The PARCC Primer ELA Activity Station features a brief video from the Teaching Channel that shows a teacher and her students doing an activity that builds critical thinking skills through characterization. The lesson is called “Character Detectives: Gathering Evidence,” and builds on the Common Core State Standards for fourth-grade reading and writing.

You will need:
- A computer that is connected to the Internet
- Access to high-speed Internet
- Access to an electrical outlet
- Speakers for computer
- ELA Station – Critical Thinking Activity Handout (included)

Getting started:

1. Before participants arrive, please visit the following link to make sure you have access to the website: https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/developing-characters-for-writing. (If this link does not take you directly to a video, you may need to create a free account that requires the use of an email address.) **Housekeeping tips:** Remember to check the volume before each presentation.

2. Once participants are seated, you might say: “Hello. My name is (insert your name) and welcome to the English Language Arts Station of the PARCC Primer. We will be watching a four-minute video that shows fourth-grade students building their critical thinking skills in the classroom. Critical thinking is the process of gathering information, analyzing it in a way that makes sense to us and then communicating about it, making it a part of our experience. Critical thinking takes place across all disciplines and is an essential life skill that will help students at each grade level and after high school. Students demonstrate their critical thinking skills in class and those skills are assessed on the PARCC assessments. Your handout has some things to consider while we’re watching the lesson.”

3. Go to https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/developing-characters-for-writing and press the play button on the left-hand bottom side of the video screen. (The white play button will turn red when you hover over it.) Play video.

4. After the video, you might say to the participants, “You can see in the video how the students interact with each other and freely discuss their ideas and use their imaginations. At home, you can help your children build their critical thinking skills by reading a story and discussing the thoughts, feeling and actions of the characters within the story.”

5. Ask if there are any questions and dismiss the group to go to the next station.