

While formative is the assessment **for** learning, summative is the assessment **of** learning.

The key factor in making a valid summative assessment is to make it as bias-free as possible. In other words, a summative exam should be objective based on the facts of the lesson and the material covered. The teacher’s opinion should not change the outcome of the test. End-of-instruction tests, state-mandated tests, SATs and ACTs are all summative tests. They are mostly multiple choice tests.

These tests have advantages and disadvantages.

* Advantages:
  + Can cover a wide sampling of content.
  + Objectively address content.
  + Can be quickly and objectively scored.
* Disadvantages:
  + Somewhat susceptible to guessing.
  + Time-consuming to construct.

The tests are easy to grade. When done correctly, multiple choice tests can be very hard to make. However, they do not reveal what a student knows how to do. Some students can become good test-takers or good at guessing the correct answer without really knowing the solution or the process. Most CTE teachers would rather use some sort of project-based, real-world problem as a final or summative exam. This is where a rubric can also be used as a summative evaluation, making grading more objective.

Constructed response items such as fill-in-the-blank, short answer and essay also have advantages and disadvantages.

* Advantages:
  + Easy to construct.
  + Require the student to supply or produce a response.
* Disadvantages:
  + Less-reliable and more subjective scoring.
  + More time-consuming to score.

Essay tests are the best way to see if a student understands the process of doing something, but they are the most subjective tests to grade. Subjectivity can be lessened by using a rubric that lists the facts that must be present in the essay and how much each fact is worth.

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