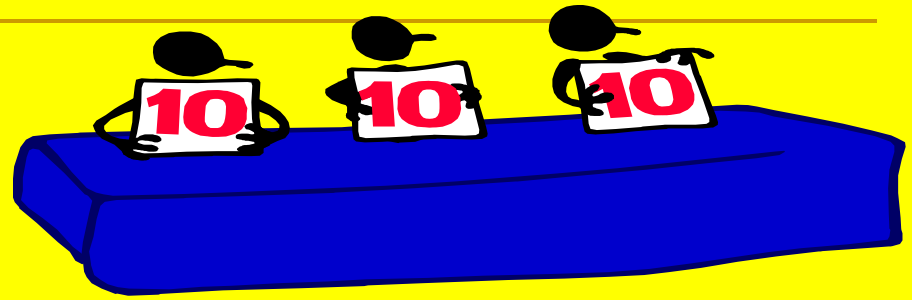# Using rubrics in the classroom

How to turn the subjective into the objective when assessing performance.

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Why rubrics?

- There are several advantages to using a rubric in the classroom:
  - Clearly show how work is being evaluated.
  - Help to clarify what the expectations are.
  - Provides easy access to differentiated instruction.
    - Allows different types of assessments other than pencil-to-paper.
  - When asked to help create they can act as a motivational tool for students.

When to use rubrics?

- Rubrics can be used for anything not pencil-to-paper to look at a holistic assessment by breaking it into parts.
  - Papers
  - Presentations
  - Powerpoints
  - Performances
  - Projects
  - Self assessment
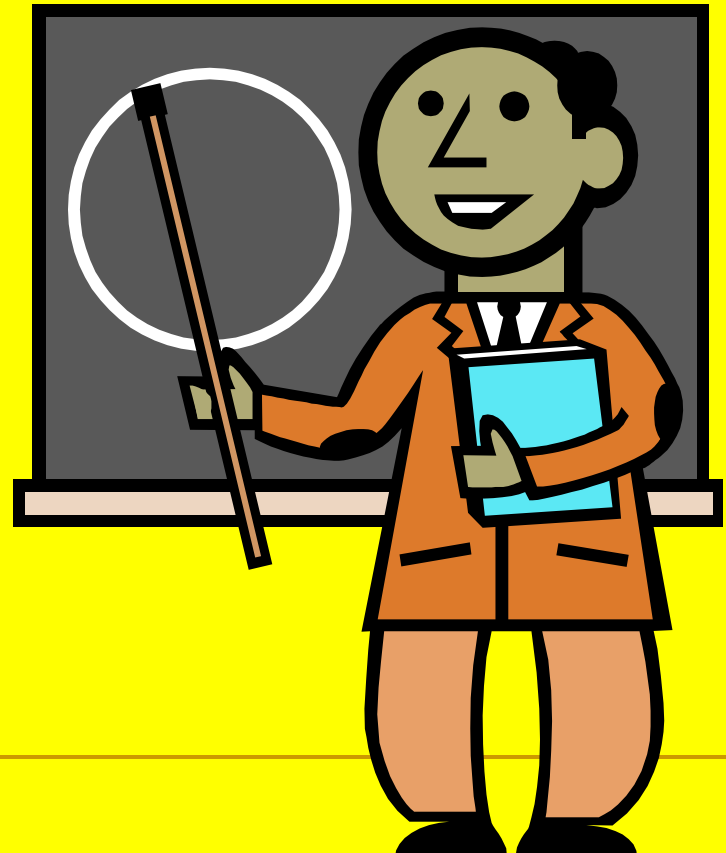
Steps to making a rubric?

- Step 1: Create categories
- Step 2: Provide several descriptors in each category
- Step 3: Have a tiered system to the descriptors
- Step 4: Make sure descriptors are specific and not vague
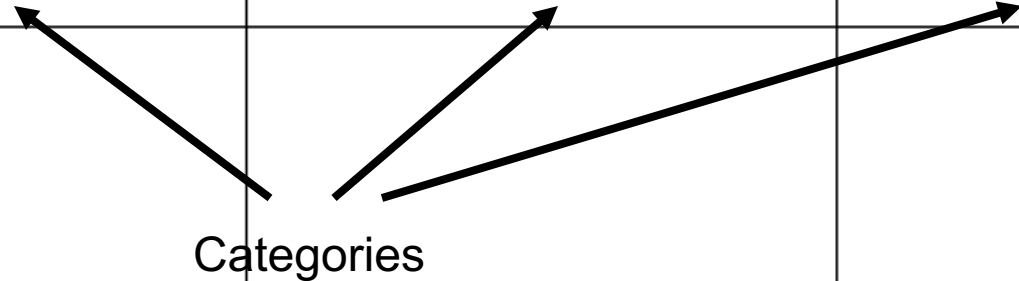- Step 5: Check the rubric over

Step 1: Create categories

- Decide how many overall categories you want to evaluate.

- Usually no less than 2 (not enough to make objective), no more than 4 (gets too confusing).

- Decide the weight of each category.

5 Themes of Geography Presentation

Students: _____   Colony: _____

Overall	Content	Presentation	Maps
Excellent (A)			
Good (B-C)			
Needs Improvement (D-F)			

Categories

Step 2: Provide several descriptors in each category

- Each category should have two to four skills being evaluated.
- This breakdown allows the evaluation to be objective.
- Doesn't put too much weight on any one skill.
- Start at excellent

5 Themes of Geography Presentation

Students: _____   Colony: _____

Overall	Content	Presentation	Maps
Excellent (A)	• Includes many details and examples designed to back up each of the 5 themes of geography. • Research is accurate and gives a clear picture of the theme it is supposed to be demonstrating. • Explains clearly and with much detail how the borders of the colony came to be.		
Good (B-C)			
Needs Improvement (D-F)			

descriptors

Step 3: Have a tiered system to the descriptors

- Each descriptor should have a matching descriptor at each level.
  - In other words the skill being assessed should be described on an excellent, good, and needs improvement level.
- Make sure each level is realistic.
  - Excellent should have high expectations.
- Helps to number these
- Using "but" for good and "not for needs improvement

5 Themes of Geography Presentation

Students: _____   Colony: _____

Overall	Content	Presentation	Maps
Excellent (A) tiered	1. Includes many details and examples designed to back up each of the 5 themes of geography. 2. Research is accurate and gives a clear picture of the theme it is supposed to be demonstrating. 3. Explains clearly and with much detail how the borders of the colony came to be.		
Good (B-C) (but)	1. Has a few details and examples to back up 5 themes but could use more. 2. Research is accurate but does not give a clear picture of the theme, showing one aspect rather than a well-rounded picture. 3. Explains how the borders of the colony came to be but do not provide much detail.		
Needs Improvement (D-F) (not)	1. Does not use details and examples to back up the 5 themes. 2. Research is inaccurate, giving the audience the wrong idea about the themes or a very limited view. 3. Does not explain very well how the borders came to be where they are.		

Step 4: Make sure descriptors are specific and not vague

- You should be able to apply this phrase to each descriptor "What does it look like?"
- Use specific numbers or a range if the category lends itself to it.
- Don't set the bar too high or too low in the wrong evaluation.

5 Themes of Geography Presentation

Students: _____   Colony: _____

Overall	Content	Presentation	Maps
Excellent (A)	• Includes many details and examples designed to back up each of the 5 themes of geography. • Research is accurate and gives a clear picture of the theme it is supposed to be demonstrating. • Explains clearly and with much detail how the borders of the colony came to be.	• Presentation has a flow to it with each person's role clearly defined. Seems as though it was rehearsed. • Presentation uses meaningful visuals that add to the content of the presentation. • Speakers present clearly, do not read the presentation to audience.	• Includes at least 10 maps that show the various themes of geography. • Maps can easily be seen by the audience. • Maps are clearly explained what they are showing.
Good (B-C)	• Has a few details and examples to back up 5 themes but could use more. • Research is accurate but does not give a clear picture of the theme, showing one aspect rather than a well-rounded picture. • Explains how the borders of the colony came to be but do not provide much detail.	• Presentation jumps around a little, making it hard to follow at times but for the most part it is clear what is being taught. • Presentation uses visuals but not all of them are meaningful and are just there for decoration rather than the expanding of knowledge. • Speakers present clearly most of the time but every once in a while read the presentation to the class.	• Includes 7-9 maps that show the themes of geography but could use a few more to illustrate points or some do not have meaningful information. • Most maps can easily be seen by the audience but a few are not clear. • Most maps are explained what they are showing but others just referred to.
Needs Improvement (D-F)	• Does not use details and examples to back up the 5 themes. • Research is inaccurate, giving the audience the wrong idea about the themes or a very limited view. • Does not explain very well how the borders came to be where they are.	• Presentation is so unorganized it is difficult to figure out what is being taught, seems like was never practiced and people are unclear of roles. • Presentation lacks visuals or most of them add nothing to the content. • Speakers read the entire presentation or do not make themselves clearly heard.	• Include 6 or fewer maps or use maps that contain no meaningful information. • Maps cannot be easily seen by the audience. • Many of the maps are not properly explained, just acting as background visuals.

Step 5: Check the rubric over

- Go through each category going through the tiers to be sure it flows and makes sense.

- Practice grading a performance and see how practical it is (maybe dress rehearsal or another venue).

- Have students or another teacher look it over for any mistakes they might find.

- If you discover mistakes while grading, take note of it and change it for next time.

5 Themes of Geography Presentation

Students: _Emily & Ashlyo_   Colony: _Massachosetts_

Overall	Content	Presentation	Maps
Excellent (A)	• Includes many details and examples designed to back up each of the 5 themes of geography. • Research is accurate and gives a clear picture of the theme it is supposed to be demonstrating • Explains clearly and with much detail how the borders of the colony came to be.	• Presentation has a flow to it with each person's role clearly defined. Seems as though it was rehearsed. • Presentation uses meaningful visuals that add to the content of the presentation. • Speakers present clearly, do not read the presentation to audience.	• Includes many maps that show the various themes of geography. • Maps can easily be seen by the audience. • Maps are clearly explained what they are showing.
Good (B-C)	• Has a few details and examples to back up 5 themes but could use more. • Research is accurate but does not give a clear picture of the theme, showing one aspect rather than a well-rounded picture. • Explains how the borders of the colony came to be but do not provide much detail.	• Presentation jumps around a little making it hard to follow at times but for the most part it is clear what is being taught. • Presentation uses visuals but not all of them are meaningful and are just there for decoration rather than the expanding of knowledge. • Speakers present clearly most of the time but every once in a while read the presentation to the class.	• Includes maps that show where the themes of geography but could use a few more to illustrate points. • Most maps can easily be seen by the audience but a few are not clear. • Most maps are explained what they are showing but others just referred to.
Needs Improvement (D-F)	• Does not use details and examples to back up the 5 themes. • Research is inaccurate, giving the audience the wrong idea about the themes or a very limited view. • Does not explain very well how the borders came to be where they are.	• Presentation is so unorganized it is difficult to figure out what is being taught, seems like was never practiced and people are unclear of roles. • Presentation lacks visuals or most of them add nothing to the content. • Speakers read the entire presentation or do not make themselves clearly heard.	• Does not include hardly any maps or those that they do contain no meaningful information. • Maps cannot be easily seen by the audience. • Many of the maps are not properly explained, just acting as background visuals.

(Handwritten annotations throughout, including: "government good examples & stories", "seemed fairly organized although one talked more than others", "you talked about some general ideas but did not go into much detail about them", "detail needed to provide connections to why people", "good amount of maps during regions section, bigger map needed in place", "Place could use more examples", "The WHY of Ideas is interesting a depth in not well explained", "good amount of maps", "some could be better explained especially borders", "could have talked in much more detail about early settlements", "not good others visual", "visual could add additional content")

How do you know your rubric is done well?

- It is simple and easy to use.
- Students are clear why they received the evaluation they did.
- When you think overall how you think that student should be graded, it matches the rubric that was broken down into parts.
- That student shows mastery of the skill used on the rubric in other forms as well.

How to make sure they are objective?

- Be as specific as you can be in the rubric.
- Anchor grading if you have the opportunity.
  - Can have a couple of people filling out rubrics including students in the class.
  - Self assessments can be done as well.
- Link the descriptions to specific indicators when possible.
- If something is more valued in the grading than something else, make sure that is clear.
- Write many comments on the actual rubric so that students are clear why you marked what you did.

Getting students involved in the process

- Have your students create their own rubrics.
  - They have more stories about bad presentations that you do.
  - Usually they will be more tough on the expectations than you would be.
  - Provides ownership.
  - They are clear of the expectations.
  - Shows them to process you go through to evaluate them.
  - Might want to create some categories yourself to make sure they are covered.

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Now create your own

- Create a rubric that will assess the project you have created
- There are blank rubrics available for you to use