

Item Specifications – What does it mean?

The Florida Department of Education and committees of experienced Florida educators developed the NGSSS Benchmarks. The *Florida Performing Fine Arts Assessment Steering Task Force* developed the *Item Specifications*. The *Item Specifications* document is a resource that defines the content and format of the test items for item writers and reviewers. Each *Item Specifications* page indicates the alignment of items with the NGSSS and defines how to begin creating a test item for a Benchmark. It also serves to provide all stakeholders with information about the scope and function of the *Performing Fine Arts Assessments*.

Benchmark Number	Big Idea	Enduring Understanding	Benchmark	Examples / Remarks	Benchmark Clarification	Response Mode	Item Type	Content Limits	Stimulus Attributes	Response Attributes	Item Context	Sample Item
------------------	----------	------------------------	-----------	--------------------	-------------------------	---------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------	-------------

Item Specifications

Benchmark Number

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

- **The first two letters identify the Discipline:** **DA** – Dance; **MU** – Music; and **TH** – Theatre.
- **The number in the third position is the Grade Level:** **K** – Kindergarten, **1** – First Grade, **2** – Second Grade, etc.; **68** – Sixth through Eighth Grade; **912** – Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade.
- **The letter in the fourth position represents the Big Idea:** **C** - CRITICAL THINKING, **S** – SKILLS, **O** - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, **H** - HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS, and **F** – FUTURE.
- **The fifth number is the Enduring Understanding:** see NGSSS page.
- **The sixth number is the specific Benchmark.**

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.” Big Idea: **C** - CRITICAL THINKING, **S** – SKILLS, **O** - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, **H** - HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS, and **F** – FUTURE.

Enduring Understanding

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

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.

Examples/ Remarks

Remarks and Examples further clarify the benchmark by providing the teacher with examples of the content that might be covered in the benchmark.

Benchmark Clarification

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

Response Mode

Responding Item, Performing Item, Creating Item

Item Type

Item Types are used to assess the benchmark or group of benchmarks.
Multiple Choice, Short Answer, Essay

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. It also defines grade level or course specific content if applicable.

Response Attributes

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

Item Context

Item Context gives a topical frame of reference to real-world applications of the test items.

Sample Item

Sample questions are provided to assist the writer in composing an item (stimulus/response) for the assessment that will follow the specifications. These questions represent only one of the numerous possibilities to consider when writing items to creatively assess the knowledge and skills implied in each benchmark.

NGSSS → Big Ideas → Enduring Understandings → Benchmarks → Item Specifications → Assessment Items