

Essential Skills

Work Sample Development: Reading

Guidelines/Requirements

Secure Maintenance

For work samples to be a valid assessment of student knowledge and skills, the work samples must be securely maintained, including updating and replacing content. Students must not be able to access—or hear about—the work sample content prior to administration.

Aligned to Content Common Core Standards

Work samples must align with the state content Common Core standards for the skill area being assessed. For example questions about reading selections, prompts for writing, topics for speaking, and problems for mathematics must clearly provide students with opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in the content standards being assessed in the work sample.

Recommendations

- Multiple reading tasks should be used within a school to prevent students from sharing information about reading selections between testing sessions. When appropriate, work samples should be embedded in the curriculum and may be used as a culminating assessment.
- Students should, ideally, be allowed some choice among reading selections or types of reading selections (e.g. topic choice, genre choice, etc.).
- All passages used for reading work samples should be at high school level. Literary selections for reading work samples should be appropriate in length and complexity to allow for responses that can meet standard on all traits of the scoring guide.
- Literary selections may be prose, poetry or drama. Poetry and dramatic selections should be appropriate in length and complexity to allow for responses that can meet standard on all traits of the scoring guide.
- A single reading work sample using two related passages may be used as the entire measure for purposes of Essential Skills certification. This format automatically creates an opportunity for students to draw comparisons between passages. This is a common experience for many HS students. If this format is used, the work sample should be appropriate in length and complexity to allow for responses that can meet standard on all traits of the scoring guide with additional prompts/questions and a specific focus on comparing/contrasting the passages.

- Reading work samples may be on-demand or curriculum-embedded. Some on-demand tasks should be available for students who are close to graduation and need to demonstrate mastery of the Reading Essential Skill. However, teachers may wish to have students respond to reading selections in the regular curriculum in a manner that can be scored using the Reading Scoring Guide and then keep those work samples for future use in certifying essential skill proficiency. (Note: Responses to curriculum-embedded texts should not be permanently returned to students if the school intends to repeat the same work sample in subsequent terms or years.)
- Reading work samples should allow for marginal notes, highlighting, graphic organizers, drawing, etc. in addition to written responses to questions. Scores on each trait take into account all student work.
- Students should respond to multiple prompts/questions per reading work sample to allow for responses that can meet standard on all traits of the scoring guide. More prompts/questions would be required if two related passages are used for a single reading work sample.