

Essential vs non-Essential Tasks/Assignments

This document has been developed to assist teachers in making important decisions about those tasks that are considered essential. Meaning, they are aligned to essential course learning, and they must be completed by all students taking the course – as a demonstration of that essential learning – in order for the student to receive course credit. Ideally, **Essential Tasks** are ones that are agreed upon by all teachers of the same course, rather than decided upon by individual teachers. Recognizing that there is work to be done to bring about this level of “per course” agreement, plans are in the works to devote the necessary time and resources to this important work.

Only those tasks considered essential should, if not completed, result in an INCOMPLETE on a student’s quarterly report card grade. Other tasks, while important for learning, if not completed should not result in an INC on the report card. Teachers are encouraged to include comments on the report card indicating that the student is not following through on all assignments. The chart, below, has been developed to help guide teachers’ thinking around tasks that, if not completed, could result in an INC for a marking period.

Nothing about this document should be interpreted to mean that non-Essential Tasks do not provide important learning experiences for students. These are important and valuable opportunities that build students’ academic knowledge and skills, leading them to success on Essential Tasks. This document is intended to communicate only that the failure by a student to complete a non-Essential Task should not result in an INC as a quarterly grade.

Criteria*	An assignment/task IS essential ...	An assignment/task is NOT essential...
Purpose	...if it is summative by design.	...if it is formative by design.
Wholistic	...if it was designed to provide evidence (summative) that a student has reached proficiency on a set of standards, skills, or learning targets at the conclusion of a unit of instruction.	...if it was intended to give student a chance to practice a skill (formative) that they would later be assessed on in a more wholistic or comprehensive manner.
Critical	...if the learning measured by the task is critical to the student’s ability to succeed in the next step of the learning journey AND that learning will not be assessed later on.	...if the learning measured by the task is not critical to the student’s ability to succeed in the next steps of their learning journey OR the learning measured by the task will be assessed again at a later time.
District-wide expectation	...if it is a district-wide agreed upon assessment embedded in curriculum/instructional roadmaps.	
State required	...if it is tied to a lab experience required by New York State in order to be eligible to sit for the associated Regents exam or earn credit for the course.	
Student Compliance		...simply because it was assigned.

****an individual task need only meet one of the listed criteria in order to be considered essential.***