**Grade 5.2 Informational Performance Task: Decisions/Coming of Age**

**Task**:

Your class has been reading *The Fighting Ground* by Avi. This novel is about a 13-year-old boy living at the beginning of the American Revolution who decides to “borrow” a gun and go off to war without his parents’ permission. Things do not go well, and he is captured by Hessian soldiers. Hessians were German soldiers hired by the British to fight Americans. Your class has become interested in learning more about what it was like to be a 13 year-old soldier during the American Revolution. You have found three sources about this topic.

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly **scan** the **sources** and the **four questions** that follow. Then, **go back and read the sources carefully so you will have the information you will need to answer the questions and complete your research**.

In **Part 1**, you will answer questions about the reading passages.

In **Part 2**, you will write an informational article using information you have read.

Directions for Beginning:

You will now review several sources. You can review any of the sources as often as you like.

Research Questions:

After reviewing the research sources, use the rest of the time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your **answers to these questions will be score**d. Also, **your answers will help you think about the information you have read, which should help you write your informational article**.

Answer the questions on the opposite side of the paper where the questions are located or in the location your teacher directs.

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**Source #1**

You have found an account of the Battle at Concord Bridge by American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson.

AMERICAN POET EMERSON DESCRIBES THE STAND AT CONCORD BRIDGE

1775, 19 April. This morning, between 1 and 2 o'clock, we were alarmed by the ringing of the bell, and upon examination found that the troops, to the number of 800, had stole their march from Boston, in boats and barges, from the bottom of the Common over to a point in Cambridge, near to Inman's farm, and were at Lexington Meeting-house, half an hour before sunrise, where they had fired upon a body of our men, and (as we afterward heard) had killed several.

We then retreated from the hill near the Liberty Pole and took a new post back of the town upon an eminence, where we formed into two battalions and waited the arrival of the enemy. Scarcely had we formed before we saw the British troops at the distance of a quarter of a mile, glittering in arms, advancing towards us with the greatest celerity. Some were for making a stand, notwithstanding the superiority of their number; but others more prudent thought best to retreat till our strength should be equal to the enemy's by recruits from neighboring towns that were continually coming to our assistance.

Accordingly we retreated over the bridges when the troops came into the town, set fire to several carriages for the artillery, destroyed 60 barrels flour, rifled several houses, took possession of the town-house, destroyed 500 lb. of balls (ammunition).

The guards set by the enemy to secure the pass at the North Bridge were alarmed by the approach of our people, who had retreated, as mentioned before, and were now advancing with special orders not to fire upon the troops unless fired upon. These orders were so punctually observed that we received the fire of the enemy in three several and separate discharges of their pieces before it was returned by our commanding officer; the firing then soon became general for several minutes, in which skirmish two were killed on each side, and several of the enemy wounded.

The three companies of troops soon quitted their post at the bridge and retreated in the greatest disorder and confusion to the main body, who were soon upon the march to meet them. For half an hour, the enemy, by their marches and countermarches, discovered great fickleness and inconstancy of mind, sometimes advancing, sometimes returning to their former posts; till at length they quitted the town and retreated by the way they came. In the meantime, a party of our men (150) took the back way through the Great Fields into the east quarter and had placed themselves to advantage, lying in ambush behind walls, fences and buildings, ready to fire upon the enemy on their retreat.

*By the rude bridge that arched the flood
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled
Here once the embattled farmers stood
and fired the shot heard round the world.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Concord Hymn"

**Source #2**

You have found another account of the Battle at Concord Bridge by a British soldier.

**“British Account of the Battle at Concord Bridge”**

Excerpts from an account presumably by Lieutenant John Barker of the King's Own.

We proceeded on our way to Concord in order to destroy a magazine of stores collected there. We met with no interruption till within a mile or two of the town, where the country people had occupied a hill which commanded the road. The Light Infantry were ordered away to the right and ascended the height in one line, upon which the Yankees quitted it without firing. They then crossed the river beyond the town, and we marched into the town after taking possession of a hill with a Liberty Pole on it and a flag flying, which was cut down. The Yankees had the hill but left it to us. We expected they would have made a stand there, but they did not chuse it.

During this time the people were gathering together in great numbers and, taking advantage of our scattered disposition, seemed as if they were going to cut off the communication with the bridge, upon which the two companies joined and went to the bridge to support that company. Our three companies drew up in the road the far side the bridge and the Rebels on the hill above, covered by a wall; in that situation they remained a long time, very near an hour, the three companies expecting to be attacked by the Rebels, who were about l000 strong.

In the meantime, the Rebels marched into the road and were coming down upon us when Captain Lawrie made his men retire to this side the bridge (which by the bye he ought to have done at first, and then he would have had time to make a good disposition, but at this time he had not, for the Rebels were got so near him that his people were obliged to form the best way they could). As soon as they were over the bridge, the three companies got one behind the other so that only the front one could fire. The Rebels when they got near the bridge halted and fronted, filling the road from the top to the bottom. The fire soon began from a dropping shot on our side, when they and the front company fired almost at the same instant, there being nobody to support the front company. We were forced to return toward Concord. Four officers of 8 who were at the bridge were wounded; 3 men killed; 1 sergeant and several men wounded.

Before [we] had quitted the town we were fired on from houses and behind trees, and before we had gone 1/2 a mile we were fired on from all sides, but mostly from the rear, where people had hid themselves in houses till we had passed, and then fired. The country was an amazing strong one, full of hills, woods, stone walls, etc., which the Rebels did not fail to take advantage of, for they were all lined with people who kept an incessant fire upon us, as we did too upon them, but not with the same advantage, for they were so concealed there was hardly any seeing them. In this way, we marched between 9 and more miles, their numbers increasing from all parts, while ours was reduced by deaths, wounds and fatigue; and we were totally surrounded with such an incessant fire as it's impossible to conceive; our ammunition was near expended.

Thus ended this expedition, which from the beginning to end was as ill planned and ill executedas it

was possible to be.

**Source #3:** You have found an informational article and a three-minute video about loading and firing a flintlock gun. This is the process that Jonathan, the 13-year oldcharacter in*The Fighting Ground* had to go through every time he wanted to fire a shot from his gun.Below is a brief excerpt from *The Fighting Ground* (pp. 33-9) that describes how Jonathan prepares to shoot his gun in battle.

In a panic, Jonathan reached down and snatched up his gun. Resting it in the crook of his arm and clumsily using both hands, he yanked his cartridge pouch open. The wooden catch broke. His fingers, trembling, touched the cartridges. He pulled one up. It was made of rough, brown paper twisted into a tube, one end further twisted tight like a candle wick. The small package contained a measure of gunpowder and one lead ball.

Putting the twisted paper to his mouth, Jonathan tore at it with his teeth. It did not give. He tugged harder. This time the paper tore—too much. He could taste powder on his tongue. He spat it out.

Hands shaking, he tried to maneuver the gun upright while still holding the torn cartridge so it wouldn't spill. But the barrel was too high. He had to stand on his toes to pour the powder in. Then, crumpling the paper in his fist, he wadded it around the lead ball, poking both into the barrel mouth.

**Loading and Firing a Flintlock**

1. Place the rifle on "half cock" (Safety) and open the pan by pushing the "frizzen" forward.
2. Reach into the cartridge box and grab a single cartridge. (These are twisted paper tubes with enough powder and ball for one shot.)
3. Bite the cartridge open.
4. Prime. (Place some powder in the pan of the lock.) Close the frizzen. Leave the rifle at half cock.
5. Charge with powder. (Pour the remaining powder down the muzzle of the barrel.) Then insert the paper-wrapped ball. This ball was NOT patched for speed in loading.
6. Draw the rammer. (Pull the ramrod from the stock.)
7. Ram. (Push the ball and paper ALL THE WAY DOWN until it is resting firmly on top of the powder.)
8. Return the rammer. (Replace the rod in the stock.)
9. The rifle is now LOADED. HANDLE IT WITH THE CARE DUE A LOADED WEAPON. (elapsed time: 15 seconds)
10. Make ready. (Bring the hammer to "full cock.")
11. Fire. (Squeeze trigger.)

Watch the three minute video for more information: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpzIb3XjyyY&feature=related>

Use Ctrl + Click to access the video.

**Part 1: ASSESSMENT ITEMS**

1. Sources #1 and #2 give firsthand accounts of the same battle. How are the accounts alike? How are the accounts different? Give one detail from each of the Sources #1 and #2 to show how the accounts are alike. Give one detail from each of the Sources #1 and #2 to show how the accounts are different.

(short constructed response)

1. Which source would most likely be the most helpful to Jonathan as he prepares for battle. Explain why this source is most likely the most helpful. Use two details from the source to support your explanation. Include the source title or number

(short constructed response)

1. All three sources give information about fighting battles during the American Revolution. Explain what you learned about this topic. Use one detail from each source to support your explanation. For each detail, include the source title or number.

(short constructed response)

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|  | **Source #1:****American Emerson Describes the Battle at Concord Bridge** | **Source #2:****British Description of the Battle at Concord Bridge** | **Source #3:****Loading and Firing a Flintlock** |
| 1. One source gives readers an idea of the difficulty a thirteen-year-old might have with his gun in combat.
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| 1. One source describes soldiers fighting from homes and behind trees to ambush the enemy. This source estimates that about four of the soldiers on his side were killed.
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| 1. The writer of one source gave evidence that the attack was poorly planned and carried out by the officers in charge.
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**Grade 5.2 Informational Performance Task:  Decisions/Coming of Age**

**Part 2:**

1. Student Directions

You will now review your notes and sources, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your writing. You may use your notes and go back to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your writing will be scored, and then begin your work.

Your Assignment

Your teacher wants each student to write an informational article about what it was like to be a 13 year-old soldier during the American Revolution. Your article will be read by other students, teachers, and parents.

Using **more than one source**, develop a main idea about what it would have been like to be a 13 year-old soldier during the American Revolution. Choose the most important information from more than one source to support your main idea. Then, write an informational article about your main idea that is several paragraphs long. Clearly organize your article and support your main idea with details from the sources. Use your own words except when quoting directly from the sources. Be sure to give the source title or number when using details from the sources.

REMEMBER: A well-written informational article

* has a clear main idea
* is well-organized and stays on the topic
* has an introduction and conclusion
* uses transitions
* uses details from the sources to support your main idea
* puts the information from the sources in your own words, except when using direct quotations from the sources
* gives the title or number of the source for the details or facts you included
* develops ideas clearly
* uses clear language
* follows rules of writing (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

**Now begin work on your informational article**. Manage your time carefully so that you can

1. Plan your informational article.
2. Write your informational article.
3. Revise and edit the final draft of your informational article.

For Part 2, you are being asked to write an informational article that is several paragraphs long.

Remember to check your notes and your pre-writing/planning as you write, and then revise and edit your informational article.