2016 | Abridged

Arts Framework

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

From the arts, students discover how to use different senses, make decisions, learn from their mistakes, and work well with others – skills that they need to succeed in school and in life.

Introduction

The arts are an important part of the national vision for what every student should know and be able to do. Just as students draw from subjects like mathematics, science, and history to understand the world around them, they use the arts – which offer a unique combination of intellectual, emotional, imaginative, and physical experiences. From the arts, students discover how to use different senses, make decisions, learn from their mistakes, and work well with others – skills they need to succeed in school and in life. In these ways and more, the arts are essential to every child's complete development.

Having a large-scale national assessment in the arts makes an important statement about the need for all children in our country to obtain the special benefits of learning that only the arts provide. In recognition of the importance of the arts in education, the **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**, also known as The Nation's Report Card, began assessing music and the visual arts in the 1970s. The **National Assessment Governing Board**, which has overseen and set policy for NAEP since 1988, then commissioned the development of a framework for the 1997 NAEP Arts Education Assessment, and the framework has remained in place since then.

The NAEP arts education assessment framework resulted from the work of many organizations and individuals involved in the arts and arts education, including K-12 teachers, postsecondary arts educators, practicing artists, researchers, and assessment specialists. For members of the education community and the general public, the ***2016 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework*** shows the scope and methodology of this arts assessment.

NAEP and the Arts Assessment Framework

NAEP is the largest continuing and nationally representative measure of U.S. elementary and secondary student achievement. For nearly 50 years, NAEP has assessed representative samples of students in various subjects. The results have become an unparalleled source of information on what U.S. students know and can do.

The **NAEP arts education assessment framework** was designed to measure student achievement in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts at grades 4, 8, and 12. This framework was used to develop the 1997, 2008, and 2016 NAEP Arts Assessments.

The development of the *1997 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework* coincided with the development of the National Standards for Education in the Arts, providing an unprecedented opportunity to align standards and assessment in a model for arts education. In 2014, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards revised these national arts education standards, so there is an opportunity for future NAEP arts assessments to incorporate the updated standards as part of NAEP's overall transition to a digital assessment format.

Scope of 1997, 2008, and 2016 NAEP Arts Assessments

In 1997, the NAEP arts assessment was conducted nationally at grade 8 in three arts disciplines, also called content areas: music, the visual arts, and theatre. For music and the visual arts, representative samples of public and nonpublic school students were assessed. The theatre assessment was conducted with a targeted sample of students who had completed 30 hours of theatre classes at schools that offered comprehensive theatre programs. Limited offerings of dance programs at schools across the country prevented that content area's inclusion in the 1997 assessment.

For 2008 and 2016, NAEP tested a nationally representative sample of eighth-grade students in music and the visual arts. Due to funding constraints and the small percentage of schools with theatre and dance programs, however, the other two arts content areas were not assessed. So while the 2016 framework includes guidelines for assessing all four arts areas, the 2016 NAEP Arts Education Assessment assessed eighth graders in only two areas – music and the visual arts.

Scope of 1997, 2008, and 2016 NAEP Arts Assessments

Assessment Year	Grades Assessed			Content Areas Assessed			
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12	Dance	Music	Theatre	Visual Arts
1997		✓			✓	✓*	✓
2008		✓			✓		✓
2016		✓			✓		✓

** The 1997 theatre assessment was conducted using a targeted sample of students in schools with comprehensive theatre programs.*

Arts Processes

Tasks on the NAEP arts assessment have been developed to assess students' abilities to create, perform, and respond to art. Because the assessment depends on precise definitions of what students should know and be able to do, the arts framework defines the processes in general, addressed below, and in the context of each of the arts disciplines, addressed in the following sections.

Creating refers to generating original art, allowing for expression of personal ideas, feelings, and responses in the form of a visual image, a character, a written or improvised dramatic work, or the composition or improvisation of a piece of music or dance.

Performing means acting out an existing work – a process that calls on the student's interpretive or re-creative skills and represents the engagement and motivation involved in creating a work of art.

Responding includes many forms and is usually a combination of affective, cognitive, and physical behavior, involving a level of perceptual or observational skill; a description, analysis, or interpretation; and sometimes a judgment or evaluation.

Arts Content Areas

Arts education and evaluation vary by discipline, or content area. The ***2016 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework*** addresses the evaluation of four content areas: **music, the visual arts, theatre,** and **dance.**

Connection Between Arts Processes and Assessment Content

The ***2016 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework*** provides a general vision for assessing the four arts disciplines and the flexibility to accommodate differences among them. The matrix below shows how NAEP assesses the arts processes for each discipline. Each cell represents a subscale in which results may be reported.

In theatre, creating and performing are viewed as a combined act, and the response to the work from the audience, director, actors, and designers is seen as an integral part of the creative process. Also, in the visual arts, reproducing an artist's work is not central, so performing is not a focus of that assessment.

The Framework Matrix

	Dance	Music	Theatre	Visual Arts
Creating	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performing	✓	✓		
Responding	✓	✓	✓	✓

Grades 4, 8, and 12

Knowledge and skills based on specific content in the arts disciplines

Music

Music, which uses a unique set of symbols, is a form of artistic expression that involves creating (composing and improvising), performing (playing, singing, and conducting), and responding (listening, moving, analyzing, and critiquing). Performance of music demands the integrated development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills.

Sample Arts Processes for Music

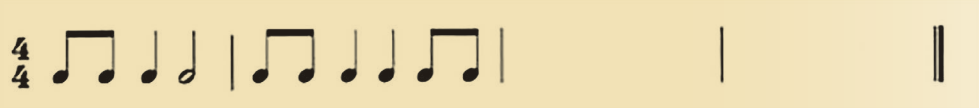
Creating	▪ Use standard and/or nonstandard notation to express original ideas. ▪ Demonstrate skill and expressiveness in the choice and use of musical elements.
Performing	▪ Apply skill by performing with technical accuracy. ▪ Read musical notation accurately. ▪ Apply historical, cultural, and aesthetic understanding by creating stylistically appropriate alterations, variations, and improvisations.
Responding	▪ Analyze the elements and structure of music. ▪ Compare and contrast various musical styles. ▪ Make critical judgments about technical and expressive qualities of musical performances and compositions. ▪ Use movement or words to interpret and describe personal responses to music.

Sample Task

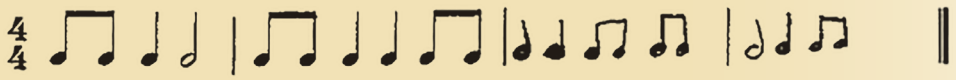
This short constructed-response question assessed students' abilities to use standard musical notation and to complete a piece in a musically satisfying way.

Sample Question

For this task, you are to write an ending for the rhythmic pattern you see below. You will hear it played two times. After you hear the rhythmic pattern, write an ending to the pattern in the empty measures printed in your test booklet. The music that you write should make the rhythm sound finished. You may use notes or rests in your answer, but do not copy any of the measures that are already used in the music. Make sure that the ending that you write has the correct number of beats.



Sample Student Response



Explanation

A three-level guide was used to score each measure of the response individually for accurate musical notation. This meant that students could earn partial credit. Responses were scored as Adequate, Limited, or Inadequate; the sample student response above represents an Adequate score, as it uses correct notation that adds up to four beats for each measure.

Students' ability to create a musically satisfying ending was scored separately. Responses for this component were scored as either Acceptable or Unacceptable. Acceptable responses concluded on a strong beat.

Visual Arts

The visual arts are rightly described in the plural; at their broadest, they include forms such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, folk art, and the decorative arts. They also embrace a variety of media (film, photography, computer imaging, and video) and functional design areas such as architecture, industrial design, and graphic design. The visual arts are increasingly about the realization of ideas in formats that are simultaneously visual, spatial, and temporal. In addition, the visual arts enable students to reflect on what they inherit from past and present cultures.

Sample Arts Processes for the Visual Arts

Creating	▪ Create subjects, themes, problems, and ideas that reflect knowledge and understanding of context and values (personal, social, historical, and cultural) and aesthetics. ▪ Create preliminary or formative ideas (sketches, models, etc.) before final execution. ▪ Create a product that reflects ongoing thoughts, actions, and new directions.
Responding	▪ Respond to content, form, context, and aesthetics. ▪ Describe relationships between form and context; between form and meaning or function; and among critical/analytical models through understanding the works of critics, historians, aestheticians, artists, and designers.

Sample Task

Students were presented with *"Pittsburgh Memories,"* a collage by artist Romare Bearden that depicts residents in an apartment building in Pittsburgh. In response to this work, students were asked to create their own collage.

Sample Question

Study the Bearden work, and think about how the collage shows the artist's memory of what life in Pittsburgh was like. Notice how Bearden combines and organizes objects and places in unusual and unexpected ways to express what it is like to remember. Look for the ways in which interesting contrasts between inside and outside areas and the use of details and colors communicate a memory.

Now think of a memory of a place where you once lived, where you live now, a friend's house, or another place important to you in your community. What kinds of pictures do you see in your mind when you remember what it was like to be there?

Being as creative as you can, create a memory collage of the place you choose. In your collage, communicate what you remember about what it was like both inside of this place and outside in the neighborhood.

To make your collage:

- *Take out all of the materials from your packet. You may use your scissors and/or tear materials you choose for your collage.*
- *Assemble on your sheet of white drawing paper pieces of any of the materials provided to show both the inside of the place you choose and what it was like outside.*
- *Once you have pasted down these areas, you can add details with markers and oil pastels.*

After you have completed your memory collage, look carefully at it. Describe in detail the ways that you show a memory of the place you chose and explain what your collage is about. Use evidence from your work to support your answer.

Sample Student Response

In my collage, I put it as a snowstorm. There are bright green trees on the snow, & there are black & white storm clouds. I also put a cave. In the cave I have 2 people by a fire, & behind them, are 2 windows.

Explanation

Students were assessed on their ability to put together a collage that communicates their memory of a place and to describe their collage. Collages were scored using a five-level guide that allowed for partial credit: Effective, Adequate, Uneven, Minimal, and Unacceptable. The sample student collage above represents an Effective score because it demonstrates the skillful use of collage technique. The student used collage materials in deliberate, unique ways to represent ideas, forms, and objects, which come together to express a memory.

Collage descriptions were scored as Acceptable, Partial, and Unacceptable. The sample student description above represents an Acceptable score because it thoroughly explains the student's work.

Theatre

Theatre is rooted in religious festival and the universal impulse of humans to play, imitate, create, and share ideas and feelings. Much of the joy of the theatre lies in bringing together diverse people, ideas, and artists in the interaction of production elements, performers, and the audience. A social art form, theatre reveals both the human condition and the human experience. It transports players and audiences through time and space.

In theatre, creating and performing are so closely related that the assessment combines them, as the table below outlines.

Sample Arts Processes for Theatre

Creating/Performing	▪ Develop scripts and scenarios. ▪ Develop characters through an acting process. ▪ Make design and technical choices to communicate locale and mood for dramatic material for theatre, film, and television.
Responding	▪ Describe and analyze artistic choices in one's own work. ▪ Describe and compare elements, styles, genres, and media. ▪ Place work in context (personal, social, historical, and cultural). ▪ Evaluate performances as audience and critic.

Sample Task

For this task, students worked in pairs to perform a reading of a scene from a play. They were told to use their imaginations to play a character in the scene. Below is a summary of the script students were given.

Summary of Script

Character B is in his or her room looking at a box of chocolates.

Character B hears Character A coming in and quickly hides the box.

Character A, Character B's sibling, enters the room and discovers the box of chocolates, then attempts – using flattery, sarcasm, and guilt tactics – to convince Character B to share.

Character B begins sampling different chocolates, and smugly offers to share the chocolates that he or she doesn't like.

Character B eventually admits to feeling sick from overindulging, then freely offers the chocolates to Character A.

Character B requests that Character A tell their mother how well Character B "shared" the chocolates.

Explanation

Students were assessed individually using the following scoring guides, which address different aspects of their performance:

A. Pair. Did the students' performance show the connectedness between them? Was the relationship between them defined?

B. Individual Holistic. Does the student hold your attention? Do you understand his or her thoughts and feelings? Is the student emotionally invested in the scene?

C. Vocal Production. Can the student be heard and understood?

D. Expression. Does the student expressively communicate his or her intentions and emotions?

E. Action. Does the student use action to help convey the scene?

F. Listening and Responding. Does the student seem to be having a real conversation? Does the student respond to how things are said, as well as what is being said?

Sample Student Response

After completing their performance, students responded to a set of self-evaluation questions. The sample response to the right refers to this line in the script: "A: [Eating one]: Blech! The pink ones are gross. Not even a dog would like those."

2. Go back through the script and pick one of your character's lines that you chose to read in a particular way.

Write in the number of the line here. 27

Describe the way you read this line. Talk about how you used your voice and any physical movements you made.

I emphasized blech loudly and the rest of the line I talked kind of loud.

It just came to me because of the exclamation point and the rest of the line was like she was mad

Explanation

Answers to self-evaluation questions were assessed using a three-level scoring guide – Acceptable, Partial, and Unacceptable – allowing for partial credit. The student response above received an Acceptable score because the student clearly described the way the line was read, referencing an interpretation of punctuation and the use of voice and emotion.

Dance

Dance incorporates skills and technique through creating, performing, and responding. In this content area, students use and apply their knowledge of different dance forms and styles, along with personal, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Sample Arts Processes for Dance

Creating	▪ Invent solutions to movement problems. ▪ Follow improvisational and compositional structures. ▪ Collaborate to achieve solutions.
Performing	▪ Recall and reproduce movement. ▪ Demonstrate physical technique. ▪ Communicate through movement.
Responding	▪ Identify compositional elements and notice details. ▪ Identify contexts (stylistic, cultural, social, historical) of the dance. ▪ Make observations about the piece's and the dancer's technical and artistic components.

Sample Task

In this task, students collaborated with a partner to create a movement sequence based on the idea of metamorphosis, using elements of dance composition including time, space, and energy. Students demonstrated an ability to collaborate with a partner to achieve solutions to a movement task, create and perform improvisational and compositional structures, replicate movement, perform with physical technique, and communicate through movement.

Students were presented with the following checklist (read aloud and posted in the classroom) to make sure their dances adhered to assessment guidelines:

Student Performance Checklist

- *Begin with a clear, still pose*
- *Develop a dance using:*
  - *Two different shapes (using the whole body)*
  - *Three different levels (high, middle, low)*
  - *One pair of movement types*
- *End in a clear, still pose*

Explanation

Students' performances were scored on the following aspects of creating and performing:

A. The dance begins and ends with a clear, still pose.

B. The pair accurately repeats the sequence of the dance.

C. The pair performs their dance together with smoothness, focus, and expression.

D. The pair demonstrates at least two clear, different shapes in the dance (not including beginning or ending pose).

E. The pair demonstrates use of high, middle, and low movement levels in the dance.

F. The dance incorporates the use of sharp and smooth movement qualities.

G. Effectiveness of the dance as a whole.

Through the arts, students acquire the skills valued in today's complex world – problem-solving, higher-order thinking, flexibility, persistence, and cooperation.

Reporting NAEP Results

Scale Scores

Scale scores, which are derived from student responses to NAEP assessment items, summarize the overall level of performance attained by a group of students. When an assessment is administered at multiple grade levels, performance for each grade is scaled separately; therefore, average scale scores cannot be compared across grades. For the arts assessment specifically, trends in the percentages of students who answered specific questions correctly are also reported.

Achievement Levels

National Assessment Governing Board policy defines three levels of achievement on NAEP – *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. These achievement levels describe what students at each grade level should know and be able to do in a particular subject.

In the case of the NAEP arts assessment, the Governing Board decided against setting achievement levels due to the complexity of the content areas. Instead, achievement on this assessment is described both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Contextual Variables

Contextual information – gathered in questionnaires during the administration of NAEP – is essential to understanding the assessment results. Questions ask about instructional content, instructional practices and experiences, teacher characteristics, school conditions and context, and conditions beyond school. Answers to these questions help create a picture of a student's educational environment and culture.

The NAEP arts assessment includes contextual questionnaires for schools and for the students themselves.

Assessment Tasks

NAEP arts assessment tasks are available to the public, allowing teachers, students, and others to gain insight into the assessment itself and learn what types of questions are asked. With the interactive **NAEP Questions Tool**, users can sort and explore NAEP questions by subject matter, grade level, and difficulty level.

Conclusion

Students who learn to value the arts set themselves up for success in school and in life. Through the arts, students acquire the skills valued in today's complex world – problem-solving, higher-order thinking, flexibility, persistence, and cooperation. Moreover, by practicing arts disciplines, students become part of the human heritage of creativity.

To view the full ***2016 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework***, please visit www.nagb.gov/publications/frameworks.htm.

The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, nonpartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

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