Frequently Asked Questions

1. How were the Prescreen and Screener Developed?

Both the Task Prescreen and the Task Screener were developed through a collaborative and iterative process managed by Achieve that included three steps:

1. Initial work with experts—including researchers and practitioners focusing on science teaching and learning, assessment, and equity in science and assessment—to define the necessary features of high-quality tasks;
2. Several pilots in states and districts for many different use cases, including professional learning; assessment review and modification; and structuring conversations between states/districts and developers that are grounded in common expectations; and
3. Refinement through detailed analysis of a wide range of tasks, including classroom formative and summative assessments as well as other types of assessment tasks (e.g., externally developed performance assessments, statewide assessment clusters).

Both tools were developed to balance being accessible to a range of users while still reflecting the major features and nuance of assessments designed for *Framework*-based standards.

2. Why did Achieve develop both a Screener and Prescreen?

As the Task Screener was under development, two major observations struck the development team:

1. They saw time and time again that frequently, the assessment tasks under consideration (for development or review) demonstrated the same common fundamental mistakes. Detailed task analysis takes time, and the team wanted to provide a quicker look at tasks that could still catch the major issues without requiring reviewers to go through a more rigorous and time-consuming process; and
2. Many of those involved in designing or reviewing tasks hadn't yet had a lot of deep experience with the *Framework* or NGSS, and it was overwhelming to throw the full Screener at them. The team wanted to provide users with a starting point that was more accessible to those less familiar with the *Framework*/NGSS.

The Task Prescreen was developed to address these observations. While the Prescreen is based on the same fundamental ideas underlying the Screener, it identifies those features that are high priority (e.g., reasoning, phenomenon-focused, using at least SEPs and DCIs), easy to identify (e.g., is a phenomenon present? Can the questions be answered using rote knowledge? Can they be answered without using the scenario?), and still provide a meaningful basis for professional learning while being a discerning screen for review purposes. The final questions in the prescreen reflect the questions that, when used with educators and developers, provided the most discerning information, the most consistent "aha!" moments, and were most supportive of their process.

3. How do the Task Prescreen and Task Screener relate to one another?

The Task Prescreen and Task Screener are based on the same fundamental ideas—the Screener presents a deeper dive while the Prescreen represents a much less rigorous initial analysis. The questions in the prescreen are not designed to exactly mirror criteria or indicators in the screener, but do represent some major features of Criterion A, B, and C in the screener.

Table 1: Relationships between Prescreen and Screener

Task Prescreen	Task Screener
Phenomenon/Problem driven scenarios: Questions 1 and 2	Criterion A: Tasks are driven by high-quality scenarios that are focused on phenomena or problems.
Reasoning and Sense-making: Questions 3 and 4	Criterion B: Tasks require sense-making using the three dimensions
The three dimensions and their use together: Questions 5, 6, and 7	Criterion B: Tasks require sense-making using the three dimensions
Tasks are coherent and comprehensible: Question 8	Criterion C: Tasks are fair and equitable.

4. How should I use these tools?

The Prescreen and Screener can be used together, either to consider independent tasks or to consider tasks that occur within a lesson or unit being evaluated with the full EQuIP rubric.

Use the Prescreen to…	Use the Task Screener to…
• Quickly screen a large set of tasks to determine which tasks are worth a deeper dive and potential use (e.g., potential tasks to be used on a final exam or common larger scale assessment/item library). • Quickly screen assessments embedded in instructional materials to determine whether they are consistent with three-dimensional learning experiences. • Support professional learning for stakeholders (e.g., assessment vendors, classroom educators, administrators) who need a gentler introduction to effective three-dimensional performance.	• Evaluate tasks that have gone through the Prescreen with relatively few red flags. • Determine whether classroom assessment tasks embedded in instructional materials are eliciting evidence of three-dimensional thinking and performance from students. • Evaluate large scale assessment tasks for the degree to which they are designed for three-dimensional standards. • Design and evaluate locally-developed assessments, including final exams and local task libraries. • Provide professional learning for stakeholders (e.g., assessment vendors and developers, classroom educators, other professional learning providers, curriculum developers) who need a rigorous understanding of three-dimensional assessments.

5. How do these task tools fit into the EQuIP suite of tools?

The Task Prescreen and Screener build on Category III of the EQuIP Rubric for Science. Importantly, both task tools can be used for formative and summative assessment tasks embedded within instructional materials, but will not support the evaluation of an entire lesson, unit, or comprehensive science instructional materials programs. For evaluation of larger sets of materials, please see the other tools in the EQuIP suite of tools.

6. Do all indicators have to be present to "meet" each criterion?

Not necessarily. The indicators are intended to help reviewers look for evidence to support or refute the criterion statement—reviewers should collaboratively discuss the evidence from the task across all indicators and decide to what degree the evidence supports each criterion overall.

7. Why aren't some major features of the NGSS and assessment—like the crosscutting concepts and assessment use and purpose—included in the Prescreen?

These features were not included in the Task Prescreen simply because they are not easy to screen for quickly, and require deeper evaluation to tasks to make even superficial decisions about their presence. It is **not** intended to suggest that features that are not included in the Prescreen are not vital to high-quality tasks.

8. What do you mean by sense-making?

'Sense-making' or 'making sense' in these tools is defined as students connecting their (assumed, based on the target of the assessment) existing understanding and abilities to new information (provided by the scenario or previous investigations) to construct new understanding of the presented scenario. This new understanding could be in the form of a claim, hypothesis, prediction, model, question, explanation, argument, etc. The emphasis here is on "knowledge in use": using their knowledge/understanding to develop a new understanding, rather than representing a previously-developed understanding.

9. Why aren't performance expectations specifically mentioned in these tools?

In three-dimensional assessments—classroom and larger scale, external assessments—the priority is on giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to use the three dimensions to make sense of phenomena and solve problems. In some cases, these will be closely connected to a specific performance expectation or bundle of performance expectations; in other cases, this might be more closely connected to different combinations of the three dimensions. The emphasis for high-quality tasks is 1) on using the appropriate three dimensions to make sense of phenomena and solve problems, and 2) that evidence for the target of the assessment—a set of PEs or otherwise—is actually being elicited to support appropriate inferences about student performance. This is addressed specifically in Criterion D of the Task Screener.

10. Where can I find professional learning to support my community in using these tools?

Achieve offers tailored professional learning to support a wide range of users—including developers, educators, and district and state leaders—in using these tools to support developing, selecting, and using better science assessments. Please contact ngss@achieve.org with requests for professional learning.

11. I have some feedback on this tool. How can I share it?

We welcome feedback for future versions! Please send your feedback to ngss@achieve.org.