

Designing and Using Weighted Rubrics

The following pages demonstrate one effective way for history teachers to integrate the new assessment model required by the Ontario Ministry of Education into their assessment plan. Adaptations have been made in order to reflect contemporary classroom realities. A column on the rubric has been provided for student achievement that falls below a Level 1 performance. In addition, the four categories of the achievement chart found in the Ministry policy document *Canadian and World Studies, Grades 9 and 10* are explicitly identified on the rubric. This will help teachers connect existing good practice with the new model. These adaptations extend and make practical the assessment theory prescribed by the Ministry.

This example demonstrates one effective way in which rubrics can be used to generate accurate and defensible achievement levels and marks for a major performance task. The twelve-point marking scale featured on page 376 of the Teacher's Resource Binder for *Canada: Face of a Nation* has been adopted to allow teachers to vary the weight of certain assessment criteria, according to the directions provided to students when the performance task (in this case a research paper) is assigned. The following contents are included to illustrate the use of this kind of assessment tool:

- assessment rubric for a research paper
- description of a paper written by a student (most teachers identify this sample as a D+/C- performance)
- completed rubric to reflect the achievement represented by the description
- completed weighted rubric to reflect a sample focus for assessment.

In this particular case the weighted and non-weighted rubrics provide an identical final mark. Depending on the design of the rubric and on the emphasis placed on specific criteria, the mark generated by the weighted and non-weighted tools can be different. Usually, this difference is not large. For example the use of a weighted rubric might move a student up or down a specific achievement level or bump a student to the next level. Adjust the weighting, as you would for a research paper assignment to your own students, to determine the change in this student's final mark. You may also wish to change the assessment criteria before using this rubric with your students.

Research Paper Rubric: Grade 10 History

Name: _____ Date: _____

Criteria	Below Level 1			Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4			Total	
	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10		
Knowledge	Using historically accurate information	Use of historical information not passable			Limited use of accurate historical information		Accurate for the most part; some important information is not accurate		All information historically accurate; most is relevant to topic		All information used is historically accurate and relevant			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
Thinking/Inquiry Skills	Historical analysis	Demonstrated analysis skills not passable			Limited recognition of historical significance		Adequate recognition of historical significance		Very good recognition of historical significance		Thorough and perceptive recognition of historical significance			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
	Evidence to support thesis statement or argument being made	Support demonstrated is not passable			Little evidence used to support thesis		Some good evidence to support thesis		Solid evidence to support thesis		Excellent support for thesis			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
Communication	Introduction contains clear thesis statement	No thesis statement in introduction			Thesis statement of limited clarity		Thesis statement mostly clear		Introduction establishes thesis clearly		Introduction clearly states strong thesis			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
	Body of essay used to present research findings	Evidence of research not passable			Quality and quantity of evidence limited; sequence weak		Good quantity; quality and sequence of evidence is adequate		Good quantity and quality of evidence; sequence mostly logical		Quality and quantity are sound; sequence logical			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
	Concluding statement used to summarize research findings	Conclusion not present or not consistent with facts presented			Conclusion has limited connection to facts presented		Adequate conclusion; consistent with some key facts		Good conclusion; consistent with most key facts		Sound conclusion; fully supportable			X
0		2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10		
Effective use of language	Use of language not passable			Limited use of proper spelling, grammar and sentence structure		Adequate use of spelling; grammar and sentence structure weak at times		Spelling and grammar used well; sentence structure awkward at times		Spelling, grammar and sentence structure all used effectively			X	
	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10		
Application	Persuasiveness and interest	Not interesting or convincing			Limited interest and persuasiveness		Persuasive and interesting in some key parts		Persuasive and interesting in all key parts		Totally interesting and persuasive			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
	Layout and Presentation	Not passable			Limited title page; limited neatness		Adequate title page; limited neatness		Effective title page; neat presentation		Title page and essay layout both excellent			X
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	
Use of footnotes and bibliography to credit sources	Sources not evident or properly credited			Limited use of footnotes and bibliography to credit sources		Footnotes and bibliography used, sources adequate		Good sources used; all sources credited		Excellent sources used; all sources well credited			X	
	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10		
Final Mark												%		

Research Paper Rubric: Grade 10 History

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Areas of Strength:

Specific Recommendations for Improvement:

Final Mark: _____ = _____% = Level _____

A Student's Research Paper

No title page is submitted as per teacher instructions. The product has a messy appearance with mistakes crossed off in pen and new text sloppily added. Work generally appears a little rushed and sloppy. The final product is a bit shorter than expected.

The information contained is for the most part historically accurate. However some of the key information is incorrect. Some of the information contained was not really relevant to the argument being made. Important information that would have strengthened the argument being made was omitted. On the whole, the student has demonstrated a limited use of historical analysis skills such as establishing cause-effect relationships, detecting bias and making judgements about historical significance.

A thesis statement is clearly established in the introduction (as required) but a disproportionate amount of historical significance was placed on it. The body of evidence, as presented, is adequate but lean. It is presented in a mostly logical order. In the body the student makes a good point then goes to a second point. The student returns later to the first point to complete it. The conclusion is clear and consistent with the information presented.

Spelling mistakes, weak grammar and awkward sentence structure confuse the reader in some parts of the presentation. Sometimes one very long sentence is used to communicate an idea, instead of a few short sentences. Other sentences make their point very well.

On the whole the work is persuasive and interesting in parts and a bit confusing in others.

A proper bibliography (with the required three sources) was submitted but all information (according to the few footnotes made) was taken from a single source. The source of some relevant information was not given and one of the footnotes used was not really necessary.

Research Paper Rubric: Non-weighted Example

Knowledge	Criteria	Below Level 1			Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4			Total
	Using historically accurate information	Use of historical information not passable	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10
Thinking/Inquiry Skills	Historical analysis	Demonstrated analysis skills not passable			Limited recognition of historical significance		Adequate recognition of historical significance		Very good recognition of historical significance		Thorough and perceptive recognition of historical significance			5.5
	Evidence to support thesis statement or argument being made	Support demonstrated is not passable			Little evidence used to support thesis		Some good evidence to support thesis		Solid evidence to support thesis		Excellent support for thesis			6
Communication	Introduction contains clear thesis statement	No thesis statement in introduction			Thesis statement of limited clarity		Thesis statement mostly clear		Introduction establishes thesis clearly		Introduction clearly states strong thesis			7
	Body of essay used to present research findings	Evidence of research not passable			Quality and quantity of evidence limited; sequence weak		Good quantity; quality and sequence of evidence is adequate		Good quantity and quality of evidence; sequence mostly logical		Quality and quantity are sound; sequence logical			6
	Concluding statement used to summarize research findings	Conclusion not present or not consistent with facts presented			Conclusion has limited connection to facts presented		Adequate conclusion; consistent with some key facts		Good conclusion; consistent with most key facts		Sound conclusion; fully supportable			7
	Effective use of language	Use of language not passable			Limited use of proper spelling, grammar and sentence structure		Adequate use of spelling; grammar and sentence structure weak at times		Spelling and grammar used well; sentence structure awkward at times		Spelling, grammar and sentence structure all used effectively			6.5
	Persuasiveness and interest	Not interesting or convincing			Limited interest and persuasiveness		Persuasive and interesting in some key parts		Persuasive and interesting in all key parts		Totally interesting and persuasive			6.5
Application	Layout and Presentation	Not passable			Limited title page; limited neatness		Adequate title page; limited neatness		Effective title page; neat presentation		Title page and essay layout both excellent			4
	Use of footnotes and bibliography to credit sources	Sources not evident or properly credited			Limited use of footnotes and bibliography to credit sources		Footnotes and bibliography used, sources adequate		Good sources used; all sources credited		Excellent sources used; all sources well credited			6.5
													Final Mark	61%

Research Paper Rubric: Weighted Example

Knowledge	Criteria	Below Level 1			Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4			Total
	Using historically accurate information	Use of historical information not passable	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10
Thinking/Inquiry Skills	Historical analysis	Demonstrated analysis skills not passable			Limited recognition of historical significance		Adequate recognition of historical significance		Very good recognition of historical significance		Thorough and perceptive recognition of historical significance			11
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 2
	Evidence to support thesis statement or argument being made	Support demonstrated is not passable			Little evidence used to support thesis		Some good evidence to support thesis		Solid evidence to support thesis		Excellent support for thesis			24
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 4
Communication	Introduction contains clear thesis statement	No thesis statement in introduction			Thesis statement of limited clarity		Thesis statement mostly clear		Introduction establishes thesis clearly		Introduction clearly states strong thesis			7
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 1
	Body of essay used to present research findings	Evidence of research not passable			Quality and quantity of evidence limited; sequence weak		Good quantity; quality and sequence of evidence is adequate		Good quantity and quality of evidence; sequence mostly logical		Quality and quantity are sound; sequence logical			6
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 1
	Concluding statement used to summarize research findings	Conclusion not present or not consistent with facts presented			Conclusion has limited connection to facts presented		Adequate conclusion; consistent with some key facts		Good conclusion; consistent with most key facts		Sound conclusion; fully supportable			7
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 1
Effective use of language	Use of language not passable			Limited use of proper spelling, grammar and sentence structure		Adequate use of spelling; grammar and sentence structure weak at times		Spelling and grammar used well; sentence structure awkward at times		Spelling, grammar and sentence structure all used effectively			13	
	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 2	
Application	Persuasiveness and interest	Not interesting or convincing			Limited interest and persuasiveness		Persuasive and interesting in some key parts		Persuasive and interesting in all key parts		Totally interesting and persuasive			13
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 2
	Layout and Presentation	Not passable			Limited title page; limited neatness		Adequate title page; limited neatness		Effective title page; neat presentation		Title page and essay layout both excellent			6
		0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 1.5
Use of footnotes and bibliography to credit sources	Sources not evident or properly credited			Limited use of footnotes and bibliography to credit sources		Footnotes and bibliography used, sources adequate		Good sources used; all sources credited		Excellent sources used; all sources well credited			19.5	
	0	2	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	9	10	X 3	
Final Mark													61%	

Weight adjustment = Maximum Mark X total of all multipliers = 10 X 20 = 200

Assignment is now based on 200 marks Final mark = 121.5 / 200 = 60.75%