

Attributes of High-Quality Student Work

The descriptions below are intended to provide educators with common vision and terminology as they engage in using student work to improve teaching and learning, be it shorter task work or products that are the result of long-term projects. These attributes are not intended to constrain a conversation about quality, and not all descriptors must be present for a piece of work to be high quality. They are intended to provoke deeper conversation and act as a starting point for formulating a shared understanding of quality. These descriptions align with EL Core Practices 5 (Designing Projects and Products) and 7 (Producing High-Quality Student Work).

Complexity

- Complex work is rigorous: it aligns with or exceeds the expectations defined by grade-level standards and includes **higher-order thinking** by challenging students to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create during daily instruction and throughout longer projects.
- Complex work often **connects to the big concepts** that undergird disciplines or unite disciplines.
- Complex work prioritizes **transfer of understanding** to new contexts.
- Complex work prioritizes consideration of **multiple perspectives**.
- Complex work may incorporate students' **application of higher order literacy skills** through the use of complex text and evidence-based writing and speaking.

Craftsmanship

- Well-crafted work is done with care and precision. Craftsmanship requires attention to **accuracy, detail, and beauty**.
- In every discipline and domain, well-crafted work should be **beautiful work in conception and execution**. In short tasks or early drafts of work, craftsmanship may be present primarily in thoughtful ideas, but not in polished presentation; for long-term projects, craftsmanship requires perseverance to refine work in conception, conventions, and presentation, typically through multiple drafts or rehearsals with critique from others.

Authenticity

- Authentic work **demonstrates the original, creative thinking of students**—authentic personal voice and ideas—rather than simply showing that students can follow directions or fill in the blanks.
- Authentic work often **uses formats and standards from the professional world**, rather than artificial school formats (e.g., students create a book review for a local newspaper instead of a book report for the teacher).
- Authentic work **often connects academic standards with real-world issues, controversies, and local people and places**.
- Authenticity gives purpose to work; the **work matters to students and ideally contributes to a larger community** as well. When possible, it is created for and shared with an audience beyond the classroom.