Literary Performance Task

Grade Level: 4th Grade
Title: Tackling Theme in Traditional Literature

Claims:

Claim 1: Read a variety of texts closely to determine theme and pattern of events
Claim 2: Writing a narrative piece.

Common Core Focus Standards (list only the ones you will be measuring in this task):

Claim 1: Read a variety of texts closely to determine theme and pattern of events

RL.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL. 2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

RL. 9 Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

Claim 2: Write a narrative piece.

W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.6 With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stimuli</th>
<th>Specifics of Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Texts:</td>
<td>Product: Narrative, Traditional Literature</td>
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"Hades and the King of Corinth"

"Rabbit and Tiger"

Topic: Themes in Traditional Literature

Audience: classmates

Purpose: To modernize a piece of traditional literature

Speaker/Role: Student

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**Task Overview (list any student supports you will provide)**

**Classroom Activity/Introduction (time estimate= 15 minutes)**

Review what we know about traditional literature.

Clearly explain the activity and introduce the two parts as well as discuss how the constructed response items will be assessed and the rubric for parts I and II. Answer any questions students may have regarding Part I or Part II of this performance task.

**Part I—Claim 1 (time estimate= 40 minutes)**

Students will read two short stories in the traditional literature genre, reading closely and identifying the pattern of events and other evidence that reveals the theme of each piece. They will be allowed to review the text as necessary.

**Scorable Products:**

Student responses to the selected response and constructed response questions. Questions will ask students to cite evidence to demonstrate knowledge of theme and compare and contrast theme across the texts.

**Part II—Claim 2 (time estimate = 90 minutes)**

Students will work individually to plan, write, and revise a narrative piece that uses the pattern of events and theme presented in the two short stories that mirrors the plot and message presented in both tales.

**Scorable Products:** Student narrative

**Sources:**

- "Hades and the King of Corinth" Greek Myth loosely retold by Lin Donn  

- Rabbit and Tiger: A Vietnamese Folktale” retold by Virgina Castleman from Guided Reading in Grades 3-6 Scholastic Resources.

**Student Directions for Part 1:**

You will now closely “read” the two short stories, annotate the texts, paying particular attention to the pattern of events characters take throughout the stories. Become familiar with both stories. Then you will answer some questions regarding the stories.

**Constructed Response Questions:**

1. **What is the common theme between these two stories? Cite evidence from both stories when making your claim.**

A two-point response will include a common theme shared by both stories. Students will cite evidence from both stories. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

**Sample Two-Point Response:**

Common theme identified with evidence from both stories to support claim.

**Sample One-Point Response:**

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Common theme identified with evidence from only one story to support claim.

Sample Zero-Point Response:
No common theme identified or no evidence given to support claim.

2. How is the pattern of events similar in both stories? How does it differ? Cite evidence from both stories when making your claim.

A two-point response will include at least one similarity and one difference in the pattern of events in both stories. Students will cite evidence from both stories. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample Two-Point Response:
One similarity and one difference between the stories, both of which are supported with evidence from both stories

Sample One-Point Response:
One similarity or one difference between the stories, supported with evidence at least one of the stories.

Sample Zero-Point Response:
Unrelated response or response that fails to address similarities or differences or fails to provide textual evidence

Student Directions for Part 2:

You will now plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish your narrative which is based on the pattern of events and theme of the two short stories you’ve just read. Now read your assignment and the information about how your narrative piece will be scored; then begin your work.

Your assignment:
You are going to write your own story that is based upon the pattern of events and theme in the two short stories you’ve just read. The characters in your narrative should follow a similar pattern of events as the characters in “Rabbit and Tiger” and “Hades and the King of Corinth”. Furthermore, the theme of your story should be the same theme of the others. Your narrative should be clearly organized with a beginning, middle, and end. Be sure to use the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish your piece.

REMEMBER: A well-written narrative piece:

- Includes characters, setting, and sets up a pattern of events
- Uses dialogue and description to explain events
- Is well-organized and flows from beginning to middle to end
- Uses transitions
- Uses both concrete and figurative language
- Provides a conclusion that wraps up the events of the story
- Follows rules of writing (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

Now begin work on your narrative piece. Manage your time carefully, so that you can:

1. Determine your plot and theme
2. Plan your narrative story
3. Write your narrative
4. Revise and edit your narrative
5. Publish your narrative

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Hades & the King of Corinth

The people of ancient Corinth believed their king, King Sisyphus of Corinth, was the cleverest king who ever lived! They were always bragging about him.

But the most clever thing the king did hardly anyone knew about, for a very good reason!

As the story goes ....

One day, the king of Corinth was busy trying to come up with an idea to solve Corinth’s fresh water problem. He saw Zeus fly by, carrying a lovely river spirit in his arms.

"That Zeus," sighed the king. "What a trouble maker!"

Soon after, the river-god Asopus flew by. “Have you seen my daughter?” he bellowed at the king.

“If you’ll give my city a source of fresh water, I’ll tell you what I saw,” King Sisyphus shouted back. Immediately, a crystal clear stream of fresh water bubbled up.

“Zeus took her that way,” the king pointed.

The king knew Zeus would be angry when he heard what the king had done. But Corinth desperately needed a source of fresh water. And now they had one.

Sure enough, Zeus was furious. He told his brother Hades to take King Sisyphus down to the underworld immediately!

“When they tell you I am dead, do not put a gold coin under my tongue,” King Sisyphus whispered quickly to his wife. Being a good wife, she did exactly as the king had asked her.

Because the king was a very important person, Hades met the king at the River Styx, the entrance to the underworld. And, because no gold coin was placed under his tongue, the king arrived at the entrance to the underworld as a poor beggar.

“Where is your gold coin?” Hades demanded in shock. “How can you pay for a trip across the River Styx and arrive in the underworld?”

The king hung his head in shame. "My wife was too cheap to pay for the passage.”

Hades mouth fell open. “You go right back there and teach that women some manners.” Hades sent the king back to earth immediately, where he was magically alive and well again.

The king and his beloved wife laughed when he told her about it. But he never told anyone else. You never knew when the gods might be listening.
Rabbit and Tiger
A Vietnamese Folktales

Rabbit perched quietly at the forest's edge, cleaning her whiskers. She wanted very much to relax and take her afternoon nap, but she sensed that Tiger, the ruler of the forest, was near. "He could eat me up in one bite, she said to herself, shuddering at the thought.

When Rabbit was younger, she could have easily outrun Tiger. Now her muscles and joints had begun to ache, and Rabbit was feeling old and stiff.

"The only way I can keep from becoming Tiger's next meal is to outsmart him," she thought.

Rabbit spent the rest of the day trying to think up a way to outsmart Tiger. But the idea that kept coming to her made her whiskers quiver with fear.

At first Rabbit tried to talk herself out of such a dangerous plan, but at last she decided she had no other choice.

"I will try it out tomorrow," she said. "Otherwise, I must hide for the rest of my life and never nap in peace."

Bright and early the next morning, Rabbit set off for the forest along a trail that she knew Tiger would use. She had just sat down to wait when Tiger came strolling down the trail.

Tiger was surprised to have a handy meal waiting so willingly. He padded up to Rabbit and placed a huge paw on her back.

"I have enough room in my stomach for one last tasty morsel," he said, running his tongue over his whiskers. "How thoughtful of you to wait for me."

Rabbit sat quietly and said nothing, hoping her plan would work.

"What is wrong with you, Rabbit? I have always frightened you, as I frighten all the animals of the forest. Today you sit here and wait for me to gobble you up. Aren't you afraid of me?"

Rabbit felt the weight of his giant paw and hoped Tiger couldn't feel her trembling under it. "Afraid of you?" she said, trying to sound calm. "Why should I be afraid of you?"

"Because I am the ruler of the forest, that's why," huffed Tiger.

"That's not what I heard."

Tiger eyed Rabbit suspiciously. "What are you talking about?" he growled.

"All the animals of the forest got together for a special meeting while you were out hunting last night. Maybe that's why you haven't heard," said Rabbit, daring to look straight into his glowing amber eyes.

"Haven't heard what?" asked Tiger.

"That you are no longer the ruler of the forest," said Rabbit, slipping out from under the giant paw. "The animals have decided that I am the fiercest animal in the forest."

"A puny thing like you?" scoffed Tiger, opening his mouth wide enough to swallow her whole.

"I can prove it," said Rabbit, gulping at the sight of his sharp, gleaming teeth. "I will ride on your back as you go through the forest. That way you will see for yourself how terrified the animals are of me. If they are not, then you can make me your next meal."

Before Tiger had time to think, Rabbit hopped onto his back and urged him to move on.

Tiger slunk through the trees. As usual, every animal fled at his approach. But before they ran, they stopped to stare at Rabbit with wide-eyed amazement. Mistaking their looks of amazement for terror, Tiger thought, "Look at their frightened faces! Rabbit must indeed be the fiercest animal in the forest."

He sank to the ground at her feet. "Rabbit, forgive me for how I have behaved," he begged. "And if you can find it in your heart, spare my life."

"Very well," said Rabbit, quite pleased with how things were working out. "But because you have frightened me so in the past, you must promise to leave this part of the forest and never return."

Tiger agreed. From then on, Rabbit not only enjoyed her afternoon naps in peace, she won the admiration of the other animals for her cleverness.
## Narrative Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 = Advanced</th>
<th>3 = Proficient</th>
<th>2 = Basic</th>
<th>1 = Below Basic</th>
<th>4 = Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader is able to accurately visualize the narrator and/or character; students organize a logical and believable sequence that unfolds naturally.</td>
<td>Student set up a situation and introduces a narrator and/or characters; student organizes a sensible sequence that unfolds naturally.</td>
<td>Introduce the narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence.</td>
<td>Does not introduce the narrator or characters and events are not sequential.</td>
<td>Reader is able to accurately visualize the narrator and/or character; students organize a logical and believable sequence that unfolds naturally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uses complex dialogue and description to develop experiences and events that show the responses of characters to situations.</td>
<td>Student use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</td>
<td>Student uses dialogue and description to develop characters and events.</td>
<td>Students do not use dialogue and description correctly or effectively.</td>
<td>Student uses complex dialogue and description to develop experiences and events that show the responses of characters to situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students use advanced transitional words or phrases to show the sequence of events.</td>
<td>Students use a variety of transitional words and phrases to show the sequence of events.</td>
<td>Student uses some simple transitional words or phrases to show sequence of events.</td>
<td>Student does not use transitional words or phrases.</td>
<td>Students use advanced transitional words or phrases to show the sequence of events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uses advanced concrete words and phrases and sensory detail to communicate experiences and events accurately.</td>
<td>Student uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to communicate experiences and events accurately.</td>
<td>Student uses some concrete words and phrases and sensory details to communicate experiences and events.</td>
<td>Student does not use concrete words or phrases to accurately communicate experiences and events.</td>
<td>Student uses advanced concrete words and phrases and sensory detail to communicate experiences and events accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student provides a conclusion that connects to the narrated experience and provides a natural closure.</td>
<td>Student provides a conclusion that connects from the narrated experiences or events and provides closure.</td>
<td>Student provides a conclusion that somewhat connects to the narrated event but does not provide closure.</td>
<td>Student provides a conclusion, but it neither connects to the narrated experiences nor provides closure.</td>
<td>Student provides a conclusion that connects to the narrated experience and provides a natural closure.</td>
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