New York State Education Department
Office of State Assessment
Creation of a Test Question
(ENGLISH)

[00:00 - 00:06]
The New York State Education Department's Office of State Assessment presents

(Section 1)

[00:09 - 00:12]
How Test Questions are Created in New York State

[00:15 - 00:42]
This video provides an overview of how test questions are created for the New York State assessments.
New York State teachers are at the heart of this process; they write, review, and select questions for the tests that reflect New York State standards.
The steps we'll describe are common to all state, national, and other large educational testing programs.

[00:43 - 01:18]
The methods we use at the State Education Department follow well-defined rules to ensure that tests measure the knowledge and skills students are learning in the classroom, which is known as validity.
When tests measure the knowledge and skills consistently, that is known as reliability.
Teachers come from all over the state who have experience teaching students from many different backgrounds, which brings multiple perspectives when going through each process of creating a test question.

(Section 2)

[01:21 - 01:23]
Creating a Test

[01:24 - 01:55]

New York State Education Department
Office of State Assessment
Creation of a Test Question
(ENGLISH)

The first step in creating a test is working with New York State teachers to define what the test will measure.
Together we create an outline of the knowledge and skills the test will cover based on the learning standards for each grade.
This becomes a blueprint for the next steps in the process: selecting reading passages and writing questions for the test.
Questions for our tests are written by New York State teachers.

[01:57 - 02:33]
First, the teachers receive training from experienced testing professionals.
Then, before these teachers create any questions, they practice writing questions and receive feedback on their work from experienced teachers and testing professionals.
The teachers then use the feedback to determine if the questions are fair and accessible to all students.
Once the teachers are familiar with the process, they are assigned specific learning standards and write questions designed to measure these standards.

(Section 3)

[02:35 - 02:38]
New Teacher Review

[02:41 - 03:14]
Next, we invite a new set of New York State teachers and experts in the subject area to review the newly created questions.
This new group does several types of reviews to ensure that our questions are appropriate for the grade, measure what they are intended to measure, and are fair and accessible for all students.
Teachers meet to discuss the questions and suggest revisions to make sure they are of high quality, fair and accessible for all students.

(Section 4)

[03:16 - 03:17]
Field Test
[03:19 - 03:58]
After multiple rounds of review have been completed, field testing is the next step.
Field testing is the process used to try out questions with students.

This is an incredibly important step.
This helps us find out if questions are being understood by students, measure what they are supposed to, and contain no hidden problems.
This question “trying out” gives us the information we need to decide if each question should be included in the state test taken by all New York students.

(Section 5)

[04:01 - 04:04]
Open-Ended Question Point Values

[04:06 - 04:42]
After the questions are tried out in field testing, another type of review takes place for the questions that require students to write out their answer.
These types of questions are called "open-ended."
New York State teachers look at students’ responses to determine what level of knowledge and skill students need for each possible point.
For example, if a question is worth four points, teachers determine what a student must show to earn one, two, three, or four points.

[04:43 - 05:06]
This information guides teachers to score all field-tested questions.
It is also used to develop the materials that will be used by teachers when they are scoring the actual test taken by all students.
This additional review provides another opportunity to make sure that the questions are accessible and fair for students.

(Section 6)

[05:09 - 05:11]
Build the Test

[05:13 - 05:53]
Once all test questions have been reviewed by New York State teachers and tried out with a group of students through field testing, the next step is to build the test.
New York State teachers select and approve the questions that students will answer.

The teachers review each field-tested question to make sure that it is appropriate to include on the test.
Questions that were found to have issues during field testing are not used.
When teachers decide a question should not be on the test, they replace it with another one measuring the same learning standard.

(Section 7)

[05:55 - 05:57]
Final-Eyes Review

[05:58 - 06:38]
The last activity in building a test is a “final eyes” review.
A new group of New York State teachers that has not yet seen all of the selected questions reviews the test.
These teachers take the test and actually answer all of the questions.
They focus on identifying any questions that have problems that might affect students’ test-taking experience.
The goal of the final eyes review is to confirm that the test students will take is reliable, valid, fair, and accessible.

(Section 8)

[06:38 - 06:40]
Respond to Feedback

[06:42 - 07:13]
State Education Department staff respond to any concerns that may come up during and after the test is given.
Lessons learned from hearing these concerns can guide the creation of new questions.
Also, feedback from teachers who gave the test to their students helps to influence future test questions.

Many additional activities take place beyond those mentioned in this video, such as copy edits and internal reviews.

[07:15 - 07:55]
Each step in the process centers on building tests that are reliable, valid, fair, and accessible for all students.
Our process is based on a great deal of research and is consistent with state and national testing programs as well as industry standards for testing.
The activities discussed today center on the work of New York State teachers, who make the decisions about test questions.
Their participation results in quality test questions that have a direct connection to classroom instruction around the State.

[07:55 - 08:06]
We encourage you to email the Office of State Assessment with any questions or if you are a teacher who is interested in getting involved in the creation of test questions.

[08:06 - 08:18]
Lastly, thank you to all of the New York State teachers for your hard work and contributions to the many steps of the question development process.