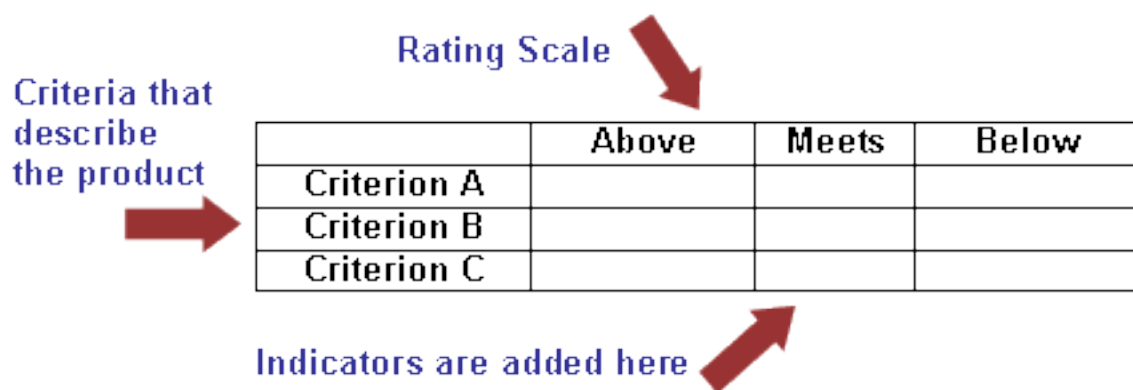


What is a rubric?

A rubric is a scoring guide that helps teachers evaluate student performance, based on a range of criteria. A rubric lists the criteria, or characteristics, that student work should exhibit and describes specific quality levels for those criteria.

How is a rubric structured? Like a matrix.

A rubric is a matrix of criteria and their descriptors. The left side of a rubric matrix lists the **criteria** for the expected product or performance. Across the top of the rubric matrix is the **rating scale** that provides a set of values for rating the quality of performance for each criterion. **Descriptors** under the rating scale provide examples or concrete indicators for each level of performance.



Let's see an example...

Rubrics: As easy as apple pie!

Here's an example of a rubric for an apple pie. "Below Expectations," "Meets Expectations" and "Above Expectations" are the rating scale indicators of recipe, apple filling and crust criteria. The indicators are filled in with descriptors of each level of quality.

Rubric for Apple Pie

	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Above Expectations
Recipe Followed Correctly	Recipe has not been followed correctly and the pie does not have the correct proportion of sugar, spices and crust	The recipe has been mostly followed correctly with approximately the correct proportion of sugar, spices and crust	The recipe has been followed correctly and the pie has the correct proportion of sugar, spices and crust
Apple Filling	The apples for the filling were not cut and prepared correctly	The apples for the filling were mostly cut and prepared correctly	The apples for the filling were all cut and prepared correctly
Crust	Top and bottom crusts are not light and flaky	Top and bottom crusts are mostly light and flaky	Top and bottom crusts are very light and flaky
Pie Baked Evenly	Pie is not baked evenly throughout and does not have an even-colored golden brown crust	Pie is baked mostly evenly throughout and the crust has a mostly even-colored golden brown crust	Pie is baked evenly throughout with an even-colored golden brown crust

Why are rubrics a good idea? Lots of reasons.

Rubrics are a great tool for teaching and learning. Why?

Because rubrics:

- support authentic assessment
- communicate expectations
- improve performance
- provide informative feedback
- promote thinking and learning
- inspire fairness

Rubrics support authentic assessment.

While traditional tests measure how well students recall content, rubrics measure how well students can apply knowledge to authentic contexts or real-world tasks.

Rubrics clearly communicate expectations.

Because rubrics define student "quality" in terms of objective criteria and standards, they clearly communicate how instructors will evaluate student performance.

Rubrics improve performance.

Rubrics lead to better student performance. When students understand assignments and expectations *before* they begin, they are more likely to fulfill them. They know what specific criteria and standards of excellence will be used to rate their performance.

Rubrics provide students with informative feedback.

Students learn from a rubric in a way that they can't learn from a single letter grade or a few comments in the margins. Because rubrics define specific elements of a learning task and describe levels of quality, instructors can provide informative feedback to students about where they perform well and where they need improvement.

Rubrics promote thinking and learning.

Rubrics promote thinking and higher levels of learning. Used to provide formative feedback, rubrics enable students to systematically review and revise their learning assignments, promoting reflective learning.

Rubrics inspire fairness.

Because rubrics have detailed assessment information, students don't feel that grades are assigned subjectively or arbitrarily. Also, when you have more than one grader, a rubric allows all graders to apply the same criteria in the same way.

Rubrics sound great! What's the catch?

Although rubrics have many benefits--and make grading faster and easier--a good rubric takes time to construct. You'll probably need to change (change, not add to) your grading and assessment methods, based on what you believe about learning assessment. Rubrics are best for critical assessments, major projects, and other assignments that require a multi-dimensional performance evaluation. The trick is to know what type of rubric to create for your situation.