

Overview: Toolkit for Evaluating Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials to the Common Core State Standards



Materials Alignment Toolkit

To ensure that all students are able to meet the high expectations of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), educators need access to high-quality and well-aligned instructional and assessment materials. In support of the work being done by both educators and developers to meet this need, Achieve, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), and Student Achievement Partners have developed this Materials Alignment Toolkit for evaluating the alignment of instructional and assessment materials. The Materials Alignment Toolkit encompasses a growing suite of tools for evaluating the alignment of instructional and assessment materials to the Shifts and major features of the Common Core. Each tool evaluates a different type of resource or material.

Purpose

The purpose of the Materials Alignment Toolkit is to catalyze the impact that the CCSS can have on student achievement by increasing the prevalence of CCSS-aligned, high-quality instructional and assessment materials. All of the tools within the Material Alignment Toolkit focus on alignment. They can be used to:

- build capacity in a state, district, or local setting around identifying high-quality, CCSS-aligned resources
- facilitate the evaluation of current resources already in use
- support the procurement or development of new resources
- share feedback with publishers or partners about strengths and gaps in alignment in assessment and instructional materials

The primary focus of these tools is to ensure that energy put towards the efforts listed above results in high-quality, aligned materials for students and

teachers. There are many important considerations to take into account when reviewing, evaluating, and developing instructional and assessment materials. These tools do not encompass an exhaustive set of criteria, and, therefore, should be integrated into existing processes to ensure that the resulting material are aligned to the CCSS and meet previously recognized local needs.

What You'll Find in the Toolkit

- **Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)**
For evaluating alignment of a comprehensive textbook or textbook series
- **Grade-Level IMET (GIMET-QR)**
Framework for evaluating the quality of instructional materials at each grade level
- **EQIP Quality Review Rubric**
For evaluating alignment of lessons, units, and modules
- **EQIP Student Work Protocol**
For establishing or articulating the relationship between student work and the quality and alignment of instructional materials
- **Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET): Formative Assessments**
For evaluating alignment of grade- or course-level assessment materials
- **CCSSO Principles: Summative Assessments**
Criteria for states to consider as they purchase, develop, and evaluate high-quality state summative assessments aligned to college- and career-readiness standards
- **Assessment Passage & Item Quality Criteria Checklists**
For evaluating the alignment of individual assessment passages, items, and tasks
- **ELL Framework**
Framework for establishing and articulating a rigorous and coherent program for serving English Language Learners (ELLs), and for evaluating the quality of instructional materials for ELLs

Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)

The IMET is designed to help educators determine whether instructional materials are aligned to the Shifts and major features of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The IMET draws directly from Common Core State Standards and the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards.

When to Use the IMET

1. **Purchasing materials:** Many factors go into local purchasing decisions. Alignment to the Standards is a critical factor to consider. This tool is designed to evaluate alignment of instructional materials to the Shifts as well as to the major features of the CCSS. It also provides suggestions of additional indicators to consider in the materials evaluation and purchasing process.
2. **Evaluating materials currently in use:** The IMET can be used to analyze the degree of alignment of existing materials and help to highlight specific, concrete flaws in alignment. Even where materials and tools currently in use fail to meet one or more of these criteria, the pattern of failure is likely to be informative. States and districts can use the evaluation to create a thoughtful plan to modify or combine existing resources in such a way that students' actual learning experiences approach the complexity, evidence, and knowledge-building of the Standards.
3. **Developing materials:** Those developing new materials locally can use this tool as guidance for creating aligned curricula.

Please note that this tool was designed for evaluating comprehensive curricula (including any supplemental or ancillary materials), but it was not designed for the evaluation of standalone supplemental materials.

Who Uses the IMET?

Evaluating instructional materials requires both subject matter and pedagogical expertise. Evaluators should be well-versed in the Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>; <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/>) for all grades in which materials are being evaluated. Evaluators also should be familiar with the substantial instructional Shifts in ELA/Literacy (<http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/>) of Complexity, Evidence and Knowledge and in Math (<http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-mathematics/>) of Focus, Coherence, and Rigor.

Where to Find It

There are four versions of the IMET: [ELA/Literacy K-2](#), [ELA/Literacy 3-12](#), [Math K-8](#), [Math High School](#). Each of these can be found by visiting achievethecore.org/IMET.

Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool – Quality Review (GIMET-QR)

The GIMET-QR is designed for use by professionals as a framework for evaluating the quality of instructional materials at each grade level to enable school districts to choose materials that are best suited to provide a coherent learning experience for students.

When to Use the GIMET-QR

The district should begin its review process by screening an entire publisher series with the Instructional Materials Evaluation Toolkit (IMET), developed by Student Achievement Partners, to see which ones are worthy of deeper consideration. The GIMET-QR mirrors the structure of the IMET, providing key criteria for each individual grade. The GIMET-QR focuses on the most distinctive, key features of the standards by grade, allowing for more in-depth analysis of the quality of the content and the instructional design of the materials—the rigor called for in the Common Core State Standards.

1. **Purchasing materials:** While there are no perfect materials, it is important for districts and teachers to know where the strengths and weaknesses are at each grade level. GIMET-QR draws from the IMET tool. However, GIMET-QR provides key criteria for each individual grade rather than by grade bands. The GIMET-QR focuses on the most distinctive, key features of the standards by grade, allowing for more in-depth analysis of the quality of the content and the instructional design of the materials—the rigor called for in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Guiding Statements are provided and reviewers are asked to cite specific supporting evidence from the materials themselves. This supporting evidence can then be used to rate whether and to what degree the criteria have been met.
2. **Evaluating materials currently in use:** The GIMET-QR can be used by districts to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional materials, how well the materials provide explicit support to teachers, and how well the materials provide student tasks that require students to perform at the appropriate levels of complexity. Additionally, the tool provides guiding questions that serve as a lens for assessing what kind of supplementary resources to use where in order to enhance and bolster the current material. Compiling this information will enable districts to proactively plan the rollout to mitigate potential problems and to forecast the type of professional development that would be needed to effectively use the instructional materials to provide CCSS-aligned instruction.
3. **Developing materials:** The GIMET-QR can also be used to develop new local CCSS-aligned curricula. The Guiding Statements draw particular attention to the important considerations that inform instructional content, suggested pedagogy, and development of tasks and assessments that will support effective Common Core implementation.

Who Uses the GIMET-QR?

It is important that the evaluators have a deep understanding of CCSS and the instructional Shifts that Common Core requires, a strong content knowledge of the subject area, and pedagogical expertise.

Where to Find It

The GIMET-QR is organized by grade level rubrics that include: ELA/Literacy K-12 and Math K-8 and can be found by visiting www.commoncoreworks.org

The Materials Alignment Toolkit v.2 was developed by Student Achievement Partners, Achieve, Council of Chief State School Officers and Council of Great City Schools.

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Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) Quality Review Rubric

Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) is a collaborative of states working with Achieve to increase the supply of quality instructional materials that are aligned to the CCSS as well as to build the capacity of educators to evaluate and improve the quality of instructional materials for use in their classrooms and schools. The EQuIP Rubrics are a set of quality review tools to evaluate the alignment of lessons, units, and modules to the CCSS. EQuIP builds on a collaborative effort of education leaders from Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island that Achieve facilitated.

When to Use the EQuIP Rubrics

The EQuIP Rubrics are designed to evaluate lessons that include instructional activities and assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that may extend over a few class periods or days as well as units that include integrated and focused lessons aligned to the CCSS that extend over a period of several weeks. The rubrics are not designed to evaluate a single task or activity or portion of a lesson. The rubrics intentionally do not require a specific template for lesson or unit design. The EQuIP Rubrics should be used for:

1. **Guiding development:** Those developing their own lessons and units can use this tool as guidance for creating aligned materials
2. **Evaluating materials currently in use:** These rubrics can be used to analyze the degree of alignment of existing lessons and units to identify improvements needed to align with the CCSS.
3. **Building capacity:** Training on and using the rubrics can build the capacity of teachers and help them gain a deeper understanding of the instructional demands of the CCSS
4. **Informing publishers:** The rubrics can be shared with publisher to make them aware of the criteria that will be applied in the evaluation of proposals and final products.

Who Uses the EQuIP Rubrics?

The EQuIP Rubrics are designed for use by educators and administrators responsible for developing, reviewing, or making determinations about materials for use in classrooms. This includes classroom teachers, instructional coaches, instructional leaders, and administrators at the school, district or state level.

Where to Find It

There are three EQuIP Rubrics, one each for Mathematics, K–2 English Language Arts/Literacy, and a combined rubric for 3–5 English Language Arts/Literacy and 6–12 English Language Arts. To view and download the rubrics and related training materials, please visit <https://www.achieve.org/our-initiatives/equip/all-equip-resources/rubrics-and-feedback-forms>.

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Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQIP) Student Work Protocol

The EQIP Student Work Protocol is designed to establish or articulate the relationship between student work and the quality and alignment of instructional materials that previously have been reviewed using the EQIP quality review process. Focusing on this relationship enables educators to develop a common understanding of the challenging work required by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Furthermore, analyzing this relationship will also assist in closing the gap between what students are learning and the expectations embodied in assignments, as well as verifying what students are being taught and what they have learned, remembered, and incorporated into their knowledge and skills. Common expectations will result in more equitable educational opportunities for students and deepen the existing foundation for collaboration among states and districts.

When to Use the EQIP Student Work Protocol

The EQIP Student Work Protocol is intended for use with instructional materials that have undergone an EQIP review, received a rating of E or E/I, and then subsequently have been implemented in an instructional setting to produce samples of student work. The specific objectives of this EQIP Student Work Protocol are three-fold:

1. To confirm that a lesson's or unit's assignment is aligned with the letter and spirit of the targeted Common Core State Standards
2. To determine how students performed on an assignment as evidence of how well designed the lesson/unit is
3. To provide criterion-based suggestions for improving the assignment and related instructional materials

Who Uses the EQIP Student Work Protocol?

The EQIP Student Work Protocol is designed for use by educators, instructional leaders, and administrators.

Where to Find It

To view and download the EQIP Student Work Protocol and related training materials, please visit: www.achieve.org/equip

Framework for Raising Expectations and Instructional Rigor for English Language Learners

This document is designed for use by educational leaders and practitioners as a framework for establishing and articulating a rigorous and coherent program for serving English Language Learners (ELLs), and for evaluating the quality of instructional materials for ELLs, enabling school districts to choose materials that are best suited to accelerate achievement of grade-level standards and development of academic language and literacy for ELLs.

When to Use the Framework

1. **Establishing or articulating your program model:** The document outlines a Theory of Action for raising expectations and increasing rigor for ELLs, and introduces the *ELD 2.0 Framework*, which articulates the importance of offering both *Focused Language Study* (FLS), in which English learners receive explicit instruction in how English works, and *Discipline-specific Academic Language Expansion* (DALE), in which academic language and literacy are developed across the curriculum, in the context of rich, grade-level text. Districts and schools can use the *ELD 2.0 Framework* to examine and describe their instructional programs for English Language Arts and academic language development for students who are acquiring English as a new language.
2. **Selecting and purchasing instructional materials for ELLs:** The Instructional Materials section of the Framework builds on the IMET tool, adding important factors to consider when choosing materials to serve ELLs; each of these considerations should be considered “non-negotiable” when evaluating materials to be used with ELLs. These considerations draw attention to the specific instructional needs of ELLs, requiring that instructional materials facilitate and support instructional design and practices that raise expectations and build agency for English learners to achieve the rigor called for in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
3. **Evaluating materials and instructional support resources:** Along with the above-mentioned ELL considerations for ELA/ELD instructional materials, the document is useful for education leaders and practitioners to evaluate professional development, intervention programs, and digital sources, whether these are part of an overall textbook adoption or supplemental in nature. A close evaluation of these important considerations will enable districts to better select instructional materials and supports that contribute toward building a district’s capacity of its overall instructional program to serve ELLs to achieve the new higher standards.

Who Uses the Framework?

It is important that evaluators have a deep understanding of second language acquisition theory and pedagogy, and are grounded in the specific needs of English learners of all typologies. Evaluators should also be deeply familiar with the CCSS and the instructional Shifts that Common Core requires, particularly as they relate to the development of academic language and literacy across the curriculum.

Where to Find It

The Framework can be found by visiting www.cgcs.org

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Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)

The AET is designed to help educators determine whether assessments and sets of assessments are aligned to the Shifts and major features of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The AET draws directly from Common Core State Standards and the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards.

When to Use the AET

1. **Purchasing assessments:** Many factors go into local purchasing decisions. Alignment to the Standards is a critical factor to consider. This tool is designed to evaluate alignment of assessments and sets of assessments to the Shifts as well as to the major features of the CCSS. It also provides suggestions of additional indicators to consider in the assessment evaluation and purchasing process.
2. **Evaluating assessments in use:** The AET can be used to analyze the degree of alignment of existing assessments and sets of assessments and help to highlight specific, concrete flaws in alignment. Even where assessments currently in use fail to meet one or more of these criteria, the pattern of failure is likely to be informative. States and districts can use the evaluation to create a thoughtful plan to modify assessments and sets of assessments in such a way that they better meet the requirements of the Standards.
3. **Developing assessments:** This tool can be used to provide guidance for and evaluation of alignment for creating locally developed assessments and sets of assessments. States and districts creating new aligned assessments and sets of assessments should use the criteria within the AET to guide the development of test blueprints, item specifications, and item review.

Who Uses the AET?

The AET is designed for use by educators and administrators including content specialists, assessment specialists, administrators, and educators at the school, district, or state level. Evaluating assessments and sets of assessments requires both subject matter and technical expertise. Evaluators should be well-versed in the Standards for all grades in which assessments are being evaluated. Evaluators also should be familiar with the substantial instructional Shifts.

Where to Find It

There are two versions of the AET: [ELA/Literacy 3-12](#) and [Math K-12](#). Each of these can be found by visiting achievethecore.org/AET.

CCSSO Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments

This document provides criteria for states to consider as they purchase, develop, and evaluate high-quality state summative assessments aligned to college- and career-readiness standards, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These Criteria were adopted by State Chiefs as the standard by which high-quality summative assessments would be measured.

When to Use the CCSSO Criteria

The CCSSO Criteria can be used for assessments in various stages of development, including evaluating pre-existing assessments as well as to guide those that are under development.

Regardless of the stage of test development, states may find it helpful to establish best practice quality assurance and other processes to monitor quality throughout development and administration, and periodically evaluate evidence to ensure the Criteria are being met.

Who Uses the CCSSO Criteria?

The CCSSO Criteria are intended to support states in selecting high-quality assessments. Thus, the document suggests the evidence that states will need to review in order to make informed judgments on vendors' claims about the quality of their proposed assessments.

The Criteria are grounded in best practices for assessment development and in the research that defines college and career readiness for English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and mathematics. These CCSSO Criteria are intended to be a useful resource for any state procuring and/or evaluating assessments aligned to their college- and career-readiness standards.

Where to Find It

The CCSSO Criteria can be found by visiting <http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Assessments.html>.

Assessment Passage & Item Quality Criteria Checklists

The quality criteria checklists are designed to help educators determine whether texts, questions, and tasks within assessments are aligned to the Shifts and to the major features of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The quality criteria checklists draw directly from Common Core State Standards and the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards.

When to Use the Quality Criteria Checklists

1. **ELA/Literacy texts worth reading:** To determine if texts used to assess Reading and/or Writing align to the CCSS
2. **ELA/Literacy questions worth asking:** To determine if individual test questions (items) in Reading and/or Writing assessments align to the CCSS
3. **Math items:** To determine whether an item aligns to the expectations of the CCSS

Who Uses the Quality Criteria Checklists?

The quality criteria checklists are designed for use by educators and administrators, including content specialists, assessment specialists, administrators, and educators at the school, district, or state level that are responsible for evaluating ELA/Literacy and math assessments. Evaluators should be well-versed in the Standards for all grades in which assessments are being evaluated. Evaluators also should be familiar with the substantial instructional Shifts.

Where to Find It

The quality criteria checklists can be found by visiting <http://achievethecore.org/assessment-checklist>.