

Assessment Instrument Quality Evaluation Rubric

High-Quality Assessment Criteria	Description of Level 1	Requirements of the Indicator Are Not Present	Limited Requirements of the Indicator Are Present	Substantially Meets the Requirements of the Indicator	Fully Achieves the Requirements of the Indicator	Description of Level 4
1. Identification of and emphasis on essential learning standards (student-friendly language)	Essential learning standards are unclear, absent from the assessment instrument, or both. Some of the mathematical tasks (questions) may not align to the essential learning standards of the unit. The organization of assessment tasks is not clear.	1	2	3	4	Essential learning standards are clear, included on the assessment, and connected to the assessment tasks (questions).
2. Balance of higher- and lower-level-cognitive-demand mathematical tasks	Emphasis is on procedural knowledge with minimal higher-level-cognitive-demand mathematical tasks for demonstration of understanding.	1	2	3	4	Test is rigor balanced with higher-level- and lower-level-cognitive-demand mathematical tasks present and aligned to the essential learning standards.
3. Variety of assessment-task formats and use of technology	Assessment contains only one type of questioning strategy—selected response or constructed response. There is little to no modeling of mathematics or use of tools. Use of technology (such as calculators) is not clear.	1	2	3	4	Assessment includes a blend of assessment types and modeling tasks or use of tools. Use of technology (such as calculators) is clear.
4. Appropriate and clear scoring rubric (points assigned or proficiency scale)	Scoring rubric is not evident or is inappropriate for the assessment tasks.	1	2	3	4	Scoring rubric is clearly stated and appropriate for each mathematical task.
5. Clarity of directions	Directions are missing or unclear. Directions are confusing for students.	1	2	3	4	Directions are appropriate and clear.
6. Academic language	Wording is vague or misleading. Academic language (vocabulary and notation) is not precise, causing a struggle for student understanding and access.	1	2	3	4	Academic language (vocabulary and notation) in tasks is direct, fair, accessible, and clearly understood by students. Teachers expect students to attend to precision in response.
7. Visual presentation	Assessment instrument is sloppy, disorganized, and difficult to read, and it offers no room for student work.	1	2	3	4	Assessment is neat, organized, easy to read, and well-spaced, with room for student work. There is also room for teacher feedback.
8. Time allotment	Few students can complete the assessment in the time allowed.	1	2	3	4	Students can successfully complete the assessment in the time allowed.

A great place to begin your initial work as a professional learning community team in mathematics is the collaborative design and writing of your common unit assessments. DuFour et al. (2016) describe the importance of using common assessment instruments this way: “One of the most powerful, high-leverage strategies for improving student learning available to schools is the creation of frequent, high-quality common assessments by teachers who are working collaboratively to help a group of students acquire agreed-on knowledge and skills” (p. 141).

Creating common assessments to use during and at the end of each unit ensures equity in the rigor of the mathematics problems used for the assessments. It will also help your team to backward-map your

instruction during the unit as you prepare the students for the expected and required rigor. Ideally, your team should create these common unit assessments *before* the unit begins.

You can use the eight criteria in this evaluation rubric to determine the quality of your current common unit assessments. A rating of 1 has a description attached and would be considered poor performance with these test criteria. A rating of 4 indicates your current common assessments act as an exemplar in these criteria we could all learn from. Regardless of your self-rating, make it a team goal to keep improving the quality of your unit-by-unit mathematics assessments.

You should also note that, if you do not collaborate to become a 4 in each category, the first four mathematics assessment design criteria listed here often create places of great inequity in your mathematics assessment process and professional work. Perhaps the most important are the identification of and emphasis on essential learning standards, the balance of higher- and lower-level-cognitive-demand tasks, the variety of assessment-task formats and use of technology, and the appropriate scoring rubric. Yet, these are also the most limiting aspects of many mathematics unit assessments—both during and at the end of a unit.