

## Figure 4.2: A Protocol for Unpacking Standards

Begin with the big picture. Select a standard domain to target your work (for example, Reading: Informational Text). This could be a single standard, a standard complete with its subtext or bulleted components (the cluster of standards), or a set of standards within a category (for example, all standards related to nonfiction reading). Examine the requirements involved. In many cases, it is best to unpack a standard's or standards' content using processes such as those outlined in the following protocol. Note that in some cases, however, you'll select a standard that is heavily laden with content, and unpacking in those instances only creates additional confusion, as things start to seem redundant or disconnected. In that case, it's best to step back and look at the overall standard first and see if you can identify the essence of the standard in a single sentence or even a title of three words or fewer.

<b>Step 1</b>	<p>Read the entire cluster of standards within the domain, and come to agreement on what it means when everything is put together. What evidence would students have to produce, and at what level of rigor would the assessment tasks need to be in order to meet the entirety of the standard? <i>Name</i> the desired level of complexity for the overall standard. If helpful, write the appropriate DOK level (or reference other models for labeling rigor) next to the main verbs, but determine the final level by looking at the entire standard's combined parts.</p> <p><i>Note: A single verb—the starting words of standards like engage, identify, explain, and so on—can often be addressed at all four levels of rigor in the DOK framework.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: It's important to make certain that significant parts of the standard will require higher-level reasoning (DOK level 3 or 4).</i></p>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p><b>Highlight (or circle)</b> all the verbs. What will students need to do to complete this standard?</p> <p><i>Note: Standards sometimes hide the verb, so you may need to write it in. For example, at almost every grade level in the Speaking and Listening standards, students must “engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions” (NGA &amp; CCSSO, 2010a). But engage is not the main verb. Teams must decide if the main verb is discuss or collaborate or something different and then write that main verb near the word engage.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: Use the verbs to determine the assessment method.</i></p>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p><b>Underline</b> any part of the standard that you believe will require direct instruction in order for students to be successful. This can include verbs you've already circled, new knowledge components, or reasoning processes. If the team disagrees on whether something will require direct instruction, place a <i>double underline</i> under that idea.</p> <p><i>Note: Double underlines indicate where teams need to use small preassessments in order to gather evidence for decision making. Healthy teams use data, not opinions or prior experiences, to make important instructional decisions.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: Underlines denote the places that teams will likely want to place the formative assessments.</i></p>
<b>Step 4</b>	<p><b>Bold (or star)</b> any skills in the standard that require direct observation. You will specifically watch or listen for these items with each student during a performance task (for example, making eye contact during a speech, speaking in a foreign language with fluency, and so on). If you can evaluate a skill in the final product (for example, a completed product like a research report, a lab report, a model built to scale, and so on), do not put a star next to it.</p> <p><i>Note: You may find standards that have no stars in them.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: Starred or bolded features require performance assessments and a set of quality criteria and clear proficiency levels incorporated into rubrics for evaluation purposes.</i></p>

<b>Step 5</b>	<p><b>Italicize (or box)</b> any items or quality indicators that need to be part of required products (if any) for standard completion (for example, a lab report with data displays).</p> <p><i>Note: Many standards do not delineate the specific products that students must develop.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: These are performance assessments that result in products and will require a set of quality criteria and clear proficiency levels incorporated into rubrics for evaluation purposes.</i></p>
<b>Step 6</b>	<p><b>Identify</b> the context and the content that you will use to teach and assess the standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Context:</i> Where does the standard fit in the sequence of instruction? What broader relationships does this standard have (for example, Does it have a connection to technology? Will it create a base for future learning? Or does it interconnect with other standards?)?</li> <li>• <i>Content:</i> Which subject or units will the standard involve? What content will students study with the skills at hand, or what skills must they practice with the content at hand?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7</b>	<p><b>Create</b> student-friendly learning targets for the content and process standards involved.</p> <p><i>Note: Keep the number of targets to a manageable few. It's helpful to list and rank the targets from hardest at the top to easiest at the bottom and then use the top (hardest) targets for the overall student learning targets, as the lower-level targets are often already included within the harder ones.</i></p>
<b>Step 8</b>	<p><b>Develop</b> a brief description of a summative assessment needed to measure student learning on the standards selected.</p> <p><i>Note: It is important to have more than one data point of reference when certifying proficiency levels.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: When teams revisit a standard through multiple assessment opportunities, learners have the option to improve over time. When students can demonstrate learning multiple times, it makes feedback more likely to feed forward.</i></p>
<b>Step 9</b>	<p><b>Write</b> a brief description for the assessment road map of scaffolded assessments (summative, formative, and individual, and which of these will serve as the common assessments) that will both offer valuable insight into student readiness and provide a clear vision of additional instruction and assessment supports so learners will have success with the overall summative assessment. Add any sense of a timeline you need to make it all manageable.</p> <p><i>Note: Not all assessments need be common assessments. Team members can add more assessments than what they have identified in the map, or modify the existing assessments in the map to best meet their needs in supporting their students' ability to achieve mastery on the common summative. The assessment road map lays out the formative assessment scaffolding needed for student success. Team members can have more than one summative assessment (for example, a pencil-and-paper test, a performance task, and so on) as they seek sufficient evidence to certify mastery.</i></p> <p><i>Hint: Select the common formative assessments that will best help team members, at strategic moments, capture the most helpful information to support advancing student learning overall. Create the common summative assessment that will provide the most sufficient and accurate evidence to evaluate student proficiency in the standards being assessed.</i></p>