

P-1: Create or obtain assessments

Align assessment items to your learning goals

To do this:

- Find the verb and associated knowledge of the learning goal (you did this earlier when you determined what students need to do to show mastery)
- Write the item to match the action(s) and content of the learning goal
- **After writing all of your questions, check:**
 - Do your questions touch on all parts of the learning goals?
 - Is every learning goal being assessed by an aligned question?
 - Are all items related to your learning goals?

What does it mean for an assessment to be “aligned”?

Assessment items match the *exact requirements* of the learning goals*

- **Items match the cognitive level of the learning goal’s verb or action**
if the learning goal requires students to *compare* different stories, the question shouldn’t ask students to only *describe* characters in each story.
- **Items match the content addressed by the learning goal**
if the learning goal pertains to the knowledge or understanding of diffusion, then the item also should be focused on assessing this same knowledge
- **Items address *all parts* of the learning goal**
if the learning goal requires students to *identify* and *compare* different phases of matter, your question shouldn’t ask them to only identify a solid and a liquid

See below for more detailed examples of aligned learning goals

*If the assessment includes scaffolded questions, not every question will need to be exactly aligned to all parts of the learning goal. When scaffolding, though, it is important to ensure that at least one question does match the cognitive level of your learning goal.

All learning goals are tested and there are no unrelated items

- each goal being assessed has at least one question that aligns to it
- every assessment item is aligned to a learning goal

See the Illustrations section of the P-1 page for assessments that illustrate this.

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Example 1:

STANDARD - Use models and points of reference to compare commonly used fractions.

This item is **not aligned** to the standard.

For a science project, Kelly recorded the number of gallons of water she drank each day for four days in the table shown below.

Day of Week	Gallons of Water Kelly Drank
Monday	$\frac{1}{3}$
Tuesday	$\frac{2}{3}$
Wednesday	$\frac{1}{2}$
Thursday	$\frac{3}{10}$

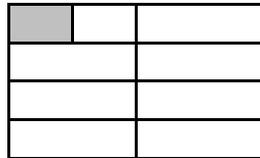
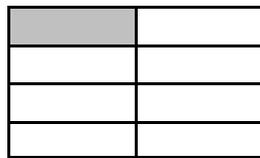
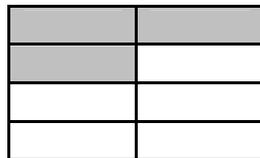
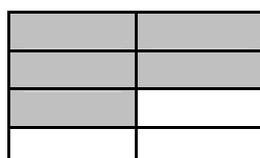
On which day did Kelly drink the most water?

	Options
A	Monday
B	Tuesday
C	Wednesday
D	Thursday

EXPLANATION - The performance called for in the standard is to **COMPARE FRACTIONS**, (Use models and points of reference to *compare* commonly used fractions), which this item does indeed require. But, the standard also specifies HOW fractions are to be compared: “using models and points of reference.” This item is not aligned because it does not use models or points of reference. The “WHAT” of the standard (i.e. the verb: to *compare* fractions) is treated in this item, but the “HOW” (i.e. “using models and points of reference”) is not. This item will not provide sufficient evidence that a student can compare fractions BY using models and points of reference.

This item is **fully aligned** to the standard.

Which model shows between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ shaded?

	Options
A	
B	
C	
D	

EXPLANATION - The performance called for in the standard is to **COMPARE FRACTIONS**, (Use models and points of reference to *compare* commonly used fractions). The standard also clarifies HOW the student should be able to compare: using “models and points of reference.” Accordingly, the item asks students to *compare* fractions using the shaded models. The performance in the standard is clearly demanded in the item, and if the student selects the correct answer, we can reasonably infer that the student has a good grasp of the content targeted.

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Example 2:

If the desired result is for learners to ...	Then you need evidence of the student's ...	So, the aligned item needs to be something like ...	
<p>Explain the process of diffusion</p>	<p>Knowledge of diffusion (knowledge)</p> <p>Ability to explain the process of diffusion (skill)</p>	<p>NON-EXAMPLE</p> <p>DIFFUSION occurs when a system is not at ...</p> <p>Equilibrium Rest Boiling Point Saturation</p>	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>Trudy drops one drop of ink into a full glass of water. Using your knowledge of DIFFUSION, describe what will happen in the glass of water.</p>
<p>Locate on a world map the territories acquired by the United States during its emergence as an imperial power in the world and explain how these territories were acquired</p>	<p>Knowledge of political geography (knowledge)</p> <p>Ability to read a map (skill)</p> <p>Knowledge of US imperialism at the turn of the 20th century (knowledge)</p> <p>Ability to explain the acquisition of particular nations (skill)</p>	<p>NON-EXAMPLE</p> <p>You are a Filipino rebel who has been fighting the US acquisition of the Philippines. Write a letter to President McKinley protesting the actions of the US</p>	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>Given a blank world map and a list of countries, students match the name of the country to the location on the map and write at least three sentences about when and under what circumstances the country became an American territory</p>