

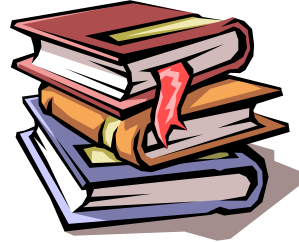
CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sixth Grade Assessment

Information for Parents

By the end of the third marking period of sixth grade, Central Bucks School District conducts a comprehensive, integrated assessment of:

- Reading
- Research
- Word Processing
- Oral Presentation
- Informational Visual Support Materials
- Time Management
- Organizational Skills



This assessment provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of various skills acquired throughout their elementary school career.

The assessment takes **three school days** to complete. All of the work is done in school. No part of the assessment is taken home during the three days the assessment is being conducted.

What happens during this assessment?

On **DAY ONE** of the assessment, students are given a question to research from a pool of three questions that they previously submitted to their homeroom teacher. The teacher reviews these questions with the school librarian to make certain there are sufficient research materials in the library. Then the teacher selects a question for each student and informs students of their topic on the first day of the assessment.

During the first day, the students are expected to complete a **one-to-two-page word processed, double spaced, written report answering their own research question**. They have the entire day to complete this report. Their time is unstructured, with the library and computer lab completely available for them to use.

Final copies of the written report are due to their teacher-coach by the end of the first day. The report and the scoring rubric goes home to parents following the assessment.

DAY TWO is devoted to **creating an informational visual** that supports the written report completed the day before, and to developing and practicing an oral presentation using the visual. **The students may create a poster, a Power Point presentation, or a model as their visual.**



Again, the day is unstructured with no fixed time schedule. Students are expected to complete this visual and prepare a two-to-five-minute oral presentation on the topic they researched. Students practice and rehearse their oral presentation during day two in school.

During both the first and second day of the assessment, all students are observed by teacher-coaches to determine their skills in **research, writing, use of technology, time management, and organization (process skills)**.

Teacher-coaches are trained not to structure the experience for students but rather to observe their process and effectiveness. If a student is working purposefully and completing his/her task on time, it is noted. If a student is off task and unable to organize materials and time for completion, this is also noted without interference and reported back to the student using the scoring rubric. This is an important experience in preparation for more independent work expected at the middle school level.

DAY THREE is oral presentation day. Each student delivers his/her presentation to a team of three teacher-coaches. The student may use note cards during his/her oral presentation and must use the informational visual prepared the day before. The coaches may ask the student questions about the topic that was researched at the conclusion of the presentation. leave the room for a limited time and then return to their regular school routine.

The students evaluate their performance using the same rubric the assessment team of teachers uses. Students are judged on their ability to accurately evaluate their own performance using the rubric.

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a way of measuring a student's performance on a given task. The rubric provides a description of the various levels of performance a student can produce.

The rubric describes in detail each of the four levels of performance: **Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic** for each skill being assessed. Teachers assessing student performance and students assessing their own performance in the sixth grade assessment know what each level of performance looks like for the written report, oral presentation, informational visual, and process skills.

It is important that the standards of performance are not a secret to students. The rubric informs the students of what the varying levels of performance are. Sixth graders will have a copy of the rubric with them throughout the three days of the assessment. They can refer to the rubric constantly so they can see how their work compares to the yardstick used to measure their performance.

Students will also have seen examples of written reports, visuals, and oral presentations that were completed by sixth graders in prior years as a way of helping them gauge their own performance. Students are in their regular homeroom throughout the third day of the assessment. The homeroom teacher follows a regular instructional schedule that day. The students giving their oral presentations

There is no grade for the assessment. The score is a diagnostic graph of your child's strengths and weaknesses in specific areas.

More importantly, the **sixth grade teacher will use the information from the assessment to help build each student's skills**. The assessment results can be used as a diagnostic tool for the remainder of the sixth grade to help set goals and provide instruction in research, writing, oral presentations, time management, and organizational skills. **Parents may also use this diagnostic information to help their child at home.**

It is important that parents, teachers and students focus on what can be learned and the skills to be improved upon from the assessment.

How can parents help their child with the assessment?

One of the most important things parents can do is to **encourage their child**. It is to be expected that some children may be a little anxious about the assessment. Whenever anyone—adult or child—is asked to perform the skills they have learned, it can be challenging. However, the experience is valuable and holds students accountable for the learning that has taken place.

Students need to know that **they will be expected to use their knowledge in practical ways and apply the skills they have learned in school**. This sets the expectation for school to be a place for the use of knowledge, and the application of skills.

Parents can help your children by encouraging him/her to do his/her best work and applying what he/she have learned. Parents can also help their child by **promoting independence and self-esteem**.

Children take their cues on these topics from the important adults around them. If we send children the message that they are not capable of doing this assessment, we raise their concern to match our own. When your child talks about the assessment, you can help by reminding him/her that they have been learning all of the skills they will need to be successful throughout their elementary school career.

Students have had opportunities to practice these skills in various ways and in different grades, and now they are going to pull all of these skills together in a three-day assessment. Your words of encouragement are very helpful and important.

Parents can also help their children by allowing them to **do this assessment on their own**. All of the work will be completed in school. This is done to ensure that all of the work being assessed is the child's work.

Another way that they can support the children is to **talk with them and encourage their interest in a variety of topics and take them to the public library**. This exposure to ideas and topics helps in the creation of interesting research questions.

For additional information, please contact your child's sixth grade teacher.

