

# Portfolio Assessment Music

## Information for Teachers

### Planning and Design

Portfolio assessment is the evaluation of a systematically collected body of work used to demonstrate growth and learning. A portfolio should be designed so that generalizations about student performance can be made with confidence. Consider the following guidelines:

- Activities should be designed at the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) objective level.
- Activities should primarily address grade-level objectives that reflect a continuum of learning across the content standard and indicator levels of the VSC. They may also include those that address what students are supposed to learn and be able to do at earlier and subsequent levels of the VSC.
- Activities should reflect a sample of objectives within and across a content standard(s). Sampling of objectives should allow meaningful generalizations about student achievement to be reported at the indicator level.
- VSC content standards, indicators, and objectives addressed for every activity included in the portfolio must be clearly indicated.

### General Blueprint

Teachers may modify this blueprint to create their own plans. Modifications may include:

- **Scope:** The portfolio may relate to a given project (e.g., “the influence of pop culture on contemporary music”), relate to a given unit of instruction (e.g., creating from observation), or reflect the learning that takes place throughout a course of study.
- **Authority:** The contents and format may be highly prescribed by teachers or allow a range of choice by students.
- **Responsibility:** Maintaining and monitoring the portfolio may be supervised by teachers or be the responsibility of students to the degree possible based upon age, grade level, experience, and ultimate purpose of the portfolio.



As an assessment instrument, an effective portfolio should address specific learning outcomes. To ensure that the portfolio provides an opportunity to measure what students should know and be able to do at a given grade level, all contents must clearly address one or more dimensions of the VSC content standards (i.e., perceiving and responding; historical, cultural, and social context; creative expression and production; aesthetics and criticism). Teachers may:

- Give detailed instructions so that each portfolio entry will align with one or more VSC content standards.
- Establish a collaborative system where students select their portfolio contents from a menu of options, all clearly aligned with standards. Choices are then reviewed in conference with the teacher.
- Allow students to make portfolio content decisions independently based on instruction that clearly aligns with VSC content standards.

For all approaches, the portfolio must demonstrate clear and close correspondence between standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

**Evaluation of the Portfolio:** The portfolio should not simply be a house-keeping tool for storing work in progress or final, graded work. A meaningful portfolio should provide a biography of teaching and learning with regard to alignment with specifically defined learning outcomes. While there is no one, right way to evaluate a portfolio, any approach should consider planning and process evidence, supporting materials, and reflections, as well as completed work samples that support predetermined learning outcomes.

The choice among different types of scoring tools should be based on both the scope of the portfolio and the purpose of the assessment. For example:

- A portfolio related to a given project may be evaluated using a specific checklist based on evidence of learning.
- A portfolio related to a given unit of instruction may be scored with a checklist or a rubric based on generic descriptors of evidence of quality.
- A portfolio related to a course of study may be scored with a checklist or with an activity-specific rubric. A logical system for aggregating entry-based scores to arrive at a comprehensive score or determination of level of proficiency should be clearly articulated.

Scoring is not the same as grading. While there is always the temptation to turn levels of performance in a checklist or a rubric into grades (4 = A, 3 = B, and so on), scores merely identify the categories or degrees of proficiency. Only by deciding what range and frequency of scores correlates with a grade can a conversion from one to the other be valid. One might decide, for example, upon the following conversion:

*Scoring is not the same as grading. ...scores merely identify the categories or degrees of proficiency.*

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- A = All entries included; 80% assigned highest score point possible, with remainder at least satisfactory.
- B = All entries included: 50% assigned highest score point possible, with no more than 10% less than satisfactory.
- C = One entry may be missing or off topic/off task: at least 50% satisfactory, with no more than 20% less than satisfactory.
- D = Two to three entries missing or off topic/off task: remaining entries at least 50% satisfactory.
- F = More than half of the entries missing or off topic/off task: majority of remaining entries less than satisfactory.
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Information about the use of portfolio scoring tools, which follows, will help in deciding the most suitable way to evaluate the contents of the portfolio based on its intended purpose.

### Use of Portfolio Scoring Tools

Oftentimes, specific tasks may be assigned to students as part of the portfolio evaluation. In that case, a scoring guide for each activity should be developed in accordance with best practices for [scoring assessments](#). To evaluate the portfolio as a whole, another type of scoring tool should be applied.

A conversion table may be used to aggregate scores assigned to each scorable portfolio component. A single score to identify overall proficiency level may also be useful for informing judgments at the classroom level (e.g., to determine the effectiveness of a unit of instruction for the class as a whole).

Following is an example of a [scoring tool](#) that might be used to evaluate the contents of a course-based portfolio assessment, designed to include an array of work samples aligned with various grade-level VSC objectives in each content standard. Note that the first four dimensions (or evaluative categories) listed are the four VSC content standards. In this example, each of the four content standards has been weighted “X2” (given double the value of other dimensions) to reflect the emphasis upon the VSC. In addition to the four VSC content standards, other dimensions, such as content integration and communication in the arts, are included, because a systemwide instructional emphasis is given to these overarching learning outcomes in this example. Evaluative categories may be added or deleted to reflect the understandings and processes most valued by a school or school system.

*Portfolio assessment scoring tools can provide diagnostic information to inform instruction.*

## Example of Portfolio Assessment Scoring Tool

This example is a scoring template for a comprehensive portfolio of work samples that reflect multiple VSC learning objectives within each content standard dimension.

Directions: For each dimension, enter the point value that represents the overall degree of proficiency exemplified by the entries that provide evidence of that dimension.



Dimension	1 Novice/Attempt to Demonstrate Proficiency	2 Intermediate/Approaching Proficiency	3 Competent/Attains Proficiency	4 Advanced/Exceeds Proficiency
Standard I	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =
Standard II	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =
Standard III	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =
Standard IV	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =	X2 =
Content Integration				
Communication (speaking and writing about music)				
Purposeful Process*				
Problem Solving				
Incorporating Ideas/Information from Sources				
Acquiring/Integrating Knowledge				
Application/Extension				
Creativity/Risk Taking				

*\*Evidence of researching, planning, drafting, revising, polishing, presenting, reflecting.*

### Creating a Conversion Table

A teacher who wishes to aggregate dimension scores may develop a conversion table that translates the relative weights assigned to all dimensions for a given grade-level portfolio into desired proficiency levels. Each teacher can determine the range of score point totals he or she deems equivalent to various levels of performance. In some instances, however, performance levels for use beyond an individual classroom (e.g., for an entire grade level, instructional level, school, or school system) may be determined by a content area team or content supervisor.

For the sample scoring tool shown above, the maximum total points a student could receive would be 32 for each set of dimensions as follows:

- 8 points for each of the four VSC content standards (32 points total);  
and
- 4 points for each of the eight unweighted dimensions (32 points total).

One possible conversion table used in conjunction with this example scoring tool above might look like the following:

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A = Advanced	For the four VSC content standards:	29-32 points
	AND	
	For the other learning dimensions:	29-32 points
B = Competent	For the four VSC content standards:	22-28 points
	AND	
	For the other learning dimensions:	22-28 points
C = Intermediate	For the four VSC content standards:	13-21 points
	AND	
	For the other learning dimensions:	13-21 points
D = Novice	For the four VSC content standards:	6-12 points
	AND/OR	
	For the other learning dimensions:	6-12 points
F = Non-Compliant	Fewer than 5 points for EITHER the four VSC content standards OR for the other learning dimensions	

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To convert portfolio scores to a grade, total scores for each set of dimensions would be applied to the conversion table to determine a letter grade. The following example illustrates this process.

The portfolio of a student has been scored. The student's scores for the dimensions identified as evaluative criteria have been entered in the scoring tool as follows:

Dimension	① Novice/Attempt to Demonstrate Proficiency	② Intermediate/ Approaching Proficiency	③ Competent/ Attains Proficiency	④ Advanced/ Exceeds Proficiency
Standard I (x2)				8
Standard II (x2)				8
Standard III (x2)			6	
Standard IV (x2)				8
Content Integration				4
Communication (speaking and writing about music)				4
Purposeful Process*				4
Problem Solving			3	
Incorporating Ideas/ Information from Sources				4
Acquiring/Integrating Knowledge				4
Application/Extension			3	
Creativity/Risk Taking			3	

*\*Evidence of researching, planning, drafting, revising, polishing, presenting, reflecting.*

These scores—30 points for the four VSC content standards and 29 points for the other learning dimensions—when applied to the conversion table fall within the range that is equivalent to a grade of A or Advanced.

### Implications of the Aggregated Scores

This student provided strong evidence of an ability to perceive, perform, and respond to music (Standard I), an understanding of music as an essential aspect of history and human experience (Standard II), and an ability to make aesthetic judgments about music (Standard IV). The student demonstrated to a somewhat lesser degree (competent, but not advanced) proficiency in applying those understandings to organizing musical sounds and ideas creatively (Standard III).

The student also scored very high on many of the other dimensions identified as evaluative criteria. Not surprisingly, the student is competent but does not excel at Application/Extension, which would be illustrated primarily through the planning and presentation of performances (relating back to Standard III). Similarly, the student demonstrates some evidence of Creativity and Risk Taking.

In this example, the student's scores for both VSC standards and other dimensions clearly fall within the range that is equivalent to a grade of A or Advanced. Had the total score for other dimensions fallen below the range of 29-32 points, the teacher would have had to decide whether to assign an A, based on the number of points assigned to the VSC standards. Such decisions are the teacher's to make but should be justifiable based on evidence of the student's learning.

Criteria for assigning scores—and ultimately grades—should be shared with students at the beginning of the year, the course, or a particular project, so that the desired performance levels are clear.

## Portfolio Assessment Task Music

### Information for Students

#### Planning and Design

Portfolio assessment is the evaluation of a systematically collected body of work used to demonstrate growth and learning. Students will be responsible for putting together a personal assessment portfolio to demonstrate their growth and learning in music. Doing so will involve four steps:

- Gathering
- Selecting and Supporting
- Reflecting
- Applying/Extending

**Gathering:** Initially, the portfolio may be the vehicle for assembling and storing all work that may eventually compose a student's evaluation portfolio. Not only should actual recordings of performances (e.g., audiotapes, videotapes, CDs) be collected and retained in the portfolio, but supporting materials such as evidence of planning, research, practice and preparatory work, feedback, etc., should also be included.

**Selecting and Supporting:** The assembly of portfolio contents is a flexible rather than fixed process. Over the period of time from which representative work is drawn, those responsible for making selections may periodically add, remove, or move around entries to illustrate different aspects of learning. Likewise, students may wish to add, remove, or change some of the materials they have included to help others understand the nature and goals of entries.

**Reflecting:** Throughout the process of producing work that may be included in a portfolio, students should think about and share with others their ideas about what they are doing and learning. Students may include ideas about their intentions, struggles, discoveries, successes, and revision or follow-up activities. Reflection is a way of enhancing learning by internalizing goals and strategies—that is, recognizing and implementing by oneself what may be next steps and why.

**Applying/Extending:** A portfolio allows students to make connections between what they have learned and how they might use that learning in the future. It lets others see what students know and have learned, and how they may connect that learning to other similar, new tasks.



## Content Standards

Students should create their portfolio for the purpose of demonstrating their proficiency in the four VSC music content standards:

- **Standard 1:** Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive, perform, and respond to music.
- **Standard 2:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of music as an essential aspect of history and human experience.
- **Standard 3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to organize musical ideas and sounds creatively.
- **Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to make aesthetic judgments.

Depending upon whether the contents and format of the portfolio are highly prescribed or allow a range of choice by students, the portfolio may initially serve as a vehicle for gathering and storing work samples and related materials. In either case, students will be expected to review the contents of the portfolio periodically to determine their progress toward fulfilling the contents guidelines (see below). At least two weeks prior to the submission of the portfolio for evaluation, students should begin the final selection process based on those requirements.

## Portfolio Guidelines

**Physical Format:** A heavy-duty folder or portfolio at least 18”x24” with tie or clasp to keep contents secure. If open-sided, a separate folder or mailing envelope must be attached in which smaller and/or heavier items may be inserted (e.g., disks, CDs, photographs, etc.).

“Oversized” artworks (e.g., construction of a nontraditional instrument, stage decorations, etc.) should be represented in still photographs, electronic images, or videotape. Students should check with their teacher about what to do with items that cannot easily be included in a portfolio.

Portfolios may also be presented in an electronic format (typed text, scanned images and/or photographs, audio and/or video entries). Regardless of the physical format, all text should either be attached to related entries or clearly coded to facilitate matching them to those entries.

**Storage:** [TO BE DETERMINED AT SCHOOL/CLASSROOM LEVEL.]  
The teacher will provide specific details.

**Portfolio Contents:** A student’s assessment portfolio should include the following:

- **Table of Contents:** The table of contents should establish the order in which entries were produced and collected. It may be in the form of written or audiotaped commentary to help reviewers navigate the collection of entries.

*...the portfolio should serve as a vehicle for gathering and storing work samples and related materials.*

- **Personal Skills/Knowledge Inventory:** Portfolios should include both pre- and post-course inventory forms. The first should identify the student's background knowledge and skill in the arts discipline being assessed; the second should identify knowledge and skills acquired during the specified time (both within and outside of the classroom). A [personal inventory form](#) can be used to present the student's prior knowledge and feelings about particular topics and concepts.

#### Work Samples:

- At least six products or performances which, taken collectively, address each of the grade \_\_\_\_ indicators for music. The number of entries does not have to match the number of indicators (e.g., a given entry may address multiple indicators).
- At least half of these entries should address multiple objectives for the indicator(s) identified—such that the completed work and supporting material(s) encompass both creative and critical dimensions of the indicator.
- At least half of the entries should involve self-selected tasks from among a set of options (that is, they should go beyond fulfilling an assignment or following a well-defined and specific set of directions).
- Among portfolio entries, there should be evidence of at least one instance of integration with English language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies. Minimally, students only need to address one content standard for each of these core content areas.
- All products or performances are expected to be in final form unless a rationale is provided for exceptions.

**Annotations to Clarify Scope of Intended Task:** All entries included in the final assessment portfolio (readied for evaluation) should be accompanied by information to clarify the underlying learning objectives (assigned or elective). These annotations may take any number of forms, including:

- A teacher-generated appended assignment sheet;
- A student-generated written description of task;
- A 3x5 card with a brief outline of task attached to each entry; and/or
- An audiotape explaining portfolio contents.

**Evidence of Process:** A student's portfolio should include evidence of the steps considered, explored, and ultimately pursued in the creation of each entry. This evidence may take any number of forms including:

- Drafts, notes, planning forms, or organizers;
- Documentation of background review or research;
- Audiotaped or videotaped documentation of various stages of work;

- Records of practice; and/or
- A process journal documenting the history and evolution of one or more entries.

Students are encouraged to include any additional information that clarifies the context or purpose of each entry (e.g., intended audience, challenges addressed, goals for the product or project). If any of the entries have been previously evaluated by a teacher, outside adjudicator, or peer, students are encouraged to include documentation (actual grade, review form, comments/corrections or other feedback, etc.).

**Evidence of Reflection:** For each entry in the final selection, students should include a written or recorded self-evaluation. They may append a completed copy of a standard [reflection form](#) or simply write a paragraph or more on the intent, processes, and perceived effectiveness of each final product.

**Evidence of Application/Extension:** In addition to the entries students select from their work, they will also be expected to include a response to one of the following portfolio probes. Each probe calls for an activity that demonstrates a student's ability to apply or extend the skills, processes, and knowledge he or she has developed and shown in one or more other entries. Students may also propose and receive approval to do an alternative application or extension project.

- Select one or more entries from your portfolio that you think would be as, or more, effective if redone in some way. Redo that work and prepare an accompanying explanation of the impact of the changes made.
- Select a product or performance from your portfolio that did not turn out the way you expected or to which the intended audience reacted differently than you thought they would. Write a brief explanation of how and why the final results did not match your expectations. Then, revise or redo the product or performance to either better match your original plans or to make it more effectively accomplish its new purpose or form.
- Select several entries from your portfolio that deal with a related idea or theme, and describe what relationship those entries have to that idea or theme and to each other. Bring the entries together to create a single new or closely related product or performance that expresses the common idea or theme more completely.
- Select one or more entries from your portfolio that could be modified by using technology (e.g., synthesized recordings). Write an explanation of anticipated impacts of the use of technology on that project or performance.

**Portfolio Evaluation:** Once submitted, the student’s assessment portfolio will be evaluated according to specific criteria, which have been provided below [TASK ADMINISTRATOR SHOULD ADD APPROPRIATE SCORING TOOL HERE].

To determine which category best describes each dimension, the evaluator (teacher, outside adjudicator, peer, student, other) will use the following guidelines:

- 1 Little to no evidence of proficiency; extremely inconsistent evidence; vague/redundant or erroneous evidence
- 2 Partial/irregular evidence of proficiency; somewhat inconsistent evidence; partial (partially complete or partially correct) or overly general evidence
- 3 General evidence of proficiency; at least somewhat consistent evidence; generally accurate and almost complete evidence, but with minor errors, inconsistencies, or omissions
- 4 Considerable evidence of proficiency; consistent evidence; consistently accurate and thorough evidence

Examples to help students understand what “good enough” and “really good” look like will be provided and discussed by the teacher so that the desired performance levels are clear.

# Reflection Form: Music Portfolio Entry

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Activity/Project Started: \_\_\_\_\_ Activity/Project Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

1. My activity/project was:

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2. My goals for this activity/project were:

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3. The hardest thing about this activity/project was:

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4. The time(s) and person (people) from whom I needed help were:

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5. The most rewarding thing about this activity/project was:

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6. The next time I do a similar activity/project, I might change it by:

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# My Perspectives: A Personal Inventory Form

## LEARNING ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART I

Directions: Respond to questions 1-10 by indicating your opinion on a scale of 1-3 in which:

**1 = Little/None    2 = Some/Sometimes    3 = Considerable/Often**

If you are split between two numbers, use +/- to convey your opinion more accurately.

### Opinion

1. How important do you think it is for students to take a \_\_\_\_\_ class?
2. How much is \_\_\_\_\_ a part of your life, as a producer (someone who does or makes \_\_\_\_\_)?
3. How much is \_\_\_\_\_ a part of your life, as a consumer (someone who uses, listens to, or observes \_\_\_\_\_)?
4. How much do you know about \_\_\_\_\_ history?
5. How much do you think \_\_\_\_\_ affects people's everyday lives?
6. How much do you think everyday life (e.g., current events, popular culture, economic conditions) influences \_\_\_\_\_?
7. How often do you learn about \_\_\_\_\_ in other subject areas?
8. How often do you read about \_\_\_\_\_?
9. How often do you write about \_\_\_\_\_?
10. How often do you talk to others about \_\_\_\_\_?



## PART II

Directions: Respond in a few sentences to questions 11-15. Use specific examples wherever possible.

11. Identify some of your favorite works in, and artists or practitioners of, \_\_\_\_\_.

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12. What do you like best about actually viewing/experiencing \_\_\_\_\_?

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13. What do you already know how to do fairly well and/or especially like to do in \_\_\_\_\_?

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14. What would you like to improve in during this course/class?

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15. What would you like to be introduced to or learn something about during this course/class?

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