A Bank of Performance Tasks in English:
Assessing Pupils’ Achievement of Benchmarks at the Intermediate Level
Acknowledgements

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Head of Development Department  Naomi Limor
Head of English Department        Sarah Schrire
Project Coordinator              Rachel Levin
Head Writer                      Lisa Arndur
Writers                          Smadar Shasha
                                  Sheila Spitz
Academic Advisors                Prof. Menucha Birenbaum
                                  Dr. Lily Orland
Editors                          Susan Menache and Debbie Lahav
Graphic Designer                 Esther Azaria

Members of Steering Committee
Prof. Dov Spolsky, Bar Ilan University; Judy Steiner, English Inspectorate; Gail Mann,
English Inspectorate; Menucha Weiss, Office of the Chief Scientist; Ruth Raz, Ministry of
Education; Ruth Kashtan, Ministry of Education; Dr. Ofra Inbar, Beit Berl Teachers’
College; Claire Gordon, Open University; Doloris Kanaani, English teacher from the Arab
sector.

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Introduction

Presented here is a bank of performance tasks for you, the teacher, which is designed to enhance your repertoire of assessment strategies for evaluating students according to the English Curriculum. This bank of performance tasks has been developed with two main aims in mind: a conceptual aim and a practical aim.

The conceptual aim of the bank is to encourage you to scrutinize the assessment procedures you use in class and examine to what extent these procedures enable you to collect reliable and valid information about students’ achievement and progress in an on-going process. In addition, the bank of performance tasks is designed to promote your understanding that teaching, learning and assessment are intertwined and interdependent in the teaching/learning process.

The practical aim of the bank is to provide you, the teacher, with samples of tasks that could be used in the classroom, either “as are” or through adaptation to your specific teaching/learning context, thus ensuring valid and reliable assessment. These tasks may also serve as models when you design your own tasks.

When designing the following performance tasks, our main concern was ensuring their correspondence to the benchmarks as defined in the curriculum. The development was also based on the belief that tasks should be credible, thought-provoking, have intrinsic value for the student and be feasible in terms of resources available and logistics of administration.

In addition, the tasks are expected to provide you with the opportunity to:

• monitor students’ progress both within tasks and throughout the year;
• provide meaningful feedback;
• evaluate complex responses.

The bank has been designed to meet the various purposes of different teachers, and it is hoped every teacher will find something to meet his/her specific needs. For those teachers who have been integrating performance tasks into their repertoire of assessment methods and have experience both in task development and analysis of student products, the bank may serve as an additional resource. For those teachers who are familiar with performance tasks but are interested in developing their skills in designing tasks and analyzing student products, the tasks and products in the bank may serve as models. Finally, for those teachers who have only recently made their first steps in designing and using performance tasks, the bank could serve as a learning experience when used in conjunction with a training program.

We hope that you, the teacher, and your students find the tasks in this bank beneficial and thought-provoking. We intended that this bank be a dynamic endeavor, and teachers are invited to send in their impressions and descriptions of ways in which the various tasks served their purposes. We also invite teachers to write to us with any suggestions for changes and/or adaptations they think appropriate.

The Writing Team