

# RUBRIC READY

A step-by-step guide to designing fair and clear rubrics for English language learners.

## PART 1: DEVELOPING THE CRITERIA



### WHAT ARE THE LEARNING GOALS OF THIS ASSIGNMENT?

Choose goals you can observe. For example, you cannot directly observe the goal "understand the importance of transitional phrases" but you can observe "apply transitional phrases to enhance flow and fluency of writing." Consider using [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) to select your action verbs. Note that at this stage of the process, it is okay to use teacher-facing jargon.

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)

## 2 REFINE AND REPHRASE YOUR LEARNING GOALS.

In this step, we prepare your learning goals to become [the criteria column](#) of your rubric. To do this, first review your goals and look for opportunities to condense them. Ideally, you end up with 4-5 simple goal statements.

Next, translate your language to be extremely accessible to your students. If you cannot describe your goals in clear, simple terms, [consider developing a glossary of rubric vocabulary](#).

When step 2 is complete, the table from step 1 should contain your finalized learning goals.

## 3 WHAT ARE YOU NOT INTERESTED IN ASSESSING WITH THIS ASSIGNMENT?

What observable skills are not critical to the learning goals you've outlined above? If the focus of the assignment is on transitional phrases, for example, a student's mastery of the present perfect continuous tense is not critical for this assignment.

By reflecting on what is not actually a learning goal you specifically identify what will not factor into a student's numerical grade. **This process reduces the possibility of more advanced students receiving higher marks because of their mastery of concepts not yet covered in your class.**

When your rubric is complete, you'll return to this step to ensure that none of your 'anti-goals' noted below appear in your rubric.








## PART 2: DEFINING EXCELLENCE DESCRIPTORS



### DESCRIBE WHAT YOU WILL OBSERVE IF THE OBJECTIVES ARE PERFECTLY MET.

Be as specific as possible. This will become the column of your rubric indicating the most possible points awarded. Again, consider adding a glossary for words that cannot be replaced with simpler phrases.

Learning Goals/criteria	Observable behaviors indicating an <u>excellent</u> submission
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	

## PART 3: DEFINING ACCEPTABLE DESCRIPTORS



**HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF A OBJECTIVE WAS SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL, BUT COULD USE IMPROVEMENT?**

This will compose the middle column of your rubric.

<b>Learning Goals/criteria</b>	<b>Observable behaviors indicating an <u>acceptable</u> submission</b>
<b>1)</b>	
<b>2)</b>	
<b>3)</b>	
<b>4)</b>	
<b>5)</b>	
<b>6)</b>	

## PART 4: DEFINING “NEEDS IMPROVEMENT” DESCRIPTORS



**WHAT OBSERVABLE CHARACTERISTICS WILL YOU SEE IN A SUBMISSION THAT ULTIMATELY HAS NOT MET THE GOAL?**

This column might result in as few as 0 points.

Learning Goals/criteria	Observable behaviors indicating an <u>“need improvement”</u> submission
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	

## PART 5: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER



### NAME YOUR SCALES

Name each scaled level. Choose a tone and complexity that works for your unique learning context. Here are some example combinations.

Voice	Level 1 (Top)	Level 2 (Middle)	Level 3 (Bottom)
<i><b>Friendly</b></i>	Great job!	Almost there!	Needs some work!
<i><b>Formal</b></i>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
<i><b>Encouraging</b></i>	Exceptional effort	Good progress	Keep trying!
<i><b>Neutral</b></i>	Meets expectations	Partially meets	Does not meet

Write your scale titles below.

Level 1 (Top)	Level 2 (Middle)	Level 3 (Bottom)

**Note:** It is normal to choose more than three levels. This is especially appropriate for significant, “signature” assessments with multiple components.

Keep in mind, however, that many scale levels can be overwhelming for students less familiar with the practice and language. A larger number of scales may also ultimately dilute the meaning of each distinction. This can be resolved by using fewer scale levels, but allowing each scale to have a range of point value, rather than a single fixed point.



Only you can decide what is best for your students and their unique classroom context. [Here are some examples of differing scale quantities and point attributions.](#)



## ADD POINT VALUES WHERE APPLICABLE

Some assignments might not require you to quantify each scale into points. If that is the case, skip this step. Otherwise, take some time to break down how many points should be awarded for each scale. This will populate your total points column.

<b>What is the total point value of the assignment?</b>	
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Write the maximum points available for the successful completion of each learning goal. The total for this column must match the total for your overall assignment.

<b>Learning Goals/criteria</b>	<b>Maximum points available for this criterion</b>
<b>1)</b>	
<b>2)</b>	
<b>3)</b>	
<b>4)</b>	
<b>5)</b>	
<b>6)</b>	
<b>Total points</b>	

If you would like to add a range of available points to each scale or descriptor, you can add them directly to your final rubric on the last page. (For an example of a ranged rubric, [see here](#)).



## REFLECT AND REVISE

If you scroll down to the next page, you will see your answers to the previous steps have been converted into the rubric structure. Review that rubric and make changes as needed. Consider the following reflective questions.

- Did any of my 'anti-goals' noted in Step 3 find their way into this rubric?
- How will I introduce this to my students?
- Can I easily explain everything included?
- Is the language clear and accessible for my students? Do I need to add a glossary, or additional words to my existing glossary?
- Are the criteria I've included truly measuring what matters most for this task?
- Could another teacher use this rubric and come to similar evaluations?
- Are the criteria manageable, or is there too much detail that may overwhelm students?
- Does this rubric encourage students to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth?
- Could the rubric enable students to know exactly what action steps they will need to take to improve?



## EXPORT YOUR RUBRIC TO A USEABLE FORMAT

The following page provides a pdf of your rubric. [Click here for instructions on converting the rubric to a digital Canvas rubric.](#)



