



Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are inviting your child to participate in The **PARCC Speaking and Listening Assessment**. This assessment is aligned with the common core and designed to inform on best practices for developing speaking and listening skills in the classroom.

In order to develop this assessment properly, we need to gather information on the accuracy, effectiveness, and usability of our assessment materials. By participating, your child will be making a major contribution to educational practice by helping develop high quality assessment tools that will be used by educators throughout the country.

Your child may be participating in any of three tasks, all of which are designed to assess speaking and listening skills. Two of the tasks are in the form of a classroom discussion and the remaining one is in the form of a presentation that may require some independent research.

Your child's participation in this assessment benefits both your child and the teachers who serve him or her. Your child will participate in tasks designed to improve their speaking and listening skills and will receive feedback from teachers regarding areas of strength and room for development.

We understand that parents and guardians are likely to be concerned about any risks to their child when participating in this study. **We would like to assure you that there are no anticipated risks for participating in this study. Your child's academic standing will not be affected by participating, and your child's name will not be recorded and any of their responses to the materials will be kept on a secure document.** Your child will also be informed that their participation is completely voluntary and you and your child have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty.

We appreciate you taking the time to read this document and inform yourself on this study. If you have any further questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,

Zachary Kornhauser
212-217-0728
zkornhauser@cae.org

Read This First

Dear Coordinator,

Thank you for deciding to participate in the pilot phase of the PARCC Speaking and Listening assessment! Included in this package are envelopes containing the assessment materials for each participating classroom. We have provided materials for the following classrooms:

Component	Grade	Teacher Name
Classroom Discussion	1	Erin Christensen
Classroom Discussion	1	Toni Ann Titmas
Classroom Discussion	K	Erin Christensen
Classroom Discussion	K	Ann Michele Lang

Please follow these steps:

1. Ensure that you have an envelope for each class that is participating in the assessment.
2. Distribute the envelopes to each teacher. Ensure that they have all the materials they need and that they are prepared to lead the assessment. Contact fieldtesting@cae.org if any materials are missing.
3. Have the teachers administer the assessment to the students:
 - a. After the students have completed the assessment tasks, have them complete the student survey. Make sure to leave time at the end of class to complete this step.
 - b. Complete the rubrics for each participating student.
 - c. Complete the demographic form and collect the completed rubrics, listening logs, and student surveys and place them in the envelope.
4. Collect the envelopes from each teacher and verify that all rubrics, listening logs, and student surveys have been completed and are included.
5. Mail the envelopes for all classes back to CAE using the provided return label. Please mail back the materials as soon as they are completed and by May 1, 2015 at the latest.

If you have any questions please email fieldtesting@cae.org or call Drew Libin (212-204-8411).

We hope you enjoy conducting this assessment! Sincerely,

Galen Murray
Program Manager, CAE



Grade K-2 Classroom Discussion Guidelines

Table of Contents

- [About These Guidelines](#)
- [Establishing Discussion Rules](#)
- [Managing Formative Assessment During Discussions](#)
- [Scaffolding Classroom Discussions](#)
- [Reflection](#)
- [Discussion Planning Questions](#)
- [Implementation Examples](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

About These Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to help you structure, support, and assess authentic classroom discussions. You may use and adapt these guidelines in any content area to support a wide variety of conversations.

Supporting All Learners

Throughout these guidelines, you will find "Supporting All Learners" tips to help you consider the implications of classroom discussions for all of the students you teach. In conjunction with the specific accommodations you will provide in accordance with each student's IEP, 504, or EL plan, you may wish to incorporate these suggestions into your planning to ensure that every student is able to fully engage in discussions.

The guidelines presented here are specifically designed to support collaborative conversations about appropriate grade-level topics and texts. In kindergarten through second grade, students describe and discuss personal experiences, texts read aloud, and information presented through a variety of media. As you select focus texts for your classroom discussions, consider selections that are both content-rich *and* authentic to the content area under study. PARCC's Passage Selection Guidelines for the Speaking and Listening Assessment, as well as Appendices A and B of the Common Core State Standards, provide additional information about considerations when choosing texts for classroom discussion.

Speaking and Listening as Foundational Skills

As noted in the *PARCC Model Content Frameworks for K-2*, besides having intrinsic value as modes of communication, speaking and listening are necessary prerequisites of reading and writing well, and research shows that oral language competence is strongly predictive of the ease with which students learn to read and write. Additionally, some students may benefit by first responding to text through broader modes of communication and multiple experiences involving appropriate use of concrete objects, drama, songs, art, or technology. Teachers can then layer alphabetic and symbolic communication systems on these concrete foundations to effectively guide students toward the targets outlined in the standards.

The PARCC Speaking and Listening materials reinforce habits of mind (that is, "practices") that aid in the mastery of the printed word, and directly target speaking and listening skills in a purposeful and systematic way. They direct students to learn how to participate effectively in real, substantive discussions around topics they are studying and texts they are reading (or listening to) so as to provide them with opportunities to build their confidence and extend their knowledge about a text by connecting their ideas with those of others through reporting their findings.

Developmental Milestones

Establishing Discussion Rules

Creating shared rules for classroom discussions helps establish an environment in which all students feel safe expressing their ideas and responding to others. Articulating rules takes the guesswork out of classroom behavior and makes implicit expectations explicit. While the **Classroom Discussion Rubric** (or **Checklist**, at the kindergarten level) provides many ideas to support respectful and rich classroom discussions, teachers and students may work together early in the school year to develop a set of three to six brief, student-friendly guidelines. You may wish to use one or more of the following strategies to guide this process:

- Define the term "respect." Ask students to give examples of how they can show respect to others when having a classroom discussion.
- Discuss the concept of rules, and have students share examples of rules they follow at home. With students, talk about how rules can help make an environment safe and comfortable for everyone. Create a three-column class chart with the column headings "Looks Like," "Sounds Like," and "Feels Like." You may wish to draw symbols (e.g., an eye, an ear, and a heart) next to each column heading. Ask, "What does a respectful conversation look like, sound like, and feel like?" Have students brainstorm ideas, and add these ideas to the chart.
- Have students act out or use puppets to model a respectful and productive classroom discussion. Then have them use their role-play to generate a list of rules that support the respectful and productive behaviors they imagined.

Sample rules for classroom discussions might include:

- Take turns speaking.
- Listen carefully when others share their ideas.
- Support your ideas with details.
- Ask questions.

Supporting All Learners

As you work with students to develop class rules, consider the needs of all students in your class. It may be useful to build concepts like wait time, reviewing activity instructions with partners, or valuing and honoring differences into your work on class expectations.

Post these discussion rules in a visible location and revisit them frequently. You may wish to illustrate each rule with a visual support. It may also be helpful to highlight and celebrate specific moments when students are effectively demonstrating a given rule.

Supporting Development Across the Grade Levels

All standards associated with classroom discussions apply to collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups on a range of grade-level topics, texts, and issues. While students should develop and use classroom discussion rules at every grade, the Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards and the PARCC Classroom Discussion rubrics and checklist articulate key differences in expectations for student behavior at each level.

- In **Kindergarten**, students learn foundational discussion skills, including speaking audibly and clearly, listening to others, and taking turns. At this grade level, students begin to internalize common processes for having conversations in pairs, small groups, and large groups, and work together to continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.

Discussion rules for kindergarten might emphasize speaking audibly and clearly, taking turns speaking, and asking questions.

- In **Grade 1**, students learn to make comments that build on the remarks of others. They develop greater attention to detail—supporting their own ideas with relevant details, and asking questions about details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. In first grade, students also continue to work on expressing their own ideas and feelings clearly.

Discussion rules for first grade to support these developmental shifts might focus on providing details, following rules, and building on the comments of others.

- In **Grade 2**, students ask questions that deepen their understanding of topics or issues. They build on the discussion processes from previous grades, practicing new skills like gaining the floor in respectful ways and linking their comments to the remarks of others. Students also strengthen their attention to facts and details, selecting appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support their retelling of events and texts.

Discussion rules for second grade might emphasize the use of facts and details to support retelling, and the importance of linking comments to the remarks of other participants.

Managing Formative Assessment During Discussions

Managing class discussions while simultaneously collecting evidence of student speaking and listening can be challenging. The following guidelines may help you to juggle the multiple roles you play during classroom discussions. For specific support on how to evaluate student

development of speaking and listening skills, see the **Classroom Discussion Rubric (or Checklist) Directions**.

- During pair and small-group discussions, circulate and observe each pair or group. Use a clipboard or tablet to track the groups you have visited and the behaviors you have observed. For grades 1 and 2, use the **Classroom Look-Fors** list provided in the rubric to guide note-taking and reflection.
- Encourage students to self- and peer-assess using a simplified or illustrated version of the **Classroom Discussion Rubric or Checklist**. The strengths and areas of need that students identify for themselves and their peers can serve as valuable formative feedback and as a strong complement to the feedback they receive from the teacher.
- Consider focusing on one or two target behaviors for each conversation. Discuss these behaviors, with examples, before the conversation. Then have students self-assess on the behaviors after the conversation. You may wish to have students use hand signals to self-evaluate on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the focus behaviors, then share their reasoning with the class.

Scaffolding Classroom Discussions

Preparing young students to engage in classroom discussions often involves practicing component skills in a variety of contexts. Every classroom discussion will look different, but these guidelines and strategies can help you think about how to support the development of discussion skills about a variety of topics and in a range of contexts.

Practice Storytelling

Whether engaging in conversations about a read-aloud text, a multimedia presentation, or an authentic experience, students should be able to describe important elements in an understandable way and support their descriptions with details. Scaffold these skills with the following strategies and activities:

- Explicitly teach lessons that focus on using key ideas and details to retell or describe a story or experience. Emphasize the importance of distinguishing between essential details and less important details, and the importance of making sure that the story is understandable to listeners.

Supporting All Learners

Use "think-alouds" to model important practices for students. Verbalize your thought processes by describing them in detail, using statements like, "I want to retell this story to my friends, but only have a minute to do it. How will I decide what are the most important things to include? I guess it really doesn't matter that the rabbit ate a carrot for breakfast but it *does* really matter that he fell asleep during the race."

- Have students draw pictures of important people, places, things, and events in their lives, and use these pictures to prompt and support their descriptions, writing, and retelling of these personal experiences.
- Build the retelling of stories into classroom routines, such as Morning Meeting. For example, invite students to turn and talk to partners (or to speak to the whole

class) in response to prompts like, "What did you do over the weekend?" "Tell your partner about a fun experience you had with a family member," or "In your own words, retell the story we read/video we watched/song we heard yesterday in class."

Supporting All Learners

If students struggle to get started on a discussion task, consider simplifying the language of the task and/or modeling a sample response to the task.

- Use graphic organizers, such as idea webs or maps, to help students practice supporting ideas with details. Have students write or draw a main idea in the central circle, and write or draw supporting details in the circles radiating out from the center.
[diagram: sample idea map]

Support Questioning and Commenting

Students should ask and answer questions of deepening complexity at each grade level, from questioning for the purpose of clarification in kindergarten, to questions about details in first grade, to questions that deepen understanding of a topic or issue in second grade. In addition, students should practice making comments that relate to the ideas of others, as well as continuing a conversation through multiple exchanges. Support these skills by implementing the following strategies:

- Model effective questioning and commenting strategies for students, and celebrate strong questions and comments posed by students.
- Create a class list of effective question and comment stems, and add to this list over time. Have students refer to these stems during discussions. Examples may include:
 - "I'd like to ask why..."
 - "I agree with what you said and..."
 - "I think that..."
- As a class, practice generating and making lists of as many questions as possible about a given topic, text, or issue. For example, you might have students respond to the verbal prompt, "How many questions can we ask about airplanes?" Alternatively, have students orally share everything they know about an object or word.

Encourage Turn-Taking

- Consider using a concrete object such as a talking stick or talking ball to have students take turns practicing speaking and listening.
- Use specific protocols to teach and scaffold turn-taking. For example, have Partner 1 speak for one minute, while Partner 2 listens, then announce "Switch!" to have students swap roles.

Supporting All Learners

Take care when pairing students for discussions. As you assign student pairs, consider the language proficiency, content knowledge, verbal expression, and self-management

of each partner.

Support Active Listening

- Emphasize the importance of paying full attention to the remarks made by others, rather than waiting for one's own turn to talk. You may wish to teach students to physically turn their bodies and faces toward other speakers when listening. Model this for students and have them practice before and during each discussion.
- At key points during discussions, have students restate important ideas, comments, or insights shared by their peers.

Supporting All Learners

When students' attention starts to wander, help to refocus their attention on the task or discussion by using hand-signals to pause the discussion, provide a quick stretch-break if appropriate, and asking a targeted question to restart and refocus the discussion.

Reflection

At the end of each classroom discussion, make sure to allow time for reflection on the discussion process. You may wish to structure this reflection as a short pair, small-group, or whole-group discussion. Review the key behaviors on the **Classroom Discussion Rubric** (or **Checklist**) with students, and consider using one or more of the following reflection questions to guide the reflection process:

- In your own words, what happened during this discussion? What did you learn?
- What did you do well? What would you like to do better? Give specific examples and details.
- What did our class do well? In what areas can we grow? Give specific examples and details.
- Describe something interesting that a classmate said. What made this comment or question interesting?

Supporting All Learners

Model reflection tasks for students before having students reflect on their own. You may also wish to integrate nonverbal signals into reflection. For example, have students put their heads down and use thumbs-up, thumbs-down, or thumbs-sideways signals to self-reflect on each **Classroom Discussion Rubric** or **Checklist** behavior.

Discussion Planning Questions

As you prepare to structure and facilitate a classroom discussion in the context of a larger unit or lesson, you may wish to use the following questions to guide your planning and decision-making:

- What do I want my students to know and be able to do as a result of this discussion? (consider content *and* skills)

- How does this discussion connect to the larger goals and guiding questions of the unit?
- What are my students ready for, both behaviorally and academically? How can I use this discussion to help them move to the next level?
- How can I ensure that all students are able to fully engage in the discussion, given the language-proficiency levels, reading levels, and special needs of the students in my class?
- How will I prepare my students for this discussion?
- Where will this discussion take place? (e.g., at tables, at a learning center, on the rug)
- How will I provide (and follow up on) feedback to students during and after this discussion?

You may find it helpful to brainstorm and plan for discussions with colleagues from your school or district, and to debrief and reflect on discussions on an ongoing basis to improve and refine your own practice.

Implementation Examples

The scenarios that follow offer examples of content-embedded, standards-aligned discussions. You may wish to use these scenarios, in combination with the **Discussion Planning Questions**, as jumping-off points for your own planning. Note that these scenarios are only examples, and that the discussions in your classroom should focus on the specific content, topics, and skills that your students are already exploring.

As you review each scenario, consider the following:

- How does the teacher structure the discussion to target the skills in the **Classroom Discussion Rubric or Checklist**?
- How does the discussion deepen students' understanding of core content?
- Which strategies from these sample discussions might you apply in your own classroom? When and why would you use these strategies?

Grade K Science

Next Generation Science Standards: K-LS1-1

As part of a larger unit exploring the needs of living things, students engage in pair, small-group, and large-group discussions to explore the topic.

The teacher has students sit in table groups of four. With students, he or she reviews the class chart showing key behaviors from the **Checklist**, and has each student select one picture behavior card from a set, identifying a targeted skill or behavior that he or she will focus on for the day. Students place their behavior cards on the tables in front of them as visual reminders during the discussion.

The teacher introduces the topic by showing students several pictures of plants and animals: a dog, a cow, a tree, and a bean plant. He or she asks students, "What do we know about plants and animals? What do they have in common?" and invites them to "think-pair-share." Students have one minute to think before turning toward a partner and taking turns describing

what they know. The teacher then redirects the whole class, and asks student volunteers to share one interesting piece of information expressed by a partner. The teacher lists student-generated information on a class chart, and draws a small illustration next to each idea. Ideas shared include "They are all alive," "They live in our homes and outside," "They need to be taken care of," "Some animals eat plants," "They come in all sizes," and "They are big and small."

The teacher explains, "Today we are going to focus on what living things need. Let's talk about what *we* need. I know that I need to go to sleep every night in order to wake up feeling healthy in the morning. What else do we, *humans*, need? Talk to your partner, and this time, make sure that you ask questions if your partner says something you don't understand." Students share ideas with one another, and the teacher prompts active listening and questioning by saying "Thumbs-up if your partner asked you a question about what humans need." Student volunteers share responses with the whole class, and the teacher lists student ideas on the board. When a student says, for example, "I need to watch TV," the teacher asks probing questions to lead a brief discussion of the difference between *needs* and *wants*.

The teacher reveals a Venn diagram, a graphic organizer that is likely familiar to students at this point in the year. He places the dog and cow pictures over one circle, and the tree and bean plant pictures over the other circle. He distributes one paper copy of an identical Venn diagram to each table group, along with various cut-out images of items such as a bucket of water, the Sun, an apple, a pile of soil, and a house. The teacher instructs students to work in groups to sort the images into groups based on whether they are basic needs of plants and/or animals. He or she revisits the guidelines for discussions, and emphasizes that students should take turns talking and should ask one another for details and clarification. Students have five minutes to discuss the challenge with their group members and place the items in the appropriate areas of the chart.

The teacher invites volunteers from each table to share each group's conclusions with the class, and encourages other students to ask clarifying questions when appropriate. The teacher explains that students will continue to explore the question, "What do living things need?" over the course of the next few weeks, and will revisit these charts over time.

Grade 1 Math

Common Core Mathematics Standards: 1.MDA.1, 1.MDA.2, 1.MD.C.4

This discussion can be implemented in conjunction with the Maryland Model Unit "Measure Length," available at http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/mathematics/units/gr1_measure_length/

As part of a larger unit exploring length and measurement, students engage in a classroom discussion about comparing and measuring length.

The teacher has students sit with partners, and distributes three lengths of string and a handful of paperclips to each pair. The teacher has student volunteers help the class review the classroom discussion rules, which are posted on a class chart.

The teacher explains, "Each pair of students has three pieces of string. With your partner, figure out how to put the pieces of string next to each other in an order that makes sense to you." He or she gives the groups a few minutes to work, then has student volunteers share their strategies with the whole class, explaining the reasoning behind the order they selected. During this whole-class conversation, the teacher introduces and highlights key vocabulary words: *longest*, *shortest*, *bigger*, *smaller*, *measure*, and *compare*, and posts these words on the class Word Wall.

The teacher then asks, "Without putting all of the pieces of string together and comparing them at the front of the room, how can we tell who has the biggest piece of string in the whole class? Turn and talk to your partner. Think about how you might use the paperclips at your tables to help you." Students work with partners to discuss strategies, then share ideas with the class. The teacher uses questions to guide students toward the strategy of using paperclips as a unit of measure to measure the lengths of their longest piece of string.

Student pairs work together to measure their strings in paper-clip lengths. Each group writes the length in paperclips on a data table on the board. After all data are posted, the teacher facilitates a whole-class discussion of the following questions:

- Who has the longest piece of string? How long is it?
- What steps did you take to measure your string? Why was it important to start at the end instead of in the middle?
- What was hard about measuring your string?
- How could we measure our string length if we each only had one paperclip?
- What would happen if our paperclips were all different sizes?
- Why do you think most people use standard measures like inches, instead of using items like paperclips or pencils?

Throughout this discussion, the teacher encourages students to refer to a class list of sentence and question stems ("I wonder..." "I think..." "What do you mean by...?" and "This reminds me of..."). Students ask clarifying questions, build on comments made by others, and support ideas with details.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher has students self- and peer-assess on their discussion skills using an abbreviated version of the rubric. Students practice giving partners constructive feedback, sharing one thing a partner did well, and one area in which a partner could do better next time.

Grade 2 Social Studies

National Council for the Social Studies strands: IIIg, IIIh, IVb

As part of a unit on communities, students engage in a classroom discussion about the

natural, man-made, and cultural aspects of communities.

As preparation for the discussion, the teacher has invited students to bring in pictures of their local community, and has provided a collection of familiar pictures from the school community to ensure that all students are able to participate. He or she invites each student to select one picture to share with the class. The teacher has students sit on the carpet in a semicircle, and invites each student to share the picture he or she selected, and to tell the class about it. After each student shares, other students are encouraged to ask questions to clarify or deepen understanding of the content in the picture.

After all students have shared, the teacher explains, "There are many different ways to think about our community. Some of us selected pictures of people we love, some of us picked pictures of natural places like the lake, and some of us picked pictures of places that have been built by humans, like the buildings downtown. Over the past few weeks, we've read lots of books about people who live in all kinds of communities, from Brooklyn, New York to the Lakota reservation. If we were going to make a book that would describe our community to people who had never been here, what would we put in *our* book? Turn and talk to the person next to you about what you think should be in our class book. Remember, one person should speak while the other person listens, then switch."

Students talk to partners for a few minutes, until the teacher calls their attention back to the whole group. He then opens up the discussion to the class, and encourages students to respond to one another's suggestions and comments, ask questions to deepen the discussion, and link comments to the remarks of others. In the course of this conversation, students explore questions like "What is most important about our community?" "What is a story you can tell about something that happened in our community?" "Describe a favorite place in our community—what details should we include?" and "What are some examples of ways that people in our community help each other?"

At the conclusion of the discussion, the teacher reviews each of the behaviors on the **Classroom Discussion Rubric**, and has students use a thumbs-up/ thumbs-sideways/ thumbs-down protocol to reflect on the class performance in each area. Following the discussion, students use the ideas generated to create their own informational books about their community.

Additional Implementation Examples

- In a **Kindergarten music lesson**, students engage in a teacher-facilitated, whole-class discussion in which they respond to a piece of music with movement, and then discuss how their movements reflected the tempo of the music and the feelings it conveyed. (National Core Arts Standards for Music, Re7.2.C.K)
- In a **Grade 1 ELA lesson**, students discuss the similarities and differences between the traditional version of Little Red Riding Hood and the book, *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China*, by Ed Young. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9)
- In a **Grade 2 science lesson**, students view a video about animal habitats. As a class, they discuss how animal habitats provide food, shelter, and other needs, and brainstorm examples of animals and their habitats. (Next Generation Science Standards 2-LS4-1)

How to Use the PARCC Classroom Discussion Rubric

Table of Contents

What is the purpose of the PARCC Classroom Discussion Checklist?	1
What is performance assessment, and how are performance assessments used to assess speaking and listening skills?	2
How is the Classroom Discussion Checklist organized?	2
What about my students who are English language learners, have special needs, or are Deaf or hard of hearing?	3
How can I use the checklist to evaluate students' speaking and listening skills in an evidence-centered way?	4
How can I use the checklist to monitor progress over time?	5
What do I do if there is not enough evidence?.....	5
My student didn't perform well in this particular classroom discussion, but I know he can do these things! Can I just check the boxes in the Strong column?.....	6
Can I share this checklist with students?	7
Can I share this checklist with families?	7
How can I use this checklist to document additional information about student performance?	7
I have so many students! How can I manage the process of ongoing formative assessment with this rubric?	7
Classroom Look-Fors List.....	9

What is the purpose of the PARCC Classroom Discussion Checklist?

The PARCC Classroom Discussion Checklist is designed to support standards-based formative assessment of speaking and listening during authentic classroom discussions. The grade-level checklist can be used to assess individual student mastery of Common Core Speaking and Listening skills during collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger

groups. The checklist is intended to be discussed with students and used as an instructional tool to support and guide ongoing development of speaking and listening skills.

The PARCC Classroom Discussion Checklist is a tool that can be used to:

1. Help you make standards-based decisions about your students' speaking and listening skills
2. Support you in designing discussions that can produce reliable evidence of your students' speaking and listening skills
3. Guide you as you coach students toward more skilled speaking and listening practices
4. Provide students with suggestions to improve their speaking and listening skills

What is performance assessment, and how are performance assessments used to assess speaking and listening skills?

Performance assessment is the evaluation of a skill (as opposed to a body of content knowledge). Evaluating a skill usually requires observation and judgment of the skill as it is enacted or applied. The road test required to attain a driver's license is a classic example of a performance assessment. An assessor evaluates someone's driving ability by observing him or her drive. (In contrast, the written driver's license exam, which tests one's knowledge of traffic laws, is not a performance assessment.)

The speaking and listening skills described in the Common Core State Standards are skills that require performance assessment for evaluation. To evaluate many of our students' speaking and listening skills, we must observe our students in action, using a range of speaking and listening behaviors to engage in authentic, content-rich discussions. For more information about structuring and supporting these discussions, see the **Grades K-2 Classroom Discussion Guidelines**.

How is the Classroom Discussion Rubric organized?

The checklist is a tool that supports communication and evaluation. It is designed to help clarify expectations and provide specific feedback that can inform learning and teaching.

The Classroom Discussion Checklist is divided into three sets of skills, or domains. In the case of the Classroom Discussion Checklist, the domains are: Content and Details, Attention to Process, and Expression.

For each domain, there are several potential patterns for expected student performances. We call these patterns, "domain descriptors." For the Content and Details and Attention to Process domains of the Classroom Discussion Checklist, there are three domain descriptors:

- **Strong:** The Strong descriptor indicates that a student demonstrates evidence of the expectations of the speaking and listening standards and has done so fully and with consistency.
- **Developing:** The Developing descriptor indicates that a student demonstrates some evidence of the expectations of the speaking and listening standards, but that the student has not yet demonstrated the expectations fully or with consistency.
- **Emerging:** The Emerging descriptor indicates that a student demonstrates little to no evidence of the expectations of the speaking and listening standards. This performance is generally characterized by an absence of evidence or minimal performance of skills expected

To help one understand these patterns of performance, the rubric lists *evidences* for each descriptor. These evidences articulate common student behaviors for that domain and descriptor. While a student's demonstration of individual evidences may vary across the domain, you will usually be able to look at evidence across a particular domain in order to determine the student's descriptor for that domain. For example, a student whose behavior indicates that he/she tells a story with relevant facts and appropriate details, and independently asks and answers questions about what a speaker has said would most likely be marked as "Strong" in the Content and Details domain, even if he/she may not consistently link comments to the remarks of others.

Due to the unique characteristics of behaviors in the Expression domain, the Expression domain does not have three domain descriptors. Instead, you can evaluate student performance in this domain by selecting "Yes" or "No" to the guiding question, "Does the student speak audibly in coherent sentences?"

What about my students who are English Language Learners, have special needs, or are Deaf or hard of hearing?

The evidences in the rubric outline general behaviors that align with the expectations articulated in the Common Core State Standards for Speaking and Listening, but these evidences are not one-size-fits-all. When a student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), always use the student's IEP to inform decisions about accommodations and modifications. You may also find it helpful to refer to your state's English language learner (ELL) guidelines to determine what language accommodations are appropriate. Finally, you may wish to meet with other teachers

and on-site specialists to determine how your school wishes to adapt and apply the rubric for effective formative assessment of particular students.

How can I use the checklist to evaluate students' speaking and listening skills in an evidence-centered way?

In order to ensure that your evaluation of students' speaking and listening skills is standards-based, consider the following process for assessing student performance:

1. **OBSERVE student performance and document evidence:** During observation of a student discussion, mark behaviors that you see the student exhibiting, and take notes on specific evidence, language, or actions that show how the student is demonstrating that behavior. Note that for some discussions (and at some points in the school year) you may wish to assess only one or two domains at a time, while in other scenarios, you may wish to assess all domains. Also note that students are not expected to exhibit every behavior on the checklist during every classroom discussion. If there is no observable evidence for a particular behavior, do not mark any evidences associated with that behavior. (See **What do I do if there is not enough evidence?** for more details.)

2. EVALUATE DOMAIN-SPECIFIC EVIDENCE:

Using the evidence you have documented, you can now make a professional judgment as to the student's descriptor for each domain. Mark the check box associated with the appropriate descriptor in the left-hand column of the checklist. Since there are multiple evidences in the Content and Details domain, you will need to use the evidence you have gathered to draw a conclusion about the overall descriptor for that domain. In some cases, you may have only selected evidences within one domain descriptor. In other cases, you may find that you have selected evidences across more than one descriptor. In either case, we recommend that you **reread the guiding statement of the domain before you make your final determination**. It is easy to get lost in the details of specific evidences, leading you to sense that the domain is narrower than it really is. Rereading the domain's guiding statement helps you to zoom out and make a more holistic assessment that is based on the preponderance of evidence from the observed discussion, rather than relying on a particular moment that was memorable but isolated. Focusing on the big picture is especially helpful if you have selected evidences across more than one descriptor and need to sort out their relative importance. You may also wish to write qualitative notes and feedback about the student's performance in the particular domain.

3. (Optional) **MAKE A HOLISTIC JUDGMENT about the overall performance.** Review the evidence and descriptors for each domain to draw a conclusion about the student's overall

performance in speaking and listening during the classroom discussion. As you make a judgment about the overall performance, consider the relative importance of each domain—depending on the performance exhibited and the nature of the discussion, you may determine that one domain should carry greater weight than the others in the determination of overall performance. Indicate the student’s overall descriptor by checking a box in the “Overall Performance” row of the checklist. You may also wish to write qualitative notes and feedback about the student’s strengths and opportunities for growth, based on the evidence from the discussion.

How can I use the checklist to monitor progress over time?

The Classroom Discussion Checklist is best applied across multiple performances, offering many chances to meet one clearly articulated set of expectations. Mastering a skill comes not only through practice but also through a deepening understanding of the expectations. For this to happen, the learner often needs more than one opportunity to demonstrate development in relation to the same expectations. Consider making the checklist a regular touchstone in your classroom practice. Use a fresh copy of the checklist to evaluate each classroom discussion (marking the date, discussion type, and topic for each instance) so that you can easily assess a student’s development over time.

Make sure that you gather data from observations of the student during multiple pair, small-group, and whole-group discussions, and during discussions about a variety of content topics and media formats. Students should be able to demonstrate effective speaking and listening skills in a range of situations. However, if you are monitoring progress over time, make sure to compare student performance in similar situations. Comparing a student’s performance in a read-aloud discussion from September with the same student’s performance in a read-aloud discussion in November may give a more accurate picture of student development than a comparison of that student’s September read-aloud performance with a November discussion of a personal experience.

What do I do if there is not enough evidence?

It is highly unlikely that a student will demonstrate every behavior from the Speaking and Listening standards in every classroom discussion. This is one reason why it is important to use the checklist on a repeated basis over time. However, it is important to pay attention to the reasons behind a particular lack of evidence:

Scenario A: No opportunity is presented for a student to demonstrate the behavior.

Not every discussion will present an opportunity for students to engage in specific types of speaking and listening behaviors. For example, if the discussion doesn’t involve a text read aloud or information presented in media, the student will not have an opportunity to recount or

describe the key ideas and details from these resources. In discussions that do not present an opportunity for students to demonstrate particular behaviors, do not evaluate the student's performance on the behaviors. Instead, simply refrain from marking the associated evidences on the checklist.

Scenario B: An opportunity is presented, but the student does not demonstrate the behavior.

In this scenario, a student has missed an opportunity to engage in appropriate speaking and listening behaviors. In most cases, this would constitute evidence for an Emerging performance descriptor. For example, if the student attempts to recount an experience but provides hardly any facts or details, this would constitute an Emerging behavior. In addition, if a student neglects to express any ideas in the course of an entire discussion, this would also constitute an Emerging behavior, since ample opportunities were presented. However, take caution to distinguish quantity from quality when it comes to evidence: a student who speaks only a few times during the course of a discussion but provides substantive, relevant details and comments that propel the discussion forward demonstrates higher-level Content and Details skills than a student that speaks frequently but makes comments that lack substance or are irrelevant.

Scenario C: An ELL, special needs, or Deaf or hard of hearing student demonstrates speaking and listening skills in ways that differ from those described in the checklist.

Diverse learners may need to demonstrate speaking and listening skills in a variety of ways. Always refer to the student's IEP when implementing the Classroom Discussion Checklist or any other instructional tool. In the case of the Classroom Discussion Checklist, consider the intent or underlying purpose of the particular behaviors described. In some cases, it may make sense to adapt the checklist to reflect the behaviors expected of the individual student. In other cases, it may be appropriate to provide additional supports (teacher prompting, supplemental texts, more think-time, assistive devices) to scaffold the student's participation in the discussion.

My student didn't perform well in this particular classroom discussion, but I know he can do these things! Can I just check the boxes in the Strong column?

It can be tempting to mark evidences on the Classroom Discussion Checklist based on your broader knowledge or perception of a student's abilities, but the checklist's value lies in the support it provides for targeted, evidence-based observations of specific student performances. During observations, focus only on the immediately observable behaviors. If there is insufficient evidence for a particular set of behaviors, do not mark any evidences associated with those behaviors.

Can I share this checklist with students?

Yes! To be most effective, a checklist is best used both before the performance ("What is expected of me?") as well as after ("How did I do?"). Take time to introduce and discuss the checklist with students, and offer opportunities for students to use the checklist in self- and peer-assessment and reflection activities. You may wish to simplify or clarify the language of the checklist for student use, or provide illustrations to aid student comprehension.

Can I share this checklist with families?

Yes! The Classroom Discussion Checklist can be a powerful tool for communicating with families about a student's speaking and listening skills, as well as for articulating the types of discussion skills that students are expected to master. Sharing the checklist and data about student progress with families at parent-teacher conferences can help parents and guardians to get a clearer picture of their children's strengths and opportunities for continued learning. It can also help empower parents to support their children's academic development, emphasizing that speaking and listening skills can transfer between home and school.

How can I use this checklist to document additional information about student performance?

You can adapt this checklist in several ways to meet your assessment and instructional needs. For some evidences, you may wish to circle or underline key words. For example, you may wish to annotate the checklist to indicate whether a student asks questions, answers questions, or both. In other cases, use the qualitative notes field for each domain to record specific notes, feedback, or additional information that can inform your future work with each student.

I have so many students! How can I manage the process of ongoing formative assessment with this checklist?

Adjusting to this process can certainly be challenging, but having students focus on one area at a time and encouraging them to engage in peer- and self-assessment can help. (If you are having students engage in peer feedback activities, however, be mindful of situations in which individual students may need accommodations and modifications). In addition, consider assessing only a subset of students for each discussion, and/or enlisting the help of an aide or paraprofessional. Over time, you will internalize the domains and evidences of the checklist, and your evaluation of student performance will become increasingly efficient.

In order to facilitate efficient whole-class formative assessment using the checklist, you may wish to use a tool like the Classroom Look-Fors List. Write student names in the left-hand

column. During the discussion, make notes to yourself about each student's performance of the listed Look-Fors.

