

Performance Assessments for Critical-Thinking & Written-Communication Skills in Middle School, High School, & College Students

Performance Task

Requires Students to **Utilize** Critical-Thinking Skills

Skills Measured:

Analysis and Problem Solving • Writing Effectiveness • Writing Mechanics

Performance Tasks ask students to:

- recognize when information is relevant or irrelevant to the task at hand
- analyze and understand data in tables and figures
- evaluate the credibility of various documents
- distinguish rational arguments from emotional ones
- determine the difference between fact and opinion
- identify questionable or critical assumptions
- deal with inadequate, ambiguous, or conflicting information
- spot deception, possible bias, and logical flaws in arguments
- identify additional information that would help resolve issues
- weigh different types of evidence
- organize and synthesize information from several sources
- marshal evidence from different sources in a written response

Selected-Response Questions

Requires Students to **Apply** Critical-Thinking Skills

Skills Measured:

Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning • Critical Reading and Evaluation • Critiquing an Argument

Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning questions, which ask students to:

- make inferences and hypotheses based on given results
- evaluate the reliability of information (such as experiment design or data collection methodology)
- identify information or quantitative data that are connected or conflicting
- detect questionable assumptions (such as implications of causation based on correlation)
- support or refute a position
- draw a conclusion or decide on a course of action to solve a problem
- evaluate alternate conclusions and recognize when a text has open issues, requiring additional research

Critical Reading and Evaluation questions, which ask students to:

- support or refute a position
- analyze logic
- identify assumptions in arguments
- evaluate the reliability of information
- identify connected and conflicting information
- make justifiable inferences

Critiquing-an-Argument questions, which ask students to:

- evaluate the reliability of information, including potential biases or conflicts of interest
- detect logical flaws and questionable assumptions
- address additional information that could strengthen or weaken the argument
- evaluating alternative conclusions