The steps in the protocol outlined below are designed to support a team of educators as they asses the alignment of performance tasks to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

**Steps for Aligning Literacy Tasks to the Common Core Learning Standards**

**Step 1. Determine what the task and rubric expect students to do and whether the texts contain sufficient and relevant information to support students in responding to the task.** Analyze the performance task and rubric, from the perspective of a student about to execute the task. What are the literacy concepts, domain content knowledge (i.e. what students are expected to know) and performances the students are required to know and do in order to accomplish the task? Read through the texts that accompany the task and determine whether the texts contain sufficient and relevant information to support students in responding to the task.

**Step 2. Determine which CCLS Literacy Standards the task and rubric addresses.** If the task is text-based, identify the type of text to be read (informational or literary) and which grade-level Reading standards are most applicable. If the task requires writing, do the same for the grade-level Writing standards. Where appropriate, determine applicable Speaking and Listening, and Language standards. Do a “close reading of the targeted standard(s), highlighting key words in the standard that identify the performance skills (often verb phrases) students should develop and demonstrate (e.g., “cite textual evidence” and draw “inferences” in R.6.1) and any specific literacy concepts (often noun phrases) students should know (e.g. students should know the difference between “what the text says explicitly” and “inferences” in R.6.1.).

**Step 3. Rate the alignment of literacy concepts and performances of the task and rubric to those stated in the CCLS.** Use the rating scale below to determine a rating for the alignment of the task and rubric’s literacy concepts and performance expectations to each of the targeted CCLS. Where there are partial matches, underline the parts of the task and rubric that match the standards and highlight where there are gaps. Identify where texts support, or are insufficient to support, students’ demonstration of the standard. *Note: When first norming this process, it might be helpful for educators to give a rating for performance and a separate rating for literacy content. Identifying whether a gap is in knowledge and/or performance will help more specifically identify where a task could be improved/revised*.

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| **Alignment of Literacy Task and Rubric Expectations to CCLS for Literacy**  |
| **3** | **Fully Aligned** | The stated expectations of the task and rubric directly address all of the major performances and literacy concepts in the standard(s). The task is likely to elicit direct, observable evidence that a student can (or cannot) demonstrate all of the expectations within the targeted CCLS standards. |
| **2** | **Partially Aligned** | This rating is used for a partial match when literacy concepts and performances in the task and rubric are consistent with the most critical concepts and performances identified in each standard. Non-critical aspects of the standard might not be addressed in the task, possibly by design.  |
| **1** | **Insufficiently Aligned** | This rating is used for a partial match when the most critical literacy concepts and performances identified in the CCLS are NOT addressed in the task and/or rubric. |
| **0** | **Not Yet Aligned** | None of the CCLS literacy concepts and performances are addressed in the task and rubric. |

**Step 4. Determine if the texts used are of appropriate complexity based on grade level expectations.** Review the text(s) to be read within the task and analyze their level(s) of complexity, considering quantitative, qualitative, and reader and task criteria (see p. 4 of Appendix A for an overview of these elements). Read the text (or an excerpt from it) and think about the text characteristics that influence a reader’s experience and make it more or less complex.

* Identify the Lexile levels of the texts and determine whether they fall within the appropriate grade level range (p. 8 of Appendix A).
* Analyze the qualitative aspects of a text’s complexity. Note: To support this analysis, refer to the Gradients of Text Complexity Rubric(s).
* Analyze Reader and Task considerations. For this stage in the planning process it might not yet be possible to take into consideration an individual reader’s ability if students are not yet known. However, it is important to consider what the task is asking students to do with the texts (read independently, with scaffolding from the teacher, in groups with peers, etc.), and CCLS grade level expectations.

Based on the analysis of the above, and using the grade level text exemplars in Appendix B of the CCLS as a guide, determine if the texts are appropriately complex for the grade level.