

Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Project  
Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments  
**Three Religions, One Sacred Place**

Quality Criteria	Yes	Yes, with Slight Modifications	No	Rationale/Suggestions
<b>1. Focus on Deeper Learning</b>				
a. Does the task require the demonstration and/or application of complex skills (e.g., Critical Abilities, DOK Levels 3 and 4, 21 <sup>st</sup> 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 from all the documents in an explanatory essay. It also involves several forms of class discussion, and collaboration in pairs and small groups. The writing task guides students carefully through several exercises teaching key aspects of a well-constructed explanatory 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 asked to write an explanatory essay. Sufficient background information and guiding mini-tasks enable them to do this with an understanding of the relationship of research, claims, evidence, and reasoning.
c. Does the task address key concepts and skills in the discipline that are transferable to other contexts?*	✓			The task focuses on important concepts about three central monotheistic religions of huge importance in understanding much of world history. It demands that students apply knowledge of these religions to a geographical context - the Temple Mount. It thereby introduces ideas regarding the interaction generally between historical processes and geographical settings. The task guides students in interpreting documents, drawing evidence out of them, and comparing them with one another - all central and transferable skills.
<b>2. Alignment to Standards</b>				
a. Does the task measure key skills and major claims emphasized by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and/or NGSS? *	✓			The task instructions list several Common Core Anchor standards in Reading and Writing, as well as several social studies standards for the District of Columbia and its version of Common Core standards in history/social studies. The various mini-tasks and the central task entail using the skills identified in all of these standards.
b. Can students' responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) be scored using CCSS/NGSS aligned rubrics? *	✓			Students must engage in several pair and small group collaborations and write an explanatory essay. These demand the use of and can be scored using several of the CCSS reading and writing standards listed in the task instructions.

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c. Are the scoring criteria--rubrics, point scoring systems, checklists (if provided)--aligned to key expectations of the CCSS/NGSS?	✓			A rubric is provided for an explanatory essay. It aligns adequately with the CCSS standards identified in the task instructions.
d. Is the rigor of the task appropriately matched to the grade-level standards being assessed?	✓			The task is designed for sixth grade students. The task prompt and the materials provided are substantive but appropriate. The scaffolding for the mini-tasks is detailed and effective in enabling students to learn a great deal from the documents and produce a well-organized explanatory essay.
<b>3. Student Choice and Agency</b>				
a. Does the task allow for a variety of responses and/or solution pathways? *		✓		The task limits the variety of responses to those that directly address a single question already formulated. Students have some flexibility in how to extract, arrange, and synthesize the evidence they will use to support their answers. The class discussions, peer editing and other small group activities offer opportunities for students to respond in various ways to the task materials. However, the overall task is carefully delimited.
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. They are expected to use most or all of the sources provided and to organize their essays in accord with a single template provided in the "Essay Planning Organizer." An "Additional Materials" list is provided for teachers at the end of the set of instructions. Greater student choice might be incorporated into the central task by asking students to select one or two other documents from this list of additional materials to incorporate into their essay.
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 by this task, but only to a very limited degree. Students must assemble the elements of some carefully guided and structured mini-tasks into a final essay. A specific organizational framework for that essay is provided, with only a limited degree of choice by students as to which documents to stress and interpret in detail.
<b>4. Relevance and Authenticity</b>				
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	✓			The materials are largely descriptive of the world religions involved and a geographical location central to those religious faiths. As such, the issue and these materials are vitally important to history as a discipline. They are also very relevant and meaningful to students, given that they deal with essential facts about widely held religious

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simulates authentic purpose and audience)? *				faiths relevant to many students.
b. Is the task related to real world problems, contexts, and/or purposes?	✓			Knowing more about the religious and political significance of the Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem is key to understanding crucial social, cultural, and political issues in the news.
<b>5. Suitable for Diverse Student Populations</b>				
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? *	✓			This issue and these materials deal with matters of a highly sensitive and volatile subject. However, the materials are even-handed and balanced in the way the facts, concepts, and concerns of each religion are presented.
b. Does the task include, or allow for the use of, a variety of stimuli?	✓			The task employs mainly written materials, but also a variety of graphics and several video clips. It is based on several forms of small group interaction that involved various kinds of tasks based on speaking and listening skills.
c. Does the task provide instructional scaffolds to support student learning and skill development toward successful completion of the task?	✓			This task employs a rich assortment of instructional scaffolds - graphic organizers, note-taking guides, peer and small group supports, etc. These are all relevant to the overall task and presented in a very clear and logical sequence to facilitate knowledge acquisition and relevant skill development.
d. Does the task include appropriate recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students?			✓	
<b>6. Design of Student Task</b>				
a. Is the overall task prompt clear (e.g., clear student directions, unambiguous graphics)? *	✓			
b. Is task information presented in an organized way?	✓			The task is developed through a very carefully arranged set of steps. The instructions are easy to understand and clear as to how and why they fit in to the overall plan for the task.
<b>7. Curriculum-Embedded</b>				
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 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.	✓		See 5a above. The topic of religion always has the potential to be sensitive for some students. However, the materials and mini-tasks are all fair, neutral in tone, and respectful of all religions.

**Comments:** This is an excellent task for its sixth-grade target audience. A meaningful task involving significant content and requiring the demonstration of important reading, writing and other skills relevant in any history/social studies course.

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