

## 2014-2015 BCS Performance Tasks

### Performance Task II

**Task Name:** Going to Court

**Task Description:** This Performance Task asks students to write a 1-3 paragraph business letter in which they try to persuade their local representative to include information about specific community resources on their website.

**Standards:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.D

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

**Student Materials Needed:**

5 tips to succeed in small claims court <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/your-money/personal-finance-reference-guide/5-tips-succeed-small-claims-court>

SD County Registrar of Voters <http://www.sdvote.com/voters/Eng/Eindex.shtml>

2-1-1 San Diego <http://www.211sandiego.org/>

## **Task Demands for PT II:**

As part of the PT II, students will identify a problem that must be resolved in Small Claims Court and they will look for resources to help them.

Students will need to be aware that the organizations they research will provide resources, but may not answer all of their questions.

To ensure student success for PT II, allow students opportunities to explore various informational websites throughout the year. Exploring our district website can be a good first step. Have students work cooperatively to find and share information.

Students will need to be familiar with the standard business letter format. The Letter to the Landlord in Fortune 4, Unit 6 will prepare them for the final part of this PT.

Students will also need to have completed Chapters 7 through 10 in the Longman Writing Essentials Book (Cause/Effect Paragraph, Comparison/Contrast Paragraph, Essay Organization, and Opinion Essay) to prepare them for their final letter writing task.

## **Background for Teachers:**

One goal of this PT is that students learn to navigate various government websites (not an easy task) and discover many heretofore unknown resources. You don't need to be (should not be) the expert – just guide them if they become frustrated.

2-1-1 San Diego is a “one stop shop” to access information about community, social, health and government services in San Diego County. Students may call their free, 24/7, confidential phone service or use their searchable online database. 2-1-1 serves the entire population of the County. <http://www.211sandiego.org/>

Small Claims Court - As per their website, “Small Claims Court is a special court where individuals, representing themselves, resolve disputes quickly and inexpensively in an informal setting... In small claims court, you may ask a lawyer for advice before you go to court, but you cannot have a lawyer in court. An individual... may file a claim up to a maximum of **\$10,000**, subject to the following exception...”  
[http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?\\_pageid=55,1424399&\\_dad=portal](http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?_pageid=55,1424399&_dad=portal)

As part of the Performance Task, students will be guided to ask their local representative for information about free legal assistance. That information can also be found on the 211 website.

City websites are all organized differently. For example, local libraries are searchable by name in Google, but if students choose to find them by searching the city websites, they will discover that each website lists their resources differently. See below:

- SD County Website <http://sdcl.org/> (to find county libraries such as the Bonita Library – Click on the Community Services tab)

- City of National City Website <http://www.nationalcityca.gov/index.aspx?page=128> (click on the City Government tab)
- City of Chula Vista Website <http://www.chulavistaca.gov/> (City Services tab – in Community Services)
- City of Imperial Beach Website <http://www.imperialbeachca.gov/> (Resident tab)
- City of San Diego Website <http://www.sandiego.gov/> (Leisure tab – left hand column)

These websites are provided for your information. Allow students to find them on their own.

### **Pre-Task Activities for PT II:**

1. Tell students that they will be reading about Small Claims Court. They will also explore city websites and call their local representative in order to create the final product – a one to three paragraph business letter in which they will try to persuade their local representative to include information about specific community resources on their website.
2. Opening Exercise:
  - a. Ask the class if they know anyone who has had a problem with their landlord keeping the whole security deposit when they moved out of an apartment.
  - b. Tell students that when calling or writing a letter to the landlord fails, a possible solution is going to Small Claims Court.

### **Procedure:**

1. Direct students to the reading, 5 tips to succeed in small claims court <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/your-money/personal-finance-reference-guide/5-tips-succeed-small-claims-court> Allow students to listen to the interview after reading it. Tell them to **take notes** of important facts.
2. Have students discuss the information that they wrote down with a classmate to ensure that everyone has jotted down the important facts. Encourage students to ask each other: “Where did you find that?” rather than simply copy from their neighbor.
3. Students will work cooperatively to brainstorm issues that can be resolved in Small Claims Court. Encourage them to choose problems they may have encountered. Hand out the PT II Brainstorming Chart, break students up into groups, and have them choose a Captain (to keep everyone on task) and a Co-Captain (time-keeper). Everyone should take notes.
4. Share resources as a class. If nobody mentioned 2-1-1 San Diego, tell them about it.

5. Hand out the PT II Graphic Organizer and direct students to research Community Resources on the Internet. This activity will take quite some time. Teachers with few student contact-hours may choose to give this as homework.
6. Tell students that they will explore the websites of their local government representatives. To find their local representatives, they can go to the Registrar of Voters website ([www.sdvote.com](http://www.sdvote.com)) and type their home address. (Students may need help choosing the correct representative for their district.)  
Have them search the website and write down their council member's phone number.

They should write down their council member's URL and phone number.

7. Write the questions below on the board and ask students to think about them as they explore the website.
  - Is the information easy to find?
  - Does the website address (deal with) your particular issue?
  - Does the website list a phone number you can call?
8. Have students practice contacting their local representative with a partner. Have them explain that they would like information on how to resolve their issue.
  - They can say: "I'm trying to find information about \_\_\_\_\_"(the situation they chose on the Brainstorming handout.)
  - They should ask if there is free help available.
  - They should finish the conversation by asking the person's name and thanking them for their help.
9. Tell students to call their local representative's office and 2-1-1 San Diego. Give them an opportunity to report back to the class the information they were given.
10. Hand out the Performance Task II Outline and remind students that they are writing a business letter. Have students write their real address and later email the letters from home as their representatives are sure to respond to them.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Performance Task II – Brainstorming

1. Brainstorm situations that may require going to Small Claims Court to resolve them.
2. Choose one that you would like to research and write about.
3. Make a list of organizations that may provide information or help.

Situation 1. <i>The landlord kept my deposit even though nothing in the apartment was damaged.</i>
2.
3.
4.
Which situation did you choose?
Resources to help you resolve your particular situation:
1.
2.
3.
4.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Performance Task II – Outline

Write a business letter to your local representative explaining why they should include information on Small Claims Court or 2-1-1 (choose one) on their website about San Diego. Include 1-4 below.

1. A statement about your issue.
2. If their website was easy to navigate and what you learned by contacting their office. Include the name of the person you spoke to if that person was helpful. If you were not given helpful information, state (mention) that, too.
3. Why you feel that it is important for information about that resource to be listed and be easy to find on their website.
4. A conclusion

Make Review your letter to check for spelling errors. Make sure it is easy to understand. Once you are satisfied with your letter, have a classmate read it. You may also ask your teacher for assistance if you need help with specific vocabulary.

## Performance Task II – Rubric

We can use the Writing Rubric from Fortune 4

It's in the front of the book.