

Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Project  
Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments  
**A Closer Look at “Mother to Son”**

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)?*	X			Task requires students to write an essay that explains the theme of a poem and the poet’s use of figurative language (i.e., metaphors) to convey that theme.
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)?*	X			Students’ responses to the task provide evidence of their critical thinking and reasoning skills and their ability to write an evidence-based essay, all of which are college/career readiness skills. Responses also provide evidence of the following Critical Ability: Communication in Many Forms.
c. Does the task address key concepts and skills in the discipline that are transferable to other contexts?*	X			Task requires close reading of a complex text (i.e., it is complex for the grade level), analysis of that text, and writing an informational essay, all of which are skills that are transferable to other contexts.
<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? *	X			Task measures Claim #1 (close reading of a complex text and analysis of that text) and Claim #2 (students produce effective and well-grounded writing). Task measures the two standards identified in the module as the “focus standards”—i.e., RL.5.2 and RL.5.4—and also measures the other CCSS language, reading, and writing standards listed in the module.
b. Can students’ responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) be scored using CCSS/NGSS aligned rubrics? *	X			Students’ products (essays) can be scored using a CCSS-aligned rubric.
c. Are the scoring criteria--rubrics, point scoring systems, checklists (if provided)--aligned to key expectations of the CCSS/NGSS?	X			Rubric used is the LDC Informational or Explanatory Rubric, which is linked to the key expectations of the CCSS.
d. Is the rigor of the task appropriately matched to the grade-level standards being assessed?	X			Although the Lexile measure of the poem is in the fifth-grade band, the figurative language and other language demands of the poem make the poem a complex text for fifth graders. The task product—an essay that discusses how Langston Hughes’ use of metaphors contributes to the understanding of the poem “Mother to Son”—is appropriately matched to the

Quality Criteria	Yes	Yes, with Slight Modifications	No	Rationale/Suggestions
				standards being assessed.
<b>3. Student Choice and Agency</b>				
a. Does the task allow for a variety of responses and/or solution pathways? *	X			To the extent that the theme can be interpreted in more than one way, the task allows for more than one response.
b. Does the task offer opportunities for student ownership and student choice (e.g., selecting a research question or topic; selecting sources; etc.)?		X		Task offers students the choice of figurative language examples from the poem to support their thesis. Other than that, there are no opportunities for student choice.
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.)?	X			Task requires some student-initiated planning in that students must plan how they will present their information (i.e., theme and figurative language examples that support that theme) in an informational essay.
<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 simulates authentic purpose and audience)? *	X			The task content includes a poem that is authentic, relevant, and meaningful (although it may be more meaningful to those students who have had exposure to people whose lives have been difficult). The task of writing an essay about the poem's theme and the figurative language used in the poem to convey that theme is also authentic and relevant (as students get older they will increasingly encounter the use of metaphors to describe situations, emotions, etc.).
b. Is the task related to real world problems, contexts, and/or purposes?	X			
<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? *			X	ELLs are likely to have difficulty with much of the vocabulary and the dialect used in the poem (e.g., crystal stair, tacks, reachin' landins, turnin', I'se been a climbin, 'cause you finds).
b. Does the task include, or allow for the use of, a variety of stimuli?			X	
c. Does the task provide instructional scaffolds to support student learning and skill development toward successful completion of the task?	X			Task provides detailed instructional scaffolding for each part of the task.
d. Does the task include appropriate recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students?	X			

Quality Criteria	Yes	Yes, with Slight Modifications	No	Rationale/Suggestions
6. Design of Student Task				
a. Is the overall task prompt clear (e.g., clear student directions, unambiguous graphics)? *	X			
b. Is task information presented in an organized way?	X			
7. Curriculum-Embedded				
a. Is the task feasible for most school/classroom environments (e.g., access to necessary resources)?	X			
b. Does the task include opportunities for independent work as well as interaction/collaboration with peers?	X			The task module includes numerous opportunities for interaction/collaboration with peers.

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.		X	
b. Does this task contain topics/materials/texts that might be sensitive for some students? If yes, please explain.	X		The topic of poverty could be sensitive for some students. The use of slang (e.g., “ain’t,” “So, boy”) ascribed to a parent could make some students uncomfortable. Students who do not have a mother may be sensitive to the topic of a mother speaking to her child. Some students may associate some of the language in the poem (e.g., “I’ve been a climbin’; ‘‘cause you finds”) with stereotypes (e.g., poor people; people of certain ethnicities). <i>Recommendation: Instructional scaffolding should be provided to make sure students understand the vocabulary and dialect.</i>

**Comments:** Task includes a poem that due to its use of figurative language and its topic (i.e., a life of hardship) is complex for fifth grade. The instructional scaffolding that accompanies the task is thorough (some instructional scaffolding definitely seems necessary for the use of this poem). *Recommendation:* In the Metaphors Informational Sheet, consider changing the metaphor related to Hiroshima and replacing it with metaphors that relate to being frustrated or being cold (the statements that precede the Hiroshima reference).

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