



9.4 Diagnostic Interview

Instructions: Select or design one to three tasks for the student to demonstrate and/or explain a concept. (The interview should take no more than 20 minutes, so the number of items relates to how long it will take for the student to solve each.) The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a great place to find interview items, as the Questions tool allows you to search for items by content, age, item type, and so on. Consider tasks on the same mathematics concept, but where one may be a story problem, another may just be numbers/symbols, and another may be very visual, with fewer words and fewer symbols.

Content to be assessed:	
Task	Interview Probes
1.	
2.	
3.	
Interview Recommendations	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If you don't know the student, begin with introductions. Smile—it is important you seem approachable and interested.2. Explain that you are interested in how he or she is thinking and will therefore be asking questions about how she or he is solving the problems.3. Pose the first problem. Watch the student solve the task; give sufficient wait time.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If student is stuck, ask what he or she does not understand—is it language related? Is it mathematics related? Pose the question a different way, draw a picture, or remind the student of something that might help him or her get started.• If the student solves the problem correctly, ask for an explanation of what he or she thought the problem was asking and how he or she solved it. In many cultures, mental math is highly valued, so do not assume that if you don't see much written down, the student is stuck or guessing.• Repeat for other problems. Keep interview short (5–15 minutes, depending on age).4. Thank the students for sharing her or his thinking with you.	