Item Specifications

What are item specifications?

Item specifications delineate for each standard the evidence students must demonstrate to show content mastery. They also define exactly how an academic standard should be measured. Item specifications are the specific plan for how to meet the test blueprint.

When constructing a building, engineers start with a blueprint that describes the goal of the project. They use the blueprint as the basis to create documents that further define how to construct the building. Materials lists, diagrams, and work schedules are types of documents that could help engineers ensure that the structure is built according to the blueprint.



Item writers and educators develop item specifications for use in developing state summative assessments. Item specifications prescribe alignment to academic standards, cognitive complexities, possible item types, and other established item design criteria essential to developing blueprint-aligned test forms. Item specifications may also guide formal test construction at the classroom level and provide additional insight into evidences of standard mastery.

Content Standard

Content Limits

What information is shared through item specifications?

For each Academic Standard, the following specifications are created by educator panel.

The broad Reporting Category content category for that standard representing a segment or domain of content approved by educators as key for reporting. A list of

Statements that describe the specific knowledge and skills that students must acquire to master the standard.

Type(

Examples of tasks that can be used to measure student acheivement of content standards.

Statements that provide limitations on content based on grade level expectations.

Constraints

Content Limits/

Evidence Statement(s) Stems/Items Sample

Explanations Cognitive Complexity and examples of ways to measure the standard at different levels of cognitive complexity (e.g., Depth

Knowledge).

3.RN.3.2: Identify how a nonfiction text can be structured to indicate a problem and solution or to put events in chronological Items may ask students to identify or refer to structural elements (e.g., sequence, description, comparison, etc.) when discussing events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text. Items may ask students to determine how the author develops the structure and to describe the impact that a particular structure (chronology, problem/solution) has on a text chronological order, problem and solution, structure Evidenced-Based Selected Response onse Hot Text Multiple Choice Multi-Selec Evidence Statements dentify the structure of a text or events, ideas, concepts, or information nples of a particular structure. dentify the structure of a text or section of text AND describe the impact of dentify the structure of a text or section of text AND select examples of the Sample Item offer solutions to the problem of [X] in the passage? [X] to [Y] xamples of [X] the process of [X]

How can item specifications be used in the classroom?

Dig Deep into Academic **Standards**

possible item

may be used

the standard.

to measure

types or

tasks that

Evidence statements target specific knowledge and skills that students must acquire to master each standard. The breakdown of the standards provides additional insight into the depth of the standard and the specific skills related to it.

Strongly Assess Content in the Classroom

Use the specifications to identify tasks that measure higher levels of cognitive complexity. Incorporate those tasks into classroom activities, student assignments, and classroom assessments to promote deeper interactions with content standards.

Create Your Own Specifications.

During professional development, continue to unpack the standards by adding evidence statements and measurement tasks which promote mastery of the standard.