

# Smarter Balanced Assessments English Language Arts/Literacy: Claim 4 Research

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# Rationale for Assessing Research

- “The Common Core State Standards reflect the fact that inquiry and critical thinking are essential attributes of a student who is college- and career-ready, enabling students to produce new insights, perspectives, solutions, and products.”
- “Experts, regardless of the field, always draw on a richly structured information base; they are not just ‘good thinkers’ or ‘smart people.’ The abilities to plan a task, to notice patterns, to generate reasonable arguments and explanations, and to draw analogies to other problems are all more closely intertwined with factual knowledge than was once believed.”



## Claim 4

Students can engage in research/inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

# Assessment Shifts Relative to Claim 4

- Increased emphasis on writing informative/explanatory texts and arguments
- Emphasis on using multiple texts when researching
- Emphasis on source-based writing
- Using sources to research and write about topics
- Evaluation and analysis of sources
- Inclusion of multiple types of sources

## Claim 4 Stimuli

- Most Claim 4 stimuli should appear to be excerpts from research sources of various academic disciplines.
- Examples may include:
  - journal articles
  - informational books/websites
  - scientific sources
  - paired excerpts on the same topic
  - primary and secondary sources.

# Claim 4 Assessment Targets

## Overview and Sample Items



# Claim 4 Assessment Targets

Students can engage in research/inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

Target 2:  
INTERPRET/INTEGRATE/  
ANALYZE  
INFORMATION

Target 3:  
ANALYZE/EVALUATE  
INFORMATION/SOURCES

Target 4:  
USE EVIDENCE

# Interpret/Integrate/Analyze Information

- Focus on analyzing information within and among research sources.
- At the elementary level, the student chooses information that can be categorized into central ideas, key details, or subtopics of a report. OR, the student chooses information for a given purpose.
- At the middle and high school levels, students are analyzing information for research purposes, paraphrasing, and identifying instances of plagiarism.

# Grade 8 Sample Item

**Lead In:** A student is writing a research paper about the American Revolution for history class. The student found a reliable source. Read the text from the source and directions that follow.

## Source 1

When settlers first came to the American colonies, they were loyal to the British king. They thought of themselves as British citizens rather than Americans. However, over time, they began to feel wronged by Britain. They believed that if they paid taxes to the king, they should have a vote in the British Parliament. The rallying cry for all Americans became “no taxation without representation.”

**Stem:** The student found another source. Read Source 2. Click on **one** sentence that has information that conflicts with the information in Source 1.

## Source 2

The history of the American Revolution is often told from the point of view of those who wanted to separate from Great Britain. The original colonies in America were settled by British citizens. Those who favored independence from Great Britain were called Patriots. Therefore, they did not see themselves as being British. The group included leaders who fought for independence, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. **However, fifteen to twenty percent of the colonists wanted to remain subjects of the British king, and they were known as Loyalists or Tories.**

# Analyze Information Sources (G3-5)

## Evaluate Information/Sources (G6-8,11)

- Focus on finding relevant sources of information.
- For grades 3-5, focus is on analyzing sources in order to locate additional information, such as relevant sources of information and relevant information from visual elements.
- At the middle school and high school levels, the sources are evaluated for accuracy and credibility.

# Grade 7 Sample Item

## *Preamble*

A student has made a plan for research. Read the plan and the directions that follow.

### **Research Report Plan**

**Topic:** The Colony: the Most Organized of All Animal Social Groups

**Audience:** science students

**Purpose:** to inform

**Research Question:** How do colonies help animals adapt and survive?

## *Question*

The student needs to find a credible, or trustworthy, source. Which website is the **best** source for the information needed for the report?

### *Alternative: A*

[www.biomebasics.net](http://www.biomebasics.net)

Tour the world's biomes without leaving your chair! Explore deserts where termite colonies rise like pillars of sand. Swim oceans where coral reefs teem with life. Survey the vegetation and animal populations of grasslands, forests, and tundra. Can you identify the biomes closest to where you live? Which biomes do you think are the most . . .

### *Alternative: B*

[www.krazycolonies.com](http://www.krazycolonies.com)

Remember those ant farms you had when you were a kid? Well, THEY'RE BACK! Surprise your son or daughter with a colony of creepy-cute ants. From behind a crack-resistant wall of plastic, they'll see drones, soldiers, and that all-important queen, bustling about their buggy business. Only \$15.99 and the shipping is free . . .

### *Alternative: C*

[www.animalinfozone.com](http://www.animalinfozone.com)

Why some animals live in colonies, and how this form of social organization is a key to their survival. In a paper by Dr. Stephen T. Cora, the author shares the work of biologists who have examined the social groups of ants, termites, bees, naked mole rats, and more . . .

### *Alternative: D*

[www.talkingaboutanimals.net](http://www.talkingaboutanimals.net)

What is an animal colony? Jane Fuller answers questions about insects that live in highly organized social groupings. Her answers may intrigue you, especially her discussion of the term "eusocial" and . . .

# Evaluate Information/Sources: Sample Item Key

## *Preamble*

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# Use Evidence

- Focus on using information to support opinions/conjectures/arguments/critiques/analyses, depending on the grade band.
- Requires the use of evidence - all items focus on selecting evidence to support research.

# Grade 4 Sample Item

A student is writing a research report about music classes in school. She wrote an opinion in the report. Read the sentences from the report and the directions that follow.

## **Student Report: The Importance of Music Class.**

Everyone knows that learning is important. What about music class? All children should have music classes in school. In music class, kids can learn new songs. They can also learn how to play instruments. Students who learn about music have better thinking and language skills. These kids can solve math problems well. They will even sometimes do better on tests. Language skills can help with talking to people and making new friends. The lessons learned in school music class can last a lifetime.

The student took notes about music classes in school. Which note supports the student's opinion?

- A. Music class is just as important as talking to friends.
- B. Music class should be enjoyed for the love of learning about music.
- C. Studies show that children who learn about music can become better readers.
- D. Studies show that children enjoy music classes more when they play instruments.

# Accessibility and Accommodations



# Accessibility and Accommodations Considerations for Claim 4

- Accommodations may need to be considered for students with motor impairments because students may use word processing tools (a mouse and keyboard) when responding to some items for Claim 4.
- Students with visual impairments may need accommodations as well.
- Some Task Models will be identified as being more appropriate for populations with motor or visual disabilities.
- Item stems will model simple, clear grade-appropriate language.

# Questions



# Reflect on Guiding Questions

1. What do educators need to do to support student learning?
2. What do educators need to do to ensure that students are prepared for the Smarter Balanced assessments?