

Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Project
Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments
Economic Systems

Quality Criteria	Yes	Yes, with Slight Modifications	No	Rationale/Suggestions
1. Focus on Deeper Learning				
a. Does the task require the demonstration and/or application of complex skills (e.g., Critical Abilities, DOK Levels 3 and 4, 21 st century skills, Key Cognitive Strategies)?*	✓			This task requires a careful reading of several documents, attention to learning vocabulary in depth, the analysis of claims and evidence in each document, comparisons of documents to one another, and a synthesis of findings in an argumentative essay. It also involves several forms of class discussion, and collaboration in pairs and small groups. The writing mini-tasks guide students in mastering key aspects of a well-constructed essay.
b. Can students' responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) provide evidence of important college/career readiness skills and Critical Abilities (e.g., collaboration, research skills, evidence-based communication)?*	✓			Students are to write an argumentative essay. Highly relevant documents and well-designed mini-tasks enable them to do this with an understanding of the relationship of research, claims, counter-claims, evidence, and reasoning. Collaboration with peers sharpens their understanding and aides in the evidence gathering, writing, and revising stages.
c. Does the task address key concepts and skills in the discipline that are transferable to other contexts?*	✓			This task asks students to apply what they know about the differences between market versus command economies to an analysis of several documents with varying points of view with specific economic policy issues and programs. This is a task central to the field of economics. Hence, the task does address key concepts and skills transferable to many other aspects of economics and history as disciplines. The task also demands the practice and application of essay writing skills transferable to many other similar writing tasks.
2. Alignment to Standards				
a. Does the task measure key skills and major claims emphasized by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and/or NGSS? *		✓		The various mini-tasks making up this task call for skills measured by the Career and College Readiness standards for reading and writing listed in "Section 1: What Task?"
b. Can students' responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) be scored using CCSS/NGSS aligned rubrics? *	✓			The task gives students the tools to do the research, reading, and evidence-gathering needed to write a meaningful argumentative essay carefully structured so as to be scored by a CCSS aligned rubric.
c. Are the scoring criteria--rubrics, point scoring systems, checklists (if provided)--aligned to	✓			The LDC Argumentation Rubric aligns with the CCSS expectations spelled out by the instructions such as, the ability to gather

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key expectations of the CCSS/NGSS?				information, formulate a claim, support the claim effectively, demonstrate knowledge of relevant content, and organize the essay well.
d. Is the rigor of the task appropriately matched to the grade-level standards being assessed?	✓			The task is rigorous, even for the 11-12 grade students it is designed for. However, it is appropriate for students at this level, preferably also with some prior economics knowledge.
3. Student Choice and Agency				
a. Does the task allow for a variety of responses and/or solution pathways? *		✓		The responses to the task are confined to the writing of an essay dealing with a question already formulated. Within those constraints, this task does provide a very limited amount of room for a variety of responses and ways to make use of the documentary sources provided. The class discussions, peer editing feedback, and other small group activities offer opportunities for students to respond in various ways to the task materials and problems. However, the task basically predetermines the way students must respond to the prompt.
b. Does the task offer opportunities for student ownership and student choice (e.g., selecting a research question or topic; selecting sources; etc.)?			✓	Students do not have a choice of topic to write about or sources to select. A limited degree of choice is provided in that students can stress some of the pre-selected sources in their essays and not others. The mini-tasks provide a set of steps for writing the essay based on a single essay outline model.
c. Does the task require student-initiated planning and management of information/data and ideas (e.g., determining strategies for solving a problem; designing an investigation; deciding how to present findings; etc.)?			✓	Student-initiated planning and management is required only in the very limited sense that students must take notes, analyze sources, discuss issues, and outline their essays. However, they do all these things in accordance with templates set for them by the task.
4. Relevance and Authenticity				
a. Is task content represented in a way that is appropriately authentic (i.e., not overly hypothetical), relevant (i.e., relatable), and/or meaningful to students and the discipline (e.g., topic connects to students' lives, task simulates authentic purpose and audience)? *	✓			The task asks students to consider broad and abstract economic concepts that may by themselves seem remote or hypothetical. However, it does so using content focused on several concrete, relevant and even highly charged and debatable topics. Many of these topics (e.g. taxing Coca Cola, shopping or working at Wal-Mart, etc.) are likely to be especially relevant and meaningful to students.
b. Is the task related to real world problems, contexts, and/or purposes?	✓			The task asks students to learn about and consider their views on many real world economic problems and policy questions.

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5. Suitable for Diverse Student Populations				
a. Is the task, at its core, free of bias that might disadvantage specific student populations and free of stereotypes in language, content, and design? *	✓			
b. Does the task include, or allow for the use of, a variety of stimuli?		✓		Most of the features of this task involve written documents, speaking and listening, writing the essay, etc. However, one source, the Newsweek Infographic, does go beyond speaking and writing to provide some graphic features relevant to the topic. Nevertheless, overall this is almost entirely a task based on written materials.
c. Does the task provide instructional scaffolds to support student learning and skill development toward successful completion of the task?	✓			The task information sets out a typical sequence of mini-tasks for writing an argumentative essay - from preparing for the task, learning key vocabulary, reading sources and gathering information from them, followed by a set of steps for constructing the essay. The scaffolding provided for each of these mini-tasks is sufficient to guide students in the successful completion of the overall task.
d. Does the task include appropriate recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students?	✓			For most of the mini-tasks, an "Accommodations and Interventions" section of the instructions recommends alternate ways of handling matters for students who may need extra support or for advanced students who can move through the task faster and give help to other students.
6. Design of Student Task				
a. Is the overall task prompt clear (e.g., clear student directions, unambiguous graphics)? *	✓			
b. Is task information presented in an organized way?		✓		In almost all cases, the instructions describe a well-organized sequence of mini-tasks
7. Curriculum-Embedded				
a. Is the task feasible for most school/classroom environments (e.g., access to necessary resources)?	✓			
b. Does the task include opportunities for independent work as well as interaction/collaboration with peers?	✓			Students collaborate at key points in pairs or small groups. They take part in all-class discussions. Otherwise they work largely independently in producing their final essays.

Task Materials	Yes	No	Comments
a. Is the task missing any referenced accompanying materials (resources, handouts, rubrics etc.)? If yes, please indicate which materials are missing.		✓	
b. Does this task contain topics/materials/texts that might be sensitive for some students? If yes, please explain.		✓	

Comments: This is a worthy task for 11-12 grade students, especially those with some economics background. A highly meaningful task involving significant content and requiring the demonstration of important reading, writing and other skills relevant in economics and other social studies classes. A small number of issues (see 1c and 6b above), if addressed, could improve the task somewhat.

Criteria summarized in this document were derived from the following sources:

- *Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments*, SCALE, 2013
- *Criteria for High-Quality Assessment*, SCOPE, CRESST, LSRI, June 2013
- *Quality Performance Assessment: Harnessing the Power of Teacher and Student Learning*, Brown & Mevs, February 2012
- *ThinkReady Task Review Checklist*, 2013