DEVELOPING RUBRICS

Developing Rubrics

A rubric can be defined as a descriptive guideline, a scoring guide or specific pre-established performance criteria in which each level of performance is described to contrast it with the performance at other levels. Rubrics can help instructors communicate their expectations to students and assess student work fairly and efficiently. Several researchers provide evidence that rubrics support teaching and learning with results suggesting higher achievement and deeper learning by students who have rubrics to guide their work (Osana & Seymour 2004; Schneider 2006). According to Suskie (2009), rubrics make scoring easier, faster, more accurate, and unbiased.

Below are important steps to consider while constructing a rubric:

1. **Defining the purposes for which you intend to develop a rubric.** Ask yourself the following questions:

   - What are the learning objectives for this assignment/task?

   - Am I grading based on the work or on participation? Am I grading both?

   - Do you intend to use it to grade students' assignment, project or provide feedback?

   - Do you want to give them detailed feedback on a variety of criteria?

   - Do you want to give them specific feedback that will help them improve their future work?

2. **Selecting type of rubric you prefer to use.** The choice of a rubric type will depend on the nature of the assignment you need to score using a rubric. Do you need to use an analytic rubric (See Figure 1) and, therefore, provide students feedback and detailed scores, or do you need a holistic rubric (See Figure 2) to allow for broad feedback and overall sense of students' performance?

Infographic Rubric

Scale (levels/points)

Category	15	10	5	0	Points
Content (topic, references, argument)	At least 4 accurate facts are displayed in the infographic	At least 3 accurate facts are displayed in the infographic	At least 2 accurate facts are displayed in the infographic	1 accurate fact displayed in the infographic	
Graphics & Visuals (graphics, pictures related to argument)	Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement of graphics contribute meaning to the overall message.	Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement are eye-catching and contribute some meaning.	Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement are present but do not contribute to the meaning.	Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement are distracting or misleading.	
References (sources for content cited properly)	All 4 facts have sources identified on the infographic.	3 facts have sources identified on the infographic.	2 facts have sources identified on the infographic.	One or zero facts have sources identified on the infographic.	
				Total	

Dimensions/ Category

Descriptions based on scale and category

Figure 1. A sample analytic rubric

Scale	Criteria
4	• At least 4 accurate facts are displayed in the infographic • Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement of graphics contribute meaning to the overall message • All 4 facts have sources identified on the infographic
3	• At least 3 accurate facts are displayed in the infographic • Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement are eye catching and contribute meaning to the overall message • 3 facts have sources identified on the infographic
2	• At least 2 accurate facts are displayed in the infographic • Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement of graphics are present but do not contribute to the meaning • 2 facts have sources identified on the infographic
1	• At least 1 accurate fact is displayed in the infographic • Selection, color, shape, size, and arrangement of graphics are detracting or misleading • 1 fact or 0 facts have a source identified on the infographic

Figure 2. A sample holistic rubric

3. **Identifying the performance criteria.** Suppose the performance task or expected learning outcome is that "students will be able to critique an article." What are the key features or criteria of an effective article critique? For example, four general criteria might be identified: summary, critique, grammar, and formatting and length (See Figure 3).

4. **Setting performance levels.** In this step, you need to decide how many levels of performance are appropriate for the assessment. Typically, rubrics have from three to six rating levels. Example of rubric's performance levels might be "(3) Outstanding, (2) Competent, (1) Poor and (0) Unsatisfactory (See Figure 3).

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Examples to describe levels of performance

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> Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor
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> Master, Apprentice, Beginner
>
> Exemplary, Accomplished, Developing, Beginning, Undeveloped
>
> Complete, Incomplete

You can arrange levels from highest to lowest or lowest to highest as long as they are organized and easy to understand.

5. **Creating performance descriptions.** In this step, you need to write a description for each cell in the matrix. You will need to write short statements of your expectations underneath each performance level for every single criteria. The descriptions should be specific and measurable. The language should be parallel to help with student comprehension and the degree to which the standards are met should be explained (See Figure 3).

6. **Revising your rubric.** After creating the descriptive language for all of the levels (making sure it is parallel, specific and measurable), you need to go back and limit your rubric to a single page. Too many parameters will be difficult to assess at once, and may be an ineffective way to assess students' mastery of a specific standard.

Article Critique Rubric

	Outstanding 3	Competent 2	Poor 1	Unsatisfactory 0
Summary (___ / ___)	Gives a clear and complete summary of the study including all necessary components.	Summary of the study may be mostly complete but lack some components or clarity.	Summary of the study may be somewhat incomplete or unclear.	Summary of the study is incomplete, unclear and/or incorrect.
Critique (___ / ___)	Presents accurate and thorough criticisms of shortcomings, particularly of issues discussed in the class. Discusses implications of those shortcomings.	Identifies a few valid criticisms relating to the shortcomings of the study, but may omit a few important ones. May discuss some implications of the shortcomings for interpretation of the results.	Omits or exhibits misconcepts relating to the shortcomings of the study. Generally does not discuss the implications of the shortcomings	Fails to identify valid shortcomings and/or exhibits serious misconceptions about those shortcomings.
Writing style / Grammar (___/ ___)	Uses concise, coherent, well-organized writing. No grammar/spelling errors.	Write with some lack of clarity or organization. Few grammar or spelling errors.	Write with lack of clarity and coherence, or many grammar errors.	Incomprehensible with many errors in organization or grammar.
Formatting/ Length (___ / ___)	Correct use of APA style (font, spacing, documentation of source, etc.). Maintain appropriate length (3 pages).	A few mistakes in using APA style. Or +/- one page.	Incorrect use of APA style. Or +/- 2 pages.	No use of APA style. Too long or too short.
			SUBTOTAL : _____ / _____	

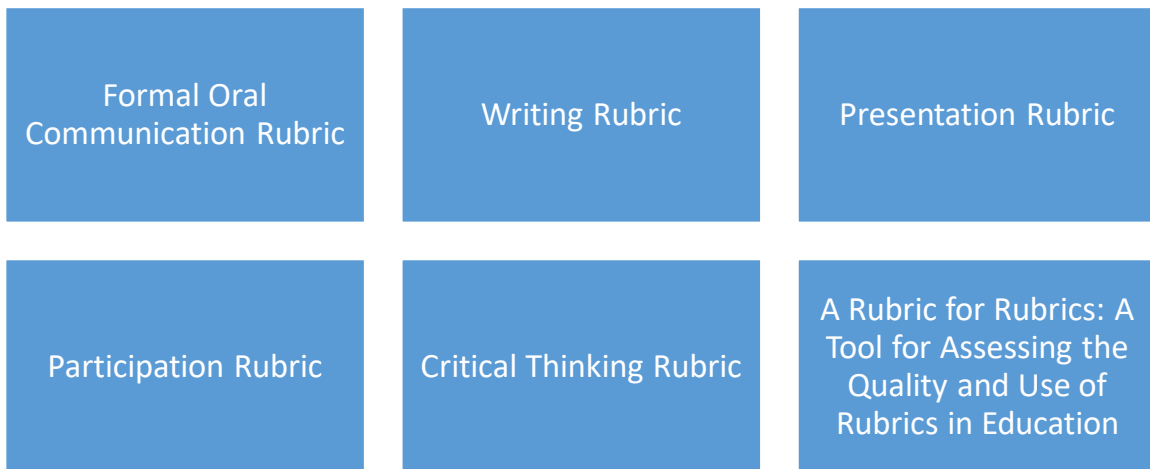**Figure 3.** Performance Levels, Criteria and Descriptions

⚠️ **Rubrics are not used to compare the performance of students, but to compare a single student against the set criteria.**

Sample Rubrics

Below are sample sets of rubrics designed by faculty at Carnegie Mellon, Bowling Green University and other institutions. Although your specific field of study or type of assessment may not be represented, these examples can give you ideas for the types of criteria, descriptions, and performance levels you might use on your own rubric.

Formal Oral Communication Rubric	Writing Rubric	Presentation Rubric
Participation Rubric	Critical Thinking Rubric	A Rubric for Rubrics: A Tool for Assessing the Quality and Use of Rubrics in Education

References

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assessment. https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/rubrics-for-

assessment.shtml

Designing Grading Rubrics, The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning.

Brown University. https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/teaching-

resources/course-design/classroom-assessment/grading-criteria/designing-rubrics

Further Reading and Resources

- [Creating Effective Rubrics, Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Alberta.](#)
- [Creating Rubrics for Assessment, Advance Consulting for Education](#)
- [How to Create Rubrics for Assignments. Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Alberta.](#)
- [Creating a Rubric, Georgia State University](#)
- [How Do Rubrics Help? (2008).](#)
- [Co-Creating Rubrics with Students, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Colorado Boulder](#)