

Performing Fine Arts Assessment  
Responding-Mode Item  
Writing and Reviewing GUIDE:  
Dance, Music, and Theatre



*A Guide for Writing and Reviewing the  
Florida Performing Fine Arts Assessment  
Responding-Mode Items*

Second YEAR 2012–2013

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*RTTT District-Developed Assessments for  
Hard-To-Measure Performing Fine Arts  
Polk Project C: Performing Arts 1 – 530-RA211-3C001  
Polk Project D: Performing Arts 2 – 530-RA211-3C002*

# Guide for Writing and Reviewing

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# Guide for Writing and Reviewing

## MODULE 1 – Introduction

In recent years, two realities focused attention on the need to reevaluate Florida’s Sunshine State Standards. First, in 2005, outside consultants reviewed the 1996 Standards and suggested that the benchmark language offer greater specificity to indicate clearly what teachers should teach and what students should be able to do. Second, federal legislation through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) holds schools and school districts accountable for how well each child is learning and further emphasizes the need to hone expectations for all students.

In January 2006, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) committed to a six-year cycle of review and revision of the K–12 content standards. The arts standards were rewritten and the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for dance, music, and theatre were adopted by the Florida State Board of Education in December 2010 (available online at <http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/FLStandardSearch.aspx>).

On August 24, 2010, the United States Department of Education announced that the state of Florida was a winner of the federal *Race to the Top* Phase 2 grant competition. A key component of Florida’s winning application focused on the standards and assessments assurance area, including the creation of high-quality interim and formative assessments. While the state government of Florida provides support for assessment in primary academic areas, there is a recognized need to develop high-quality, balanced assessment systems in other content areas. Through the guidance of stakeholder committees, criteria were established and resources were provided for development of assessments for such areas as physical education, health, **dance, music, theatre**, visual arts, world languages, and career and technical education courses that are more difficult to measure objectively. Led by the Polk County Public Schools (Lakeland, Florida), 15 Florida school districts formed a consortium to design and develop high-quality items and assessments for the performing fine arts—dance, music, and theatre.

The NGSSS are divided into benchmarks that identify what a student should know and be able to do at each grade level. The document, *Performing Fine Arts Assessment Responding-Mode Item Specifications: Dance, Music, and Theatre*, provides information about the benchmarks, the stimulus types, and the test items.

### *Origin and Purpose of the Item Specifications*

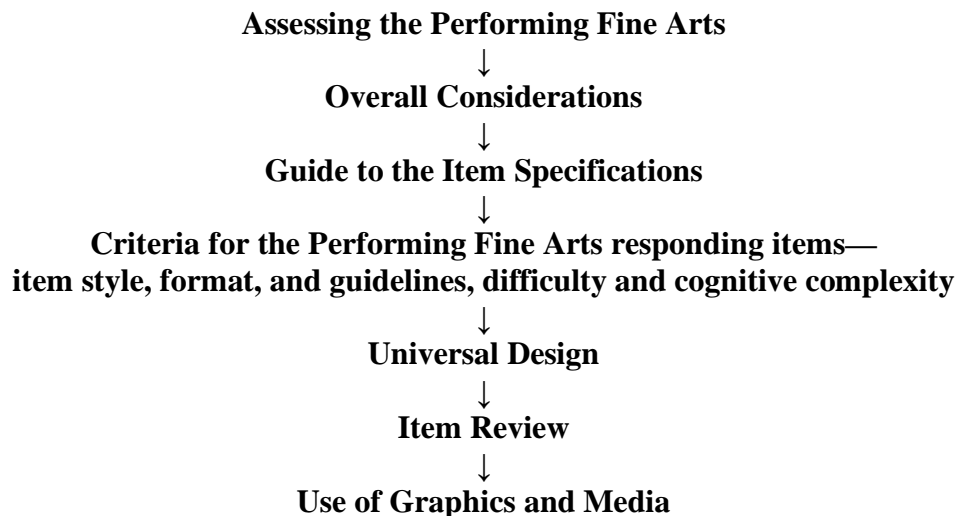
Committees of experienced Florida educators, along with the Florida Department of Education, developed and approved the *Item Specifications* documents referred to above. The *Item Specifications* documents are resource documents that define the content and format of the assessment and test items for item writers and reviewers. Each *Item Specifications* document indicates the alignment of items with the NGSSS. It also provides all stakeholders with information about the scope and function of the Performing Fine Arts Assessments.



## Scope of This Guide

This guide provides a discussion of the performing fine arts elements assessed by the tests. Modules 1-3 provide an introduction and background information; Modules 4-6 provide information writing selected-response items; Modules 7-9 provide information on short-answer and extended-response items; Modules 10 through 12 address cognitive complexity levels, item difficulty, and universal design; Modules 14 and 15 are checklists; and Module 16 discusses the use of media in items.

The *Item Specifications* document provides general and grade-specific guidelines for the development of all test items used in the Performing Fine Arts assessments for dance, music and theatre for grades K–12. It identifies the manner in which each benchmark is assessed at grades K–12; provides content limits and stimulus attributes for each benchmark; and gives specific information about content, item types, and response attributes.



## Assessing the Performing Fine Arts

### Defining the Terms

- **ASSESSMENT:** gathering information about where the student has been, where the student is now, and where the student should be, relevant to academic and artistic expectations
- **MEASUREMENT:** the use of systematic methodology to observe artistic behaviors in order to represent the magnitude of performance achievement, task completion, and concept attainment
- **EVALUATION:** the comparison of assessment information in relation to a standard or set of preestablished criteria

# COMPARISON - Assessments in the Performing Fine Arts versus traditional assessments

## HARD-TO-MEASURE PERFORMING FINE ARTS

The RTTT initiative charges the Florida Department of Education to measure **INDIVIDUAL Student Achievement**. The Performing Fine Arts are Hard-to-Measure because most classroom work includes **teams of students** (dance, ensemble, band, chorus, orchestra, acting troupe), and the students are involved in **Performing/Creating activities**, rather than Responding activities.

## HARD-TO-MEASURE? YES!

- Performance-based tasks
- Collaborative activities
- Creative outcomes

## HIGHER-ORDER THINKING

EASY-TO-MEASURE	HARD-TO-MEASURE
<p><b>TRADITIONAL PROCESS</b></p> 	<p><b>ARTISTIC PROCESS</b></p> <p><b>Performing:</b> Students perform – dance, sing, play an instrument, act;</p> <p><b>Creating:</b> Students create original work – choreograph, compose, improvise, write;</p> <p><b>Responding:</b> Students reflect upon a work of art – describe, interpret, evaluate works in dance, music and theatre.</p> 
<p><b>TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b></p> 	<p><b>PERFORMING FINE ARTS CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b></p> 
<p><b>TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT</b></p> 	<p><b>PERFORMING FINE ARTS ASSESSMENT</b></p> 

# Assessment Response Modes in the Performing Fine Arts

There are three modes of artistic expression based on the roles our students assume during performance and related activities:

- **Responding:** the role of audience; listener and evaluator
- **Performing:** the role of interpreter of existing performance works
- **Creating:** the role of originator of new performance works

Assessment response modes mirror these to the greatest extent possible within the context of an assessment task. Authentic and alternative techniques are used to measure the progress of individual students in each of these three response modes.

## What Is the ARTISTIC PROCESS?

Arts education consists of experiences in three interrelated artistic activities: responding, performing, and creating. Students involved in these activities gain knowledge about the arts, refine their perceptual and expressive skills, and make and justify judgments about works of art.

### Responding to artistic works and performances:

Students reflect upon works of art. They describe, interpret, and evaluate works and performances in dance, music, and theatre.

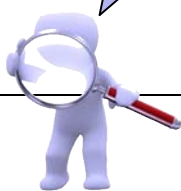
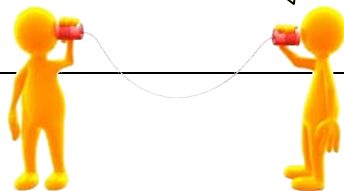

### Performing an existing work with understanding/interpretation:

Students apply skills to perform existing work in the art form. They dance, choreograph, sing, play instruments, direct, or act, using existing works of art.

### Creating a new artistic work:

Students use their own ideas to create original work in the art form. They compose or improvise original pieces of dance, music, or dramatic works.

## ARTISTIC PROCESS

	<b>Responding</b> <i>observe</i>	<b>Performing</b> <i>communicate</i>	<b>Creating</b> <i>imagine</i>
<b>DANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe</li> <li>• interpret</li> <li>• evaluate</li> </ul> <p><b>Students reflect upon works of art!</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dance</li> <li>• choreograph</li> <li>• rehearse</li> <li>• present</li> </ul> <p><b>Students apply skills to perform existing works of art!</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• choreograph</li> <li>• improvise</li> <li>• design</li> <li>• rehearse</li> </ul> <p><b>Students use their own ideas to create original works!</b></p> 
<b>MUSIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe</li> <li>• interpret</li> <li>• evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sing</li> <li>• play an instrument</li> <li>• conduct</li> <li>• rehearse</li> <li>• present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compose</li> <li>• arrange</li> <li>• improvise</li> <li>• direct/conduct</li> <li>• rehearse</li> </ul>
<b>THEATRE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe</li> <li>• interpret</li> <li>• evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act</li> <li>• direct/stage</li> <li>• rehearse</li> <li>• present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act</li> <li>• direct/stage</li> <li>• improvise</li> <li>• design</li> <li>• write</li> <li>• rehearse</li> </ul>



**Responding:** places the student in the role of reviewer, critical evaluator, or audience member

**Performing:** places the student in the role of interpreter or re-creator of existing art

**Creating:** places the student in the role of originator of new art, expressing ideas and feelings through newly created art

In these modes, students are engaged as artists in an artistic process for the purpose of providing evidence of specific artistic knowledge and skills.

- Direct content assessment
- Provide evidence of the employment of critical-thinking skills
- Self-assessment of achievement and personal artistic growth

### *Categories of Assessment: Formative and Summative*

- Formative Assessments are those the primary purpose of which is to gather evidence of progress toward a larger goal, such as a standard or grade-level expectation.
- These assessments occur during the time students are forming the knowledge, skills, and understandings that are requisite to the larger goal.
- Results are used primarily to identify areas of weakness and strength in order to guide instruction.
- Summative Assessments are those the primary purpose of which is to gather culminating evidence of the student's knowledge, skills, and understanding as expected at a particular grade level.
- These occur at selected culminating or anchor points in the learning process and can include an evaluation of progress toward the district or state standards.
- Data from both categories are used to report progress to parents

### *Item Types in the Performing Fine Arts*

- **Selected-Response or Multiple-Choice items:** These items ask a question and provide a set of response choices (3 or 4), one of which is clearly the correct or best answer.
- **Short Answer:** These items are answered by a phrase or a few sentences.
- **Extended Response or Essay:** Students construct a lengthy response to a question or problem. Essay questions use an open-ended response format. Artistic analogs include creating a new work or improvisation.

**Performance Assessment:** A performance assessment requires students to produce a product or demonstrate a process, solve a problem involving several steps, or carry out an activity that demonstrates proficiency with a complex skill.

- **On-demand Performance:** obtained at the time of the assessment
- **Performance Event:** a rehearsed performance developed over time



## MODULE 2 – Overall Considerations

This section of the *Guide* describes the guidelines that apply to all test items developed for the Performing Fine Arts Grades K–12 Assessments.

### *Overall Considerations*

**Overall considerations** are broad item-development issues that should be addressed during the development of test items. Other sections of the *Guide* relate more specifically to one aspect of the development (for example, individual item types or content limits).

1. Each responding item will be written to measure one benchmark. Performing benchmarks have been clustered into groups by Performing Task.
2. When benchmarks are combined for Performing Task assessment, the specification indicates which benchmarks are combined.
3. Items should be appropriate for students in terms of grade-level difficulty, cognitive development, and reading level.
4. At a given grade, the test items will exhibit a varied range of difficulty.
5. For Performing Fine Arts items, the reading level should be approximately one grade level below the grade level of the assessment, except for specifically assessed Performing Fine Arts terms or concepts.
6. Items should not disadvantage or exhibit disrespect to anyone in regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, or geographic region.
7. To the extent possible, items should be written so students can answer them without using any additional equipment or tools other than the computer and headsets. In cases where performances are recorded for later assessment, the additional equipment required should be minimal.
8. Items may require the student to apply Performing Fine Arts knowledge and skills described in NGSSS benchmarks from lower grades; however, the benchmarks from lower grades will not be assessed in isolation.
9. Items should provide all necessary components and information for students to listen, analyze, or use in order to respond to the items.
10. Items should provide clear and complete instructions to students.
11. Each item should be written clearly and unambiguously to elicit the desired response.
12. Items on the Performing Fine Arts assessments should be written so that students are expected to select or provide the most accurate answer or appropriate response as possible. Students should be allowed to listen to or view item stimuli for an



appropriate number of times or be allowed adequate time to prepare a performance when appropriate. (NOTE: On-demand performances generally do not have preparation time.)

13. Short-Answer and Extended-Response items must have a clear, concise rubric for grading.



## MODULE 3 – Item Specifications

### *Why are item specifications important for Item Writers and Item Reviewers?*

#### *Origin and Purpose of the Item Specifications*

Committees of experienced Florida educators, along with the Florida Department of Education, developed and approved the *Item Specifications* documents. The *Item Specifications* is a resource document that defines the content and format of the assessment and test items for item writers and reviewers. Each *Item Specifications* document indicates the alignment of items with the NGSSS. It also provides all stakeholders with information about the scope and function of the Performing Fine Arts Assessments and end-of-course assessments.

#### *Benchmark Number*

Each NGSSS Benchmark is labeled with a system of number and letters.

- The first two letters identify the Discipline: DA—Dance; MU—Music; and TH—Theatre.
- The number or numbers in the third position represent the Grade Level: K—Kindergarten, 1—First Grade, 2—Second Grade, etc.; 68—Sixth through Eighth Grade, 912—Ninth through Twelfth Grade.
- The letter in the fourth position represents the Big Idea.
- The fifth number is the Enduring Understanding.
- The sixth number is the specific Benchmark.

#### *Example: TH.912.H.2.4*

- The first two letters identify the Discipline—Theatre.
- The numbers in the third position represent the Grade Level—9th through 12th grade.
- The letter in the fourth position represents the Big Idea—Historical Connections.
- The fifth number is the Enduring Understanding—“The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.”
- The sixth number is the specific Benchmark (Benchmark 4).

## *Benchmark*

Benchmarks explicitly describe what students should know and be able to do in Dance, Music, and Theatre. Benchmarks are specific and measurable. The disciplines of Dance, Music, and Theatre are considered to be “Hard-to-measure” content areas.

## *Content Area*

Dance, Music, or Theatre

## *Grade Level*

K–5, 6–8, 9–12

## *Big Idea*

Big Ideas are the major organizing point for arts education in Florida. Big Ideas provide a broad overview of what students should know and be able to do. Big Ideas are organized into “Enduring Understandings.”

- C—Critical Thinking
- S—Skills
- O—Organizational Structure
- H—Historical Connections
- F—Future

## *Enduring Understandings*

Enduring Understandings provide a more focused view of arts education and targeted understandings for Florida students. Enduring Understandings enable arts teachers to identify or design Essential Questions for planning purposes.

### **Big Idea C: Critical Thinking and Reflection**

**Critical and creative thinking, self-expression, and communication with others are central to the arts.**

**Enduring Understanding C.1:** Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

**Enduring Understanding C.2:** Assessing our own and others’ artistic work, through critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making, is central to artistic growth.

**Enduring Understanding C.3:** The processes of critiquing works of art lead to development of critical-thinking skills transferable to other contexts.

### **Big Idea S: Skills, Techniques, and Processes**



**Through dance, music, theatre, and visual art, students learn that beginners, amateurs, and professionals benefit from working to improve and maintain skills over time.**

**Enduring Understanding S.1:** The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art.

**Enduring Understanding S.2:** Development of skills, techniques, and processes in the arts strengthens our ability to remember, focus on, process, and sequence information.

**Enduring Understanding S.3:** Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.

### **Big Idea O: Organizational Structure**

**Works in dance, music, theatre, and visual art are organized by elements and principles that guide creators, interpreters, and responders.**

**Enduring Understanding O.1:** Understanding the organizational structure of an art form provides a foundation for appreciation of artistic works and respect for the creative process.

**Enduring Understanding O.2:** The structural rules and conventions of an art form serve as both a foundation and departure point for creativity.

**Enduring Understanding O.3:** Every art form uses its own unique language, verbal and non-verbal, to document and communicate with the world.

### **Big Idea H: Historical and Global Connections**

**Experiences in the arts foster understanding, acceptance, and enrichment among individuals, groups, and cultures from around the world and across time.**

**Enduring Understanding H.1:** Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the world in which they live(d).

**Enduring Understanding H.2:** The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

**Enduring Understanding H.3:** Connections among the arts and other disciplines strengthen learning and the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to and from other fields.

### **Big Idea F: Innovation, Technology, and the Future**



**Curiosity, creativity, and the challenges of artistic problems drive innovation and adaptation of new and emerging technologies.**

**Enduring Understanding F.1:** Creating, interpreting, and responding in the arts stimulate the imagination and encourage innovation and creative risk-taking.

**Enduring Understanding F.2:** Careers in and related to the arts significantly and positively impact local and global economies.

**Enduring Understanding F.3:** The 21st-century skills necessary for success as citizens, workers, and leaders in a global economy are embedded in the study of the arts.

### *Assessment Response Mode*

- Responding Item
- Performing Item
- Creating Item

### *Item Types*

Item Types are used to assess the benchmark or group of benchmarks.

- Selected Response or Multiple Choice
- Short Answer
- Extended Response or Essay

### *Benchmark Clarifications*

Benchmark Clarifications simply restate the benchmark in terms of what the student will do when responding to questions of each type.

### *Content Limits*

Content Limits define the parameters of subject matter content with suggestions on where to find material and examples.

### *Stimulus Attributes*

Stimulus Attributes define the parameters of the types of written, visual, audio, and video materials that should be used in the test items, including the appropriate use of graphic materials. They also define grade-level readability and/or understanding, length of aural excerpts, copyright information, and selection of examples or course-specific content if applicable.

### *Response Attributes*

Response Attributes define the characteristics of the answers that a student must choose from or provide.

Example: Grade-level readability, types of responses (short answer, multiple choice, and essay), evaluate higher-order thinking that requires problem-solving or critical thinking.

### *Sample Question*

Sample Questions are provided to assist the writer in composing an item (stimulus/response) for the assessment that will follow the *Item Specifications*. These are just suggestions and should be considered to be a jumping-off point for creativity and thinking of new ways to assess the skills and knowledge addressed in the benchmarks.



# MODULE 4 – Item Style and Format

## *Criteria for the Performing Fine Arts Responding Items*

The Performing Fine Arts responding items include three primary types of test items: selected-response items (SR), short-answer items, and extended-response items (ER). The *Item Specifications* that follow present the criteria for the following:

- Item style and format for all item types
- Guidelines for item writers for all item types
- Item difficulty and cognitive complexity of the Performing Fine Arts responding items
- Universal design
- Use of graphics and media

### *Item Style and Format*

This section presents stylistic guidelines and formatting directions that item writers should follow while developing test items. Guidelines are provided separately for each item type to be developed.

Style and formatting guidelines provide consistency in the appearance and quality of the items. Because there are a large number of writers and reviewers, these guidelines provide a framework for item writing and reviewing that allows all items to be written and reviewed with the same criteria in mind.

### *General Guidelines*

1. Items must be written to measure the benchmark and should exhibit a range of difficulty.
2. The reading level should be approximately one grade level below the level assessed.
3. Items should be clear and concise, and they should use vocabulary and sentence structure appropriate for the assessed grade level.
4. Information being assessed should be pertinent, relevant, and assess significant information.
5. Items must match the identified cognitive difficulty level.
6. For items that refer to an artwork, titles should be capitalized with the exception of indefinite articles and prepositions.
7. For items that refer to the creator of an original artwork, the creator's commonly used name should be capitalized appropriately (for example, Ludwig van Beethoven, e. e. cummings, George Bernard Shaw).

8. As appropriate, boldface type should be used to emphasize key words (e.g., **least likely, best described**, etc.).
9. Plural forms should be used whenever possible to avoid gender-specific pronouns.
10. Items should be written in the active voice.
11. An equal balance of male and female names should be used, including names representing different ethnic groups appropriate for Florida.
12. For clarity, artistic symbols and note values should be preceded and followed by one space.
13. Musical notation should be included on a staff, with the exception of rhythmic patterns in the lower grades.
14. The comma should be used in a number greater than or equal to 1,000 with the exception of years (e.g., 2012).
15. Abbreviations should be avoided unless they are commonly used in the art form (e.g., *p* may be used for *piano* when presenting dynamic markings in music items).
16. An Item Objective should be written for every item. The Objective explains how the item matches the Benchmark being assessed and is phrased as follows: “This item addresses the benchmark in the following ways: . . .”
17. Writers should make one final review of their item using a checklist to ensure that all rules have been followed. Please see Appendices for the checklist to be used by all writers and reviewers.

### *Selected-Response (SR) Items*

1. SR items should take an average of one to three minutes per item to solve, depending on the grade level.
2. The final sentence of any SR item stem must be expressed as a question.
3. SR items consist of the following parts:

**Stem:** This is the question being asked.

**Options:** These are the answer choices and consist of the following:

- **Key:** This is the correct answer.
- **Distractors:** These are the incorrect answers.

# MODULE 5 – Writing the Item Stem (Selected-Response Items)

## *Selected-Response Items: STEM*

Selected-response items are effective and efficient for measuring factual knowledge but can also be crafted to measure at the interpretive/inferential level. Within limitations, well-crafted selected-response items and particularly item sets can address higher-level cognitive skills.

## *Guidelines for Writing the Item Stem*

Writing the item stem is a critical step in creating an item. These guidelines assist the writer in developing item stems that will work best for the item being developed.

1. Write the stem as a closed question. Open-ended formats (“This melody is an example of \_\_\_\_\_”) are not used on this assessment.
2. Word the stem positively if at all possible. Negatives such as “not” and “except” are often overlooked by the students, which causes the question to be misinterpreted. If it is unavoidable, however, the word should be emphasized by all uppercase letters (e.g., “Which of the following is NOT an example of . . .”).
3. Make the stem as clear as possible so the student knows exactly what is being asked. Include only the information that is necessary. Don’t write too much.
4. If you use a graphic or other form of media, place it below the text of the stem.
5. Put the main or central idea of what you want to ask in the stem, not in the options. The student should not have to read the options in order to understand what is being asked. Pulling the information into the stem also helps avoid repeated information in the options.
6. Make sure that nothing in the stem gives a clue (cue) that will help the student choose the correct answer. For example, if you use *child* in the stem and *children* for one or two of the incorrect answer choices, you will be giving a clue that the choices with *children* are probably not the correct answer. Clueing can happen within an item and between items. The stem of one item can provide a clue to the answer of another item, an answer choice of one item may be the same answer as another item, etc. This is particularly the case when one writer creates a series of questions for one benchmark; reviewers and writers need to be careful to avoid clueing.
7. Don’t write trick questions. The purpose of a test item is to measure the students’ knowledge, not their ability to decipher a test question.

# MODULE 6 – Writing Options (Answer Choices) for Selected-Response Items

## *Guidelines for Writing Options (Answer Choices)*

These guidelines provide suggestions for writing Selected-Response options. Following these guidelines will strengthen the validity of the items and affect the item difficulty.

1. Selected-Response (SR) items will have four options (A, B, C, D) in grades 3–12, and three options (A, B, C) in grades K–2.
2. Make sure that the Key is the only correct answer. The other options (distractors) should be *plausible* but *incorrect*. Each distractor should be an answer choice that is believable for someone who does not really know the correct answer; distractors that obviously lack plausibility are easily rejected, leaving fewer viable options from which to choose. A good strategy is to use typical errors that students make as the distractors.
3. The options must be *parallel* and avoid outliers, which is any option that stands out from the others for any reason. The options must be parallel structurally (e.g., one is not significantly longer than the others), conceptually (e.g., one is very complex and the others very simple), and grammatically (e.g., one starts with a different verb tense than the others). Outliers have a tendency to make options more (or less) attractive to students, which may cause students to select or reject these options for the wrong reason.
4. Do not use “none of the above” or “all of the above.”
5. Avoid giving clues to the right answer in the item options. This clueing can be within the item and between items. Avoid using terms such as *always*, *never*, *none*, *totally*, *absolutely*, and *completely* because they set extreme limits and thus can be a clue that they are less likely (or appear to be more likely) to be the correct answer. Similarly, terms such as *often*, *sometimes*, *generally*, *usually*, and *typically* also qualify the answer choice and should be used with caution as they are clues and are more often true.
6. Phrase answer choices positively as much as possible. The use of words such as *not*, *except*, *doesn't*, *didn't*, *couldn't*, and *wouldn't* will be less problematic in the answer choices compared with their use in the stem and may work fine (and in some instances make the most sense) if the syntax is well crafted, but the recommended strategy is to consider positive phrasing first. However, if a negative is used in one of the options, it should be used in at least one other option. Otherwise, it is an outlier.
7. Using a stem that asks for the *best* answer requires careful wording for the distractors as they all may have a degree of correctness (thus the term *best*), but the correct answer has to be the *best* choice. It is good to get another expert's opinion on what is the best choice. Then what you decide is the correct answer will more likely prove to be so (based on an analysis of the item statistics after the item is administered).

8. Avoid using opposites as options. For example: “Be a good team player” and “Take care of yourself first” are clearly opposites. Students will immediately rule out one of them, which results in fewer options from which to choose.
9. Don’t make a distractor humorous. Such a distractor can be a distraction to the real intent of the benchmark being measured. Students may consider these “giveaways” and reject the distractor outright, reducing the number of viable choices to choose from.
10. Option order, punctuation, and grammar guidelines are as follows:
  - Options should be in logical order (e.g., short to long, long to short, alphabetical, or numerical).
  - Complete sentences should have initial caps and end with a period.
  - Phrases should not have periods.
  - One-word options should have initial caps and no period.
11. Rationales must be written for all options to explain why a particular option was selected. The rationale for the Key must explain why the response is correct; simply stating “This is the correct answer” is not sufficient. The rationales for the distractors must be twofold: they should explain (1) why the options are plausible and (2) why they are nevertheless incorrect. If a clear rationale cannot be written, this is often a good indicator that the option is not a good choice. Format and content for sample rationales follow:

Stem: “Listen to the following melody. Which instrument from the brass family is playing?” <insert audio of a trumpet playing>

- A. Tuba
- B. Baritone
- C. Trumpet
- D. French horn

A Rationale: This is incorrect. Although a tuba is in the brass family, it has a lower pitch.

B Rationale: This is incorrect. Although a baritone is in the brass family, it has a lower pitch.

C Rationale: Key—This is the correct answer because the trumpet is a brass instrument and the sound matches the pitch of the melody.

C Rationale: This is incorrect. Although a French horn is a brass instrument, it has a lower pitch.

Note: The Key rationale shows why the trumpet is the correct choice. The Distractor rationales show both why the distractors are plausible (they are in the brass family) and why they are nevertheless incorrect (the pitch doesn’t match). The format does not have to match correctly, as long as it states (1) that the response is incorrect, (2) why the response is plausible, and (c) why the response is incorrect.

# MODULE 7 – Writing Short-Answer and Extended-Response Items

## *Guidelines for Writing Short-Answer and Extended-Response Items*

1. Short-Answer and Extended-Response items require more than a one-word response. Items that can be answered with a single word (or one simple phrase) should be turned into Selected-Response items. There are typically multiple ways of responding to a Short-Answer or Extended-Response item.
2. Short-Answer items are worth 2 points. The response typically consists of several short phrases or a list.
3. Extended-Response items are worth 4 points. The response is longer and may consist of two main ideas and two supporting details, one main idea and three supporting details, or four examples of a single idea. Avoid simple lists (e.g., “What are four instruments in the brass family?”). Remember that this item can receive 4 points so you want it to have some substance.

4. The three parts of Short-Answer and Extended-Response items are as follows:

**Stem:** This is the question or task that the student has to answer or perform. It must clearly delineate what is required for a full-credit response. The rules for the stem are the same as those explained earlier in this *Guide*.

**Exemplary Response:** This is an example response, written as though by a student, of the minimal response that would receive full credit.

**Rubric:** This provides the scoring criteria needed to assign scores to a response. This project uses an *analytic rubric* that assigns score points for specific, identified responses.

## MODULE 8 – Writing the Stem for Short-Answer and Extended-Response Items

Writing the item stem is a critical step in creating an item. These guidelines assist the writer in developing item stems that will work best for the item being developed.

1. Write the stem as a closed question. Open-ended formats (“This melody is an example of \_\_\_\_\_”) are not used on this assessment.
2. Do not use negatives such as “not” or “except” for Short-Answer or Extended-Response items.
3. Make the stem as clear as possible so the student knows exactly what is being asked. Include only the information that is necessary. Don’t write too much.
4. If you use a graphic or other form of media, place it below the text of the stem.
5. Make sure that something in the stem doesn’t give a clue (cue) that will provide inadvertent guidance in how to respond. Clueing can happen within an item and between items. A stem of one item can provide a clue to the stem of another item; an answer choice of one item is a correct answer in the rubric of another item; or a stem of one item clues an answer choice of another item. This is particularly the case when one writer creates a series of questions for one benchmark; reviewers and writers need to be careful to avoid clueing.
6. Don’t make the item opinion-based. Any response to a question that asks for the student’s opinion would be arguably correct which renders the item invalid and unusable.
7. Don’t write trick questions. The purpose of a test item is to measure the students’ knowledge, not their ability to decipher a test question.
8. Avoid stems that are too open-ended. For example, “Describe the development of modern dance” cannot be answered succinctly. It is also very difficult to score because of the broad parameters.
9. Item stems must clearly delineate what is required (e.g., how many examples) for a full credit response. For example:

Short Answer:

“What are two of the movements used in an arabesque?”

OR

“What is one movement used in an arabesque? How is the movement performed?”

Extended Response:

“What are two characteristics of music from the Baroque Period?”



What are two examples of music from the Baroque Period?"

10. The stem should use a question format. However, clarifying instructions or information that follow the question (e.g., Give two examples of . . .” “Be sure to. . . .” may be in sentence format.
11. Words used in the stem must be selected with care. If all you want is a list of two items, use “identify” or “give” rather than “describe” or “explain.” Or you might ask the student to “identify” and then “explain” the choice that was made. However, if you want the response to have more depth, do not use the more limiting words such as “identify.”
12. Give enough information in the stem to make clear the nature of the desired answer. Make sure the stem contains all the information the student needs in order to understand the task. Don’t assume that the student will be able to read between the lines or figure out what might be missing. Use the stem to clarify issues that may arise from the way the question is worded. For example, if the question asks the student to *compare and contrast*, *summarize*, *explain* or *describe*, then give enough information in the prompt to support the question so the student will know what you intend when you use those words.





## MODULE 9 - Writing and Using Scoring Rubrics for Short Answer and Extended Response Items

1. The Exemplary Response / Sample Answer shows *one* example of how a student *could* respond and receive full credit. This is a minimal response and does not contain all the possible information that a student could provide.
2. Scoring Rubrics require only the information that is requested in the stem.
3. The scoring rubric is what the scorer will use to assign scores to a student's response. It is written so that the item can be scored consistently by different scorers. The rubrics are written using the following parameters:
  - Full-credit response (two points or four points): The rubric for full-credit responses will show all the possible responses. If the list is not finite, include the phrase “. . . including, but not limited to . . . .”
  - Partial-credit response (one point for SA items and one, two and three points for ER items): The rubric for partial-credit responses indicates how many pieces listed in the full-credit rubric are required; e.g., “The response contains one correct example listed above.”
  - Zero-credit response: This rubric uses “boilerplate” language and is the same for all item and is written as follows: “The response indicates inadequate or no understanding of the concept needed to answer the item. The student may have written on a different topic or written ‘I don’t know.’”

### *Sample Short Answer Item and Rubric:*

#### **Benchmark: MU.5.H.2.2**

The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

#### **Stem:**

What is one way people listened to music before the radio was invented?

How was their experience different from listening to music on the radio?

#### 2-Point Sample Answer:

People played music in their homes. The difference is that it is much more social than listening to music on the radio.

#### 2-Point Rubric:

The response identifies one way people listened to music AND explains how the experience was different. Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Attended concerts: saw other people / more personal

- Played instruments / sang in the homes: saw other people / more personal / improved skills
- Listened to records: could choose what music to listen to

1-Point Rubric:

The response correctly describes one way people listened to music before the radio was invented.

OR

The response correctly identifies a difference between listening to music before and after the invention of the radio.

0-point Rubric

The response indicates inadequate or no understanding of the concept needed to answer the item. The student may have written on a different topic or written “I don’t know.”

***Sample Extended-Response Item and Rubric:***

**Stem:**

Watch the two videos. What are two examples of techniques that are used in both performances to communicate the story? What are two examples of what the techniques are communicating?

<Insert two videos, one of a dance performance and one of a theatre performance>

4-Point Sample Answer:

The performances both use costumes and movement to help tell the story. The costumes show a particular period of time to help the audience identify when the events take place. Both performances have fight scenes, and these movements are used to show battles between good and evil.

4-Point Rubric:

The response identifies two examples of techniques used in both performances to show mood, and gives two examples from the videos of techniques that are used to establish mood. Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Techniques**

- Sets / Lighting / Costumes / Audience / Movement / Story / Projection

**Examples:**

- Identify period / help people relate to events / show good vs. evil / suggest time of day / culture / climate / social or historical events / help create realism / create atmosphere / authenticity / focus on main characters / show writer’s intent.

3-Point Rubric:

The response correctly identifies two techniques and gives one example.

OR

The response correctly identifies one technique and gives two examples.

2-Point Rubric:

The response correctly identifies two techniques.

OR

The response correctly identifies one technique and gives one example.

OR

The response correctly identifies two examples.

1-Point Rubric:

The response correctly identifies one technique.

OR

The response correctly identifies one example.

0-point Rubric

The response indicates inadequate or no understanding of the concept needed to answer the item.

The student may have written on a different topic or written “I don’t know.”

## MODULE 10 – Item Difficulty

### *Definition*

Item Difficulty refers to **the actual percentage of students** who chose the correct answer.

### *Item Difficulty*

The difficulty of Performing Fine Arts items is initially estimated by the item reviewers. As each test item is reviewed, reviewers make a prediction of difficulty based on their knowledge of student performance at the given grade level. The classification scheme used for this prediction of item difficulty is based on the following:

**Easy** More than 70 percent of the students are likely to respond correctly.

**Average** Between 40 percent and 70 percent of the students are likely to respond correctly.

**Challenging** Fewer than 40 percent of the students are likely to respond correctly.

After an item appears on a test, item difficulty refers to the actual percentage of students who chose the correct answer.

## MODULE 11 – Cognitive Complexity

Cognitive complexity refers to the cognitive demand associated with an item. The DOE once used Bloom’s Taxonomy<sup>[1]</sup> to classify test items; however, Bloom’s Taxonomy is difficult to use because it requires an inference about the skill, knowledge, and background of the students responding to the item. Beginning in 2004, the DOE implemented a new cognitive classification system based upon Dr. Norman L. Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels.<sup>[2]</sup> The rationale for classifying an item by its DOK level of complexity focuses on *expectations of the item*, not on the *ability of the student*.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Bloom, B.S., et al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. New York: SRKay, 1956.

<sup>[2]</sup> Webb, Norman L., and others. “Webb Alignment Tool,” 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center of Educational Research. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAT/index.aspx>.

### Depth of Knowledge

Depth of Knowledge measures the degree to which the knowledge elicited from students on assessments is as *complex* as what students are expected to know and do as stated in the state standards.

—Norman Webb

#### *Why Use DOK?*

RTTT requires that each state develop rigorous standards (NGSSS) and align their state assessment to those standards. States must adopt a system to guarantee that alignment.

#### *What Does DOK Accomplish?*

DOK ensures that the intent of the standard and the level of student demonstration required by that standard match the assessment items. It provides a cognitive processing ceiling (the highest level at which students can be assessed) for item development.

#### *Where Did DOK Come From?*

Dr. Norman Webb, senior research scientist at the National Institute for Science Education and professor emeritus at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, developed Depth of Knowledge. Several other states (at least 20) use DOK to evaluate the rigor of their state assessments.

#### *How Does It Work?*

Depth of Knowledge is broken into four levels. As the levels increase, students must demonstrate increasingly complex mental strategies. A Level One item might assess the student’s recall of simple facts or the ability to identify or define simple concepts. Higher levels of DOK require

that students solve problems in new and creative ways and allow for multiple solutions to solve those problems. A Level Two item might require students to take basic information and then draw an inference beyond the information that was simply stated. Level Three items might require students to take information and then apply it to a new task or concept. Level Four items involve an advanced level of thinking and might require students to pull together multiple pieces of information and draw conclusions from the data.

## Levels of Depth of Knowledge

### LEVEL ONE—RECALL

Recall facts, information, or procedures

### LEVEL TWO—SKILL/CONCEPT

Use information or conceptual knowledge; draw inferences

### LEVEL THREE—STRATEGIC THINKING

Use reasoning, develop a plan, draw conclusions

### LEVEL FOUR—EXTENDED THINKING

Design an investigation, collect data, and analyze the results

## Our Challenge in the Performing Fine Arts

DOK refers to cognitive processing. It does not accurately define what arts students should be doing in class—creating and performing. According to DOK, a student performing a state-level violin solo or tackling the lead role in the school play is performing at the Skill/Concept Level of DOK 2.

### DOK 1

Emphasis is on facts and simple *recall* of previously taught information. This also means following simple steps, recipes, or directions. Concepts can be difficult without requiring complex reasoning. At DOK 1, students find “the right answer,” and there is no debating the “correctness”; *it is either right or wrong*.

### Examples of DOK 1 in Music

Items	Why is this DOK 1?
Name the notes of the C Major scale	Simple recall of knowledge
Name four periods of classical music	Simple recall, but must be taught
Identify this sign: #	Recognize that a sharp sign indicates the raising of the pitch of a note by a semitone

### DOK 2

Requires **comparison** of two or more concepts, finding similarities and differences, applying factual learning at the basic skill level. Main ideas—requires deeper knowledge than just the definition. Students must **explain** “how” or “why” and often estimate or interpret to respond.

## DOK 2 in Music

- This is where the student begins to **play** an instrument or **sing** in context.
- Students learn notes and fingerings at DOK 1; they **apply the skill** at DOK 2.
- Students use basic **aural skills** such as hearing intervals or adjusting pitch.

## Examples of DOK 2 in Music

Items	Why is this DOK 2?
Read and perform a simple rhythm	If the student <i>interprets</i> the rhythm (as opposed to repeating), it is DOK 2.
Play a simple melody or accompaniment	Student must make sense out of written notation and perform.

## DOK 3

Students must reason or plan to find an acceptable solution to a problem. *More than one correct response or approach is possible.* Requires complex or abstract thinking and application of knowledge or skill in a new and unique situation.

## DOK 3 in Music

- Students begin to use knowledge of scales to **compose** melodies.
- They **improvise** over a single key center and **experiment** with their own creativity.
- They perform in an **ensemble** and adjust pitch, expression, and dynamics, and follow the cues of a conductor.

## Examples of DOK 3 in Music

Items	Why is this DOK 3?
Improvise a simple melody	New application of complex processes
Perform as a member of a conducted ensemble	Students make individual choices about performances.
Compose a single line melody	New application of complex processes

## DOK 4

At this level, students typically **identify** a problem, **plan** a course of action, **enact** that plan, and **make decisions** based on collected data. Usually involves more time than one class period. **Multiple solutions** are possible. Students often connect multiple content areas to come up with unique and creative solutions.

## Examples of DOK 4 in Music



- Students compose with two or more voices. Requires application of harmony, preplanning, and extended time
- Students improvise over a chord progression. Requires knowledge of chords, spontaneous decision-making, and advanced aural skills
- Students rehearse/perform solo or in a small ensemble. Students make decisions about style, interpretation, balance, and expression without the aid of a teacher

### Examples of DOK 4 in Music

Item	Why is this DOK 4?
Compose using two or more parts	Requires application of harmony, voice leading, cadences
Improvise over a given chord progression	Requires student to apply all previous learning in a new and novel situation
Perform in a student-led ensemble or solo with accompaniment	Student makes all choices.

### Key Points Regarding DOK

- DOK is about complexity, not difficulty. It is very possible to have an item with low difficulty but a high cognitive level and vice versa.
- In levels 3 and 4, students make decisions, and there is more than one correct answer.



## MODULE 12 – Universal Design

### *Universal Design*

The application of universal design principles helps develop assessments that are usable by the greatest number of test takers, including those with disabilities and nonnative speakers of English. To support the goal of providing access to all students, the assessment maximizes readability, legibility, and compatibility with accommodations, and test development includes a review for potential bias and sensitivity issues.

We revise items to allow for the widest possible range of student participation. Item writers must attend to the best practices suggested by universal design including, but not limited to,

- reduction of wordiness;
- avoidance of ambiguity;
- selection of reader-friendly construction and terminology; and
- consistently applied concept names and graphic conventions.

Universal design principles also inform decisions about test layout and design including, but not limited to, type size, line length, spacing, and graphics.

### *Review Procedures*

Prior to appearing on any assessment, all Performing Fine Arts items must pass several levels of review as part of the development process. Florida educators and citizens, in conjunction with the DOE and assessment contractors, scrutinize all material prior to accepting it for placement on the assessments.

## MODULE 13 – Review of Test Items

### *Review of Test Items*

The DOE and the assessment contractors review all test items during the item development process. Groups of Florida educators and citizens are subsequently convened to review the items. The content review focuses on validity, determining whether each item is a valid measure of the designated NGSSS benchmark, as defined by the *Item Specifications* for test items. Separate reviews for bias and sensitivity issues are also conducted as noted above.

Florida Performing Fine Arts Assessment items are field-tested with a large group of students in Florida to ensure quality of items before they count toward a student's score. In the event an item does not test well, it is either deleted or revised. Revised items will again require field-testing prior to being used.

### *Review for Potential Bias*

Performing Fine Arts items are reviewed by groups of Florida educators generally representative of Florida's geographic regions and culturally diverse population. Items are reviewed for the following kinds of bias: gender, racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic. Item reviews also include consideration of issues related to individuals with disabilities.

### *Review for Community Sensitivity*

Florida citizens associated with a variety of organizations and institutions review all items for issues of potential concern to members of the community at large. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the primary purpose of assessing performing fine arts achievement is not undermined by inadvertently including in the test any materials that parents and other stakeholders may deem inappropriate. Reviewers are asked to consider the variety of cultural, regional, philosophical, political, and religious backgrounds throughout Florida, and then to determine whether the subject matter will be acceptable to Florida students, their parents, and other members of Florida communities. Test items are written to meet criteria specified by the Florida Performing Fine Arts Steering Task Force.



# MODULE 14 – Selected Response Checklist



## Florida Performing Fine Arts Assessment Project Checklist for Writing Test Items

<i>Selected Response (Multiple-Choice) Items:</i>		
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>The item (Overall)</b>
		• Is the item free of grammatical errors?
		• Does the item directly measure the intended benchmark?
		• Is the item content correct, accurate and realistic?
		• Does the item assess significant information?
		• Is the item written at an appropriate grade level and proficiency level?
		• Does the item match the identified cognitive complexity?
		• Does the item match the identified Depth of Knowledge?
		• Does the item avoid negatives except when absolutely necessary?
		• Is the item free of slang?
		• Is the item free of bias and sensitivity issues; and is it fair?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>The stem</b>
		• Is the stem clear, concisely written, and unambiguous?
		• Is the stem written in the form of a question?
		• Does the stem ask only one question?
		• Does the stem contain all of the information necessary for a response?
		• Is the stem free of unintentional clues to the correct answer?
		• Does the item avoid unnecessary technical language?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>The options/distractors</b>
		• Are there four (three for grades K-2) options?
		• Are the options arranged in a logical order if one exists (e.g., numerical or alphabetical), and of approximately the same length (or arranged short to long or long to short)?
		• Are the distractors plausible, appropriate, and independent of one another (i.e., no cluing), but clearly incorrect?
		• Are emphasis words ( <b>least, most, best described</b> ) written bold?
		• Are the options aligned with one another, are they grammatically parallel?
		• Do the options avoid repeated information?
		• Are the options similar in length? (e.g., either distinctly shorter or very much longer than the others)
		• Do the distractors avoid using the words "all of the above" or "none of the above?"
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>The key</b>
		• Does the key answer the question posed in the stem?
		• Is the key correct and the only correct option?
		• Is the key obvious because it is the only positively or negatively worded option?

*Comments - REVIEWER: If needed, please revise the item or rewrite the item. Remember to note your reasons for making any changes within the DOE Item Bank "comments box" for this item.*

# MODULE 15 – Short Answer and Extended Response Checklist



## Florida Performing Fine Arts Assessment Project Checklist for Writing Test Items

		<i>Short Answer and Extended-Response Items:</i>
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Short Answer and Essay items</b>
		• Is the item free of grammatical errors?
		• Does the item directly measure the intended benchmark?
		• Is the item content correct, accurate and realistic?
		• Does the item assess significant information?
		• Is the item written at an appropriate grade level and proficiency level?
		• Does the item match the identified cognitive complexity?
		• Does the item match the identified Depth of Knowledge?
		• Does the item avoid negatives except when absolutely necessary?
		• Is the item free of slang?
		• Is the item free of bias and sensitivity issues; and is it fair?
		• Does the item tell the appropriate degree of detail, specificity, precision, or units to be included in the answer and the amount of points to be awarded for the response?
		• Is the item succinct, and does it contain only the needed information?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>The prompt/stem</b>
		• Is the item a direct question?
		• Does the stem contain all of the information necessary for a response?
		• Is the stem clear and unambiguous?
		• Is it clear to the students that their answer should be concise?
		• If there are two parts to the stem, are they clearly delineated and/or separated?
		• Does the stem (prompt) indicate the amount and type of information that must be included in the response?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>The rubric</b>
		• Does the response clearly state what is required to receive full credit?
		• Is there a clear separation of score points?
		• Is the rubric aligned with the prompt?
		• Does the rubric permit multiple solutions in the response?
		• Do the score-point descriptors clearly delineate what a student must do to earn each point?
		• Does the rubric contain scoring rules that correspond to what is asked in the prompt?
		• Does the rubric contain unambiguous response exemplars?

*Comments - REVIEWER: If needed, please revise the item or rewrite the item. Remember to note your reasons for making any changes within the DOE Item Bank "comments box" for this item.*



## MODULE 16 – Item Media: Graphics, Audio, Video

Graphics (musical score samples, photos, and digital printed material) and media (audio and video files) are used extensively in the RTTT Performing Fine Arts items to provide both necessary and supplemental information; that is, some graphics contain information that is necessary for answering the question, while other graphics and media illustrate or support the context of the question. The benchmarks assessed by the Performing Fine Arts items require different levels of graphics illustrations. For example, staging, music reading, and choreography require graphics and/or media to provide essential information for answering a question. In contrast, items or tasks in other benchmarks may contain graphics or pictures that illustrate and enhance interest but are not necessary to answer the question.

All artwork must be high quality; clip art is not acceptable under any conditions. Musical scores, photos, and other digitized print matter must be provided at 300 DPI. Please save a copy of your artwork on your computer for future reference.

Most of the individual benchmark specifications in the *Performing Fine Arts Assessment Responding-Mode Item Specifications: Dance, Music, and Theatre* indicate the extent to which graphics should be used to support test items developed for the benchmark. When no reference is made to the use of graphics, graphics are not required, even though they may be used.

### Audio

The RTTT Performing Fine Arts Project requires all writers *to convert sound files into MP3 format*. Writers are encouraged to use latest version of iTunes (<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>) for Mac or Windows to convert various audio files to MP3 files. Please SAVE a copy of your audio excerpt in your files for future reference. You will note that *ALL audio excerpts should be a minimum of 5 seconds and no more than 45 seconds in length*. Research and identify *any copyright information for any aural example*. All writers are encouraged to review public domain sources and/or compose/arrange musical examples based on the benchmarks.

### Video

*All video files are required to be converted into .mp4 files (required Quicktime player or codec).* Writers are encouraged to use MPEG Streamclip video converter for Mac or Windows (<http://www.squared5.com/svideo/mpeg-streamclip-mac.html>) for video editing. The MPEG Streamclip converter will open most movie formats; allow you to edit them with Cut, Copy, Paste, and Trim; set In/Out points and convert them into muxed or demuxed files or export them into QuickTime, AVI, DV, and MPEG-4 files with higher quality. The most appropriate compression rate for exporting MP4 files is H.264. An open-source website consisting of public domain video files is [www.schooltube.com](http://www.schooltube.com). Please SAVE a copy of your video excerpt on your computer for future reference. Please note that *ALL video excerpts should be a minimum of 10 seconds and no more than 45 seconds in length*. Research and identify *any copyright information for any video example*. All writers are encouraged to review public domain sources and/or compose/arrange musical examples based on the benchmarks.