



Attributes of High-Quality Student Work

The descriptions below are intended to provide a common vision and terminology as we engage in using student work to improve learning, be it shorter task work or products that are the result of long-term projects. These attributes are not intended to constrain a conversation about quality, and not all descriptors must be present for a piece of work to be high quality. They are intended to provoke deeper conversation and act as a starting point for formulating a shared understanding of quality.

Complexity

- Complex work is rigorous: it aligns with or exceeds the expectations defined by grade-level standards and includes **higher-order thinking** by challenging students to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create during daily instruction and throughout longer projects.
- Complex work often **connects to the big concepts** that undergird disciplines or unite disciplines.
- Complex work prioritizes **transfer of understanding** to new contexts.
- Complex work prioritizes consideration of **multiple perspectives**.
- Complex work may incorporate students' **application of higher order literacy skills** through the use of complex text and evidence-based writing and speaking.

Craftsmanship

- Well-crafted work is done with care and precision. Craftsmanship requires attention to **accuracy, detail, and beauty**.
- In every discipline and domain, well-crafted work should be **beautiful work in conception and execution**. In short tasks or early drafts of work, craftsmanship may be present primarily in thoughtful ideas, but not in polished presentation; for long-term projects, craftsmanship requires perseverance to refine work in conception, conventions, and presentation, typically through multiple drafts or rehearsals with critique from others.

Authenticity

- Authentic work **demonstrates the original, creative thinking of students**—authentic personal voice and ideas—rather than simply showing that students can follow directions or fill in the blanks.
- Authentic work often **uses formats and standards from the professional world**, rather than artificial school formats (e.g., students create a book review for a local newspaper instead of a book report for the teacher).
- Authentic work **often connects academic standards with real-world issues, controversies, and local people and places**.
- Authenticity gives purpose to work; the **work matters to students and ideally contributes to a larger community** as well. When possible, it is created for and shared with an audience beyond the classroom.