

What Rubrics Can Do

- Rubrics can be useful when students challenge grades. Usually, it pre-empts student complaints when they see where they need to improve.
- Once rubrics have been developed, professors can save time grading. Fewer comments on the students' homework are needed as the rubric explains which areas students must improve.
- Instructors can more easily identify areas in which students could benefit from clarification in the classroom by looking at the results of student performance.
- Rubrics make expectations loud and clear.
- Rubrics give students a basis for self assessment.
- Rubrics promote independent learning.
- Rubrics eliminate vague assessment criteria and overly subjective performance behavior.
- Rubrics link assignments clearly to curricular goals and learning objectives.
- Rubrics define expectations for learners and instructors by clearly showing students how their work will be evaluated.

→ A rubric makes explicit the criteria that are being applied to this work at this time, and it brings judgment closer together.¹

→ A rubric can increase the fairness of grading in a course taught by several professors or one that is managed by several teaching assistants.



Answers these questions:

- By what criteria should performance be judged?²
- Where should we look and what should we look for to judge performance success?
- What does the range in the quality of performance look like?
- How do we determine validly, reliably, and fairly what score should be given and what that score means?
- How should the different levels of quality be described and distinguished from one another?

¹ See Barbara Walvoord's *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004. (19-21).

² See Grant Wiggins' book *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998. (Chapter 7).