Decode Your Assignments

Rubrics communicate expectations, provide clear criteria for assessment, and clarify levels of quality. They can also speed up your grading and reduce student grade complaints. A rubric has two elements: criteria on which performance is judged and the various levels of achievement. Here’s a rubric that could be used to judge a student baking assignment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Baking Assignment</th>
<th>Exceeds (3 points)</th>
<th>Meets (2 points)</th>
<th>Does not meet (1 point)</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual appeal</td>
<td>Has lots of visual interest. Finished product is neat and visually interesting.</td>
<td>Has some visual interest, may not be neat or lacks creativity.</td>
<td>Finished product is sloppy or bland in appearance.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>Has outstanding taste with complementary flavors.</td>
<td>Tastes good overall, but flavors may not blend perfectly.</td>
<td>Does not taste good. Flavors do not blend together.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>Recipe chosen has high level of complexity and demonstrates high skill level.</td>
<td>Recipe chosen is moderate complexity and demonstrates moderate skill level.</td>
<td>Recipe is simple and does not demonstrate skills.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips for developing and using rubrics:

- Use rubrics to demonstrate the importance you place on various parts of the assignment.
- Share the rubric with the assignment to help students understand what’s important to you.
- Create rubrics in Blackboard to make grading and feedback quick and easy.
- Add an extra “going beyond expectations” check box to give extra weight to a student who does outstanding work.

To learn more, visit these sites:

- The Center for Teaching Excellence at Cornell University shares these helpful Science Rubrics.
- The College of St. Scholastica has a large list of sample grading rubrics for a wide variety of assignments.
- Check out the article by Heidi Andrade: “Teaching with Rubrics: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.” You can find this is in our UTSA Library at http://www.jstor.org/stable/27559213.

Need help creating rubrics for your assignments?
Contact us for a one-on-one consultation!

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