

Program of Studies: Performance Assessments

June 2016

At Monument Valley Middle School, performance assessments frame our curriculum and define our courses, merging cognitive skill development with the most important content knowledge that students need to be prepared for college and career. Our performance assessments enable students to demonstrate their ability to integrate and use the knowledge, skills, and strategies learned from a unit of study in meaningful, real world activities.

When students are engaged in meaningful work connected to their lives, they exceed our expectations. Assessments are most valuable when they are not simply measures of what we have *done*, but of what more we have to *do*. Quality assessments give us insights that help us better understand learning and teaching. We use those insights to shift and improve our approaches. We never depend on just one form assessment to understand a student. Instead, we use multiple data points, ranging from tests to one-on-one conversations, to get a complete picture of each student's holistic needs.

Performance Assessment Features:

Real-World Scenario: Students assume roles in a scenario that is based in the “real world” and contains the types of problems they might need to solve in the future. The more the students can imagine themselves in the scenario, the more engaged they are likely to be.

Authentic, Complex Process: The task reflects the complexity and ambiguity of real-world challenges, where there might not be a right or wrong answer, where solutions might not be obvious or given, where information might be conflicting or partial, and where there might be competing frameworks or positions from which to view the situation.

Higher-Order Thinking: The task requires students to engage in critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and problem solving in order to arrive at a judgement or decision.

Authentic Performance: The product or process the students create reflects what someone assuming that role would produce.

Transparent Evaluation Criteria: The learning outcomes drive the creation of the task. They and the evaluation criteria and rubrics are made clear to students, in part so they can evaluate their own work and in part so they can get diagnostic feedback on their strengths and weaknesses.

Grade Five Performance Assessments

Humanities

Persuasive Essay on Animal Rights – Students will read widely about animal rights issues and choose a topic of interest to write about persuasively.

Ancient Civilization Exhibit – Students will choose an ancient civilization studied during the year and then will research a general category (ie. religion, architecture) for that culture. Students write a brief research paper, create a display and a physical representation of that topic. During the exhibition students will answer questions and articulate their knowledge of that topic.

Science

Simple Machine Final Challenge – Students think about how one or more simple machines are used in daily life and then create a physical project and written component that show how it makes a job easier. This can be in a variety of forms including models, videos, diorama poster, etc.... Students will also do an oral presentation to show what they've learned.

Improving a Factory Sub-System – Students need to know about the Engineering Design process that includes, Ask, Imagine, Plan, Create, and Improve, as well as have knowledge of simple machines. Students will create a loading dock sub-system that includes at least two simple machines by going through all the above steps. Students work in groups and then present their final project to the class.

Lab Report on Animal Behavior – Students will complete a variety of stimulus and response labs on how animals respond to certain stimuli and why it is important to their survival. Students will share the information gathered in a well thought out and organized lab report that includes: A defining Question, the hypothesis, materials, procedure, results and conclusion.

Design Your Own Mealworm Experiment – Students design and plan an experiment that tests a single variable using questions and data that demonstrates how response to stimuli can effect an animal's survival. Students will present their findings on a poster that demonstrates their design, their new discoveries, and what they learned from the process.

Creation of a Field Guide – Students will create a field guide specific to a vertebrate that live in Western Massachusetts. This guide, which can be done electronically or freehand, should include the animal’s name, description, food, habitat and adaptations.

Math

What’s the Better Buy? – Students will respond to the following: A new amusement park has just opened in Great Barrington and you want to make sure you get as many rides as possible for your money. The park has two cost plans for visitors. Each plan includes a fee for admission and an additional charge for each ride. It’s up to you to decide which plan works best for you.

Check This – Students will respond to the following real life problem which reinforces the concepts of decimals taught throughout the unit: You are hoping that you will be able to purchase an Xbox One for @499.50, so you are taking over managing your family’s checkbook for two weeks. During this time period you will make deposits, make withdrawals, and write checks in order to pay various bills. Your family account will begin with a balance of \$600.00.

The King’s Floor Plan – Students will be given the task of designing a house for the King. The King has a specific budget and requests that must be met. Specific rules will need to be followed in order to please the King.

Grade Six Performance Assessments

Language Arts

Flash Fiction Writing Piece – After studying the elements of fiction and flash fiction, students will create their own work of fiction that is under five hundred words.

Two-Voice Poem – This performance task gives students a chance to demonstrate their understanding of the characters and issues of survival presented in *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. Students will be crafting and presenting a two-voice poem incorporating the views and experiences of the two main characters, Nya and Salva, as well as factual information about Southern Sudan and the environmental and political challenges facing the people of Sudan during and after the Second Sudanese Civil War. Students will have read the novel and various informational texts to gather a rich collection of textual details from which they can select to incorporate into their poems.

Overcoming Adversity Informational Pamphlet – After reading *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper, students will research a particular type of adversity to determine what it is, what causes it, what the symptoms are, and what the treatment is, and adopt the role of a health professional informing

middle school students about the subject of their research. Students will be presenting their pamphlets to their peers as well as teachers. The goal of the presentation will be to inform the audience and make them aware of this type of adversity through an informative pamphlet as well as an oral presentation.

Civil Rights Boycott – After learning about the many types of non-violence that were used to create change during the Civil Rights Movement, students will choose a product or service they feel strongly should be boycotted and create a persuasive writing piece on that topic. In addition, students will present an oral speech as well as a multi-media presentation to their classmates to convince them to join their cause.

Utopian Community – After reading The Giver by Lois Lowry, students will create and outline their own utopian societies, focusing on the areas of people (culture), government, economy, and climate, and will adopt the role of a founding member of their own utopian community whose job it is to persuade their classmates to join their community. Students will create a visual representation (poster, powerpoint, trifold, etc.) for each of the four main areas of their utopias. The representation should contain no words (other than any incidental words that are found within the images they choose) The students will also create a detailed outline for each section of the collage explaining the significance of every image and what it represents with regard to its place in the utopia. They will then present their utopias to the class and give a three to four minute presentation explaining the main tenets and fundamental make-up of their community, highlighting what makes it a utopia.

Social Studies

Maya Culture – students will create a Maya Culture Project. Options are open for students

Tenochtitlan – Students will research and compose an informative writing piece on the takeover of Tenochtitlan

Columbian Exchange – Students will participate in a class debate on the consequences of the Columbian Exchange

Explorers – Students will research an explorer and write a biography on their findings.

Science

Bio Blitz – Students learn about the concept of biodiversity, and each class chooses a 10×10 meter plot around the school yard, which they think will have the most biodiversity. Specialists in plant and fungi groups collect, sort and describe samples from their plot. The entire class contributes to the collection of animal observations and evidence. Students create a mural sized infographic to visually

represent the difference species and explain the process. Select students will present their findings to the 5th grade classes.

Cell Analogy Project – After researching and observing plant and animal cells, students work in teams of 2 or 4, depending on the class, to create a model or poster of a cell. Students must know about the function, appearance and placement of cell organelles so they can accurately compare them to a dissimilar system of their choice (e.g. a cell is like a kingdom). Final products will be presented for display our room and the library.

Pendulum Labs – Students will complete two labs based on the motion of pendulums. The first lab will be structured for maximum support, so that students know what is required for a 6th grade lab report. The second lab changes one variable of the students' choice and allows for practice with the lab report format. Students need to know how to perform and record each step of a lab report: heading, question, hypothesis, procedure, data and analysis, and conclusion.

Engineering Challenge – After experimenting and learning about forces and bridges, students either work on building a model of a tower or bridge depending on the class. Tower projects work in teams of 4 (architect, engineer, CEO, and accountant) to design, budget for and build a scale model of a sports tower. Students need to know how to build a structure to withstand the maximum weight and wind, as well as how to keep their job under budget. Towers are tested and reviewed by the class. Bridge projects work in teams of 2 following the E.I.E. Bridge challenge to build a stable, cost effective bridge that a barge can sail under.

Layers of the Earth – Students research the layers of the earth and movement of heat energy through reading, videos and labs. Working alone, students create a model of the earth's layers that reflects the correct proportions. Each model must also demonstrate an understanding of the properties of each layer.

Non-Fiction Books – Students research a science topic of their choice. Using their notes and science specific vocabulary, students write and illustrate their own non-fiction book to share with younger Muddy Brook students. They need to know the format and elements of non-fiction writing and how to put their research into an understandable and engaging format.

Math

Adoption Kits – Students will use Greatest Common Factors and Least Common Multiples and the related vocabulary to realize which Greatest Common Factor or Least Common Multiple is needed.

Pick a Number, Any Number – Students will create a story for numbers for division, need for common multiples, decimal places, etc.

Sweet Tooth – Students will write expressions that record operations with numbers and letters and apply properties of operations.

Want Ads – Students will measure unit rates, write equations, substitute for variables, and create and use graphs and tables.

What's My Area – Students will measure length, area of triangles, and area of rectangles.

Grade Seven Performance Assessments

Language Arts

Flash Fiction – After studying the elements of fiction, and flash fiction students are asked to create their own piece of flash fiction (under 500 words).

Memoir – After reading Dahl's memoir Boy, students write their own memoir. OR Write a persuasive essay/letter – Should corporal punishment have a place in education?

Socratic Seminar – After reading The Omnivore's Dilemma, students will have a Socratic seminar in where they discuss which food system is best for our country.

Slam Poetry – Students will study slam poetry, write their own poem, and perform it for the class.

Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian – After reading Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, students will complete a project of their choice in groups. Projects can include: Reader's Theater, Lost Scene, Socratic Seminar, Puppet Show, Song, Newspaper, Board Game, or News Broadcast.

Artifact Essay – While reading Chains, students will collect information for their final project, an artifact essay. Students will choose a character, and 3 artifacts to represent the character's relationships, problems the character encountered, and significant event that affected the character.

Published Writing Pieces – Throughout the year, every other month. Students will create and publish a writing piece in a different genre. By the end of the year, "At the end of the year, student's portfolio must contain the following: 1 narrative piece the purpose of which is to entertain the reader, 1 expository piece the purpose of which is to present factual information, 1 persuasive piece the purpose of which is to examine a controversy, and 1 choice piece which can be any purpose.

Social Studies

Salem Witch Journals – Students research elements of the Salem witch trials, and then write their findings in the form of Journals from the time period. Students must have content knowledge of the Salem Witch trials and demonstrate reflective writing.

Colonial Brochures – Students research elements regarding the founding of the 13 original colonies, and then create travel brochures for their colony. These brochures are then presented out in a Gallery Walk.

Boston Massacre Performance – Students will recreate the Boston Massacre Trials.

Tory/Patriot Newspaper Article – Students create a Newspaper article in response to the Declaration of Independence from a Tory/ Patriot Point of View.

Revolutionary War Battle Project – Students create a 3D project of a Revolutionary War battle.

Founding Fathers Biography – Write a Biography of a founding father/ mother.

Science

Persuasive Essay – Students will create a research based essay in which they decide if the Space Race had a positive influence on the United States.

Variable Lab – Students will participate in two MMSI Labs regarding IV and DV with examples of control groups.

Earthquake Proof Building Project – Student will construct an earthquake-proof Building out of restricted materials with special emphasis on base-Isolation.

Solar System Lab Report – Students participate in a MMSI Lab on the planet sizes and distances.

Balloon Powered Car Project and Lab – Students will build a prototype based on a list of restricted materials the goal of which it to have the car travel at least five meters. When completed, students will complete a lab that will emphasize quantitative vs. qualitative analysis, graphing, acceleration, speed, velocity, IV, DV and control variables with a detailed version of their conclusion.

Math

Ball Bounce Experiment – In this experiment, students will investigate how the height from which a ball is dropped is related to the height it bounces.

Debits and Credits – Students will use a check register to record debits and credits and calculate a running total balance.

Detective Activity – Students will record the name, height, and stride length of their classmates in meters.

Take the Ancient Greek Challenge – In this task, students will draw geometric shapes using a ruler and a protractor. The focus of this task is constructing triangles.

Plant Growing Experiment – In this experiment, students will investigate how the height a plant grows is related to the number of days the plant has been growing.

Probability – Is it Fair? – Students analyze the fairness of certain games by examining the probabilities of the outcomes. The explorations provide opportunities to predict results, play the games, and calculate probabilities.

What is a Unit Rate? – Students will develop an understanding of the unit rates associated with a proportional relationship. Students will also develop the ability to determine the appropriate rate to use in solving a problem and to use the corresponding unit rate to solve missing-value problems.

Shakespeare vs. Harry Potter – Students will analyze text from two periods of time to determine which author used longer words. Students will randomly sample given text from two pieces of literature.

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French Grade 7

Lia et Babar Final Story Reading/Presentation – Students first read the story “Lia et Babar” out loud. Then, without referring to the text, students tell the story out loud in their own words. Finally, students write out the story and create an alternate ending.

Dialogues/Skits – Students write and perform two versions of the same skit – one using familiar forms of address and one using formal forms of address.

Café Project – Students have a choice of writing a story, writing and performing a skit or creating a video based in a Café Setting.

School Schedule – Students write and orally present orally their daily schedule at MVM commenting on likes and dislikes as well as on one topic they learn about or one activity they do in each class.

Family Project – Students have a choice of creating a family tree that includes descriptive sentences, writing an essay, creating a slide presentation or making a video. In this project, students describe family members, real or imaginary.

Spanish Grade 7

El Muchacho Pastor – Students read the “El Muchacho Pastor” story out loud, in Spanish, and translate each sentence to English. The next day, without referring to the text, students write the same story in their own words. Finally, students write out a different story, using the same set of vocabulary words.

School Schedules – Students write and orally present their daily schedule at MVMS. They tell what classes they have and at what time, comment on their likes and dislikes, and tell why they like or dislike each thing.

Coyote y Cuervo – Students write and perform skits using the target vocabulary. They then write a different version of the story with an alternate ending.

Giving Directions – Students guide a blindfolded partner through an obstacle course, giving directions entirely in Spanish.

Family Project – Students create and present a family tree. It may be either a slide presentation, a video, or a chart. They describe each family member, real or imaginary, and include descriptive sentences.

Grade Eight Performance Assessments

Language Arts

Personal Narrative (Memoir) – Students need to utilize their skills of writing with sensory details, authentic dialogue, and thought shots to effectively engage their readers in their memoirs.

Unit Test on Thinking About Literature – The test will require students to explicate a variety of samples of literature (short stories, non-fiction, and poetry) in order to find themes, symbolism, and irony. Students will write their analyses of the literature in fully developed open responses.

Poetry Portfolio – Students will create three original works of poetry, demonstrating their ability to create iambic meter, assonance, consonance, alliteration, rhyme scheme, and onomatopoeia. Students will also write an in-depth analysis of a work of poetry, discussing the sound devices listed above and their impact on the poem’s message.

Literary Analysis Essay – Students will write a literary analysis essay on a novel based on the Holocaust

Newspaper Portfolio – Students will read newspaper articles (primarily from the NY Times) extensively. While reading, students will also hone skills at interviewing sources, recognizing bias in writing, parenthetical phrases (and proper punctuation), and research. With those skills, students will write a newspaper article about an issue at school. Students will also be reading Op-Ed articles on a variety of topics (school starting times, homework debate, current political issues, bullying). While reading, students will focus on the importance of relevant and verifiable evidence for claims, including a counterclaim, and engaging tone and style, and a thoughtful and provocative conclusion/ending. The students will then write an Op-Ed piece on a school issue.

The Pearl – Students will analyze The Pearl with a focus on Greed and its impact and/or contribution to the subjugation of groups of people. The students will be combining art and literary analyses to create an astrological sign fitting for both Kino and Juana. Students will also create a visual presentation of two symbols for the novel as a whole.

Valley Notes Fahrenheit 451 – Students will create their own Sparknotes (Character Analysis, Major Themes, Notable Quotes, Plot Summary, Major Examples of Symbolism) for the novel Fahrenheit 451.

Social Studies

Presidential Research Project (Fakebook Page or Magazine Issue) – Students will pick a President from a predetermined list Will use a structured research template to record the classic research W's for a law, foreign issue and domestic issue handled during this President's term Classes will have a walkabout and create a timeline of significant events from each other's assignments.

Jackson Report Card or Open Response – Students may pick assessment. Report card involves assessing Jackson's actions as President and how he managed foreign, domestic, and ethical issues in office. The open response option requires students to defend whether Jackson deserves to be on the \$20 bill based on his management of foreign, domestic, and ethical issues in office.

Go West Presentation – Students are placed in skill based groups and assigned one of seven topic areas based on the stakeholders of westward expansion. Focus in on the research W's but with more depth than the previous assessment. Groups divide up the research tasks and conduct their research at home and at school. Groups create a visual display and present their information to the

class orally. All students take notes on the presentations using a teacher generated graphic organizer.

Living History Museum – Students are assigned a theme; need to gather three primary sources on the theme that tells the story of slavery in Antebellum America. Students write detailed captions that include reference to the research W's Students in similar themes will gather and organize their primary sources into a museum display Classes will have a gallery walk where they will complete a teacher generated walkabout page to capture the essentials of each of the slavery related themes.

Research Paper – Students will pick from a list of topics related to social, political and economic developments in Antebellum America Students will research independently at school and home, using the teacher taught note card method Peer evaluation will be incorporated to assess quality of information on note cards, the outline, and first draft Students will present an oral synopsis of their topic to the class.

Science

Air Quality Experiment – Students will work independently or with a partner to research in-depth one or more of the six criteria pollutants in air (source, effects, and possible solutions for improvement), and create two products from a choice board to display their results. They will know the molecular formula/structure of their pollutant(s), any physical and/or chemical properties and physical and/or chemical changes caused by the pollutant. They will create their products to educate their peers about the pollutant(s) on which they have become an expert.

Model Roller-Coaster – Students will work in small groups to design, build, and test a model roller coaster. Their design and test data will be reported in a modified lab report format. They will know about potential and kinetic energy, balanced/unbalanced forces, Newton's Laws of Motion, and calculations for speed/velocity and acceleration.

GMO Research Paper – Students will work independently to research and write a persuasive essay on the benefits or drawbacks of genetically modified food. They will know about inheritance of traits and the impact of genetically modified organisms.

Climate Change Research and Debate – Students will use their weather observations, data they've collected, and hypotheses from weather experiments as a launching point for research and writing that evaluates the impact of human activities on global climates over the past century. As a culminating activity, the students will stage a debate regarding the causes and potential solutions for

global climate change. Students will know about basic weather data, the role of oceans in weather and climate change, and the impact of human activities on climate change.

Math

Container Project – Students will use practical application of formulas of surface area and volume.

Race for Equality – Students use the concepts of slope and y-intercept to design a “race” where racers of different speeds finish a race in a 3-way tie.

Investment Project – Students will be comparing linear investment with exponential investment, using three methods for listing patterns(table, graph, equation) and compare the two functions.

French Grade 8

Kindergarten Story Reading – Students have a choice of creating a family tree that includes descriptive sentences, writing an essay, creating a slide presentation or making a video. In this project, student describe family members, real or imaginary.

Mini markets – Students create authentic products and then buy/sell the products at two “Mini Marchés.” Students are vendors on one day and clients the other day. On the day that the students are selling products, they set up a stand with signs.

Conjugation Lesson – Students create a 10 minute lesson plan in which they teach the conjugation of a verb of their choice (regular or irregular) to a group. Each student teaches a different verb. (Note: the goal of the lesson is to teach the concept of a conjugation – there is not an expectation that all of the students will learn all of the verb that are presented).

Response to Text/Book Report – Students read a short novel in French and then have a choice or writing a traditional book report, a response to the text or an alternate ending to the text.

Final Project – Students prepare a 15 minute Final Project which they present to the whole class. The presentation may be interactive, may include video/audio, may be a performance, may be a reading of a text written by the student followed by a Q&A session or a discussion.

Spanish Grade 8

Ratoncito del Campo – Students read the “Ratoncito del Campo” story out loud, in Spanish, and translate each sentence to English. The next day, students write the same story in their own words. Finally, students write out a different story, using the same set of vocabulary words.

Novel Reading – Students read the short novel, Patricia Va a California, in Spanish and then have a choice of writing a traditional book report, a response to the text or an alternate ending to the text.

Mis Vacaciones – Students create a presentation (Powerpoint or video) in which they talk about ten things they did (in past tense) during vacation. During the presentation, they must answer at least 2 questions per slide, in past tense.

Novel Reading – Students read the short novel, Piratas del Caribe, in Spanish and then have a choice of writing a traditional book report, a response to the text or an alternate ending to the text.

Final Culture Project – Students prepare a 15 minute Culture Project which they present to the whole class. The presentation may include video/audio, may be a performance, may be a reading of a text written by the student followed by a Q&A session or a discussion.

Mercadillo Project – Students create culturally authentic products and then buy/sell the products at two Mercadillos. Students are vendors on one day, and clients the other. On the day they are selling products, they set up a “market stand” with signs, and converse with customers entirely in Spanish.