



## Smarter Balanced and Teachers: Supporting Student Achievement Through Meaningful Feedback

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is creating next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Just as the CCSS describe the knowledge and skills students need to be prepared for college and career, the system of computer adaptive assessments—including summative and formative tests—will provide important information about whether students are on track, as well as resources and tools for teachers to help students succeed.

### Key Features of Smarter Balanced

- ▶ **Innovative item types** go beyond multiple choice questions to include constructed response and performance tasks that measure critical thinking and problem solving.
- ▶ **Interim assessments** provide information about student progress throughout the year to help teachers differentiate instruction.
- ▶ **A digital library** of research-based formative assessment practices and tools.

### Teacher Involvement

Smarter Balanced is committed to working with teachers to develop and test the new assessments. Teachers will be engaged in test item development, item writing and scoring the assessments. Approximately 100 teachers from each state will participate in State Networks of Educators to evaluate the formative tools and resources that will be available through the assessment system. During the Pilot and Field Tests, the Consortium will collaborate with teachers in order to obtain feedback on how students are responding to the assessments.

### Training and Support

At the heart of the assessment system will be a digital library with research-based formative tools. The library will include examples of instructional best practices at each grade level, strategies for cross-classroom collaboration and professional development resources related to the assessment system, such as scoring rubrics for performance tasks. Educators will also be able to submit resources and engage in online discussions to share information and learn from colleagues—whether they are in a neighboring district or across the country.

### Key Dates for Teachers

- ▶ **Spring/Summer 2012**—Teachers help write Pilot items and tasks, review for alignment with CCSS, and check for bias/sensitivity
- ▶ **Winter/Spring 2013**—Pilot testing of assessment items and performance tasks
- ▶ **Summer/Fall 2013**—State Networks of Educators evaluate formative assessment practices and instructional resources; professional development cadres meet
- ▶ **Fall 2012–Fall 2013**—Teacher teams write Field Test items and tasks, review for alignment with CCSS, and check for bias/sensitivity
- ▶ **Spring 2014**—Broad participation in Field Testing of summative and interim assessments
- ▶ **2014–15 School Year**—Implementation of assessment system and launch of digital library

### LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Smarter Balanced member states will work directly with teachers and teacher organizations throughout the project. For a full list of state contacts and to learn more about Smarter Balanced, visit [SmarterBalanced.org](http://SmarterBalanced.org).



# SAMPLE ITEMS AND PERFORMANCE TASKS

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is purpose of the sample items and performance tasks?

Smarter Balanced sample items and performance tasks are intended to help teachers, administrators, and policymakers implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and prepare for the implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessment system in the 2014-15 school year. They provide an early look into the depth of understanding of the CCSS that will be measured by the Smarter Balanced assessments.

### 2. Will these items and tasks appear on the final assessments?

The sample items and tasks are meant to illustrate the rigor and complexity students will encounter on the Smarter Balanced assessments. They also show the different types of questions that will appear on the assessments, including: selected-response; constructed response; technology-enhanced; and performance tasks. While these items and tasks may be included in the non-secure interim assessment item bank, they will not be part of the secure summative assessment item bank. Smarter Balanced is working with educators to develop and test thousands of additional items and performance tasks in 2013 and 2014.

### 3. Can I administer these questions to my students?

The sample items and tasks are not intended to be used as practice tests. However, educators can use them to begin planning the shifts in instruction that will be required to help students meet the demands of the new assessments.

### 4. When will teachers and students be able to view complete assessments?

Teachers and students will have two opportunities to experience the assessments prior to implementation in the 2014-15 school year. All schools in Smarter Balanced member states will be eligible to participate in a Pilot Test of the assessment system beginning in February 2013. Additional information about how to participate in the Pilot Test will be made available to states in fall 2012.

In early 2014, a large-scale Field Test will be conducted across member states. The goal of the Field Test will be to ensure that administration, scoring, and reporting systems function correctly in preparation for the implementation of the assessment system in the 2014-15 school year.

### 5. What is a performance task?

Performance tasks are extended activities that measure a student's ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple standards—a key component of college and career readiness. Performance tasks will be used to better measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with selected- or constructed-response items. Some performance tasks can be scored automatically; many will be hand-scored by professionally trained readers.

These tasks will be delivered as part of the interim and summative components of the assessment system, with more extended tasks available in the digital library as part of the Smarter Balanced-developed exemplar instructional modules and inventory of currently available resources. The time and resource constraints for each performance task will be guided by its placement in the overall assessment system.