

Technology-Enhanced (TE) items/tasks are desirable when they can provide evidence for that what could not be as reliably obtained from SR and CR items. Additionally, components of certain Extended-Response (ER) items (in mathematics) and performance tasks may employ TE tools as part of the task. An expressed desire on the part of the consortium is that the use of TE items in the assessments will ultimately encourage classroom use of authentic mathematical computing tools (e.g., spreadsheets, interactive geometry software) as part of classroom instruction.

Performance Tasks

Smarter Balanced defined Performance Tasks in their Race to the Top application as follows:

[Performance tasks]...will provide a measure of the student's ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple [content] standards — a key component of college- and career readiness. Performance [tasks] will be used to better measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with [selected response] or constructed response items. (p. 42).

The Smarter Balanced Performance Task Work Group has identified the essential characteristics by specifying a performance task must:

- Integrate knowledge and skills across multiple content standards or English language arts strands/mathematics domains;
- Measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and/or complex analysis with relevant evidence;
- Require student-initiated planning, management of information and ideas, and/or interaction with other materials;
- Require production of more extended responses (e.g., oral presentations, exhibitions, product development), in addition to more extended written responses that might be revised and edited;
- Reflect a real-world task and/or scenario-based problem;
- Lend itself to multiple approaches;
- Represent content that is relevant and meaningful to students;
- Allow for demonstration of important knowledge and skills, including those that address 21st century skills such as critically analyzing and, synthesizing media texts;
- Focus on big ideas over facts;
- Allow for multiple points of view and interpretations;
- Require scoring that focuses on the essence of the task;
- Reflect one or more of the Standards for Mathematical Practice, Reading and Writing (or Speaking and Listening) processes; and
- Seem feasible for the school/classroom environment.

The general specifications for Smarter Balanced performance tasks build upon the work of the Smarter Balanced Performance Task Work Group, which provided guidelines describing the general characteristics desired in the performance tasks. The specifications address fifteen different aspects

of performance tasks, such as overall structure, allowable teacher-student interactions, tools and other resources, and scoring requirements.

The task specifications call for multi-part, multi-session activities during which students individually will produce several scorable responses, products, or presentations. All this will be accomplished within controlled classroom settings. More detailed information regarding time requirements, stimulus materials, products, etc. is provided in subject-specific performance task specifications and in the target-specific tables describing performance task models. Specifications developed by groups other than the performance task team (specifications/guidelines for stimulus materials, rubrics, formatting and style, bias and sensitivity, and accessibility and accommodations) are not repeated in the general performance task specifications even though they apply.

As with TE items/tasks, an entire section of these *Specifications* contains information related to the development of high-quality performance tasks, and a writer must refer to that section when attempting to write these tasks. In short, performance tasks should:

- Integrate knowledge and skills across multiple claims and targets;
- Measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and/or complex analysis with relevant evidence;
- Require student-initiated planning, management of information/data and ideas, and/or interaction with other materials;
- Reflect a real-world task and/or scenario-based problem;
- Allow for multiple approaches;
- Represent content that is relevant and meaningful to students;
- Allow for demonstration of important knowledge and skills, including those that address 21st century skills such as critically analyzing and synthesizing information presented in a variety of formats, media, etc.;
- Require scoring that focuses on the essence of the Claim(s) and Targets for which the task was written. Scoring rules are described in detail in the Performance Task section of the content-specific item specifications documentation;
- Be feasible for the school/classroom environment.

Many PTs will require up to 120 minutes in which to administer. Additional time might be necessary for prework or group work, as required by a particular task.