What is a good task?

Grades 3-12

Good tasks are constructed so that they cannot be answered by simple multiple-choice responses. They should address the ability of the student to form and communicate mathematical ideas and arguments, see and make connections between various content strands of mathematics, make conjectures, justify results, organize and analyze data, and make estimates and predictions based on incomplete data or patterns of events.

Good Tasks:

1. require sustained work and often take several days of combined in-class and out-of-class time

2. deal with significant mathematical ideas and relationships. They go beyond asking the student to simply recall or reproduce factual information.

3. might have different solutions or might allow different decisions or positions to be taken or defended.

4. present non-routine, open-ended, and loosely structured situations that require students both to define the problem and to construct a strategy for solving it.

5. are often grounded in real-world contexts. They seem real and purposeful and are embedded in a meaningful context that seems authentic. They frequently pose a challenge or problem that would be encountered by a person using the content being learned as part of their job.

6. provide for both group and individual work, with appropriate accountability.

7. call upon students to make and explain assumptions.

8. necessitate students to use a variety of problem solving skills and critical thinking skills and thought processes; skills which are taught, not assumed.

9. include criteria and rubrics for evaluating student performance.