RUBRICS

PURPOSE
A rubric is a set of criteria used for judging performance quality (e.g., from poor to exceptional). Rubrics are an effective method for scoring essays and projects, allowing the chance to clarify expectations and provide a standard for feedback, whether from the instructor or peers. Creating and referring to rubrics can focus learning, practice, and assessment on the distinguishing characteristics of quality results and processes.

DESCRIPTION
President Clark (2007) said, “At BYU-Idaho, students prepare for work and for life by engaging in an educational process defined by experiential and active learning.” Referring to rubrics during such authentic learning scenarios can be a powerful tool in helping students take something truly valuable from the experience. The following list explains the benefits of using a rubric consistently.

• Any task. Rubrics can provide framework for identifying and judging the quality or performance in virtually any behavior that is observable—from balancing a check book to balancing a chemical equation, from explaining the causes of a labor dispute to selecting good spud seeds, from wiring an electrical circuit to writing a persuasive essay, from demonstrating good communication skills in front of a class to exercising faith as a disciple leader during a week of study.
• Visual aid. A visual aid can be used during individual and peer practice to evaluate essays, business plans, portfolios, etc.
• Reusable. Rubrics focus on learners’ performance quality in applying procedures and principles. The same rubric can be used for several scenarios, making its development a good investment of your time. By focusing more on performance than content, rubrics can help establish consistency among several instructors in the qualities focused on among students.

Creating a Rubric
1. Make a list of what excellent performance looks like (consider the process, result, or both).

Rubric for a Good Rubric
A rubric is a set of well-defined criteria for judging performance quality, from poor to exceptional. It clarifies expectations and provides a standard for feedback. A good rubric has the following traits:
• Valid – characterizes skilled performance
• Authentic – approximates real-world situations
• Generalizable – applies to other similar tasks, not just this one
• Appropriate – describes a reasonable range of examinee ability
• Understandable – defines criteria clearly enough for students to understand and use
• Useful – explains weaknesses and suggests how to improve future performance

Rubrics may be designed for use in an analytic or holistic rating process. They may be used for self, peer, or instructor evaluations in both informal and formal settings.

EXAMPLE
• Analytic. Rubrics are used in Teacher Education for projects, presentations, and student teaching. Some are graded by the instructor, some by peers, and some by both. In one example, students are asked to create an effective lesson plan. A rubric is used both to clarify what is expected and to provide feedback on the assignment. This rubric is used with an analytic grading method, in which
the grader looks for and assigns points to each criterion separately.

### Rubric for a Lesson Plan

- **Item**: Objective is stated in measurable terms, is related to state or district standards, and is closely related to its assessment.
  - **Points Possible**: 5
  - **Score / Comments**

- **Item**: Lesson content and activities are appropriate for the grade level.
  - **Points Possible**: 5
  - **Score / Comments**

**Total Points**: 30

**Comments on lesson plan:**

- **Holistic**: English uses rubrics extensively for defining and evaluating composition assignments and other projects. This rubric is used with a holistic grading method, in which the grader rapidly reads each paper, compares it to the rubric, and then assigns a single, overall rating. Subcategories may form as some papers lie between the levels described.

### Rubric for a Narrative Paper

#### Excellent
- A personal, appropriate story is shared.
- Purpose is clear and integrated into the piece.
- No more than a few grammatical errors.
- Sensory details add to the story.
- Format follows MLA.

#### Acceptable
- An uncomfortable personal story is related.
- Purpose is stated, but awkwardly.
- Grammatical errors draw attention.
- Sensory details are present, but not appropriate.
- Minor formatting problems exist.

#### Needs Improvement
- Someone else’s story is told.
- Purpose is never really made clear.
- Grammatical errors make the essay unclear.
- Descriptive details are not present.
- Repeated formatting errors distract the reader.

### TIPS
- **Hand it out ahead of time.** If you’re going to use a rubric to grade students, and if it summarizes the important characteristics of the exercise, why not share it with them to begin with? It will help them focus on critical elements as they practice.
- **Don’t be afraid to change it.** The best rubrics get better with use. Take time to reevaluate and revise the criteria after using it with a class. Your wording clarity and perspective of what is most important may evolve.
- **Include your students.** Defining a rubric in groups after appropriate preparation can make a great learning activity. Allowing two or more students to evaluate another’s project using a good rubric can produce effective feedback and consistent results.

### PITFALLS

- **Overanalyzing criteria.** It is possible to define the criteria in such detail that student creativity is limited in the project. Using the rubric can also become too tedious to be practical (valid, understandable, and useful).
- **Implicit criteria.** It can cause frustration if students are evaluated on non-stated criteria after a rubric is developed. Students cannot understand the depth of the principles summarized as criteria if the rubric is not followed.

### OTHER NAMES
- Score card, grading chart, performance assessment

### KEY ARTICLES

### OTHER RESOURCES
- Links
- BYU-Idaho Writing Rubric

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http://www.byui.edu/learning-and-teaching/instructional-tools