

Principles and Guidelines for Adopting or Creating Locally Developed Benchmark Assessments for Checkpoint A *Modern Languages – American Sign Language (ASL)*

Purpose

Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments are selected by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). They may be designed by the LEA itself, by regional or statewide educational consortia, or by commercial vendors.

The purpose of these Guidelines is twofold. They provide a framework to LEAs for constructing valid, reliable, and equitable locally developed Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments aligned to the [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages \(2021\)](#) while allowing them flexibility to address specific local needs and priorities. Additionally, they provide a framework to regional or statewide consortia for constructing valid, reliable, and equitable Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments aligned to the [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages \(2021\)](#) that will be made available for adoption by LEAs.

If an LEA makes the decision to adopt a commercial assessment, they may select from those already identified, evaluated and approved by NYSED for meeting the standards for the [4 + 1 Pathways requirements](#).

The guidance that follows pertains to those assessments developed by LEAs or regional or statewide educational consortia.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the development of these recommendations:

1. Maintaining a valid and reliable assessment of Checkpoint A in order to maintain the benchmark as a graduation requirement that all students can realistically attain in two years;
2. Maintaining fidelity to the language functions, topics, and [Performance Indicators for Category 3-4 Languages](#) for Novice Mid to Novice High from the revised [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages \(2021\)](#);
3. Considering pragmatic approaches and protocols for administration based on past practices that were shown to be successful, along with more recently introduced and current research-based practices; and
4. Considering overall assessment and task designs that are user-friendly and can be realistically administered, completed, and scored within the end-of-year timeframe.

Other Considerations

The following aims were also considered:

1. Aligning the assessment with approved Pathway and Seal of Biliteracy Assessments including nationally recognized commercial proficiency tests; and
2. Establishing a foundation for the subsequent adoption or creation of locally developed Checkpoint B Benchmark Assessments.

Guidelines

Other assessments. Guidelines for locally developed Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments for Modern Languages other than American Sign Language (ASL) and Classical Languages are not addressed in this guidance document. Modern Languages other than ASL differ in their emphasis on oral/aural modalities rather than visual/signed modalities. Guidelines for Classical Languages reflect the differences that exist between Modern and Classical Languages as articulated in the [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages for Classical Languages](#) and the [Proficiency Ranges and Performance Indicators for Classical Languages](#).

Who needs to take this assessment. One credit of a World Language remains a graduation requirement for ALL students in NYS except those exempted on an IEP due to a disability that substantially and demonstrably impacts the ability to acquire language. Successful performance on a Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment in tandem with successful Checkpoint A course completion allows middle school students to earn one graduation credit prior to entering ninth grade.

The Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment is administered at the completion of a Checkpoint A course of study at the middle school level to provide learners the opportunity to earn one world language credit. The recommended and most common program design is the 2-year Checkpoint A course sequence offered in 7th and 8th grades.

Administration. Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments are conducted as an on-demand set of performance tasks or a test administered at the end of the course coinciding with the administration dates of Regents Exams. On-demand tasks, given under traditional protocols for Regents Examinations, assure the integrity of assessment results and reduce the likelihood of plagiarism or cheating. The final score for the Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment can only include scores for tasks which meet these criteria.

Assessment tasks for Interpersonal Signing should be conducted prior to the exam administration date during the final ten weeks of the academic calendar including the exam window for the administration of the June Regents Examinations. Presentational Signing tasks may also be conducted in this same time period. Any sooner than this may not allow adequate instructional time for all students to have developed sufficient readiness to demonstrate the

proficiency target. The Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment is designed to be a summative benchmark assessment.

Technology support and safeguards. Individual LEAs may use technology tools to administer portions of the Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment consistent with the nature of the standard assessed. LEAs may additionally use technology tools to score objective items and record scores on any assessment item. Technology tools must provide sufficient safeguards to guarantee the integrity of the assessment.

Scope and content. The Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment will be targeted to the performance indicators for Novice High for Modern Languages. Performances at Novice Mid will be considered passing.

All Communication Standards (Standard 1 Interpretive Communication, Standard 2 Interpersonal Communication, and Standard 3 Presentational Communication) are assessed in the on-demand Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment.

The content of the Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment is intended to reflect a sufficiently broad representation of the three themes and 13 topics identified in the [NYS Themes and Topics](#) within meaningfully integrated contexts.

Weighting of sections. The sections of the Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment are weighted as follows:

Standard 1 Interpretive Communication – 50% Total Weight

- Interpretive Receiving (50%)

Standard 2 Interpersonal Communication – 20% Total Weight

- Interpersonal Signing (20%)

Standard 3 Presentational Communication – 20% Total Weight

- Presentational Signing (20%)

Standard 4 Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives – 10% Total Weight

Items for Standard 5 Cultural Comparisons are not addressed separately from the Communication Standards. Instead, items that assess Standard 5 may be included in Standard 1 Interpretive Communication and/or Standard 4 Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives.

Items for all sections are aligned with the [Performance Indicators for Category 3-4 Languages](#) for Checkpoint A.

English support for English Language Learners (ELLs). English-language *directions* in locally developed Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments may be translated in writing into home languages for ELLs.

In addition, LEAs may provide ELLs with an oral translation of English Language *questions*, *answer choices*, and *prompts* within these assessments. All translations must be oral, direct translations of wording in English. Other than for directions as indicated above, written translations are not allowed. No clarifications or explanations may be provided.

Per CR Part 154, these testing accommodations are designated for ELLs. LEAs must make all necessary arrangements to make these accommodations available for ELLs who need them. Such testing accommodations are also afforded to former ELLs for two additional years after achieving proficiency on the NYSESLAT.

Assessment Format

This section contains descriptions of options for assessing the [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages](#) for Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessments developed by LEAs or regional or statewide consortia. Beside the title of each section is the range of percentages for weighting each section as presented above. The word “text” that is used in these descriptions refers to any source of meaningful input which, in the case of ASL, may be visual or signed.

Standard 1 - Interpretive Receiving (50%)

This section assesses the student’s ability to understand signed input from or based on [authentic resources](#) at Novice High. At this level, students identify the topic and some details from short texts on familiar topics. Teachers may sign transcripts of authentic resources or transcripts derived from authentic resources as prompts for this section or may play video recordings or portions of video recordings of short ads, announcements, or interview excerpts. All students receive each signed text twice. Additional repetitions are given when necessary to comply with provisions of IEP or 504 specifications. Formats may include answering multiple choice questions, responding to constructed response questions, selecting corresponding images, or using short checklists. This section may also contain items to assess Culture Standards 4 and/or 5. Interpretive tasks may include some items in English and some in the target language or may be all in English.

Standard 2 - Interpersonal Signing (20%)

This section assesses the student’s ability to communicate in unrehearsed short conversations with another person about highly familiar contexts consistent with the performance indicators for Novice High. Students are individually assessed with a teacher serving as the conversation partner. As an example, the format could include short spontaneous role play situations that are within the experience of the learners in which the students always play themselves and the teacher plays the role of a friend, teacher, or other adult. Another potential format is an interview, with the students choosing from a selection of conversation prompts based on the [three themes and 13 Checkpoint A topics](#) and the [four interpersonal language functions](#) in

Standard 2. Learners carry on two conversations which are evaluated on a rubric based on language of the [NYSED Master Rubrics for Novice High](#).

Standard 3 - Presentational Signing (20%)

Presentational Signing may be completed prior to the administration of the on-demand examination in the last ten weeks of the school year including the exam window for the administration of the June Regents. The task may be video recorded using a computer application.

A Presentational Signing section assesses the student's ability to fulfill a communicative purpose representing highly familiar contexts suggested by the [three Checkpoint A themes and 13 Checkpoint A topics](#) using one or more of the [five language functions of Standard 3](#) by signing in response to a prompt. Prompts might include asking students to describe an authentic image, to narrate a series of authentic images, or to leave a message in response to a given situation. Students would be given a prompt, a short time to think and make some notes, and then sign in real-time to the teacher or video record their Presentational sample. After sufficient time to prepare, Checkpoint A students are given 1 to 1 ½ minutes (1:00 – 1:30) to provide their signing sample. The Presentational Signing task would be assessed based on the language of the [NYSED Master Rubrics for Novice High](#).

Standard 4 - Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives (10%)

Assessment of Culture Standard 4, Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives, includes items that ask students to identify cultural products and practices based upon [authentic resources](#). Items in this section are based on the [three Checkpoint A themes and 13 Checkpoint A topics](#) and the Checkpoint A language function, "identify," in Standard 4. This could be done by developing multiple choice, constructed response questions, or other task types. Another possible format is graphic organizer completion which is scored according to a proficiency-based rubric using language from the [NYSED Master Rubrics for Novice High](#). This section may contain items to assess Culture Standard 5. Culture tasks may include some items in English and some in the target language or may be all in English.

Standard 5 – Cultural Comparisons (Optional)

LEAs and regional or statewide consortia wishing to include assessment of Culture Standard 5, Cultural Comparisons, may include items in Standard 1, Interpretive Reading and/or Standard 4, Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives.