

# UNIT SEVENTEEN: PORTFOLIO

## Introduction

**T**he AVID portfolio is a tool that provides students an ongoing opportunity to evaluate progress toward the ultimate goal of success in college. The portfolio must be more than a collection of student work and records amassed during one’s academic career. Students should be encouraged to use the portfolio to reflect, at least yearly, upon the journey of learning that has brought them that much closer to graduation and their plans beyond. The portfolio, used as an authentic assessment in the AVID class, allows students to evaluate achievement relative to earlier performance, recognize patterns in work, pinpoint areas of improvement, and target areas of challenge for future focus. The portfolio should be an integral tool in goal setting, measuring progress, and modifying pathways. Ultimately, the portfolio will document growth and aid students in becoming self-directed learners.

At the end of each academic year, students should be encouraged to use the “Portfolio Guiding Questions” to help them evaluate the work in their portfolios. Each student should write a cover letter addressing the guiding questions, thereby drawing conclusions about the quality of his or her work and the progress made in the course of that school year. The letter should acknowledge improvements and developing strengths. It should indicate target areas for future improvement. It should report on achievement with respect to prior goals and introduce new goals for the ensuing year. The writer should reference specific pieces of work, and compare work early in the year to more recent pieces in the portfolio. While the process should be qualitative and authentic for the student, the teacher may wish to create a rubric to establish the expectation of the letter’s content. Beyond the written evaluation, the teacher may wish to establish a format for presentation either to the class, the student’s parents, or school administrators.

In addition to the “Portfolio Guiding Questions,” scaffold the portfolio evaluation process by adjusting the focus from year to year. Students address a given prompt at the end of each grade-level. The following are some suggestions for prompts by grade level.

### ***6th Grade***

What parts of AVID do I find most useful and exciting? How is this reflected in my work?

### ***7th Grade***

What can I do in my last year of middle school to best prepare me for a college pathway?

### ***8th Grade***

How have I been prepared for high school? How does my plan for high school success take advantage of my areas of strength and account for my areas of challenge?

### ***9th Grade***

What electives will I seek out in the next three years? Why? How do they align with my goals and interests? What service organizations and/or clubs can I commit to through high school? How do these commitments fit into my plan to reach college? How are they aligned with my goals and interests? What academic areas will I seek out tutoring for? What academic areas might I be able to help my peers in?

### ***10th Grade***

How has my course of study lead me to select Advanced Placement courses for my junior year?

### ***11th Grade***

What career goals do I have that embrace my interests and strengths? What colleges will I seek admission to, based upon these areas of interest and strength, and my college research thus far? What goals do I have for my senior year?

### ***12th Grade***

Student presents a completed AVID portfolio, narrating a growth experience through the AVID program, utilizing student work and portfolio items to document progress toward the college goal. Student will highlight areas of marked improvement, areas of clear strengths, and areas of continued focus for improvement.

How has my AVID experience prepared me for college? What academic areas am I considering for future focus in a major, minor or pre-professional course of college study? How does my plan for college success take advantage of my areas of strength and account for my areas of challenge?



## *Student Handout 17.1*

# Portfolio Guiding Questions

- What is your favorite piece of work in the portfolio? Why? What does it say about you?
- Looking at a piece of your written work from the beginning of the year and one from the end of the year, where do you notice improvement? What have you improved in your writing?
- At what have you improved in general? Is there any work that demonstrates this?
- What areas would you like to improve in? Why?
- What seems to be your greatest strength as indicated by your work? Is it a specific skill? For instance, are you a strong writer or presenter? Is it a subject area? For instance, is your highest graded work always in science?
- Have your academic interests or goals shifted in any way since the start of the year?
- Has any of the work in the portfolio been the result of collaboration? Did you work with other students to produce it? What did you learn about yourself in that process?
- How does the completion of this work bring you closer to your graduation goals and your college goals?
- What were the highlight learning experiences of your year? Why?
- What projects or units of study were your least favorite? Why? What could you do in the future to have more success with such projects or tasks?
- What have you learned about yourself this year?
- If you had to increase the time you studied next year by an hour a day, what skill or subject area would you spend that time on? Why? What piece(s) in your portfolio demonstrates a need for such focus?
- How has AVID contributed to your growth as a student? Is there any work that demonstrates this?

