparation for Conversations

**Topic Dependent Prompt –** After reading the novel and reflecting on your understanding of the themes, discuss your understanding of a key theme of *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe with a peer or small group.

Student Voice:

Student A: I think one of the main themes in Things Fall Apart is the clash between traditional Igbo society and the changes brought by European colonialism and Christianity. I read an article that discussed how Achebe portrays the tension and misunderstandings between the two cultures. For example, the European missionaries do not understand the Igbo customs and view them as primitive.

Student B: That’s a good point. The theme of cultural clash is really evident. I also found some research that talks about Okonkwo’s struggle with his identity and masculinity. The traditional Igbo values emphasize strength and success, which Okonkwo tries to embody. But when the Europeans come, those values are challenged, and Okonkwo feels lost and powerless.

Student A: Yes, Okonkwo’s internal conflict is a major part of the story. His inability to adapt to the changing society highlights the broader theme of resistance to change. I found a study that mentioned how Okonkwo’s downfall is symbolic of the collapse of the Igbo culture under colonial rule.

Student B: I absolutely agree. Another theme I noticed is the role of fate and personal choice. Okonkwo tries so hard to control his fate, but in the end, his choices lead to his tragic end. This relates to the Igbo belief in chi, or personal god, which influences one’s destiny. I read that Achebe uses this to show how individual actions and societal pressures interact.

Student A: That’s true. The tension between individual will and fate is a recurring motif. It is interesting how Achebe uses Okonkwo’s character to explore these deep philosophical ideas while also telling a compelling story about the impact of colonialism.

Assessing—Propelling Conversations

**Topic Dependent Prompt –** After reading the novel and reflecting on your understanding of characters and their relationships, discuss your understanding of the key characters of *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe with a peer or small group using the following prompts.

What are some of the key relationships between characters in the text?

How do these relationships support the overall theme or central idea?

Student Voice:

Student A: Let’s talk about some of the key relationships between characters in Things Fall Apart. One important relationship is between Okonkwo and his father, Unoka. I think this relationship is crucial because it shapes Okonkwo’s character and motivations. Okonkwo strives to be the opposite of his father, whom he views as weak and unsuccessful.

Student B: I agree. Okonkwo’s determination to be different from Unoka drives many of his actions, including his harshness and strict adherence to traditional values. Another significant relationship is between Okonkwo and his son, Nwoye. This relationship is strained because Okonkwo expects Nwoye to be strong and masculine, but Nwoye is more sensitive and open to new ideas, especially when he converts to Christianity.

Student A: The tension between Okonkwo and Nwoye highlights the theme of generational conflict and change. Okonkwo’s inability to understand Nwoye’s choices symbolizes the broader clash between tradition and change brought on by colonialism. I read a study that discussed how Nwoye’s conversion represents the younger generation’s rejection of old ways.

Student B: Exactly. There’s also the relationship between Okonkwo and his friend, Obierika. Unlike Okonkwo, Obierika is more reflective and questions some of the customs and decisions, such as Okonkwo’s role in Ikemefuna’s death. Obierika’s perspective provides a counterpoint to Okonkwo’s rigid views.

Student A: Obierika’s character indeed adds depth to the narrative. His questioning attitude shows that not all Igbo people blindly follow traditions, which supports the theme of cultural examination and the impact of colonialism. Achebe uses these relationships to explore how individuals respond differently to societal pressures and changes.

Student B: Right. These relationships are central to understanding the overall themes of the novel, such as the struggle between tradition and change, and the complexities of personal and cultural identity. They make the story richer and more relatable.

Assessing—Summarizing the Thoughts of Others

**Topic Dependent Prompt –** Students discuss the following question in groups: How does the author convey the cultural experiences of the characters in the novel?

Student Voice:

Student A: I think Achebe conveys the cultural experiences of the characters well by using detailed descriptions of their daily lives and customs. For example, he describes the yam festivals, the egwugwu ceremonies, and the marriage rituals in great detail, which helps the reader understand the Igbo culture.

Student B: I see what you’re saying, but I think Achebe also uses the characters’ interactions and conflicts to highlight their cultural experiences. For instance, the way Okonkwo interacts with his wives and children shows the patriarchal structure of Igbo society. His strictness and the expectations he places on them reflect the societal norms.

Student A: That’s true. The interactions definitely add depth to the cultural portrayal. However, I still believe the vivid descriptions of the rituals and traditions are the primary way Achebe immerses the reader in the Igbo culture. These descriptions make the setting and customs come alive.

Student B: I don’t disagree with that, but I think you’re overlooking how the characters’ personal struggles and conflicts also convey their cultural experiences. For example, Nwoye’s struggle with his father’s expectations and his eventual conversion to Christianity highlight the cultural clash and the impact of colonialism on individual lives.

Student A: You make a good point about Nwoye. His experiences do show the cultural tensions. On the contrary, I think the descriptions of communal activities, like the wrestling matches and the market days, provide a broader view of the community’s cultural life, which is equally important.

Student B: Moreover, Achebe’s use of proverbs and traditional stories within the dialogue of the characters is another way he conveys their cultural experiences. These elements reflect the oral tradition of the Igbo people and give insight into their values and beliefs.

Student A: Yes, the proverbs and stories are crucial too. They add layers of meaning to the characters’ actions and decisions. In addition, they help the reader understand the wisdom and philosophy of the Igbo culture.

Student B: So, we can agree that Achebe uses both detailed descriptions and the characters’ interactions and conflicts to convey cultural experiences. These elements together create a rich and nuanced portrayal of the Igbo society.

Student A: Absolutely. Achebe’s multifaceted approach ensures that readers gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the cultural context in which the characters live.

Appendix A—Collaborative Discourse Rubric

| Criteria | Attempted | Approaching | Proficient |
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| **Evidence Statement 1**  (Preparing for Conversations)  Students prepare for collaborative discussions by reviewing notes from reading, research, or previous discussions. They contribute thoughtful comments that demonstrate comprehension and express opinions. | The student does not have any research references when participating in discussions.  The student either does not participate or only provides their opinions within a discussion about a topic requiring research.  The student does not show an understanding of relationships within key elements of a topic in conversations. | With some peer or teacher assistance, the student can participate in a conversation about a topic and reference some pre-work or research.  The student is inconsistent or vague regarding the research they reference in discussions to support their claims or thoughts about a topic, relying too heavily on their opinions within discussions.  When referencing relationships between topics, the student is inconsistent or inaccurate with key connections in showing proficiency with the topics of discussion. | The student can participate in a discussion covering an array of relevant elements while staying aligned to one clear topic.  Within discussions, the student references their research related to the topic and supporting details, states any claims or reasoning about the discussion prompt, and can do so in ways that address individuals or groups within a discussion.  When referencing their research, the student is able to clearly describe relationships between concepts and use key terms and terminology related to a topic independently. |
| **Evidence Statement 2**  (Propelling Conversations)  Using appropriate registers, students propel conversations in collaborative discussions by connecting them to broader themes, actively involving others, and challenging ideas when necessary, including through negotiation and persuasion. | The student is unable to participate in conversations whether with individuals or in groups.  The student shows little to no knowledge of the topic in conversations.  The student is unable to monitor themself with regard to when they speak or do not speak. The student struggles with asking questions or restating the ideas of others in the conversation. | With support, the student can initiate conversations with individuals and groups about a given prompt or topic.  The student inconsistently expresses their opinions of key elements about a topic, confuses fact with opinion, incorrectly cites research, or does not cite research at all within a discussion.  The student is inconsistent in their ability to participate in a discussion, either not participating at all or over participating and not leaving room for others in the conversation. | The student independently initiates conversations with individuals and groups about a given prompt or topic.  The student can express their own opinion of key elements or ideas about a topic open to interpretation in persuasive ways and reference research conducted about a topic, including ways prominent thinkers of a topic have understood the topic as evidenced by their sources.  The student shows evidence of monitoring their turn-taking, listening, and ability to balance creating a statement with posing a question—including showing evidence of active listening through restating or quoting others in the discussion. |
| **Evidence Statement 3**  (Responding in Conversations)  During collaborative discussions, students respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement while they qualify or justify their own views. Students make new connections based on evidence and reasoning presented during discussions. | The student cannot state their point of view about a topic in a way that is supported with evidence.  The student struggles to create an argument to show a thorough understanding of the topic or take into account different interpretations.  There is one linking of ideas in the student’s conversation.  The student does not ask clarifying questions within conversations. | With support from others, the student can restate the points of view of others but inconsistently communicates if they agree or disagree with those points.  The student inconsistently creates arguments about a topic of conversation, having trouble reinforcing their claim with evidence either from research or others.  The student does not consistently use language that links ideas together, instead statements only communicate thoughts in segmented ways.  The student inconsistently asks others to restate their claims when they are unclear about them. | The student can restate others’ points of view about a topic of conversation and can evaluate whether they agree, disagree, or can build on those ideas to create more clarity on the core ideas of a topic.  Within conversations, the student can create an argument to support their point of view about facets of a topic that are open for interpretation. Additionally, when constructing arguments, the student can adjust their language decisions as needed to make their points clearer, link ideas together, and/or use language conventions such as *on the contrary, in addition, moreover,* and so on.  The student also asks those they are speaking with to restate statements that they find unclear and/or ask follow-up questions. |

1. If a student dictates to a scribe, it is important for the scribe to be careful to record **only** what the student explicitly communicates, rather than making interpretations and “filling in the blanks.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The multiple references to the *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework* in this performance task are cited and abbreviated as (ELA/ELD Framework, p. number).

   California Department of Education (CDE). 2014. *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento, CA: CDE Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Achebe, C. 2006. *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Penguin Classics. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Please remember to review the “Keeping Assessments Culturally Responsive and Inclusive” section of this performance task and ensure you are scoring **only** the talk moves defined within the rubrics prior to scoring. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)