



# Newly Qualified Teachers Project

## Assessment Checklist

Setting your assessments for the middle or the end of term is often the last thing on your mind when you start your year as a new teacher.

But one of the keys to managing the heavy load when Test Week rolls around is to **'begin with the end in mind'**. Seasoned teachers often set their tests and projects as part of their term planning, and use these to focus their module lessons and tasks.

There's also nothing worse than setting a test, getting the kids to write it, and then only realizing *afterwards* that you've made your life impossible when you begin to mark. No one told you about assessment design and what to watch for! And your HoD is probably super busy and none too accessible when the marks need to be in and the reports are due...

### Run through this checklist

This assessment checklist tool is a suggested tick box exercise to help improve your assessments at the most basic level. When you set a project, assignment, test or exam, scan through the boxes that are most useful to you with a quick **Yes | No | N/A** to pick up issues in your assessment.

As you become more seasoned and experienced, you can adjust the tool, removing the issues that no longer apply to you, or even adding your own reminders. After all, no one is functioning 100% at 10pm somewhere in November...even the veterans.

### Getting a valid assessment

Many of the issues outlined on the next page are about making sure little slip ups do not put all your hard work to waste. Not being able to identify a learner's script, realizing you didn't check marks added up correctly, or ending up with marks you can't use because they were too easy or hard, are all surefire ways to waste a lot of energy and time.

Also: you want your assessment to measure what the learners can really do, not their deciphering skills or whether they are super speedy/fast writers. But then again, maybe you do...

Whatever it is, make sure you know what you're assessing.

Assessments often come in clusters. This is hard for you **and** your learners. Cast your planning eye ahead and look for crunch times: plan and prepare accordingly. Not only will you feel more sane and cope better, but you model doing this for your students too.



### Tip

Ask your Head of Department if there is a school or subject specific template that you can use or copy. Or ask for past papers on which to model your own assessment layout. Make sure that your HOD moderates your question papers and leave enough time for discussion of any problems/issues.



### Warning

Don't run assessments if you haven't done the memo. It's asking for trouble. All sorts of gremlins creep out of the woodwork about mark allocation, interpretation of results and consistency across teachers. It can even result in needing to rerun the assessment! Which is the last thing you need when you have 200 tests to mark to a deadline.



# Checklist

Tick for 'yes', strike through if n/a.  
Some questions are for reflection only.

## FRONT PAGE/ HEADER

Check these are on the front of your assessment:

- Subject
- Grade
- Paper Title
- Teacher name
- Moderator name
- Space for student name
- Space for student class
- Space for final marks achieved
- Total marks

*Some schools might want the ...*

- School emblem

## MARKS AND MARKING

- Have you set the memo for the paper?**
- Are all marks clearly allocated?**
- Do sub questions' marks add up to the total for that question?
- Is there a ✓ or a 1 for each word/phrase/answer that gets allocated a mark on the memo/rubric?
- Are any non-academic penalties clear? (e.g. late submissions)
- If the marks are stated at the end of the question, is it clear they do not belong to the next question?
- Does the memo reflect acceptable alternatives and/or common misunderstandings that will not be awarded marks?**
- Does the memo show part marks for method?

*It can be nice to have...*

- Tally blocks at the bottom of each page and the end of each section for adding up marks easily.

## LAYOUT

- Do questions run over pages? If so, is question text split in a legible way?
- Is there sufficient space for each answer (if learners respond on the paper)?
- Is there sufficient margin space for the marker's comments/marks?

## ASSESSMENT DESIGN

- What is the division between cognitive levels in the assessment? (Easy | Medium | Hard)
- How does the assessment progress through these levels?
- Does the assessment scaffold sub-questions that refer to the same source material?

*The bigger picture...*

- How does this assessment fit in with the term's plan/Scheme of Work?
- Is the scope of the assessment clear?
- Have learners received the scope?
- For rubric-assessed work, have learners been given a copy of the rubric?
- What % of the learners do you expect to respond correctly to each level of questions?
  - Does this form a normal distribution of marks?

## INCLUSIVITY

- What size is the font of the assessment? Can all learners read it?
- Are any learners ESL/EFL? If so, are difficult words that are not for assessment explained? Or can they be avoided?
- Is a short glossary or translation appropriate?
- Check for spelling errors which might confuse students
- Check the tone of the test: could a short sentence make it less austere?
- Are there images? Do they photocopy well? Are they clear?
- Do images need captions?

*Subject specific issues...*

- Are scientific or mathematical images clearly labelled and indexed?
- Are keys clearly displayed?
- Are images to scale or not? Is this signalled?
- Is the image resolution adequate to allow for reading off data to acceptable accuracy?

## PRACTICAL STUFF

*Managing workload...*

**Before you hand out the assessment**

- When are marks due?
- When is the assessment handed in?
- Do the assessment yourself.** Double *your* total time to estimate learners' required time.
- Try marking the assessment.** Pick up errors. Measure time per script, and then multiply by total number of assessments you must mark. Take 90% of this (for efficiency gains) to work out how much time you need.
- Is there a lot of photocopying and stapling?** Who will do this?
- Do you need non-paper materials?** Maths sets, equipment, rulers, pencils, paints... set these out in class sets in clearly marked boxes.

**After the assessment has been done**

- Mark two or three assessments with a colleague/your HoD. Cross check mark allocation and interpretation of learner responses. **Insist on this.**

*The bigger picture...*

- Are there many assessments at the same time?
  - In the same department?
  - Across departments?
- How does this affect your marking load? The learners' load?

**Ask for term assessment plans from all departments you work in.**

**PUT THESE IN YOUR PLANNER**

- When are parents' meetings? Do you need marked assessments to discuss with parents and/or guardians?

## TEACHER FILES

Make sure you have:

- Copies of all assessments/memos
- Copies of all marksheets
- Copies of all assessment plans
- Moderation notes



Original versions by Sara Black, for NQT Project, UCT, 2018.

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