

PARENT ACTIVITY—THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CHANGING REGENTS EXAMS (40 MINUTES)

This activity is designed to provide parents with an opportunity to:

- 1. Share thoughts, questions, concerns, and/or reflections on what the Common Core standards mean for students and teachers;*
- 2. Compare previous New York State Regents exam questions to sample Common Core-aligned questions; and*
- 3. Understand how the new Common Core-aligned tasks will better measure the skills necessary for success in college and careers.*

Required Materials:

- A copy of this facilitator guide for each facilitator*
- Copies of the High School Parent Activity packet for each parent (located at the end of this document)*
- Extra pencils/pens*
- Chart paper and markers or chalkboard/whiteboard (if desired)*

- 1. Welcome and Reflections. (5 minutes)** Facilitator (typically a school leader or teacher) welcomes all parents and explains that participants should introduce themselves (their name and child's grade) and take 30 seconds to share a reflection, response, question, or concern that they have.

Facilitator or another volunteer begins. Go around in a circle until everyone who wants to share has the opportunity. *Note: Encourage all parents to share, but let them know it is okay to pass. Consider asking a parent (or another staff member in the room) to keep track of time.*

Facilitator charts (or notes) questions and/or concerns.

- 2. Discuss College and Career Readiness. (5 minutes)** Facilitator explains that a major push of the Common Core standards is to ensure that students are prepared for college and/or careers upon graduation from high school. This is an effort that needs to start in the early grades and continue through high school. The Common Core is about getting students ready to compete nationally and internationally. Facilitator leads participants to share responses to the following question:

- What skills are important for high school graduates entering today's workforce, in contrast to 50 years ago?
(Possible responses: 1) Today's careers require more reading, math, and analytical skills and often require employees to "think outside of the box" as opposed to 50 years ago when there were more jobs that were more mostly manual labor; 2) Today, there should be less emphasis on memorizing and knowing facts—you can look up most facts using Google—and more emphasis on learning how to think critically and apply concepts in new situations...)

Facilitator states that in this activity parents will look at how the types of questions students are being asked to solve—in class now and, starting this year, on certain Regents exams—are changing.

3. Identify differences in expectations between past Regents exams and future Common Core-aligned tasks in math. (15 minutes)

- Facilitator frames the transition:
 - Starting this year, the Regents exams high school students take will begin to change to align to the Common Core. These exams will require students to solve more complex problems and explain their thinking.
 - Through this and other changes, the exams will begin to more closely reflect the work and learning students are doing in their classes as well as the skills necessary for college and career readiness.
 - Over the past two years, we've been starting to prepare teachers and students for these changes. For example, every student has had the opportunity to experience several Common Core-aligned tasks as part of regular classroom activities.

In order to better understand the differences, we will be looking at examples from the old Comprehensive English and Integrated Algebra Regents exams together with new Common Core-aligned tasks in literacy and math. Let's begin with math.

- Once you've had a chance to look at some key differences between old Regents exam questions and the sample Common Core-aligned tasks, we will reflect on how this connects to where we are trying to take our students.
- Participants read the math questions from the January 2012 Integrated Algebra Regents exam and the sample Common Core-aligned math task and record observations on the chart in their note-taking guide around the following questions (feel free to ask parents to complete this activity in pairs or to do it as a full-group discussion):
 - i. What do the questions ask students to do? (*See annotated sample questions in parent activity for possible responses.*)
 - ii. What are the key differences between the January 2012 Integrated Algebra Regents exam and the sample Common Core-aligned math task?
 - iii. How do the Common Core-aligned questions connect with the skills students need to build to be college and career ready? (10 minutes)
(Possible responses: The Common Core-aligned math question requires students to deeply understand the math concepts and apply what they know to a complex real-world situation. To do this, students first have to figure out how to tackle a new problem that isn't presented in a straightforward way. In addition, like with most problems you solve in a career, students first have to figure out what the problem is asking before they can solve it. Students need to demonstrate persistence—another important college and career readiness skill—to complete the multi-step and more complex problem.)

Note: You can instruct participants to look at the un-annotated or annotated sample questions in their packets. Un-annotated sample questions are at the beginning of the parent packet. Annotated questions are at the end of the parent packet. As a related activity, you may choose to have

students talk their parents through Common Core-aligned work that they have completed in class to illustrate the difference in these new assignments. See an example of a student-led parent-teacher conference [here](#).

Sample Key Differences—Math
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common Core-aligned items are more complex and require students to complete multiple steps using more than one operation.• Students must demonstrate deep conceptual knowledge of math in addition to performing calculations.

- Participants share their responses to the questions above. (5 minutes)

4. Identify differences in expectations between past Regents exam questions and current Common Core-aligned tasks in English. (15 minutes) Facilitator frames the transition by explaining that participants will now complete the same activity looking at English exam items.

- Participants read the two English questions, skim the texts from the sample Common Core-aligned literacy task, and record observations on the chart in their note-taking guide around the following questions:
 - i. What do the questions ask students to do?
 - ii. What are the key differences between the January 2012 English Regents exam and the sample Common Core-aligned literacy task?
 - iii. How does the Common Core-aligned question connect with the skills students need to build to be college and career ready? (10 minutes)

(Possible responses: The Common Core-aligned literacy question requires students to closely read complex texts and formulate their own understanding of those texts, both important skills for college and careers. In addition, these longer and more challenging texts are more like the reading required in many jobs.)

Note: You can instruct participants to look at the un-annotated or annotated sample questions in their packets. Un-annotated sample questions are at the beginning of the parent packet. Annotated questions are at the end of the parent packet.

Sample Key Differences—English
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The texts are more complex (e.g., in structure and vocabulary).• Students must use specific text-based evidence, rather than more general references from literature they have read to support personal opinions.

- Parents share their responses to the questions above. (5 minutes)

5. Wrap up. Facilitator thanks participants for willingness to share their thoughts.

Adaptation Ideas:

- If you would like to extend the activity, please consider the following options:
 - i. Allow time for parents to fully read the passages and/or work the math problems in Steps 3 and 4.

- If you need to shorten the activity, consider the following:
 - i. Review only the math or English exam items.
 - ii. Split parents up and have half the group focus on the math tasks, while the other half focuses on the literacy tasks, and then share key learnings with the full group.

High School Parent Activity: The Common Core Standards and Changing State Tests

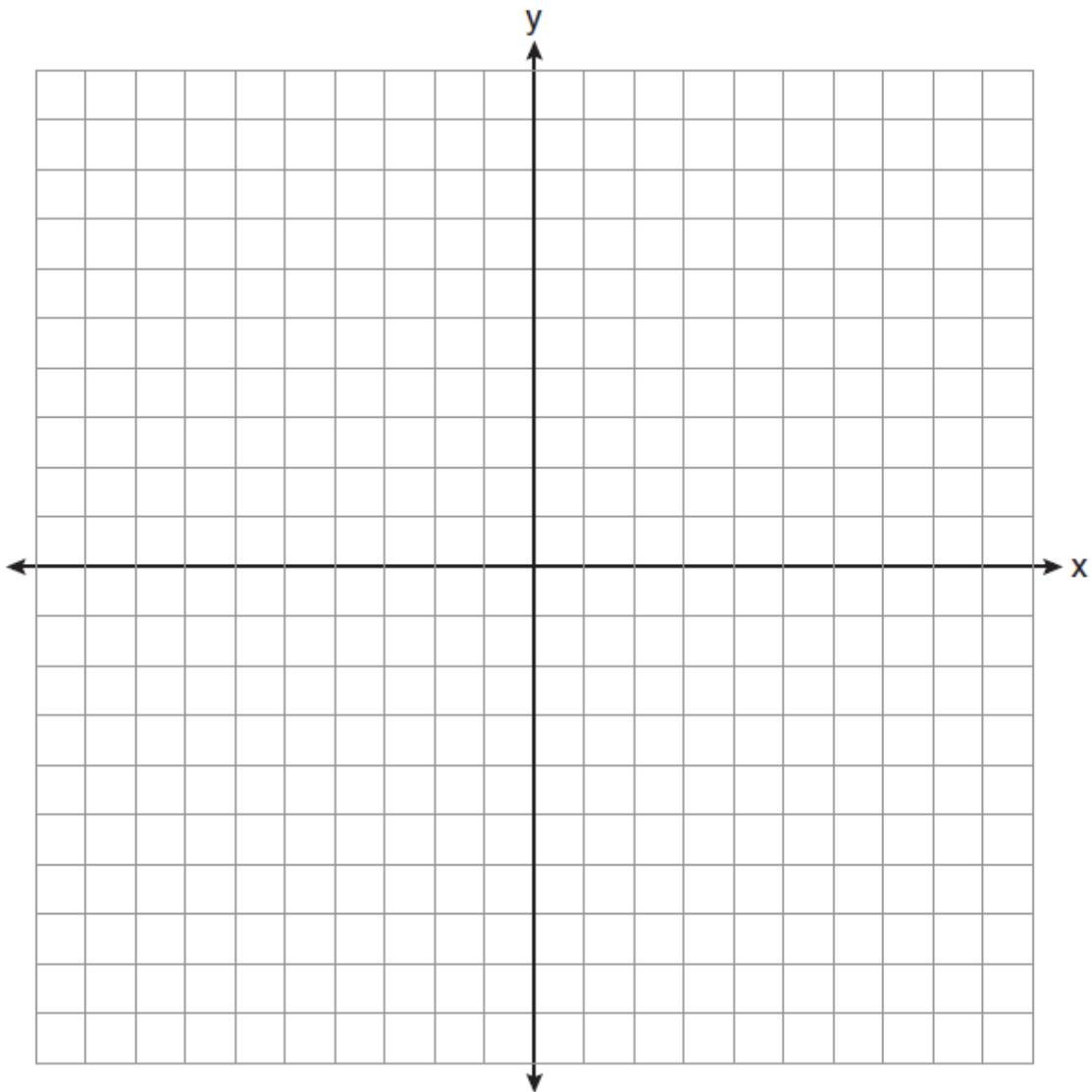
Math Assessment Items	
What do the questions ask students to do?	
Old Integrated Algebra Regents Exam Item	Sample Common Core-aligned Math Task
Key Differences	
What are the key differences between the sample questions? How do the Common Core-aligned questions connect with the skills students need to prepare for college and careers?	
English Assessment Items	
What do the questions ask students to do?	
Old Comprehensive English Regents Exam Item	Sample Common Core-aligned Literacy Task
Key Differences	
What are the key differences between the sample questions? How do the Common Core-aligned questions connect with the skills students need to prepare for college and careers?	

High School Math: Actual January 2012 Integrated Algebra Regents Exam Question

35. On the set of axes below, solve the following system of equations graphically. State the coordinates of the solution.

$$y = 4x - 1$$

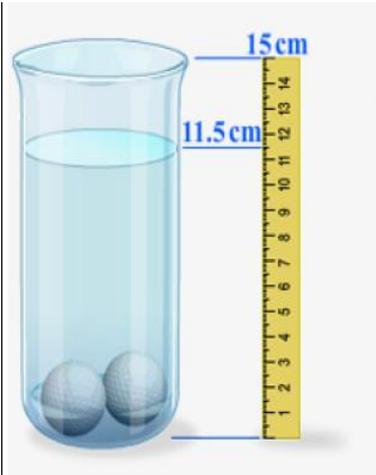
$$2x + y = 5$$



High School Math: Sample Common Core-aligned Math Task

PART A

Tom is doing an experiment adding golf balls to a glass jar containing water. The picture and the table show what happens to the height of the water as Tom adds golf balls.



Number of golf balls, x	Height of water in centimeters, y
0	9.0
1	10.2
2	11.5
3	12.7
4	13.8

Use the words and numbers in the word bank below to complete the following sentences and the equation based on the results of Tom's experiment.

WORD BANK:

Golf balls	Change	Glass jars	Water height	1.16
1.2	1.3	9.0	12.0	13.8

- 1) The height of the water changes at an average rate of about _____ centimeters per golf ball.
- 2) If these data were graphed with the number of golf balls as the independent variable, the y -intercept for the graph would be about _____ centimeters.
- 3) This means that for zero _____, the _____ is 9 centimeters.
- 4) Tom's table and graph can be represented by the trend line with the equation

$y = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} x + \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$.

PART B

There are several ways that Tom could modify the conditions of his experiment.

What modifications would increase the rate of change in the height of the water level with respect to the number of golf balls? Check all that apply.

- Use larger golf balls
- Decrease the diameter of the glass jar
- Drop the golf balls into the glass jar at a faster rate
- Add 5cm of water to the glass jar
- Drop the golf balls into the glass jar two at a time

PART C

Tom repeats his experiment with a different glass jar. The new glass jar, B, has a smaller radius than the original glass jar, A.

How will the rate of change in the experiment using glass jar B be different from the rate of change in the experiment using glass jar A? Explain how you know.



Data from Experiment with Glass Jar A

Number of golf balls, x	Height of water in centimeters, y
0	9.0
1	10.2
2	11.5
3	12.7
4	13.8

High School English: Actual January 2012 English Regents Exam Question

Your Task:

Write a critical essay in which you discuss **two** works of literature you have read from the particular perspective of the statement that is provided for you in the **Critical Lens**. In your essay, provide a valid interpretation of the statement, agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it, and support your opinion using specific references to appropriate literary elements from the two works. You may use scrap paper to plan your response.

Critical Lens:

“No two persons regard the world in exactly the same way...”

—J.W. von Goethe

“Introduction to the Propyläen”

from *Prefaces and Prologues to Famous Books*, 1910

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it
- Choose **two** works you have read that you believe best support your opinion
- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have chosen
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use the specific references to appropriate literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view) to develop your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner
- Specify the titles and authors of the literature you choose
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

High School English: Common Core-aligned 9th – 10th Grade Literacy Task

Readings: Students have read the following arguments made by leaders across time to promote racial equality:

- “I Have a Dream,” by Martin Luther King, Jr.,
- “Remarks to the Convocation of the Church of God in Christ,” by William J. Clinton,
- “Ending Racial Inequality,” by George W. Bush, and
- “Remarks to the NAACP,” by Barack Obama

Task: *Which of the four speakers do you think makes the strongest argument?*

Write an argumentative essay in which you make a case for the speaker who you think makes the strongest argument to promote racial equality. Consider each speaker’s use of claims, counterclaims, reasons, evidence, and methods when making your determination.

Your argumentative essay should be one to two pages in length and should be written for an audience who is familiar with the speeches. Organize your essay so that it is easy to follow and establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Begin by introducing the topic and argument. Develop your argumentative essay with claims and counterclaims that are grounded in evidence from the four texts listed above. Be sure to use transitions that help link major sections of the text and clarify the relationships between and among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Use the conventions of standard English and maintain a formal style.

Text Excerpts: Common Core-aligned 9th – 10th Grade Literacy Task

Excerpt #1: Remarks to the NAACP by President Barack Obama (Transcript)

NAACP Centennial Convention
Hilton New York
New York, New York
July 16, 2009

It is an honor to be here, in the city where the NAACP was formed, to mark its centennial. What we celebrate tonight is not simply the journey the NAACP has traveled, but the journey that we, as Americans, have traveled over the past one hundred years.

It is a journey that takes us back to a time before most of us were born, long before the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, and *Brown v. Board of Education*; back to an America just a generation past slavery. It was a time when Jim Crow was a way of life; when lynchings were all too common; and when race riots were shaking cities across a segregated land.

It was in this America where an Atlanta scholar named W.E.B. Du Bois, a man of towering intellect and a fierce passion for justice, sparked what became known as the Niagara movement; where reformers united, not by color but cause; and where an association was born that would, as its charter says, promote equality and eradicate prejudice among citizens of the United States.

From the beginning, Du Bois understood how change would come - just as King and all the civil rights giants did later. They understood that unjust laws needed to be overturned; that legislation needed to be passed; and that Presidents needed to be pressured into action. They knew that the stain of slavery and the sin of segregation had to be lifted in the courtroom and in the legislature.

But they also knew that here, in America, change would have to come from the people. It would come from people protesting lynching, rallying against violence, and walking instead of taking the bus. It would come from men and women - of every age and faith, race and region - taking Greyhounds on Freedom Rides; taking seats at Greensboro lunch counters; and registering voters in rural Mississippi, knowing they would be harassed, knowing they would be beaten, knowing that they might never return.

Because of what they did, we are a more perfect union. Because Jim Crow laws were overturned, black CEOs today run Fortune 500 companies. Because civil rights laws were passed, black mayors, governors, and Members of Congress serve in places where they might once have been unable to vote. And because ordinary people made the civil rights movement their own, I made a trip to Springfield a couple years ago - where Lincoln once lived, and race riots once raged - and began the journey that has led me here tonight as the 44th President of the United States of America.

And yet, even as we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the past one hundred years; even as we inherit extraordinary progress that cannot be denied; even as we marvel at the courage and determination of so many plain folks - we know that too many barriers still remain.

We know that even as our economic crisis batters Americans of all races, African Americans are out of work more than just about anyone else - a gap that's widening here in New York City, as detailed in a report this week by Comptroller Bill Thompson....

Excerpt #2: "I Have A Dream," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Address delivered at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

Washington, D.C.

August 28, 1963

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges...

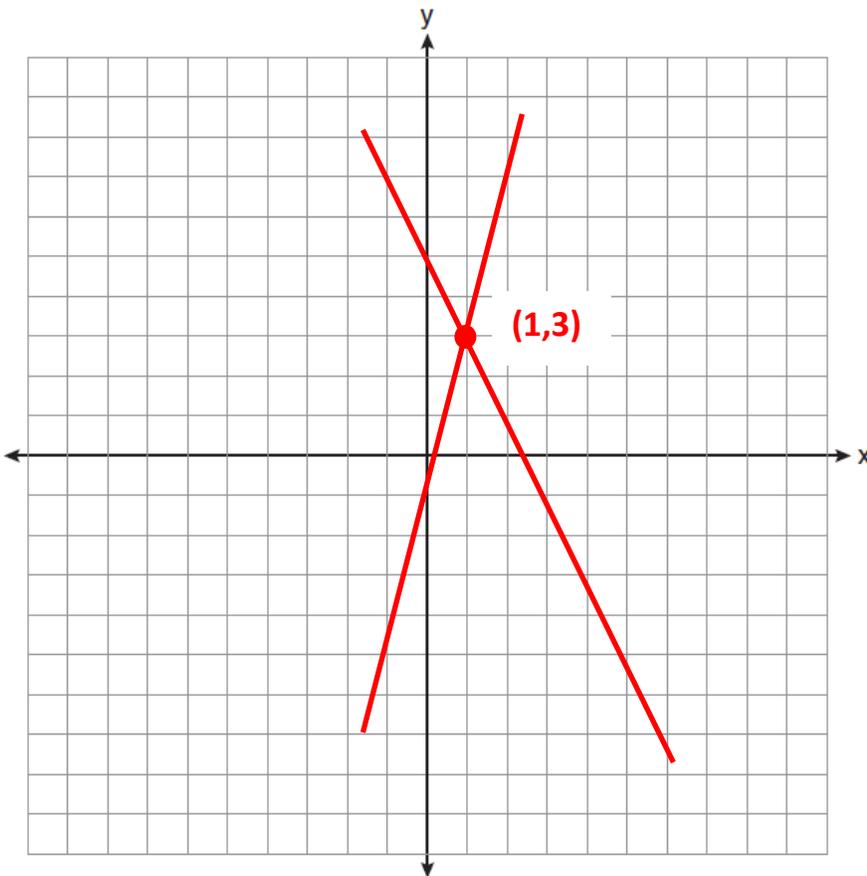
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$$y = 4x - 1$$

$$2x + y = 5$$

X=1; Y=3

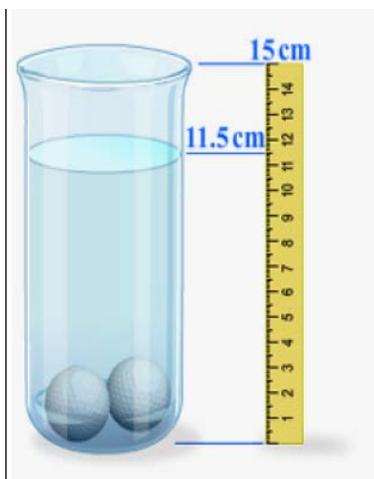


- *Students can solve the problem following a straightforward process.*
- *Students do not need to demonstrate a deep understanding of systems of equations and do not have to explain how they arrived at their solution.*

High School Math: Sample Common Core-aligned Math Task

PART A

Tom is doing an experiment adding golf balls to a glass jar containing water. The picture and the table show what happens to the height of the water as Tom adds golf balls.



Number of golf balls, x	Height of water in centimeters, y
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Use the word bank below to complete the following sentences and the equation based on the results of Tom's experiment.

WORD BANK:

Golf balls	Change	Glass jars	Water height	1.16
1.2	1.3	9.0	12.0	13.8

- 1) The height of the water changes at an average rate of about 1.2 centimeters per golf ball.
- 2) If these data were graphed with the number of golf balls as the independent variable, the y -intercept for the graph would be about 9.0 centimeters.
- 3) This means that for zero golf balls, the water height is 9 centimeters.
- 4) Tom's table and graph can be represented by the trend line with the equation $y =$ 1.2 $x +$ 9.0.

- Students must first read and make sense of the scenario before applying the appropriate math concepts to solve.
- Students must choose among multiple approaches to solve the problem and explain their thinking.

PART B

There are several ways that Tom could modify the conditions of his experiment.

What modifications would increase the rate of change in the height of the water level with respect to the number of golf balls? Check all that apply.

- Use larger golf balls
- Decrease the diameter of the glass jar
- Drop the golf balls into the glass jar at a faster rate
- Add 5cm of water to the glass jar
- Drop the golf balls into the glass jar two at a time

PART C

Tom repeats his experiment with a different glass jar. The new glass jar, B, has a smaller radius than the original glass jar, A.

How will the rate of change in the experiment using glass jar B be different from the rate of change in the experiment using glass jar A? Explain how you know.



The rate of change using glass jar B will be greater than the rate of change using glass jar A because glass jar B has a smaller radius than glass jar A. This means that there is a larger increase in the water height when you add one golf ball to glass jar B than there is when you add one golf ball to glass jar A.

Data from Experiment with Glass Jar A

Number of golf balls, x	Height of water in centimeters, y
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High School English: Actual January 2012 English Regents Exam Question

Your Task:

Write a critical essay in which you discuss **two** works of literature you have read from the particular perspective of the statement that is provided for you in the **Critical Lens**. In your essay, provide a valid interpretation of the statement, agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it, and support your opinion using specific references to appropriate literary elements from the two works. You may use scrap paper to plan your response.

Critical Lens:

“No two persons regard the world in exactly the same way...”

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Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it
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- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have chosen
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use the specific references to appropriate literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view) to develop your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner
- Specify the titles and authors of the literature you choose
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

- *Students are asked to write an essay supporting a personal opinion.*
- *Students do not need to respond to opposing arguments.*
- *Students are asked to describe broad themes from texts they have read, but do not need to provide specific textual evidence.*

High School English: Common Core-aligned 9th – 10th Grade Literacy Task

Readings: Students have read the following arguments made by leaders across time to promote racial equality:

- “I Have a Dream,” by Martin Luther King, Jr.,
- “Remarks to the Convocation of the Church of God in Christ,” by William J. Clinton,
- “Ending Racial Inequality,” by George W. Bush, and
- “Remarks to the NAACP,” by Barack Obama

Task: *Which of the four speakers do you think makes the strongest argument?*

Write an argumentative essay in which you make a case for the speaker who you think makes the strongest argument to promote racial equality. Consider each speaker’s use of claims, counterclaims, reasons, evidence, and methods when making your determination.

Your argumentative essay should be one to two pages in length and should be written for an audience who is familiar with the speeches. Organize your essay so that it is easy to follow and establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Begin by introducing the topic and argument. Develop your argumentative essay with claims and counterclaims that are grounded in evidence from the four texts listed above. Be sure to use transitions that help link major sections of the text and clarify the relationships between and among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Use the conventions of standard English and maintain a formal style.

- *Response requires students to read and analyze challenging texts rather than form a personal opinion.*
- *Students are asked to support their own claims and to provide and respond to opposing arguments.*
- *Students are asked to use specific details from the texts to support their analysis.*