

Principles and Guidelines for Adopting or Creating Locally Developed Benchmark Assessments for Checkpoint A *Classical Languages*

Purpose

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

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 \(2021\)](#) for Classical Languages (p. 2) while allowing them flexibility to address specific local needs and priorities. They additionally 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 \(2021\)](#) for Classical Languages (p. 2) that will be made available for adoption by LEAs.

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 Classical Languages](#) for Novice Mid to Novice High (Interpretive Reading) and Novice Mid (Interpretive Listening; Presentational Communication; Interpersonal Communication) from [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages \(2021\)](#) for Classical Languages (p. 2);
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; 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, including American Sign Language (ASL), are not addressed in this guidance document. Guidelines for Modern Languages reflect the differences that exist between Classical and Modern Languages as articulated in the [NYS Learning Standards for World Languages \(2021\)](#) for Modern Languages (p. 1) and the Proficiency and Performance Indicators for [Category 1-2](#) or [Category 3-4](#) Modern 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 because their disability 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 students 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 Speaking (and Presentational Speaking, if included) may 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. 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. 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 Interpretive Reading and Culture Standards 4 and 5 with performances at Novice Mid considered passing. The Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment will be targeted to the performance indicators for Novice Mid for Interpretive Listening, Presentational Communication, and Interpersonal Communication.

All Communication Standards (Standard 1 Interpretive Communication, Standard 2 Presentational Communication, and Standard 3 Interpersonal Communication) are assessed in the on-demand Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment, although not all skills of these standards need to be included in the on-demand Benchmark assessment.

The content of the Checkpoint A Benchmark Assessment is intended to reflect a sufficiently broad representation of the six themes and associated topics for Checkpoint A identified in the [NYS WL Themes and Topics](#) for Classical Languages (pp. 3 – 4) within meaningfully integrated contexts.

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

Standard 1 Interpretive Communication – 60% Total Weight

- Interpretive Reading (45-50%) with Embedded Culture (5%)
- Interpretive Listening (5-10%)

Standard 2 Presentational Communication – 10% Total Weight

- Presentational Writing (5-10%)
- (optional) Presentational Speaking (0-5%)

Standard 3 Interpersonal Communication – 10% Total Weight

- Interpersonal Speaking (10%)

Standard 4 Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives – 20% 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 Classical Languages](#) for Checkpoint A.

English support for English Language Learners (ELLs). As is the practice with NYS assessments, 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 \(2021\)](#) for Classical Languages (p. 2) 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.

Standard 1 - Interpretive Reading (45 - 50%) with Embedded Culture (5%)

This section assesses the student's ability to understand target language passages based on authentic sources at Novice High, to analyze words and phrases derived from Classical languages in an extended passage in English, and to recognize cultural references embedded in those passages. For Checkpoint A, students identify the topic and some isolated facts from short texts on familiar and everyday topics. Tasks can include answering multiple choice questions and responding to constructed response questions as well as analyzing words and phrases derived from the Classical language in English-language passages. This section contains items to assess Culture Standard 4 and may contain items to assess Culture Standard 5. Interpretive tasks may include some items in English and some in the target language or may be all in English.

Standard 1 - Interpretive Listening (5 - 10%)

This section assesses the student's ability to understand audio input in the target language with visual supports at Novice Mid. At this level, students identify some basic facts from short passages on highly familiar topics. Teachers may read short passages based on authentic resources at a level-appropriate speed. All students hear each passage twice. Additional repetitions are given 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. Interpretive tasks may include some items in English and some in the target language or may be all in English.

Standard 2 - Presentational Writing (5% - 10%)

This section assesses the student's ability to write a short message or description on a highly familiar context to fulfill a communicative purpose associated with Standard 2. The section could include one or two short writing tasks representing contexts suggested by the six themes and associated topics for Checkpoint A identified in the [NYS WL Themes and Topics](#) for Classical Languages (pp. 3 – 4) and the five presentational language functions of Standard 2. Particular focus at Checkpoint A would be placed on the language functions of describing, sharing information (informing), and giving reasons (persuading). Scoring of Presentational Writing is aligned to the performance indicators for Novice Mid and accomplished with a rubric based on language of the [NYS Classical Languages Master Rubric](#) for Novice Mid.

Standard 2 - Presentational Speaking (Optional) (0-5%)

LEAs and regional or statewide consortia may include Presentational Speaking as part of the Checkpoint A Benchmark. This part would 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 could be recorded using a computer application.

A Presentational Speaking section would assess the student's ability to fulfill a communicative purpose representing highly familiar contexts suggested by the six themes and associated topics for Checkpoint A identified in the [NYS WL Themes and Topics](#) for Classical Languages (pp. 3 – 4) using one or more of the five presentational language functions of Standard 2 by speaking in response to a prompt. Tasks might include asking students to describe an image or to record a response to a given situation. Students would be given a prompt, a short time to think and make some notes, and then produce their Presentational speech sample. After sufficient time to prepare, Checkpoint A students are given 1 to 1 ½ minutes (1:00 – 1:30) to provide their speech sample. The Presentational Speaking task would be assessed based on the language of the [NYS Classical Languages Master Rubric](#) for Novice Mid.

Standard 3 - Interpersonal Speaking (10%)

This section assesses the student's ability to communicate in one or two unrehearsed short conversations with another person about highly familiar contexts consistent with the performance indicators for Novice Mid. Students are individually assessed with a teacher serving as the conversation partner. As an example, the format could include a short spontaneous role play situation that is within the experience of the students in which they 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 six themes and associated topics for Checkpoint A identified in the [NYS WL Themes and Topics](#) for Classical Languages (pp. 3 – 4) and the four interpersonal language functions in Standard 3. Students carry on conversations which are

evaluated on a rubric based on language of the [NYS Classical Languages Master Rubric](#) for Novice Mid.

Standard 4 - Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives (20%)

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 represent a range of topics suggested by the six themes in the [NYS WL Themes and Topics](#) for Classical Languages (pp. 3 – 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 [NYS Classical Languages Master Rubric](#) for Novice High. Students may be given a choice of items from which to select. This section may contain items to assess Culture Standard 5. 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.