# Your Guide to Rubrics
## (with 3 templates you can use today)

A Crowdsourced Anthology of Strategies from Real Education Professionals

# Introduction

When you were in school, how exciting was it to receive an "A" on an assignment? You saw the bright red mark at the top of your paper and knew that you nailed that task. If it was a task such as a test with multiple choice answers, it was easy to see what questions you might have missed and how many points were deducted from your overall score. No matter what, that "A" meant that you were probably going to earn some ice cream or a special treat that evening!

However, assignments that require a greater level of rigor—or greater depth of knowledge—are not quite so cut and dry. What constitutes an "A" grade, and does it show a significantly greater degree of understanding and key concepts that a student who receives a "D"?

Creating fair, equitable, and transparent grading rubrics are an important component of ensuring student success, eliminating teacher bias, and pushing student rigor with projects and assignments that are both aligned to content standards and allow for students' creation and creativity.

# What is a Grading Rubric?

A grading rubric is a predetermined criterion that evaluates specific skills or sets expectations for assignments. Grading rubrics provide a clear delineation of what is evaluated, what is addressed from the standards, and what students need to demonstrate in order to earn credit for each rubric piece. Grading rubrics lend themselves nicely to a wide variety of assessments and assignments that work with the top levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, including analysis, synthesis, and creation.

For group projects, grading rubrics can also allow each student's contribution a separate evaluation, providing parity in case one student does not pull their weight. A wide variety of assessments such as speeches, creative writing projects, research papers, STEAM fair projects, and artwork are just a small sample of assessments that work well with grading rubrics. Additionally, grading rubrics provide feedback during benchmark assessments of long-term projects, so students can clearly see their progress and what tasks still need attention before the final project's deadline hits.

# Types of Rubrics - Holistic

Grading rubrics fall into two subsets: analytic and holistic. Each offers specific benefits depending on what the educator is looking to asses.

**Holistic grading rubrics** look at a student's performance as a whole, and does not delineate specific areas of student assessment. There are performance descriptors that are often thorough and specific to the task, and grade ranges (ex: 90-100, 80-89, etc) that correspond to those descriptors. One of the benefits of holistic grading rubrics is that they allow a snapshot of a student's performance on one overall task, but drawbacks include the lack of specific feedback in certain areas and the inability to weight portions of the task.

A great [example](example) of a holistic and a holistic/analytic hybrid rubric is New York State's writing rubrics for grade 6-8 state testing. Here, you can see how holistic rubrics assess short responses for overall content and clarity, and how a holistic/analytic hybrid rubric scores longer essay responses where students need to demonstrate a variety of skills.

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**Analytic grading rubrics** allow two columns and is traditionally created in a table format. One column identifies the specific criteria, and the other expresses the level of achievement in mastering those criteria. Cult of Pedagogy shares a worthwhile resource for analytical rubrics and how they can identify specific areas of student strengths and weaknesses.

# Rubrics for Teachers and Online Rubric Makers

Creating a rubric from scratch may seem like a daunting task, but there are many templated rubrics for teachers, as well as online rubric makers where educators can easily plug in specific information. A great place to begin looking for project or assessment rubrics is within your own district or state's exam system. For example, if students in 11th grade English class are seeing the same writing and performance rubric throughout the year on assignments, then they know exactly what's graded on their state final assessment. Use these already established local and state rubrics as a way to prepare students for critical exams and familiarize students with its terms and categories.

Looking for something that lends itself to a wider variety of assessments? Look no further than your LMS, where user-created rubrics are uploaded for easy grading and record keeping. If you're not sure where to begin, contact your department chair, instructional coaches, or tech-savvy colleagues to help you begin this process. You can also use online sites such as RubiStar, Rubric Maker, and Quick Rubric to search through a cache of pre-existing rubrics to meet your needs, or create one for a specific project.

# Rubric Template

What makes up a good grading rubric template? First, specificity is key. Your language must be precise, clear, and explicitly lay out what students need to accomplish in order to be successful on the assignment. Consistency in language use is also critical, as well as how it correlates to levels or scores. For example, if vocabulary is a rubric requirement, the difference between a level 3 could be "grade-appropriate vocabulary", while a level 4 uses "sophisticated, domain-specific vocabulary." Reliability is also a factor when creating a quality grading rubric. Would another teacher be able to score the assignment with roughly the same outcome based on the rubric you've created?

Great grading rubrics give educators specific and reliable data to assess tasks and assignments that measure upper-level thinking skills. Creating a quality grading rubric is a careful collaboration between your content standards, local and state assessments, and evaluation of student strengths and areas for improvement.

# 3 Examples of Rubrics - A Word from the Editors

No matter your subject area, rubrics enhance student learning, while giving you a deeper understanding of them. Whether you're using rubrics in class already or you haven't begun yet, we're sharing three examples that are sure to bring you some grading inspiration.

These rubrics come directly from the classrooms of real educators in the Schoology community who've seen such a positive impact on their students that they were eager to share their successes. As you read through them, consider how you can implement these structural devices in your classroom based on the responses to these two questions:

How has your use of rubrics impacted student learning?

How has your use of rubrics impacted your teaching?

# More Clarity in Assessments

**How has your use of rubrics impacted student learning?**

I believe that using rubrics allows for more clarity in my assessments. I would like to have the students reflect more on their scores, but I have to balance the time between playing their instruments and metacognition.

**How has your use of rubrics impacted your teaching?**

I am able to manually collect the data and then make decisions based on that.

See Brian's Analytical Rubric

## Brian Bruggeman

*Band Instructor*
Monroe Middle School

# Set a Standard for Grading Assignments

**How has your use of rubrics impacted student learning?**

It gives students guideline and set expectations ahead of time. However, you have to be careful not to have your rubric too detailed, so you get a bunch of cookie cutter assignments turned in.

**How has your use of rubrics impacted your teaching?**

It has set a standard for grading assignments and I feel keeps things fair.

Make a copy of Alicia's Holistic Grade 7 Rubric



## Alicia Nussbaum

*Teacher*
Ottoville Local Schools, OH

# So Much Easier!

**How has your use of rubrics impacted student learning?**

It is easier for the faculty to more clearly communicate with the students about assignments and schedule changes. When we had an early dismissal two weeks ago, I posted an update to the class I was going to miss that afternoon. All of the students came in prepared the next day!

You must establish a routine with Schoology usage in order to have an expectation that students check it and use it during snow days. Also, there's something to be said about honoring the traditional snow day routine and slightly adjusting your plans to make up for missing time. Use Schoology to clearly communicate your plans!

**How has your use of rubrics impacted your teaching?**

It has made grading a thousand times faster!! Saves me so much time!

See Rachelle's rubric on the next slide



**Rachelle Impink**

*Math Teacher*

Manheim Township School District, PA

**0 = didn't do it (empty glass)**

**1 = attempted but missed**

   **(half empty glass of room temperature tap water)**

**2 = cold tap water**

**3 = scoop vanilla ice cream**

**4 = ice cream sundae**

## Conclusion

Inspired? We hope so. Honestly, these examples are simply the tip of the iceberg. Hopefully, you'll continue your research and find the rubrics that work for you and your students. Whether you try one of these or try them all—definitely tell us what you think!

How have rubrics impacted student learning in your classroom? Do you have a rubric to share? Share your thoughts with us on Twitter @Schoology.

# Are you interested in learning more about how an LMS can help your classroom, school or district?

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