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# Using Rubrics or Scales

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Rubrics and scales are crucial for authentic assessments so that students may better understand your expectations. We often casually use the terms “rubric” and “scale” interchangeably, but it is useful to distinguish between the two. Rubrics are useful in clarifying how the student has performed with respect to your expectations on an assignment or task. Scales can be useful in describing how a student has progressed in their knowledge with respect to the learning goals.

## Scales

- Topic specific
- Progression of Knowledge
- Inherent to curriculum

## Rubrics

- Task specific
- Use to assess quality of work on particular indicators/factors
- Inherent to Assessment

## Which is best to use?

It may be worth it to create a scale to provide students with at the beginning of the course so it is clear what they are working towards in the course - what their expected outcomes are based on the learning goals. But, with a focus on assessment, it would be best to create a rubric.

## A rubric includes three things:

- 1) Criteria: The aspects of performance to be assessed
- 2) Indicators: Description of the criterion and performance level
- 3) Performance/Rating level: A numerical value to indicates students' level of mastery

## An effective rubric:

- Includes a lot of descriptive language
- Is reliable and valid
- Will help students plan and monitor their work performance
- Can be used across multiple assignments
- Provide students with information about their instructor's expectations
- Reduce the time instructors spend grading
- Provide information about instruction and what may need to be revised
- Encourages peer to peer feedback and support
- Will make clear what an instructor intends for students to learn

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## Examples

[Action Research Project](#)

[Association of American Colleges and Universities Value Rubrics](#)

[Discussion Essays - University of West Florida](#)

[Carnegie Mellon Example Rubrics](#)