

Tools for Grading: Rubrics and Spreadsheets

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Introduction

ANALYTIC RUBRICS

Example 1: Winona State Univ.

Rubric for Research Paper				
Criteria	Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
Purpose	The writer's central purpose or argument is readily apparent to the reader.	The writer has a clear purpose or argument, but may sometimes disagree.	The central purpose or argument is not consistently clear throughout the paper.	The purpose or argument is generally unclear.
Content	Enhanced generation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central purpose or argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights.	Informative provides reasonable support for a central purpose or argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights.	Informative supports a central purpose or argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Central purpose or argument is not clearly identified. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.
Organization	The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.	In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what writer intends.	The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.
Style	The writing is compelling. It hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout.	The writing is generally engaging but has some dry spots. In general, the reader finds it difficult to maintain interest.	The writing is dull and unengaging. Through the paper has some interesting parts, the reader finds it difficult to maintain interest.	The writing has little personality. The reader quickly loses interest and stops reading.

Example 2: Derek Bruff

Cryptography Essay #1 (Opinion Paper)					Student Name: _____	
Component	Poor (1 point)	Acceptable (2 points)	Good (3 points)	Excellent (4 points)	Score	Comments
Importance of Question	No attempt is made to establish why the question matters beyond the context of this course.	The student gestures to the importance of this question to those outside this course, but doesn't offer any reason why.	The student offers one clear and compelling reason why the question matters.	The student offers more than one clear and compelling reason why the question matters.		
Personal Connection	The paper reads as if it could have been written by anyone.	The student references his/her personal experiences or interests, but in a vague or disconnected way.	The student makes at least one concrete connection between the question at hand and his/her personal experiences or interests.	The student draws on specific, concrete personal experiences or interests at multiple points in the paper.		
Relevance of Argument	The arguments presented by the student for his/her position are mostly weak and/or inappropriate for the question.	The student presents some reasonable arguments for his/her position along with some other weak and/or inappropriate arguments.	The student presents arguments for his/her position that are generally appropriate and supports his/her position.	The arguments the student presents for his/her position are appropriate, supports his/her position, and is notably varied and/or creative.		
Complexity of Argument	The student fails to consider positions other than the one for which she argues in the paper.	The student considers alternate positions or potential objections to his/her arguments, but offers no significant response to those other positions.	The student considers alternate positions or potential objections and offers some responses to those positions.	The student considers several potential objections to his/her arguments and offers compelling counter-arguments.		
Clarity						
Clarity of Opinion	There's no evidence that the student has an opinion about the central question.	The central question is addressed, but the student's position on that question isn't that clear.	The student's one position on the central question is explicitly stated and would be clear to other students.	The student's one position on the central question is very clear, as is the student's position on one or more related questions.		

Example 3: Northeastern Illinois Univ.

General Education Critical Thinking Rubric Northeastern Illinois University					
Quality	No/Limited Proficiency (D/E)	Some Proficiency (C)	Proficiency (B)	High Proficiency (A)	Rating (A-E)
1. Identifies & Explains Issues	Fails to identify, summarize, or explain the main problem or question. Represents the issues inaccurately or inappropriately.	Identifies main issues but does not summarize or explain them clearly or sufficiently.	Successfully identifies and summarizes the main issues, but does not explain why they are problems or core questions.	Clearly identifies and summarizes main issues and successfully explains why they are problems or core questions, addressing their relationships to each other.	
2. Distinguishes Types of Claims	Fails to label correctly any of the formal, conceptual, and value dimensions of the problem and proposed solutions.	Successfully identifies and labels all of the formal, conceptual, and value aspects of the problem and success.	Successfully explains and labels all of the formal, conceptual, and value dimensions of the problem.	Clearly and accurately labels not only all the formal, conceptual, and value, but also those implicit in the assumptions and the implications of positions and arguments.	
3. Recognizes Underlying and Complex	Fails to accurately identify and explain any essential or theoretical context for the issues. Presents problems as having no connection to other conditions or to assumptions at hand.	Shows some general understanding of the underlying or theoretical context on underlies, but does not identify many specific ones relevant to the situation at hand.	Correctly identifies all the essential and most of the theoretical context relevant to all the main underlies in the situation.	Not only correctly identifies all the essential and most of the theoretical context, relevant to all the main underlies, but also finds major underlies and connects them to the complex or essential nature of the situation.	
4. Considers Methodology	Fails to explain how/why specific methods of research are relevant to the kind of issue at hand.	Identifies main but not all methods relevant for dealing with the issue, does not explain why they are relevant or effective.	Successfully explains how/why which methods are most relevant to the problem.	In addition to explaining how/why which methods are typically used, also identifies embedded methods and possible alternative methods of dealing with the problem.	
5. Formulates Personal Responses and Acknowledges Other Perspectives	Fails to formulate and clearly express one's point of view. (or) fails to anticipate objections to his/her point of view, or considers view but not strong alternative positions.	Formulates a clear and precise personal point of view, but does not anticipate objections to his/her point of view, or does not seriously discuss its weaknesses as well as its strengths.	Formulates a clear and precise personal point of view, but does not anticipate objections and/or provides convincing replies to these.	Not only formulates a clear and precise personal point of view, but also anticipates objections and/or provides convincing replies to these.	

Clarify Learning Goals

- Content
 - Importance of Question
 - Personal Connection
 - Relevance of Argument
 - Complexity of Argument
- Clarity
 - Clarity of Opinion
 - Clarity of Argument
 - Voice
- Presentation
 - Mechanics
 - Formatting

Categories from Example 2 (Bruff)

Go Beyond “I’ll Know It When I See It”

Organization

- Exemplary - The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose or argument. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.
- Good - The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.
- Acceptable - In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what writer intends.
- Unacceptable - The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.

Descriptors from Example 1 (Winona State)

Raise the Bar for A-Level Work

Evaluates Assumptions

- High Proficiency - Not only identifies and evaluates all the important assumptions, but also some of the more hidden, more abstract ones.
- Proficiency - Identifies and evaluates all the important assumptions, but not the ones deeper in the background – the more abstract ones.
- Some Proficiency - Identifies some of the most important assumptions, but does not evaluate them for plausibility or clarity.
- No/Limited Proficiency - Fails to identify and evaluate any of the important assumptions behind the claims and recommendations made.

Descriptors from Example 3 (NE Illinois)

Descriptors: Quantitative Approach

Importance of Question

- Excellent - The student offers more than one clear and compelling reason why the question matters.
- Good - The student offers one clear and compelling reason why the question matters.
- Acceptable - The student gestures to the importance of this question to those outside this course, but doesn’t offer any reasons why.
- Poor - No attempt is made to establish why the question matters beyond the context of this course.

Descriptors from Example 2 (Bruff)

Descriptors: Benchmark Approach

Clarity of Argument

- Excellent - The arguments made by the student would be very clear to fellow students—clear enough to serve as examples of logical reasoning for future students.
- Good - The arguments made by the student would be mostly clear to fellow students.
- Acceptable - The arguments made by the student would make at least some sense to fellow students.
- Poor - The arguments made by the student would be difficult for fellow students to follow.

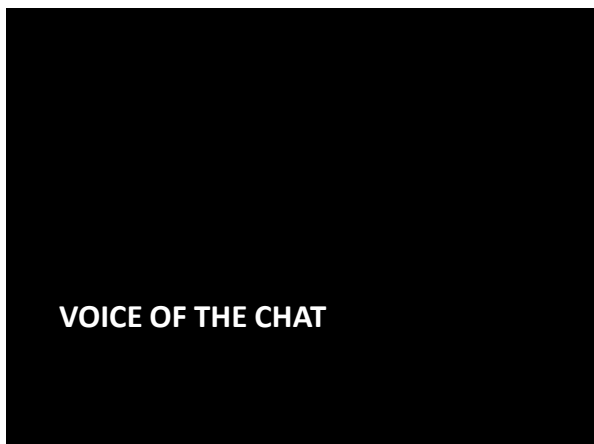
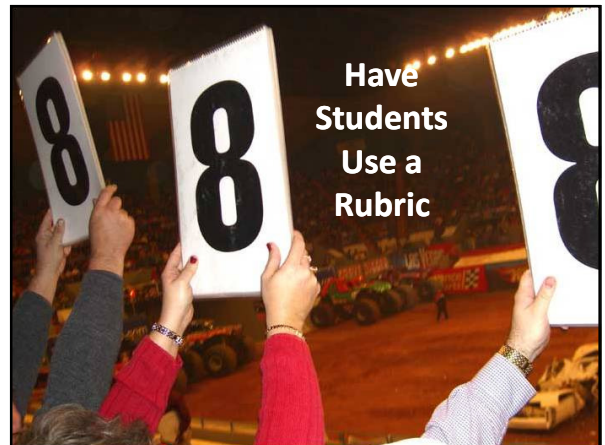
Descriptors from Example 2 (Bruff)

Descriptors: Two-Step Approach


Evaluates Evidence

- High Proficiency - Not only identifies and rigorously evaluates all important evidence offered, but also provides new data or information for consideration.
- Proficiency - Identified all important evidence and rigorously evaluates it.
- Some Proficiency - Successfully identifies data and information that counts as evidence but fails to thoroughly evaluate its credibility.
- No/Limited Proficiency - Fails to identify data and information that counts as evidence for truth-claims and fails to evaluate its credibility.

Descriptors from Example 3 (NE Illinois)



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