

Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Project
Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments
Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

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)?*		X		Task asks students to discuss “satire” and “humor” and then to evaluate whether the short story “Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” is satire “or only humorous.” Discussing the meaning of satire and humor does not necessarily require the demonstration of complex skills, but recognizing whether a story is satire does require the demonstration of complex skills. Note: Although many people think of satire as a form of humor, this task takes the approach that satire and humor are two distinct genres. Thus, the task seems to be asking whether the story is satire or not.
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 can provide evidence of the following Critical Abilities: communication skills (oral and written) and interpersonal interaction/collaboration skills. Students are basically asked to take a position (the story is satire or humor) and to defend that position with evidence.
c. Does the task address key concepts and skills in the discipline that are transferable to other contexts?*	X			The ability to ascertain whether a text is satire or not is a skill that is transferable to other contexts (e.g., political science), as are the skills of writing an essay and collaborating with others.
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? *		X		Task measures Claim #1 (students can read closely and analytically) and Claim #2 (students can produce well-grounded writing). The task module lists numerous CCSS grade 8 standards for reading and writing, most of which apply. The module also states that RL.8.3 and RL.8.6 are the focus of the task, but it is not clear how the task directly measures RL. 8.3 (it does measure RL.8.6).
b. Can students’ responses to this task (what students are asked to produce) be scored using CCSS/NGSS aligned rubrics? *	X			Students’ responses (essays) can be scored using a CCSS-aligned rubric.

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c. Are the scoring criteria--rubrics, point scoring systems, checklists (if provided)--aligned to key expectations of the CCSS/NGSS?	X			Students' written responses are scored using the "LDC Student Work Rubric—Argumentation," which is aligned to key expectations of the CCSS.
d. Is the rigor of the task appropriately matched to the grade-level standards being assessed?			X	In order to answer the prompt, students must understand what satire is and, for the purposes of this task, view satire as being different from humor. Although the creation of humor in a text is addressed in RL.8.6, the concept of satire is not directly mentioned in the CCSS reading standards until grades 11-12 (RL.11-12.6). <i>Recommendation:</i> Consider focusing on the use of irony to create humor in the story, which would be appropriately rigorous for for RL.8.6, especially because the text itself is so rigorous for grade 8.
3. Student Choice and Agency				
a. Does the task allow for a variety of responses and/or solution pathways? *	X			Task allows for a variety of student responses in terms of the evidence they choose from the text to support their position.
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 opportunity to choose the evidence they use to support their position, but other than that there is no 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 students to decide how to present their findings, but other than that, there is no student-initiated planning or management of information/data.
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)? *		X		Task content is authentic and meaningful to the discipline because it is important in the discipline to recognize what constitutes satire. Task is likely not meaningful to students, however, because asking 8 th -grade students to recognize satire in a very difficult text (Lexile level is college level) that is focused on characters from long ago is most likely not relatable to students' lives.
b. Is the task related to real world problems, contexts, and/or purposes?	X			Evaluating whether a text is satire or not is related to real world contexts.

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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? *		X		At its core, the task is largely free of bias. However, students who are not familiar with the stereotypes of “smart East Coast person vs. uneducated West Coast person” (or the notion of tall-tale stereotypes in general) might be at a disadvantage for understanding satirical elements of the story. Also, the use of the common vernacular for the time (e.g., West Coast slang, East Coast vernacular) will be especially difficult for ELL students and below grade-level readers.
b. Does the task include, or allow for the use of, a variety of stimuli?			X	Task is very focused on the text of the short story “Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.”
c. Does the task provide instructional scaffolds to support student learning and skill development toward successful completion of the task?		X		Task provides instructional scaffolds that support skill development toward successful completion of the task, but scaffolds do not seem adequate for helping students understand the concept of satire.
d. Does the task include appropriate recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students?			X	There are no specific recommendations for accommodations and differentiation to provide access for diverse students.
6. Design of Student Task				
a. Is the overall task prompt clear (e.g., clear student directions, unambiguous graphics)? *		X		The overall prompt is somewhat clear, but asking students to evaluate whether the story is satire or only humorous could be confusing to those students who have been taught that satire contains elements of humor and/or is a form of humor. <i>Recommendation:</i> If the focus remains on satire, consider changing the prompt to “whether the story is satire or not” or “is an example of satire or not.” Or, change the focus from an argument to an explanation (i.e., ask students to explain which parts of the story are examples of satire).
b. Is task information presented in an organized way?	X			
7. Curriculum-Embedded				
a. Is the task feasible for most school/classroom	X			Task is feasible for most school/classroom environments.

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environments (e.g., access to necessary resources)?				
b. Does the task include opportunities for independent work as well as interaction/collaboration with peers?	X			Instructional scaffolding activities include opportunities for independent work and interaction/collaboration with peers.

Task Materials	Yes	No
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

Comments: The focus of this task is on satire, which is a concept that is not mentioned in the CCSS standards until grades 11-12 (RL.11-12.6). In addition, the one text that is used in the text has a very high Lexile level (a Houghton Mifflin Harcourt document that lists readability measures for various texts gives the Lexile measure as 1620), making it unsuitable for most grade 8 classes. The basis of the task is that satire is a separate genre from humor, which may be confusing to students who have been taught that satire is a form of humor or contains elements of humor. For these reasons, the task, as written, does not seem suitable for most grade 8 classes. It could, however, be changed so that students are asked to find examples of satire (and/or irony) in the text and to explain these examples, rather than asking students to evaluate whether the entire text is satire.

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