

**Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity**  
**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT GLOSSARY**

- **Performance outcomes:** The academic knowledge, behaviors, and skills that students are expected to learn and demonstrate in a performance task. These may include the following:
  - **Enduring Understandings** – *Big ideas that have lasting value beyond the classroom, are central to the discipline, and are transferable to new situations* (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Examples include:
    - English language arts: Writing and speaking are shaped by audience and purpose; texts are embedded within their cultural and historical contexts.
    - Mathematics: Mathematical relationships abound in the world around us and can be applied to everyday decisions such as figuring out whether buying in bulk is a better deal, calculating how much our 401k has dropped, designing our living spaces, or even critiquing art.
  - **Essential Skills** – *The skills that are necessary to do work in the discipline.* Examples include:
    - English language arts: Develop a thesis statement, supported by arguments and/or evidence; demonstrate a command of the conventions of the English language.
    - Mathematics: Use mathematical symbols and language to explain mathematical relationships or ideas.
  - **Disciplinary Thinking** – *Ways of knowing and thinking in the discipline; approaches to thinking or problem-solving.* Examples include:
    - English language arts: In building an argument, consider counterclaims and opposing positions; consider multiple interpretations of a character, motive, or theme.
    - Mathematics: Reason deductively; generalize from specific cases to test whether a relationship holds true in all cases.

Unlike content or skill standards, performance outcomes do NOT represent the totality of all academic behaviors and skills that are valued and desired, but represent a subset of valued learning outcomes that will be measured in the performance task. Performance outcomes are written so that they can be applied across courses and topics/units of study within the discipline.

- **Common scoring scale:** A set of evaluation criteria that can be used to score student work across courses, teachers, and schools, regardless of the specific

topic/unit of study. The scales or rubrics are aligned with the performance outcomes, with score levels designed to represent developmentally appropriate performance targets.

- **Scoring system:** The procedures used for calibrating teachers to score student work reliably within and across schools, and the processes used to evaluate score reliability and comparability across teachers and schools.
- **Performance task:** An assignment that requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and disciplinary thinking by creating a response or a product. The task is designed to measure the performance outcomes and can be scored using the common scoring scales.