

More than 45 states are implementing the Common Core State Standards, which provide consistent learning goals designed to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and career. Moving far beyond simply memorizing facts and figures, the new standards challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, learn how to think critically, and apply what they are learning to the real world.

To help students meet these goals, the state-led Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is working with educators to develop assessments that will replace current state assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in the 2014-15 school year. The Smarter Balanced assessment system will provide teachers with new tools to monitor student progress and resources to meet each student's unique needs.

This handout includes several examples that illustrate the different types of questions students will experience on the assessments. Additional items and performance tasks are available on the Smarter Balanced website. Teachers, students, parents, and other interested parties can use these resources to experience the features of online testing and gain insight into how Smarter Balanced will assess students' mastery of the Common Core.

- Practice Tests for grades 3-8 and 11 are available at:  
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>.
- Additional sample items and performance tasks are available at:  
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks/>

#### Mathematics – Selected-Response Item (Grade 4)

Students often had to wait until grade 8 or high school to hear that multiplication and division are “inverse operations.” Operations in early grades with the Common Core State Standards ask students to “understand” the relationship between addition and subtraction, and similarly the relationship between multiplication and division. Problem solving provides a natural opportunity for students to truly understand this relationship, unlike the “fact families” that have appeared in many textbooks under prior math standards.

In this problem, students are asked to choose all equations that represent the problem, which requires students to both understand and interpret the relationship between multiplication and division in the context of a word problem. Past assessments have often tried to assess multiplication and division as separate skills, while the Smarter Balanced assessments will highlight the relationship between the operations to support the knowledge and skills that students need for later study of algebra.

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Scott is reading a book that has 172 pages. Melanie is reading a book that has three times as many pages as Scott's book.

How many pages does Melanie's book have? Select all the equations that represent this problem.

$172 \div 3 = \square$

$3 \times \square = 172$

$172 \times 3 = \square$

$\square \div 3 = 172$

$\square \div 172 = 3$

$172 \div \square = 3$

**Mathematics – Technology-Enhanced Item (Grade 11)**

This high school item has many noteworthy features. First, it asks students to use volume formulas that are considered content of prior grades, meaning that retention of information is important and the consortium will attend to the coherence of the standards. Also, it allows students to make a decision about how much water is moved from Tank A to Tank B to solve the problem. Some students may decide to move only a little bit of water and others may decide to empty Tank A. Neither strategy is right or wrong, but both are available and represent one of the nice features of an online assessment: Students have to interact with the assessment item as part of the solution strategy.

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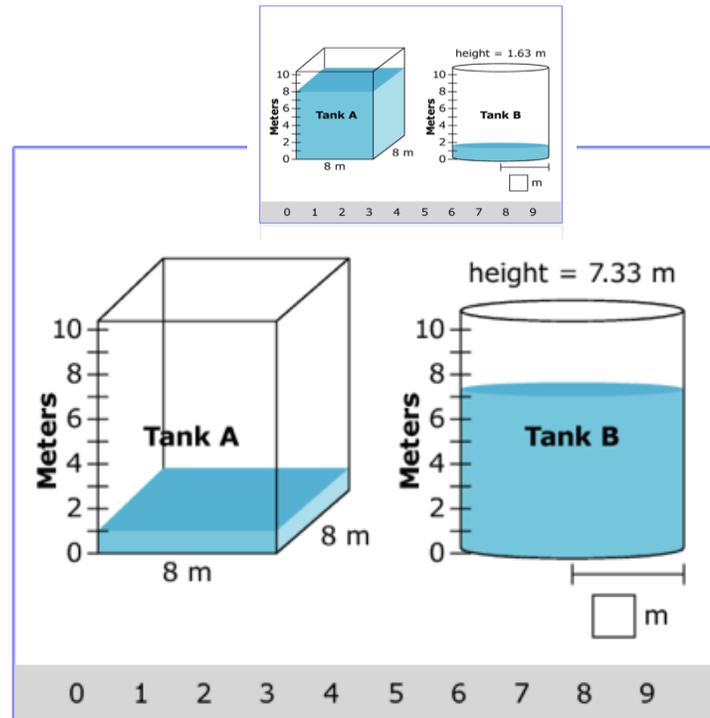


Two water tanks are shown. Tank A is a rectangular prism and Tank B is a cylinder. The tanks are not drawn to scale.

Tank A is filled with water to the 10-meter mark.

Click Tank A to change the water level. The volume of water that leaves Tank A is transferred to Tank B, and the height of the water in Tank B is shown.

Drag one number into the box to show the approximate radius of the base of Tank B.



**English Language Arts/Literacy – Constructed-Response Item (Grade 11)**

This English language arts/literacy item asks students to revise a short passage to improve its coherence. A correct answer will give sufficient evidence of the ability to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information. Students must identify the following irrelevant sentences and explain why they are not necessary:

- “Because of the depression, many homes were left abandoned, so there was not anyone to care for them and keep the plants properly groomed.”
- “Pines are not the only trees in the South, however.”
- “There are about 250 species of trees in Georgia alone.”

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The following paragraph is an excerpt from a student's report about plant life in the southern United States. After reading the paragraph, you will identify details that are unnecessary and explain why they should be removed.

**The Invasion of Kudzu**

In 1876, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, hosted the Centennial Exposition in honor of the country's 100th birthday. The Japanese constructed one of the most popular exhibits, primarily due to an amazing vine called *kudzu*. For centuries, the Japanese used the pea vine for many purposes, including medicine, but what attracted the Americans the most were the sweet-smelling purple flowers that covered the vine. The warm, moist climate of the southern states—from Georgia to Florida and north to the Carolinas—was the most hospitable part of the US for the vine. Temperatures in Georgia can reach into the 90s, and the humidity is often above 90%. Residents all over the southeast began planting kudzu. The vine's success caught the attention of many, including Channing Cope who promoted its use for erosion control and animal feed, especially during the Great Depression. Because of the depression, many homes were left abandoned, so there was not anyone to care for them and keep the plants properly groomed. No one predicted, however, that the vine would end up taking over. The vines slowly engulfed pine forests, telephone poles, and even houses, leading to the destruction of native plant life. Pines are not the only trees in the South, however. There are about 250 species of trees in Georgia alone. As kudzu out-competed the local plants, it deprived them of nutrients and, especially, sunlight. Kudzu now covers over 7 million acres of land, and it continues to expand at the rate of 150,000 acres annually. That is almost one foot per day! Attempts to kill it have proven difficult, as it is immune to most herbicides; thus, kudzu continues to smother the southern states. Researchers continue to search for a solution to “the vine that ate the South,” but the answer is nowhere in sight.

In the space below, identify the sentences from the paragraph that are unnecessary, and briefly explain why each one should be removed.