

How to Create a Grading Rubric

Grading rubrics are extremely useful tools for instructors of any course to use. They are particularly valuable because they thoroughly, specifically, and concretely communicate your expectations to students for their performance. In a face-to-face environment, you may communicate these expectations through gesture, facial expressions, and other visible measures. In an online class, these options are not available. In any learning environment, a grading rubric is a good idea because it prevents your communicating different expectations to different students, communicating partial expectations or communicating them haphazardly through out the semester. The use of a grading rubric, when communicated to students, also serves as a sort of contract. If students know how they will be evaluated before they are given an assignment, they have more opportunity to fulfill the highest level of expectations. If instructors articulate how they will evaluate student performance and communicate that to students, then there will be less misunderstanding later on about how the instructor arrived at grades. Grading rubrics take the suspicion of arbitrariness out of grading, and help foster a more trustful relationship between students and instructors.

Grading rubrics are composed of three parts: 1. criteria, 2. levels of competency, and 3. an assignment of value to each level.

Criteria

There are two types of criteria, those relating to your content objectives, and those relating to your process objectives. Content objectives are generally what you want students to remember, understand, or comprehend about the content. Process objectives are more about the processes in which students use the basic knowledge.....such as application, analysis, and manipulation. Generally, grading criteria will reiterate the first segment of your instructional objectives.

Levels of competency

Grading rubrics are generally represented by a matrix of a number of level, always at least two levels but often three or even more. Each level will articulate the extent of the student's competency with fulfilling the criteria. They are progressive, and often cumulative in nature.

Assignment of value

In addition to the articulation of the different levels, a grading contains a numeric or grade assignment of each level that corresponds with well the student has mastered the instructional objective. Grade assignment are always of primary interest to students, but number assignments are more strategic for instructors since number values are more specific and much easier to compute individual assignment grades into an overall value. These numeric values are cumulative, culminating in an overall score for the assignment.

Once the rubric has been constructed, a grading scale must be developed that reflects the numeric value of the assignment. An assignment worth 20 points, with three content criteria, two process criteria, should be designed so that getting a "top score" in all five criteria should result in a perfect grade, or 20. On the other hand, you will have to decide what the lower grading limits will be. Here is how a grading rubric might look:

	Highest level	Middle level	Lowest Level
Content Criteria 1	Description 4 pts.	Description 3 pts.	Description 2 pts.
Content Criteria 2	Description 4 pts.	Description 3 pts.	Description 2 pts.
Content Criteria 3	Description 4 pts.	Description 3 pts.	Description 2 pts.
Process Criteria 1	Description 4 pts.	Description 3 pts.	Description 2 pts.
Process Criteria 2	Description 4 pts.	Description 3 pts.	Description 2 pts.

Here are some examples of other grading rubrics that might help provide ideas for your specific assignment and discipline:

- <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/curry/class/edis/590b/grade.html>
- <http://home.earthlink.net/~profschreck/html/homepage/rubric.html>
- http://radiography.gc.cc.fl.us/rte2563/grading_rubric.htm
- <http://www-home.cr.duq.edu/~millerjeff/rubric.htm>
- <http://www.schools.1th5.k12.il.us/aviston/KBLesson8.html>
- <http://www.swc.utexas.edu/evaluating/holisticrubric.html>
- <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec596/QuestRubric.html>
- <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/sylabi/Johnson/johnsongrading.html>
- <http://alt.usg.edu/research/discussionrubric.html>

Assignment

Create a grading rubric that corresponds with one of the assignments or activities in your course. Be sure to link the criteria with your instructional objectives for that assignment, determine and articulate the different levels of competency, and assign values to each level.