

Design Guide for Content-Area Graduation Standards

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Districts should define 5-8 standards per content area, which together will allow a district to determine students' proficiency in that content area. Standards should be broad enough that they apply to all grade levels, PK-12. Each standard will be defined by approximately 5-10 Performance Indicators.

Criteria	Weaker Statements	Stronger Statements
Alignment <i>To what extent does the statement align with national and state standards? Is the statement central to understanding the content area?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not align with national, state, and/or local standards and frameworks; Are so narrow, specific, or vague that they are not central to understanding the content area as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with national, state, and/or local standards and frameworks; Use precise, descriptive language that clearly communicates what is essential to building proficiency in the content area.
Transfer <i>Does the statement describe knowledge, and skills that can be applied across multiple disciplines and that will be of value beyond a particular point in time?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe topics that are only relevant to or applicable within a unit, textbook, resource, course, or program; Focus on factual content without connecting the statements to enduring cross-curricular and content-specific skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require students to develop an understanding of relationships among principles, theories, and/or concepts; Require students to develop and demonstrate skills and knowledge that will endure throughout their education, careers, and civic lives.
Cognitive Demand <i>Does the statement imply higher order thinking, deep conceptual understanding and transferable skill acquisition?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require only basic recall and lower-level cognitive skills, such as identifying, defining, summarizing, or listing; Do not require the application of knowledge to diverse or novel problems, texts, or situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require students to demonstrate higher-order cognitive skills such as reasoning, analyzing, planning, interpreting, hypothesizing, investigating, or creating; Require the application of knowledge to diverse or novel problems, texts, or situations.



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