

Creating and Using Rubrics for Course Assignments

ASSESSMENT FOR BUSY PEOPLE!



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What is a rubric?

- ▶ A guide that articulates the expectations for an assignment and communicates the level of quality
- ▶ A tool that measures performance or learning
- ▶ Rubrics are typically used to score student performance on defined criteria and levels of quality, or intellectual or skill development
- ▶ Rubrics can be simple or complex; qualitative or quantitative



Two main types

- ▶ **Analytic Rubric:** Specifies at least two characteristics to be assessed at each performance level and provides a separate score for each characteristic
 - ▶ Use it for: identifying particular strengths and areas for improvement; detailed formative feedback
- ▶ **Holistic Rubric:** Provides a single score based on an overall impression of a student's performance on a task
 - ▶ Use it when: a single dimension is adequate; short assignment; quick or summative feedback



Short Essay Question Rubric*

	EXCELLENT	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Completeness	Shows a thorough understanding of the question. Addresses all aspects of the question completely.	Presents a general understanding of the question. Completely addresses most aspects of the question, or addresses all aspects incompletely.	Shows a limited understanding of the question. Does not address most aspects of the question.	Does not answer the specific central question.
Analysis	Analyzes, evaluates, compares, and/or contrasts issues and events with depth.	Analyzes or evaluates issues and events, but not in any depth.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating accurate, relevant facts.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating vague, irrelevant, and/or inaccurate facts
Evidence	Incorporates pertinent and detailed information from both class discussions and assigned readings (when applicable).	Includes relevant facts, examples, and details, but does not support all aspects of the task evenly.	Includes relevant facts, examples, and details, but omits concrete examples, includes inaccurate information, and/or does not support all aspects of the task.	Does not incorporate information from pertinent class discussion and/or assigned readings.
Writing	Presents all information clearly and concisely, in an organized manner.	Presents information fairly clearly and concisely, and may have minor organization problems.	Lacks focus, somewhat interfering with comprehension.	Organizational problems prevent comprehension.

*Borrowed from USC Center for Excellence in Teaching | cet.usc.edu



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Assigning Points or Grades to the Performance Levels

- ▶ Use the assignment instructions as a guide
- ▶ Determine the total possible points for the assignment
- ▶ Decide the distribution/percentage of criteria and divide the points accordingly. It's helpful to put the points/percentages directly in the box with the performance descriptions.
- ▶ Incorporate some flexibility by using a range of points for each performance level
- ▶ A couple options regarding points:
 - ▶ You can choose to break down the points OR
 - ▶ Assign an overall letter grade and use the rubric to identify strengths and points for improvement



Approaching Student Work

- ▶ Do a quick read of a few papers to get a sense of the range
- ▶ When grading a paper, start by comparing the work to the highest-level performance description. If the work meets that description, assign the work to that level. If not, move on to the next-highest performance description and so on.
- ▶ Mark the performance level for each criterion. Circle, check, or note specific concepts in the rubric (where technology allows)
- ▶ If you are not sure which performance level to choose between two levels, look for consistent or overall performance across the sample and rate accordingly
- ▶ Add the scores for an overall grade (determine how points convert to grades)
- ▶ Provide brief notes to the student on specific areas of accomplishment or need for improvement, using the rubric to illustrate your points



Checking the Rubric

- ▶ After you have graded a few pieces of work, review the overall grades. Look at the high, middle, and low grades. Does it seem like the overall grades are working out appropriately?
- ▶ If there is a mis-match, make adjustments to the rubric and re-grade the first few pieces of work as necessary



Thank you!

For more information about creating and using rubrics, visit
the Center for Teaching & Learning

<https://www.colorado.edu/center/teaching-learning/>



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