

**OVERVIEW**

At Desert Academy, we strongly believe that learners construct their own meaning. In devising meaningful learning and assessment, three questions must be considered; What do we want to learn? How best will we learn? How will we know what we have learned?

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know, understand, can do, and feel at different stages in the learning process. Everyone involved with assessment, the community as a whole, must have a clear understanding of the reasons for the assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success, and the method by which the assessment is made. Assessment focuses on the process of student learning as well as on the quality of the products of that learning. Assessment is an essential part of the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyse student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching. It is the foundation on which to base our future planning and practice. It is integral to guiding students through the learning process.

**PURPOSE FOR ASSESSMENT**

- Assessment determines the learners' levels of understanding, using both formative and summative assessment.
- Assessment enhances the learning of the students.
- Assessment must meet the needs of students at particular ages and stages of development.
- Assessment supports and encourages effective teaching and learning.
- Assessment reflects intercultural dimensions of the programmes.

**PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSMENT**

- Assessment practices are clear to all members of the community (teachers, parents, and students).
- Assessment is key to planning, teaching, and learning.
- Assessment aims to determine the effectiveness of teaching.
- Assessment is balanced between formative and summative forms.
- Assessment provides opportunities for both peer and self-assessment, and for student reflection of their own learning.
- Prior knowledge is assessed previous to any new learning.
- Assessment provides feedback to students that is prompt and supportive.
- Assessment is shared with the community on a regular basis.

## **ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

Teachers will

- use a variety of assessment strategies and tools provide feedback on the learning process.
- report assessment with on-line progress reports, narratives (bi-yearly), advisory letters, and parent-teacher conferences.
- organize relevant assessment and reporting procedures according to the objectives of the MYP programme.
- make professional judgments based on the prescribed MYP assessment criteria as defined in the subject guides.
- incorporate a variety of forms of assessments that are tailored to the content and learning objectives for each subject area.
- use rubrics, exemplars, and anecdotal records to communicate assessment with students, teachers, and parents
- use performance assessments, trans-disciplinary skills assessments, portfolios, tests and quizzes, written responses, essays and reports, research reports, displayed work, performances, exhibitions, class discussion and self-reflection as a means of authentic assessment.
- will use authentic assessment alongside standardized tests in order to assess student performance and basic skills levels.

## **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The criteria and point values vary for each of the eight disciplines, but all are derived from four core components:

- Knowledge: Facts that the student should be able to recall to ensure competence in the subject
- Understanding: How the student will be able to interpret, apply, or predict aspects of the subject
- Skills: Shown through tasks that allow the student to apply what has been learned to a new situation
- Attitudes: Ways in which the student is changed by the learning experience

## **HOW DO WE GRADE?**

Assessment will be externally moderated by IB.

## STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

Name of Test	Who Takes it	Content Covered	Time of Year
PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test)	All Juniors, highly recommended for sophomores	SAT preparedness in math, critical reading and writing	Fall, October
ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills)	New students grades 7-10 in Fall, ALL students 7-10 in Spring	Baseline test to measure areas of strengths/weaknesses in reading, grammar usage, math	Fall and Spring
ERB/Wrap (Education Records Bureau)	All students grades 7-12	Measures writing achievement	Fall, October
PLAN To plan ahead for the ACT	All 10 <sup>th</sup> graders	ACT preparedness in english, math, reading, science	Winter, December

## STUDENTS NOT WRITING IN THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE

It is important to remember that some students may not be using their first language. For these students, teachers are not marking for grammatical accuracy. They are more concerned that the students present their answers as clearly as possible. Teachers will assist Language B (English) learners by highlighting and improving language errors, where applicable.