

Performance Outcomes: The academic knowledge, behaviors, and skills that students are expected to learn and demonstrate in a performance task.

Put simply, performance outcomes are statements that describe what students will demonstrate that they know and can do by completing a performance task. Performance outcomes are the spine of performance assessments; all components of a task should be aligned and connected to the performance outcomes to ensure coherence and validity.

Writing Performance Outcomes

Performance outcomes are phrased in terms of knowledge, skills, and understandings. It is important that performance outcomes be of a grain size that allows for teacher and student flexibility in how the outcomes are demonstrated. In other words, performance outcomes should only describe **what** students will learn and demonstrate, not **how** they will demonstrate it. Performance outcomes don't describe what students will **produce**; they describe what students will **do cognitively** and what teachers will **assess**.

A Test Case

Here is a non-example of a performance outcome:

 Students will research a controversial issue then write an argumentative essay regarding what level of government should have authority and power when making and executing laws related to this issue.

This is a summary of the task; it describes what the students will **produce**, or **how** students will demonstrate certain academic knowledge, behaviors, and skills. It is not a performance outcome.

The performance outcomes for a task like this might include the following:
Students will:

-  Develop a discipline-specific argument focused on federalism and addressing a specific contemporary issue;
-  Locate and use varied sources to understand the topic;
-  Compare and contextualize sources to accurately understand them;
-  Use and accurately explain evidence from those sources to support their argument;
-  Include accurate content and connections to context that support the argument.

These statements describe the cognitive work that students will do and define what the teacher will be able to assess by analyzing students' work.



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