

## How do I design a performance-based task emphasizing transfer?

Locating an existing task and tweaking it to meet your needs is a good first step to designing your own performance tasks, especially if you are just getting started. I suggest collaboratively analyzing an existing task to locate each of the characteristics of high-quality PBAs. Don't be surprised to find that many PBAs are not designed to assess transfer of both academics and personal skills/work practices. However, many readily available PBA tasks can be "upgraded" by adding or strengthening opportunities for student input, work practices, and self-reflection.

### Getting Started with Performance-Based Assessment Design: Framing the Scope

Start by answering five key questions to frame your thinking about the purpose of the PBA.

1. **VALIDITY:** What (**content + processes + personal dispositions**) will be transferred during learning and assessed?
2. **ALIGNMENT:** How does this task align with local competencies or academic standards? Can you identify which competencies or core academics are reinforced when students engage in this performance assessment.
3. **AUTHENTIC CONTEXT:** Within what real-world context and format (e.g., case study, design problem, investigation, simulation) will students solve a problem or investigate an essential or driving question? This design feature includes two important points: use real-world contexts and pose a broad essential or driving question to make learning relevant, open-ended, and intriguing.
4. **STUDENT INPUT:** How will PBAs reflect the cultural diversity of learners? Will students be given choices or be required to make any decisions regarding task content/focus, approach/resources used, or how they will share what they've learned?
5. **OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN:** When will all students have an opportunity to develop foundational and conceptual knowledge that they can transfer to a new situation or problem by engaging in this task? Is this task either embedded in an instructional unit or an opportunity to extend thinking beyond what is taught in an instructional unit? The skills, concepts, and dispositions you expect students to transfer must first be taught and reinforced – through practice drills, scrimmages, and feedback – before playing "the game."

## Designing Performance-Based Assessments

### Part 1 - Brainstorm Ideas for the Task Purpose and Scope

**STEP 1: Identify what the assessment is intended to measure.** An initial brainstorm helps to clarify the assessment purpose and scope. Use the criteria below (typically used in most rubrics) to generate the expected processes/skills, concepts, dispositions, and thinking strategies you plan to assess. All criterion types do not need to be included in the final scoring rubric but *should be considered* during this phase of the planning. **Only the last two criteria will actually assess far transfer of skills, concepts, or dispositions so at least one of them should be included.**

Criterion Types	Questions Related to Each Type of Rubric Criterion	Possibilities for PBA Topic:
<b>Skills and Processes</b> (DOK 1 or DOK 2 for more complex tasks)	<b>Will the student use specific processes or tools</b> (e.g., procedures for research or a science investigation; data collection tools/analysis; validating credibility of sources; use of technology, software)?	
<b>Form</b> (DOK 1)	<b>Are there formats or rules to be applied</b> (e.g., correct citation format; organization of lab report; required camera shots; editing grammar and usage; meeting deadlines)?	
<b>Accuracy: Content and Concepts</b> (DOK 1 or 2)	<b>What content knowledge must be applied accurately?</b> List essential domain-specific terms, concepts, theories, symbols, representations to be accurately applied.	
<b>Transfer: Interpretations, Construction of Knowledge</b> (DOK 3 or 4)	<b>How will the student go beyond developing an appropriate product</b> to gain new insights, raise new questions related to the topic, or make connections to Big Ideas? How does this link to the essential question?	
<b>Impact on Self and Others</b> (DOK 3 or 4)	<b>How will the final product achieve its intended purpose</b> (e.g., solve a complex problem; inform or change perspectives of self or the audience; synthesize information to create a useful product or entertaining performance; justify a call to action/make a difference). How does this link to the essential question?	

**STEP 2: Identify one or more authentic contexts for applying these skills, concepts, and dispositions in the performance assessment.**

Consider how real-world professionals employ these skills and concepts (scientists, artists, historians, researchers, writers, choreographers, videographers, health professionals, technicians, educators, etc.).

- case study or artifact /data analysis
- research – gather, organize, analyze information (e.g., survey, interview, readings)
- science or STEM investigation (e.g., field study, lab investigation)
- group problem-solving activities (e.g., engineering design task, dance routine, mathematical model, fine arts /media products)
- other?

**STEP 3: Identify appropriate format(s) for how students will apply their knowledge, skills, and dispositions.**

- comparing case studies or recommending solutions after case analyses
- dramatization, role playing scenario (e.g., court case, mock trials, interpretive dance)
- peer reviewed products (e.g., visual and performing arts, product design challenges)
- performance/presentation – oral, written, visual, multimedia, etc.
- develop a product – oral, written, visual, multimedia (e.g., infographic, podcast, video, documentary)
- community service projects, awareness campaigns
- self-reflection journals
- peer critiques

**STEP 4: What choices, input, or decisions will be made by students?**

- topic/content/focus
- individual versus group work, individual roles
- resources, tools, timelines
- products demonstrating learning
- audience

**STEP 5: Develop the Student Prompt for the Task**

**S-T-A-R-S** is a framework for describing where there is structure and where students might have input (designated by “?” in the table). Each letter of STARS describes a different component of the PBA. Use S-T-A-R-S as the starting point for the student prompt.

## **Designing Performance-Based Assessments**

### **Part 2 - Putting the Task Description Together**

**STEP 6: Develop an overview of the PBA with student prompt and general teacher instructions.** Page 5 lists information that should be included in each PBA overview.

## **Designing Performance-Based Assessments**

### **Part 3 – Clarify Success Criteria and Develop Scoring Rubrics**

**STEP 7: Finalize success criteria aligned with observable evidence expected from the processes used and the products developed to demonstrating learning.**

Review the student prompt (and notes from Part 1 of the PBA design) in order to ensure that the criteria in the scoring rubrics clearly align with assessing both the processes used and final products demonstrating learning. Often more than one scoring rubric will be needed – one to assess academics and others for peer- or self-assessments.

**STEP 8: Develop a scoring guide or rubric.**

A well-written rubric provides direction to both teachers and students as to what to do next to advance the learning. You may eventually end up creating a teacher version with additional task-specific scoring notes and a student-friendly version for self- or peer-assessment. (Chapter 6 includes examples of student scoring guides.)

## Performance-Based Assessment Overview

**Project or Assessment Task Title**

**Content Area /Course**

**Grade Level**

**Unit of Study**

**Competencies / Standards Assessed**

- **Academic Content**
- **Inter- and Intra-Personal Skills /Work Practices**

**Enduring Understanding(s)/Big Idea(s)**

**Essential or Driving Question(s)**

**Student Prompt**

Use STARS components and student-friendly language: Situation + Task + Audience + Roles and Resources + Success Criteria). Clarify the choices or decisions students must make (e.g., collaboration options; choose strategies used; determine the product; generate questions to guide your research).

**General Teacher Directions**

**Task Description:**

**Resources Needed:**

**Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills (to transfer):**

**Estimated Time Needed:**

**Suggested Use: Formative \_\_\_\_ Interim (mid-year or mid-unit) \_\_\_\_ Summative \_\_\_\_**

**Additional Accommodations Allowed** (e.g., use of audio books for task requiring literary analysis; allow video-taped presentation as option to live audience):

**Rubrics or scoring guides used for this PBA or project:**

- Content Knowledge, Skills/Processes, Impact
- Specific Product - Form or Formatting Criteria (visual, auditory, etc.)
- Peer Assessment or Peer critique
- Self-Assessment or Self-Reflection