



SCALE CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY RUBRIC DESIGN

Before building a rubric, authors should determine the primary **purpose** of the rubric (e.g., summative, formative, program-improvement), and the primary **audience** for the rubric (students, educators, both). For any purpose and any audience, a high-quality rubric is built using learning-centered design principles and meets the criteria below.

Purpose - Learning Centered Design

- Rubric **sets clear expectations**: Describes proficient performance.
- Rubric is **analytic**: Performance is broken down into distinct dimensions.
- Rubric is **educative**: Provides feedback to teachers and students to support learning and improvement.
- Rubric is **common**: Can be used within and across courses, grade levels or grade spans, tasks, and teachers to measure progress toward long-term performance outcomes.

Content

- Rubric is tightly aligned to key performance outcomes.
- Rubric measures worthwhile knowledge and skills - standards-aligned content, complex disciplinary understandings and practices, and 21st century skills.
- Rubric is not task-specific: generalizes to a variety of tasks within the discipline.

Structure & Organization

- Rubric is short - for usability and focus.
- Dimensions are distinct and focused, with few indicators within each performance level.
- Dimensions are sequenced in a logical order.
- Indicators should not be grouped together within a single performance level if student performance on those indicators often varies.
- Indicators are not repeated across dimensions.
- Indicators for each performance level are parallel in sequence and grammatical style across the dimensions.

Performance Levels

- Performance levels reflect a developmental progression through qualitative (vs. quantitative) differences in student performance.
- Rubric has a sufficient number of performance levels to capture progress within a grade level or grade span, and especially in the range where the majority of students fall.
- Rubric uses standards-based criteria to define proficiency.

Language

- Performance level labels and indicators are neutral in tone and avoid value-laden, stigmatizing language.
- Rubric describes observable behaviors and skills in the work sample; describes what students **can** do and **not** what they can't do.
- Language is simple, clear, and provides clear distinctions between levels; is student-friendly.
- Rubric communicates how a student can get to the next performance level.