# Rubrics

Rubrics are scoring guides, usually in chart form, that outline explicit sets of criteria at progressive levels of learning performance. They provide effective means of communicating expectations to students and have the additional benefit of helping students plan for their own improvement.

Most often elements of an assignment or project are listed vertically down the left side of the chart and levels of achievement run across the top. Characteristics of the demonstrations at each level fill each cell of the chart.

## Creating Rubrics

If you're preparing to create a rubric from scratch, there are a couple of ways you might approach the task.

1) **If you have ready access to a set of reports, projects or assignments that you've already graded:**
    a. Select and set aside all the projects that earned a passing grade
    b. Create three categories for those projects
        i. Those that earned a low but passing grade
        ii. Those with middle range scores
        iii. Those that earned high grades
    c. For each set of projects or assignments, record the characteristics of each project that enabled you to make the judgments you did.
        i. As much as possible, use positive language to describe levels of achievement at each level
        ii. Describe each level in terms of the learning in evidence, not in terms of what was missing that prevented the work from being awarded a higher grade

The list of characteristics you generate for each category will serve as the basis for your rubric.

2) **If you don't have ready access to already graded reports, projects or assignments:**
    a. Begin by recording your bottom line:
        i. List the basic minimum characteristics of an assignment that you would be willing to award a passing grade to
    b. Describe the additional characteristics that would allow you to award a middle range grade
    c. Describe what an ideal report, project or assignment would look like

2.1) **Creating rubrics collaboratively with students**

There are a number of different ways to involve students in the creation of rubrics.

a. Begin by sharing samples of completed work with students. Together, decide which of the samples are of superior quality and what characteristics set them apart from the others. Continue through the samples, differentiating the characteristics of each that set them into qualitatively different categories.

or

b. Describe the assignment or project you are asking them to undertake; include the purpose of the task and the learning you are intending to target. Ask students to describe the characteristics that should earn a passing grade. Work from there to describe the characteristics at increasingly levels of complexity.

or

c. Decide what your bottom line for a pass is on the assignment/project you have planned. Use those characteristics as the descriptors for the *Ideas* cells of a rubric and invite students to collaborate to finish the rubric

*Scroll down for a sample rubric for *Written Communication*

Example: Rubric for *Written Communication*

| Elements | Marginal | Acceptable | Exceptional | Mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Use of informal language and colloquialisms and casual tone | Tone and language are appropriate to intended audience | Authoritative yet accessible tone; meets professional standards | /4 |
| Content | Ill-defined problem definition; simple repetitive process | Clear problem definition; iterates design process; produces a variety of potential design options | Uses standard design methodology and related tolls and resources; creative approaches to identify and develop alternative concepts and procedures | /4 |
| Graphical Communication | Incongruence between tables and reference to text | Agreement between tables and text; Accurate captions and lists | Figures and tables professionally formatted and integrated into text | /4 |
| Accuracy | Minor grammatical/punctuation errors do not detract from the message; use of simple sentences | Units are specified; acronyms and symbols defined; varied sentence structure increases reader's interest | Error Free; Attractive and professionally formatted | /4 |
| Referencing | Use of secondary and tertiary sources; uses a variety of referencing standard | Use of mainly primary sources; Citations conform to EEE standard | Use of multiple authoritative and reliable sources; all citations are referenced | /4 |