ASSESSING LEARNERS ONLINE: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
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Introduction
Assessment can be done during class or based on work the learner submits to the teacher for grading. The traditional exam environment is difficult to do while teaching online, so continual assessment becomes a key way to gauge how well learners are doing. In order to keep a record of learner progress, we need assessment criteria or grading rubrics. This guide provides examples of assessment criteria and ways of developing learner autonomy – an important 21st-century skill.

What type of criteria can I use?

When deciding what criteria to use, think about the objectives of your syllabus or course and use these to decide on the criteria you want to assess. Each criterion might have different levels – for example, the learners demonstrate them 'completely', 'to some extent' or 'not at all'. Here are some ideas for criteria to assess different skills.

Writing
- **Task completion** – has the learner answered the question?
- **Accuracy** – is the writing accurate and using appropriate grammar/vocabulary for the task?
- **Layout and paragraphing/structure** – is this appropriate? Note: this is especially useful for writing tasks that have specific layouts, such as invitations, application letters and advertisements.
- **Content and ideas** – is the content relevant, appropriate and complete?

Speaking
- **Fluency** – this describes the flow of speaking. Is it natural? Does it continue without a lot of hesitation?
- **Accuracy** – is the speaker using accurate and appropriate grammar/vocabulary for the task?
- **Pronunciation** – is the pronunciation clear? Remember, comprehension is the most important aspect – can the speaker be easily understood?

Listening and reading
This can be assessed using online quizzes and polls with multiple choice or short-answer comprehension questions.
- **General comprehension** – can the learner understand the main messages of what they are reading/hearing?
- **Detail** – can the learner show understanding of specific information in the text?

Providing assessment criteria

Giving learners the assessment criteria is a way of encouraging learner autonomy. It also means the learners know what is expected of them and what areas to work on.

- Give learners a **timetable** of class content, including any forms of assessment. This means that the learners can **prepare** themselves.
- Share **assessment criteria** and **grading rubrics**. This helps the learners know what is expected of them, just as learning objectives are shared at the start of a lesson.
- Explain how you will provide **feedback**. This includes what grades you will give. Some teachers prefer a scale of A–D, others a percentage, others follow their Ministry of Education's grading system. Other teachers prefer to write comments of positives and areas for development. Whichever it is, make sure your learners know what type of score they will get and what it means.
- **Summarise** and **share** areas in which the learners are making progress as well as areas to focus on. This lets the learners know where they are and where they need to go.

Submitting assignments

Here are some examples of how learners can submit assignments for grading in an online context.

- **Speaking assessment**: learners record themselves and send in their recording. Set a topic with clear criteria for assessment so that the learners know what the objective of the assignment is. You can use online tools, where learners record themselves and send a link. Alternatively, learners record themselves on a phone and send the recording. This can be a voice memo or a voice message on a mobile messenger app (e.g. WhatsApp).

- **Written assessment**: learners use Google Docs and share the link with you. You can make comments directly in the document using insert/comment. Learners can also send Word documents to you, or just type straight into an email. On Word documents, use 'Track changes' to make comments and suggest revisions. Alternatively, learners can take a photo of handwritten work to send to you.

Useful links
- Short videos explaining various aspects of assessment:
  https://www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/research/assessment-literacy
- An online voice recorder for learners to send you audio files:
  https://online-voice-recorder.com/